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# Summary

This research found 8 important attributes of firms’ internationalization process, extracted from the literature of traditional internationalization and Born Global literature. The reason for extracting the chosen attributes was due to a very fragmented literature. The 8 decisive attributes of the internationalization process of a company are: 1) resources and capabilities, 2) market knowledge, 3) market commitment, 4) adaptability, 5) business networks, 7) founder’s experience and 8) global market orientation. The configuration of the attributes influences companies’ ability to internationalize rapidly at an early stage, or slowly in small, gradual stages.

The findings are conducted as a mixed method research. This implies that a multiple case study, and a survey are conducted. Therfore, two different paradigms are applied in two different points of time. This is the interpretive paradigm for the qualitative studies and the functionalist paradigm for the quantitative studies. Through five case studies and a survey sample of 106 respondents this research conducts empirical tests of the attributes. Thereby, analyzing the configuration of Born Global internationalization, finding that the qualitative research showed great contribution the Born Global attributes, while the quantitative research gave ambiguous results primarily due to a limited sample size.

The case studies were conducted by collecting five face-to-face interviews, following the critical incidents technique. That approach enabled identification of the single case’s critical incidents in relation to the internationalization process of the company. Accordingly, the survey questionnaire was conducted by e-mail, to access relevant respondents within the chosen industry; the Danish textile and clothing industry.

During the research process validity is sought and obtained as much as the responds allowed. To enhance the validity of the findings this thesis followed an interview guide during interviews, as well as conducted pilot testing of the questionnaire, publication and invitation were sent to the target population. Even though the methods were followed, data collected properly and transparent reporting of the data, the findings of the quantitative research are now known to be insignificant. Therefore, this thesis primarily presented findings based on the qualitative analysis.

**1**

# Introduction

*The purpose of the following chapter is to address the research context as well as cover the aim of the investigation. In addition, the problem formulation and research question of this thesis will be presented, and the overall project structure will be illustrated. This will provide an overview of each chapter of the thesis.*

## Research background

*The following section contains the background of this research including the effect of globalization, internationalization as an outcome of globalization and the Born Global phenomenon.*

During the last 25 years, researchers have outlined and developed new approaches to internationalization of companies. In the beginning of the 1990s, research discovered that some companies were able to internationalize more rapidly at the inception of the company or nearby. Researchers have therefore found that different sets of characteristics might be present in the companies following this new trend of internationalization. Further, the increase in the occurrence of the Born Global concept in the literature reflects the fact that these firms are becoming increasingly widespread (Kraus *et al.*, 2017). Accordingly, Rodríguez-Serrano and Martín-Armario (2017) claim that approximately one-fifth of new European companies consider themselves Born Global in general. For countries such as Denmark, this represents half of all young firms. This will be the starting point of this dissertation. Scholars’ increasing interest have especially been stimulated by the Born Global’s competitive success in international markets, despite limited financial and human resources (Rodrírguez-Serrano & Martín-Velicia, 2015).

##### The effect of Globalization

The birth of these new internationalization processes can certainly be explained by many factors. The increasing degree of globalization is argued to be one of them. Globalization is said to be many things and there is no clear answer as to when globalization started, what it means for businesses, and what it means for companies’ opportunities in the global world. Globalization can be a result of many different factors, which have worked as driving forces. To mention a few, several researchers point at the developments within information technology, communication, and manufacturing systems, which have improved possibilities for interaction, fostered expansion of global networks and alliances, and radically changed firms’ operations in international markets (Morgan-Thomas & Jones, 2009; Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016; Kraus *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the reduction in trade barriers, the standardization across countries, and the emergence of new growth economies have been factors in promoting globalization. These driving forces are, at the same time, also part of what is understood by globalization, and globalization has thus also had an impact on these driving forces. In this dissertation, globalization is perceived as the processes that contribute to creating dependency among actors, which has consequences on the way companies perform their activities. Cavusgil *et al.* (2008) describe globalization in the following way:

*“The globalization of markets has opened up countless new business opportunities for internationalizing firms. At the same time, globalization implies that firms accommodate new risks and intense rivalry from foreign competitors.”* (Cavusgil *et al.*, 2008, p. 51).

In this dissertation, globalization will not have any further meaning. However, from above quote, it is assumed that globalization has affected the internationalization of companies and the way cross-border trade occurs, and has thereby been a main driver for providing opportunities to early and rapid internationalization (Kraus *et al.*, 2017).

##### Internationalization as an outcome of Globalization

Historically, companies have always internationalized. Strandskov (1995) argues that strong international exposure, everything else alike, increases a company’s general development ability and adaptability, and thereby improves its maneuverability. In addition to the sales function, other basic functions of the company can also be internationalized: production can be transferred abroad, sales of knowledge, know-how and technology can happen, and the company can engage in strategic alliances with foreign companies in a functional division of labor by exchanging competences, knowledge, and know-how (Strandskov, 1995). The perception of internationalization in this thesis is based on the fact that internationalization is understood as transformation processes in the company's basic functions, systems, and structures as a consequence of the interaction across national borders (Strandskov, 1995). Unless otherwise stated, internationalization in this thesis will concern corporate internationalization. Typically, internationalization has been done in small steps, where the risks are fairly calculated and the speed of the internationalization is relatively slow. In that sense, Johanson and Vahlne (1977) developed one of the most well-known internationalization models, the Uppsala model of internationalization. Newly established companies are traditionally limited by the lack of resources. Due to this fact, the Uppsala model of internationalization states that companies must build up home market knowledge and access a network and explore resources to have a solid foundation for internationalization. To not risk too much, internationalization must then be done in small steps to neighboring markets to limit the amount of resources needed for the internationalization. Therefore, companies would firstly choose exporting as an entry mode, as this is claimed to be the most resource-limited entry mode.

##### The Born Global phenomenon

This thesis assumes that globalization has affected the internationalization of Danish companies. Studies indicate that Danish companies established within the last 25 years or so export faster than older companies (Madsen & Servais, 1997). These companies are the so-called Born Global companies. The phenomenon was developed in the early ‘90s and originates from another phenomenon: *“International New Ventures”* (Baranowska-Prokop & Sikora, 2015). Present studies have found that the Born Global firms gain competitive advantages bringing innovations to international markets through a set of factors that are different from the traditional companies (Andersson & Berggren, 2016). Thereby, the rise of the Born Global phenomenon has challenged traditional stage theories by changing the understanding of operations of newly established firms, and stimulated an open debate about the future of internationalization research (Sekliuckiene, 2015; Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016). The Born Global phenomenon is complex, and there have been theoretical challenges in explaining what it is (Baranowska-Prokop & Sikora, 2015). This thesis will try to deal with this by developing a clearer understanding of Born Global internationalization and how it is different from traditional internationalization. Among other things, Born Globals stand out of the traditional internationalization process, due to their ability to internationalize early, rapidly and export to distant countries, despite scarce resources. Furthermore, these companies tend to overcome risks of introducing new products in the marketplace and entering multiple markets at the same time. In addition, research has found evidence that these companies overcome regional boundaries at an early stage, exporting to countries outside of their home continent. (Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016) Further, knowledge about the internationalization processes of these companies, compared to the traditional internationalization processes, can provide insights into the challenges facing small and medium-sized Danish companies when establishing foreign activities. These insights can be used to improve the conditions of these companies, thereby increasing possibilities of positive outcomes of Danish companies engaging in foreign activities. The present thesis will therefore examine how internationalization processes take place in selected Danish companies. The objective is to map the factors that are particularly important for some companies to internationalize rapidly, while others internationalize after several years. The study will primarily be based on the Born Global theory, as it is this internationalization form that is expected to be able to clarify the differences between the two branches of the internationalization theory.

## 1.2. Problem formulation

*The following section contains an overview of the problem formulation of this thesis as well as research questions are axtracted from the research background.*

Previous research has suggested that Born Globals are not an industry or sector-specific phenomenon and, therefore, should not be defined solely as businesses that implement and/or sell cutting edge technology. Although a rather large proportion of the research focuses on Born Global companies’ internationalization, these articles remains devoted to start-up companies in highly technological industries (Morgan-Thomas & Jones, 2009). Therefore, existing research has tended to overlook the development of Born Global characteristics outside high technology sectors. The critical interrelationships between how and why Born Global firms internationalize in the way they do will therefore be done with focus on the Danish textile and clothing industry, which is known to be less technology-based. This decision is backed by Freeman and Cavusgil (2007), who claimed that Born Globals appear in large numbers, especially in smaller open economies. Furthermore, scholars have found that deregulations and advances in technologies make a country such as Denmark an ideal location to research the phenomenon of Born Global firms.

As identified, the present literature has some knowledge gaps. To fill the current gaps, this study aims to investigate Born Global firms, distinguishing to mainstream traditional internationalization, and the limited knowledge regarding low-tech industries. This study aims to map the important factors of Danish textile and clothing manufactures to early and rapid internationalize. Therefore, it seeks to explore the known literatures of Born Global and traditional internationalization, providing a theoretical understanding of the two parts of theory. By combining the methodological approaches of a literature review with an empirical mixed method approach, this study seeks to overview, analyze, and evaluate the scientific field under investigation. Moreover, this study aims to add empirical research findings of quantitative and qualitative nature to provide empirical evidence on how practitioners within the chosen industry can use the research findings. Also, an additional aim is to help future researchers investigate the phenomenon of Born Global and mainstream traditional internationalization by illustrating the important attributes and competencies of companies. Thereby, this study has the overarching aim to address the following problem formulation: ***How can Danish companies enhance the possibility to decide whether to internationalize as a Born Global or in the traditional way?*** To answer the problem formulation, this thesis uses several research questions that guide the research through the investigation. Like the problem formulation, the research questions are extracted from the research background, as well as they work as supporting questions for the problem formulation. These are as follows:

**RQ1**: *What are the characteristics of both Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization, and what are the main differences?*

**RQ2:** *What main attributes must be present to internationalize as a Born Global company and a traditional company, respectively?*

**RQ3:** *Which configuration of attributes should a start-up possess to internationalize rapidly at an earlier stage?*

The research questions will be answered partly though the literature review regarding different internationalization approaches and partly through the findings from the empirical analysis, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Therefore, the research questions will be answered from two perspectives by the investigation of five case companies and through a quantitative questionnaire developed on behalf of the literature review. The third research question will be answered based on the findings from research questions 1 and 2. The following section illustrates how the problem formulation and research questions is intended to by answered.

## 1.3. Dissertation structure

Figure 1 - Dissertation structure



(Source: Own creation)

This dissertation consists of 9 chapters, in which some of them are methodologically addressed differently. The purpose of figure 1 above is to provide an overview of how the dissertation is going to be executed. The first chapter includes an introduction in which the research background is being identified. The research background then leads to a specific problem formulation and several research questions. This leads to explaining the overall purpose of the investigation. The first chapter also provides an overview of the structure of the dissertation. Thereby, the first chapter works as the initial guideline for the reader, which should enhance transparency in the research process. Chapter 2 provides explanations of the research design, including detailed descriptions of every single step conducted in the mixed method approach. In relation, the philosophical standpoint is made clear in this chapter as well. Regarding this, this thesis opts for two different standpoints at different points in time, which is also clarified in this chapter. In Chapter 3, a multifaceted view of relevant literature on Born Globals and traditional internationalization is provided. In relation, a framework of attributes is created, based on both traditional internationalization theory and Born Global theory. The literature review then aims at answering research question one and two. In relation to the framework, a set of scientific deducted questions is provided. These are therefore extracted from existing literature and works as the link between the literature review and the data collection process. Chapter contains the framework used in the analysis. The framework consists of crucial attributes extracted from both Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization. This leads to extraction of several scientific questions that will be investigated in the quantitative analysis. Chapter 5 is the analysis and discussion and presents the empirical results. This chapter aims at testing the framework extracted from the theory both quantitatively and qualitatively. This is done through a multiple case study and a multiple logistic regression analysis. Here, the scientific questions will be discussed as well as the framework developed from theory. Chapter contains the conceptualization of findings and recommendations. This should work as a checklist for Danish comoanies deciding to internationalize. This part should therefore also aim providing answers for the research questions. The conclusion, limitations and future research are presented in Chapter 7. Here, the main findings will be summarized and the problem formulation will be answered. In addition, limitations faced in in the research process are outlined as well as implications, and suggestions for future research is provided in the end.

**2**

# Theory of Science and Methodology

*This following chapter covers a description of the theory of science and methodological considerations of this thesis, including the understanding of paradigms, ontology, epistemology, human nature, methodological approach, the choice of cases, methods of data collection, and data analysis. This chapter therefore explains the perception of reality and knowledge the authors of the thesis have. In this regard, this chapter depicts the philosophical conditions that underlie the methodological considerations taken up in this thesis.*

## 2.1. Theory of Science

*The purpose of this section is to outline the considerations of the theory of science. Moreover, this section provides the thesis with the guideline of how the research will be conducted.*

### 2.1.1. Introducing the Paradigms

The term paradigm is crucial to understand the research methodology behind this thesis. A scientific paradigm is, according to Arbnor and Bjerke (2009), what explains how researchers view and solve problems. It consists of theories, methods, dominant thoughts, and principles that legitimize the choices made by the researchers. These thoughts and principles should compromise the ontological and epistemological considerations related to the research (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). The term is also often referred to by Kuhn, who argues that every aspect of an investigation or research is characterized by specific assortments of the phenomena studied, including the research question and the methods applied. He defines a paradigm as being:

*“a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, [and] how results should be interpreted”*

(Kuhn, 1970: cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 35).

The goal is to understand how and why the research has come to its final results. Therefore, the scientific paradigm also conveys assumptions about human nature and methodological assumptions (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The concepts will be described and applied in the following sections.

### 2.1.2. Ontological considerations

Social scientists approach their investigation and subject through implicit and explicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and how it may be investigated (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). According to Bryman and Bell (2015), ontology concerns the perception of reality. Social scientists are faced with a basic question whether the reality is external to the individual or the product of individual consciousness or whether reality is of an objective nature – a product of individual cognition, which means whether reality is given out there, or is a product of one’s mind (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In other words, the central issue in the ontological nature is thus whether social entities (like organizations) can be considered objective and external to the researcher and the social actors, or whether they can be considered social constructions that are built by the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2015). These positions, reflecting the outer ends of researchers’ perceptions of reality, are often referred to as objectivism and constructivism (Bryman & Bell, 2011), realism and nominalism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), or objectivism and subjectivism (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009). The terms are rather overlapping each other, and it is possible to separate them from each other by relating them to ontology, epistemology, and methodological considerations.

Following Bryman and Bell (2015), *objectivism* refers to an ontological position where the researchers are confronted with external facts with no option to influence it. It views an organization as a tangible object, as having a given reality in which the members of the organization follow a social order and conform to the mission of the organization. Here, clear rules and regulations are followed by the people of the organization as well as standardized procedures are adopted to get things done, meaning they do the jobs to which they are appointed. Often, they are told what to do, and over time, they learn how to apply the rules and regulations. This understanding typically follows one common direction and sets a given foundation about the understanding of reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The *constructivist* approach challenges this suggestion and criticizes the universal perception of reality. Here, all individuals are social actors, who construct their own realities and the reality is therefore not an objective/tangible entity. The identity of the organization becomes relative to these different realities. Thus, the organization consists of individuals that create a dynamic social order where rules and regulations are not rigorously followed (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

This thesis is partly based on both approaches. The objective approach concerns the quantitative part of the data collection. Here, the researchers search for facts that can generalize information about internationalization processes in the Danish textile and clothing industry. However, the researchers of this thesis also see the reality as being a social construction when applying a qualitative research design. Therefore, the researchers acknowledge that not only one truth or reality exists, but that there exists as many realities as there are actors. Depending on which informant is asked during the case study interviews, the perceptions about internationalization processes, would be different, since the respondents’ own reality would be reflected in their subjective perceptions. As a result, the objective of this part of the thesis is to gain insights into the informants’ perceptions of the critical incidents related to the internationalization processes in their company, to outline which attributes have been influencing their international activities. Therefore, the optimal goal of this part of the data collection is not to find one final truth, but instead to produce knowledge, which is trustworthy (Wenneberg, 2000).

### 2.1.3. Epistemological considerations

Epistemology concerns what is acceptable knowledge within a certain research field (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It deals with how an individual knows the things he assumes to be true (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Therefore, epistemology reveals how the research should be understood by the reader. Every researcher has different opinions about what is important for the specific research on conduction; thus, individual preferences in relation to the epistemological standpoint will arise. While some researchers claim that it is possible to be an external observer and know the truth about the social world, some researchers claim that this social world can only be understood by making the individual actor under investigation a part of the research. Because of these different viewpoints, a researcher either adopts a positivistic approach or an anti-positivistic approach (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Being an external observer means that the researcher believes that he or she should be objective in the investigation, meaning seeking for regularities and causal relationships, and thereby leave personal values and assumptions out the research. A researcher opting for this is following the positivistic approach. On the opposite, an anti-positivistic researcher believes that the world is socially constructed. Thereby, the involvement of those actors under investigation, who are directly affecting the social activities, is a necessity (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The epistemological perception of this thesis is, on the one hand, characterized by the fact that the researchers interact with the informants. On the other hand, it is also characterized by the fact that the researchers try to seek causal relationships with a survey, just not at the same time. Therefore, the epistemological perception is a two-part perception. The results are, thus, both created through the interaction with informants in conjunction with chosen theory. However, results are also created through being external fact finders. Therefore, one part of epistemology opts for an anti-positivistic approach, since the researchers believe that reality should be understood by involving the actors being a part of the investigation. Here, knowledge is created through a social interaction process between the researchers and the informants. Accordingly, knowledge occurs as a subjective and mental construction, which must be an ongoing process. (Burell & Morgan, 1979). The other part of epistemology opts for a positivistic approach, where knowledge will be created by being external and objective, when seeking regularities, causal relationships, and generalizable facts during the questionnaire.

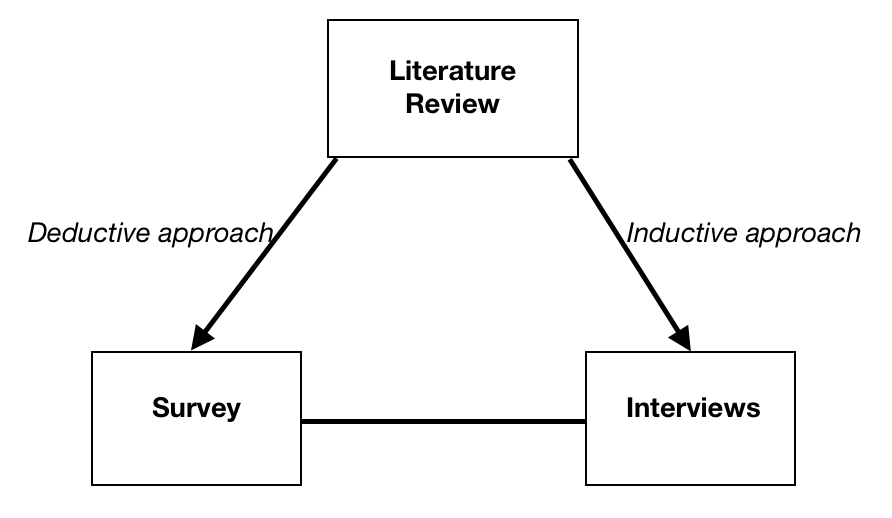
In this regard, Bryman and Bell (2015) suggest that the researchers can either opt for an inductive or a deductive approach in the process of creating knowledge. The following subparagraph 2.2.4 will outline the justification of the direction of this research.

### 2.2.4. Inductive/deductive considerations

According to Bryman and Bell (2011), inductive and deductive considerations are determined by how the researcher’s view of the nature of the relationship between theory and research is. Induction refers to an approach where the researcher collects data before theory is constructed. The researcher makes observations and collecting findings, which then form the basis of a theory. The theory formulation then becomes a result of these observations and findings that have already been done by the researcher. The researcher uses the observations and findings to determine how existing theory/literature can explain the issues under investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Deductive theory is known as being the most common view of the relationship between theory and research. It refers to a study, which is based on what is already known within a certain field and thereby the theoretical considerations within that field. Here, hypotheses or questions to scientifically inviestigate are often constructed being the subject to empirical study. In other words, the researcher goes the opposite way of the inductive approach, where theory leads to observations and findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Being two-part in the perception of reality, certainly at two different times, means also having two different approaches in the process of creating knowledge. Therefore, this research takes on both a deductive approach and an inductive approach. The research approach is illustrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Inductive and deductive stages

******

(Source: own creation)

##### The Deductive stage

This research takes on the deductive approach, since it is built up around existing theory and what is already known about internationalization processes. This means that the foundation of this thesis is all those factors related and relevant to the research issue, which are already conducted by other researchers, through the literature review. The literature review has defined research areas, and the interviews and the survey were prepared based these research areas. On the deductive stage, one purpose of this thesis is to examine the factors identified on a specific industry to revise and test the theory and to find out to what extent companies within this industry follow the patterns from the theory (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The aim of this part of the research is to make general suggestions on how start-up companies should internationalize following best practice from existing theory combined with information gathered from a survey. The objective of the survey is to answer scientifically extracted questions of the crucial attributes within the theory of the two streams of theory, which should support in answering the research questions. It therefore seeks to provide general managerial recommendations/thinking patterns about how internationalization, and which internationalization processes to follow, can be made into a choice of the company.

##### The Inductive stage

The inductive approach is applied when conducting in-depth qualitative interviews. Practically, this happened after handing out the survey, but before analyzing and investigating the answers from the survey. Here, the focus is to understand internationalization dynamics and processes through interaction with informants. The objective is to create meaning from the data already collected (here, both the literature review and the quantitative data), to identify patterns and relationships to both further test theory, but also expand, build, and develop theory. The purpose of this part of the research has three dimensions: 1) to give theoretical exploration of predefined specific research topics that had support in the interviews, 2) to explore new elements of the research topic that emerged through the case studies, and 3) to understand whether some of the proposed specific factors (here referring to the framework of this research) found little or no justification. Since the interviews were either unstructured or semi-structured, it made room for testing and exploring the assumptions made prior to the interviews.

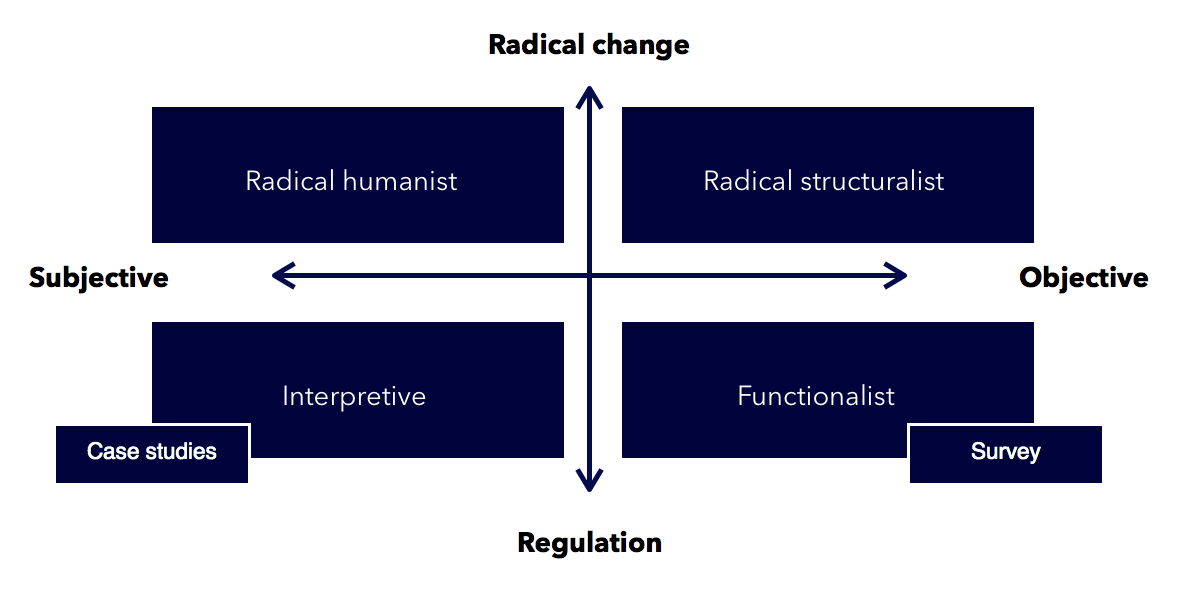
### 2.2.5. Human Nature considerations

As for the human nature considerations, Burrell and Morgan (1979) talk about determinism and voluntarism as being the two opposites. These considerations involve the issue of what model of man is reflected in any given social-scientific theory. These assumptions are as well crucial since they define the nature of relationship between man and the society in which he lives. The deterministic view sees the man and his activities as being completely determined by the environment surrounding him. Following the voluntarist view, the man is free-willed and has more autonomy (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Since this research, adopts a subjective view, it allows the actors to be a part of the investigation through interaction. Therefore, the research allows them to illustrate their subjective opinions, thereby giving them more autonomy. In this regard, the voluntarist view of human nature is considered. Besides, when conducting the quantitative data, the determinist approach is considered, where the situation and the environment, which is surrounding him, determine a person’s activities. Therefore, the researchers of this thesis recognize that other factors around both the personal life and the environment of the company he/she is a part of, has an influence on the activities being made. In this respect during the internationalization processes of the company.

### 2.2.6. Formalizing the paradigm discussion

To formalize the discussion above about the research paradigms, the *“Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory”* by Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 35)is being applied. The above paradigms and relating philosophical notions can be divided into groups that create a classification of clearly defined options on philosophical thinking, which works as a base for the investigation of a social phenomenon. Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) classification of paradigms is based on two opposing perspectives of what they call the subjective-objective dimension and the regulation-radical change dimension. The subjective-objective dimension is already discussed and will therefore not be elaborated any further. The regulation-radical change dimension refers to assumptions about the function and purpose of the research when investigating the world of business. For the regulatory dimension, the purpose is *“to describe what goes on in organizations, possibly to suggest minor changes to improve them, but not make any judgement”* (Bryman & Bell, 2015 p. 35). For the radical change dimension the point of manage and business research is *“to make judgements about the way that organizations ought to be and to make suggestions about how this could be achieved”* (Bryman & Bell, 2015 p. 35). These dimensions have led to four paradigms named as *Radical humanist, Radical structuralist, Interpretive,* and *Functionalist*, which are illustrated in figure 3 below.

Figure 3 - Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory



(Source: Adapted from Burrell & Morgan, 1979 p. 22)

An important notion worth mentioning is that the four paradigms illustrated above are mutually exclusive, meaning that they offer alternative views of social reality and thereby offer different ways of seeing. Therefore, a synthesis is not possible because the paradigms are contradictory in the pure origin. In other words, they are incompatible with one another. Hence, they should be seen as alternatives, meaning that researchers can operate in different paradigms sequentially over time, but never at the same time. The reason is that by accepting the assumptions of one paradigm, one defies the assumptions of all the others (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

As expressed, this research adopts both a subjective approach and an objective approach. The research and analysis in this thesis is based on existing structures of organizations, where the objective is to suggest minor changes to improve them, rather than radically changing them. This points at the regulation spectrum of the matrix. Furthermore, it was argued that the thesis is following both an anti-positivist approach and a positivistic approach. Therefore, this thesis opts for two different paradigms. The interpretive paradigm since this thesis is emphasizing the idea of examining the existing nature of social order through interviews (the inductive approach), and the functionalist paradigm since this thesis also tries to generalize through a survey (the deductive approach). It is said about the interpretive paradigm that it *“is informed by a concern to understand the worlds as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience”* (Burrell & Morgan, 1979 p.28). Explanations must be found within the individual’s subjective perceptions. It sees the world as a social process, which is constructed by the individuals being a part of it. In addition, understanding must be based on the experience of those who work in the organizations under investigation. This corresponds to the condition in this thesis, where one goal is to understand those individual internationalization patterns experienced by managers, leaders, etc. from different organizations within the Danish textile and clothing industry through in-depth interviews.

Thus, the functionalist paradigm is also applied, however, at another point of time in the data collection process, which, as prescribed by Burell and Morgan (1979), is a necessary condition for applying two different paradigms. The functionalist paradigm concerns the idea of creating rational explanations of the topic being studied. This often involves the use of quantitative data, as is also the case in this thesis. Quantitative data creates statistical material, which can be used to generalize and to test scientific questions, here derived from the literature review. The objective is to make suggestions on how start-up companies can enhance their possibilities of choosing their own internationalization process. The objective is to create recommendations that can be applied to different organizations within the textile and clothing industry. Therefore, it needs to be assumed that this thesis should be more objective in its approach to data collection when performing the quantitative part of the investigation. This confirms the choice of the quantitative method as being appropriate for this research.

## 2.2. Methodology

*The following section contains a description of the methods applied in this thesis. This includes data collection, mixed method research including considerations about quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, data processing. Based on the above perceptions of reality, the following methodological considerations are made.*

### 2.2.1. Primary data collection

##### Primary Data

The primary data of this thesis and therefore the background for the literature review is document studies. The documents/papers used to conduct the literature review are found through a search by different key terms in Scopus, which is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature, such as scientific journals. Following this method, the literature review will include essential findings from research conducted all over the world on social science issues related to Internationalization patterns. This thesis therefore conducts the literature review on a solid foundation from highly relevant peer-reviewed literature, to improve the relevancy and include critical research. The literature review of this thesis is based on key terminologies, which are different based on whether we sought literature on traditional internationalization or Born Global internationalization. For the traditional internationalization part, the key terms were associated with internationalization processes or patterns, stage theory as well as Uppsala internationalization, combined with search terms associated with how companies succeed in the internationalization process. For the Born Global part, key terms associated with Born Global internationalization or international new ventures were used in combination with how companies can succeed in internationalizing in this way. This gave a limited result of around 400 articles relevant for this issue. To limit the number of articles and narrow the search, all relevant reviews were firstly selected. By ranking the other articles on citations, it was made possible to collect the most important sources within this research field. By reading through headlines, abstracts, and introductions, the total number of papers used for the literature review of this thesis was limited to 28.

To structure the articles, an Excel spreadsheet was created covering relevant information from the articles in a sum-up table. This table is shown in Appendix 1. By always having the research question in mind, several key headlines were celebrated as being the most important for this specific research. This covered key definitions of both Born Globals and traditional internationalization, which key dimensions the paper was build up upon, the context of the study, including choice of country and choice of a specific industry (if any), key findings including the specific findings related to the context, and at least what the paper concluded as being the most important factors for successful internationalization in both the traditional way and the Born Global. The sum-up table played a central role in the process of constructing the literature review. The table made it possible to identify key patterns within existing literature and thereby base the literature of this thesis on the most solid foundation possible. The key structure of this literature review is therefore based on what recognized authors have made already. The sum-up table also works as a transparent tool for the reader to have a quick overview of the most important aspects related to this specific research. The most essential aspect of the sum-up table is that it works as the key instrument to identify what others have found as being the most important success attributes of traditional internationalization and Born Global internationalization. The most essential success attributes were then collected into smaller tables based on different sub headlines. These headlines where also identified in the literature as key dimensions within the successful internationalization on the same basis as outlined above. The tables illustrate a very fragmented literature where a lot of success attributes exists. To narrow the literature review and present a more streamlined configuration of attributes, five of the most essential aspects were identified. As expressed, these were chosen due to their relative importance illustrated by existing researchers. The overall literature provides knowledge about internationalization processes within both a Born Global perspective and a traditional perspective, it therefore compares the two approaches. Therefore, it also provides knowledge about how companies can have success with rapid internationalization and thereby gain a competitive advantage.

### 2.2.2. Mixed Method Research

In this thesis, mixed methods will be applied to answer the research question in a broader perspective. Mixed method research is the use of multiple methods during the research process (Kuada, 2014). The mixed methods applied in this thesis are quantitative and qualitative research methods. This research conducts a quantitative survey by developing a questionnaire, which will form the basis of a quantitative analysis of the research question and the factors identified being crucial for internationalization success. In addition, by interviewing several companies, the framework and the research questions will be answered by a qualitative research approach. The investigation will thereby be extracted through both approaches and findings will therefore be crosschecked and compared. Furthermore, the two analyses would then seek to complement each other. The objective of applying this approach is to strengthen the results and develop a whole truth by triangulation (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The choice is made to provide a broader and more complete view of traditional internationalization processes and Born Global internationalization processes respectively. The research design is presented in the following sections, as well as the type of mixed method desing is outlined.

##### Type of mixed method design

There are several designs of mixed method research. Creswell and Clark (cited in Bryman & Bell, 2015) presented four basic mixed method designs. The first design is called **The Convergent Parallel Design**, which is the design of simultaneous collection of both the quantitative and qualitative data, where the two different types of data have equal priority. After the data collection, the two analyses are compared or merged to develop the whole, understood as the truth. The Convergent Parallel Design seeks to capitalize on the strengths from both qualitative and quantitative research, by comparing the findings and compensating from the weaknesses of using qualitative or quantitative research solely. The second design presented by Creswell and Clark is **The Exploratory Sequential Design**. This design entails the collection of qualitative data prior to the collection of quantitative data. Researchers can generate hypotheses based on the qualitative data and then test it by using quantitative research. The third design is presented as **The Explanatory Sequential Design**, where the collection of quantitative data and the analysis of it is followed up by collection and analysis of qualitative data. This design seeks to elaborate or explain the findings of the quantitative research by following up with qualitative research. Thereby, this approach is used to get a deeper understanding of general tendencies from quantitative research. The fourth design is called **The Embedded Design** entails both quantitative and qualitative research, but here one of them is prioritized. This approach relies more on one of the research approaches, and then draws on the other approach within the context of the study. The prioritized approach can, thus, be enhanced, which makes this approach favorable if the chosen approach is not profound enough to understand the phenomenon under investigation. (Bryman & Bell, 2015) In this research, we apply what Creswell and Clark named The Convergent Parallel Design, weighing quantitative and qualitative research equally. That will be applied by simultaneously collecting data and separate analysis of that data collected. The reasoning is that when the two analyses are merged, it provides a broader picture and understanding of the truth. Thereby, this research draw upon the strengths from both the qualitative and quantitative research respectively. The two research approaches will be described in the coming sections.

#### 2.2.2.2. Qualitative research

*In the following sections, qualitative research methods will be presented, including multiple case study design, cross-case analysis, interviews, interview preparation, interview method, interview guide and data processing.*

##### Multiple case study research

A case is, among other things, concerned with the complexity and particular nature of a given phenomenon in a given setting (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This thesis features a multiple case study (Yin, 2014). Case studies are often applied to analyze decisions: why were they made and how were they implemented (Yin, 2014). This thesis follows this logic, since it seeks to investigate which considerations and decisions have been made during the internationalization process in selected case companies, and to what extent specific factors have had an influence on that process. The reasons for choosing several cases are many. Yin (2014) argues that the independent conclusions arising from several cases provide more powerful data, than if only a single case was applied (Yin, 2014). Accordingly, this is also based on the statement that evidence gathered from multiple cases is more compelling, which makes the overall study more robust (Yin, 2014). By using multiple cases, a greater ability is obtained to compare the empirical case results with each other as well as with results obtained from the quantitative research and previous studies. The objective when applying multiple cases in this thesis is to identify similarities and differences in the five case companies’ internationalization processes. Additionally, a reason is that multiple case designs can provide theory that is better grounded, more accurate, and more generalizable (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Following Yin (2014), a multiple case study research method as the one implied in this thesis can use several different data types for describing and analyzing cases. In relation hereto, the data collected is enabled through collecting multiple sources of evidence. Accordingly, this thesis uses documentation and interviews (Yin, 2014). Documentation in this thesis refers to the use of documents in relation to searching for relevant information regarding the chosen cases under investigation. This includes annual reports, internal documents about specific internationalization strategies of the companies, etc. Interviews are also applied in this thesis, since it is considered one of the most important sources of case study data (Yin, 2014). The interview technique is a popular data collection method, particularly as a qualitative method (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

##### Cross case analysis

The purpose of the multiple case study is to enable a cross case analysis. Cross case analysis is chosen to be able to detect patterns of association, between the cases of this thesis (Bryman & Bell, 2015) This application of cross case analyses makes it possible to examine the relationships between variables, which will be extracted later in the theoretical framework. Moreover, the cross-case analysis does not make it certain whether there exists a causal relationship between the variables, but it is applied to investigate how the variables of this thesis are related across multiple cases (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Furthermore, the cross-sectional case analysis will found the basis of drawing relatedness between practice and the theory, in a discussion between the findings of the multiple case study, and the theoretical framework.

##### Interviews

For this thesis, five interviews were held which were all face-to-face interviews. The reason for choosing the face-to-face interview is due to the enhanced possibility for a dynamic and interactive interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is in line with the interpretivist paradigm of this thesis. These kinds of interviews allow the researcher to adapt and adjust the interview situation to the research topic. Accordingly, it allows the researchers to ask for details in relation for their critical incidents, in relation to their development of international activities, which is especially essential for this thesis. A face-to-face interview also provides the ability to establish a common atmosphere, which can help both the interviewer and the interviewees throughout the interview. The research can decode gesticulation and postures of the informant, which provides the research with useful information as well, since it then becomes possible to adjust the interview to fit the informant as well as it can provide an understanding of the quality of the answers delivered by the informant (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

##### Interview preparation

Following Bryman and Bell (2015), three main types of interviews in qualitative research exists: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. The structured and the semi-structured interviews refer to a situation where the interviewer has a series of questions, which are based on an interview schedule. The idea is that all interviewees are given the exact same context of questioning. For the structured interview the interviewer must follow the interview schedule in detail and in the same order as they are printed. On the other hand, for the semi-structured interview, the interviewer can vary the sequence of questions. Here, questions are more general in their frame of reference then those often found in a structured interview schedule (Bryman & Bell, 2015). A form of the unstructured interview (or sometimes semi-structured) is applied in this thesis. The unstructured interview normally resembles conversations, and can start with the interviewer asking a single question which then drives the conversation forward (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The unstructured interview is characterized by being planned to a low level in advance, therefore, no interview guide as such will be applied in this thesis. This makes the unstructured interview highly exploratory (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The *oral history interview* (Bryman & Bell, 2015)is applied in this thesis, since this interview form goes strictly in line with the chosen interview method, the critical incident technique (see next section). The idea behind the oral history interview is to recall events from the respondents past and make them reflect on them. By applying this method, this research tries to answer the scientific questions asked by letting the informant specify his or her experiences. In relation, it is crucial that the informant is guided in the right direction, without influencing the answers. By making a positive interview setting, the researchers should be able to motivate the informant to be willing to share information. However, by following this method, there is a risk that the informant has difficulties in recalling past experiences. Therefore, a brief description of the objective of the interview is sent to the informant prior to the interview. This increases the possibility of receiving answers that correspond to the specific research topic.

##### Interview method

This thesis has chosen the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) for several specific reasons:

* The method allows close interaction between the interviewer and the informant, which is essential when the objective is to understand the reasoning behind the incidents.
* The method can be used to test a specific framework.
* For studies that tries to recall historical incidents, CIT is appropriate since it focuses on events that are expected to have a high recall by the respondents. At this point, bias may be present if the respondent cannot reveal incidents.
* The method can identify crucial incidents in the history of the case companies and explain why they are crucial. The behavior of the companies can be put into context and thereby be related to their specific impact. When studying the development of the case companies, the impact of past critical incidents is registered.

*“The critical incident method involves asking respondents to describe critical incidents”* (Bryman & Bell, 2015 p. 226). The most common use of the method involves interviewing respondents about particular events or behaviors to develop an understanding of their sequence and their significance to the individual (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The method is widely defined by Flanagan (1954) who describe the method in five major steps: 1) Determine the general objectives of the activity being studied, 2) make plans and set specifications, 3) collect the data, 4) analyze the data, 5) interpret the data and report the results.

The *first step* involves a specification of what is necessary to do and not to do if participation in the activity is to be judged successful or effective (Flanagan, 1954). Therefore, the general aim for the activity being studied (internationalization processes) is for the five case companies to survive in the market and to achieve international sales of above 25% of total sales.

The *second step* involves setting plans and specifications. This step is about having clear and precise instructions for the observers (here the researchers themselves) so that the evaluation and classification in the following is being made correctly. Here, a specific interview guide (See Appendix 5 – Interview Guide) is made to ensure consistency in all case interviews, and to ensure that incidents are covered to the fullest. Furthermore, the second step involves four specifications needed to be decided upon*:* 1) Defining the situations observed, 2) relevancy to the general aim 3) extent of effect on the general aim, and 4) Persons to make the observations(Flanagan, 1954)*.* The first necessary specification is a delimitation of the situations to be observed. For this thesis, this sounds like the following: the behavior in five companines regarding their first international experience and what attributes have been driving the process to either success or failure. The next step is to decide if a specific behavior observed is relevant to the general aim of the activity as just defined. Regarding this thesis, any action which either directly or indirectly effects the general aim as specified above is included. The third necessary specification is to decide how important an effect the observed incident has on the general aim. Here, this research will use the specification that an incident is critical if it makes a significant contribution, either positively or negatively, to the general objective of the activity. The fourth specification involves the person to make the observations. Regarding this step, it will subsequently be the researchers of this thesis making the observations, even though it often is experts from the outside (Flanagan, 1954). The reason to choose ourselves and what makes it legible is that we as the researchers already know the nature of the general aim of the activity and thereby the study that this research is about to make.

The *third step* involves collecting the data. This part can be done in several ways. For this thesis having individuals (here leading employees/managers of the case companies) report from memory about critical incidents that occurred in the past is chosen. Here it is essential that the observer evaluate, classify, and record the behaviors or results observed while the facts are still fresh in the minds (Flanagan, 1954). This will be done by both recording the interview, and to notice any activity related to the general aim of the activity while it is presented by the informants. Accordingly, a scheme of the critical incidents will be made to secure a clear overview of the attributes relevant for this research topic. The recalled data in the form of critical incidents is, as aforementioned, obtained by having individual interviews and through questionnaires.

The *fourth step* involves analyzing the data. This step is, naturally, closely linked to the previous step. The aim of the data analysis is to summarize and describe the data in an efficient way, so that it can be effectively used later in the research (Flanagan, 1954). In addition, an appropriate overview of the data makes it easier to draw inferences, and to compare the activities between the cases. Regarding this step, a cross-case table is presented in Table 12 in section 5.2.3.

The *fifth and final step* involves interpreting and reporting the data. This step is about making judgements about which incidents to report and which to not report. In relation, reviewing the previous four steps is necessary to determine what biases have been introduced by the procedures used. This includes an examination of the procedures used and a discussion of the limitations of the methods applied. Accordingly, this includes the degree of credibility and trustworthiness of the data obtained and the method applied. These limitations will be outlined in section 7.2. about limitations, while the credibility and trustworthiness will be a part of the methodology (Presented in section 2.2.3. Reliability and Validity).

The CIT method goes in line with the subjective approach this thesis has to the research, since the focus is on an individual’s perception of the specific incidents during the internationalization process of the company.

##### Interview guide

An interview guide is a script that structures the interview to a greater or lesser extent. The guide can either contain topics that must be covered during the interview or it can be a detailed sequence of carefully formulated questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As expressed, this thesis follows a more unstructured or semi-structured interview form. This implies that the interview guide consists of topics that must be covered and suggestions for questions. The interview guide can be accessed in Appendix 8. There is a direct relationship between the specific research question of the thesis and the topics and related questions formulated in the interview guide. Therefore, the interview is an essential tool the researchers have in the interview situation to investigate the research questions (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It is therefore necessary that the interview topics and related suggestions for question, are carefully formulated in relation to the framework developed from the theory in this thesis. Following the logic of CIT, it is essential that the same interview guide is implied for every interview in order to be as consistent as possible.

Interview questions can be assessed both in terms of a thematic or a dynamic dimension. Thematic means production of knowledge and dynamic is related to the interpersonal relation during the interview. A well-formulated interview question must contribute to both dimensions. The interview guide of this thesis is a combination of the two by making headlines that are related to thematic concepts while the questions are asked in a way where the informant can express his/her story. This should create the optimal interview setting for this thesis.

##### Choosing informants

Naturally, the informants chosen for a research must depend on the specific research topic (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The informants chosen for the qualitative interview part of this thesis were purposive, therefore based on their specific knowledge about the research topic. This was done in practice by communicating directly to the person in charge of the organizations. The informants of GardinLis, Cold Flood Prevention, Rodtnes, and Fantini are the directors of their respective companies, and it is therefore perceived that they were the ones with the greatest ability to contribute to this research. For United Textile Group (UTG), the informant is CFO and CTO, ranking him among the top of the hierarchy of the company. These were chosen since it was essential that they, as far as possible, had been a part of the internationalization process of the organization from the beginning, and thereby had influence on the strategic considerations in the process. The only one not a part of the company’s first international activities is Mogens from UTG. Thus, his knowledge about the period was limited, but acceptable. All other informants were a part of the decision-making process around the first international activities. They, therefore, all play a key role in their respective companies, and thereby represent this study at a satisfactory level. In addition, the purpose was to be able to compare Born Global internationalization patterns with traditional internationalization patterns, which was made possible by choosing informants that represented both approaches.

##### Qualitative data processing

The execution of the interviews resulted in recording and transcription. The transcription had a direct transfer from audio to text, to which there were only a few distinctions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The spoken words are transcribed into a more formal written language, to not include “uhs,” pauses, emphases, and emotional expressions like laughter and sighs, as these aspects have no bearing on the analysis of the interview. Accordingly, there were no further interpretations reflecting why and how the informants were answering in the way they did. The transcription ended up constituting an extensive amount of written material. Thus, the analysis of the material had to be systematic and suitable for the thesis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To improve this, a timeline of critical incidents with corresponding comments was made based on each interview and transcription.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that the analysis of the interview begins before the interviews are completed. The reason is that the researchers need to consider how the interview must be executed beforehand, so its meaning is understood in a coherent way. The interview guide was based on specific research topics, to which the researchers of this thesis had identified questions that should facilitate the understanding of internationalization processes of the five case companies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

To commence the data processing, the text material was transferred into an extensive timeline of the development of each company. Each timeline consists of critical incidents and related comments. This was done in relation to CIT, but also to get first impressions of which areas were covered in the interview. The segmentation of raw text into more manageable timelines is an initiation of the coding process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), categorization and coding are among the most common forms of computer-assisted analysis. While the two terms are often used interchangeably, this thesis still distinguishes the two. Categorization contains a systematic conceptualization of a term that allows for quantification, while coding involves the attachment of one or more keywords to a text section for later identification of statements. This thesis primarily used categorization, since a cross case analysis (In Section 5.2.3. Summary of Empirical Analysis of the five case companies) is made in the end of the analysis to try to generalize and quantify the results. Here, the objective is to outline the extent to which the selected factors from the framework have been influencing each of the five companies. In this way, it becomes possible to identify which factors have had highest influence, if any, in the internationalization process of the selected companies, and thereby examine similarities and differences across cases. Therefore, the categorization should provide a simple overview of the occurrence of the factors being investigated. Nonetheless, coding has also been used to a certain extent, since its empirical foundation is understood to form the premise for theoretical development. This is primarily seen in the way that citations have been used in the empirical chapters of this thesis. In relation, the coding principle used in this thesis was based on concept-driven coding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Concept-driven coding utilizes codes (topics) that are developed by the research in advance. In this thesis, this was done through reviewing the literature. Therefore, codes existed in the form of specific research topics prior to conducting the five case studies. The coding process assisted in achieving the objective of relating the empirical data to existing specific research topics.

#### 2.2.2.1 Quantitative research

*To be able to test specific scientific questions derived from the theory in relation to the research question, this research will apply quantitative data collection. Accordingly, this method enables the research to compare traditional internationalization with Born Global internationalization within different variables underlying the research question (Kuada, 2014). The application of the quantitative research method will be presented in this section.*

##### Main Steps in quantitative research

When applying the quantitative research approach, a certain process is required. Being ethically correct and following certain patterns in the development of the research is important to answer scientific questions according to quantitative research. Bryman and Bell (2015) outline ten main steps of this research process as a deductive approach: 1) elaborating theory, 2) devise hypothesis or raise questions to scientifically investigate and test the theory, 3) the research design is selected as presented (in section 1.3. Dissertation Structure), 4) operationalization of the theory in a framework (in section 4. Framework). In relation to the operationalization of the theory, this thesis also constructs scientific questions regarding the crucial attributes of internationalization extracted from the literature review. These scientific questions are developed, to be further tested in the following steps: This thesis 5) selects research sites and 6) selects respondents. Then data is 7) collected, 8) processed, and 9) analyzed. Finally, 10) the quantitative findings are developed (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p. 161).

##### Developing the survey

The development of the survey in this research entails the development of survey objectives. This research investigates the phenomenon of traditional (Uppsala) internationalization versus rapid internationalization referred to as Born Global internationalization. The objective of the survey is to test the framework presented in Chapter 4. To test the framework, considering a company’s export and international activities, it is crucial to reach the right respondents (Kuada, 2014). This research determines the population to be companies of the Danish textile and clothing industry. This choice was made since it is a highly internationalize industry, as well as Denmark has long traditions within this industry. Respondents of the selected companies need to have the requisite knowledge about the company’s development of export and international activities (Bryman & Bell, 2015). For that matter, it is crucial to reach respondents of the position of Chief Executive Officer, Director of International Affairs, or similar, from a managerial or strategic level of the companies. To reach the needed respondents throughout the geographical area of Denmark, this thesis uses e-mail surveys (Appendix 3) since it is the most applicable solution due to scope and scale of time and resources (Kuada, 2014). Accordingly, sampling through embedded e-mail is a recognized approach to access respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Moreover, the e-mail and survey are composed in Danish, to make sure no misunderstandings occur. This also enhances the response rates, to limit the non-response bias. In this research, the leading Danish knowledge database of companies NN Markedsdata is used to search for companies within the industry and collect their contact information. The companies within the following trade categories will found the population of this investigation:

* Manufacture of home textiles (13.92.10)
* Manufacture of finished textile products, except home textiles or clothing (13.92.20)
* Manufacture of other textiles (13.99.00)
* Manufacture of clothing of leather (14.11.00)
* Manufacture of undergarments (14.14.00)
* Manufacture of other apparel and accessories (14.19.00)

The search through NN Markedsdata resulted in 469 companies (See Appendix 4 – Target Population Survey) with available contact information, which is the sample frame of this research. Thus, the sample of this investigation is a non-probability sample, since the selection method applied is restricted by the availability of contact information, through the search database (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The next step is to develop the survey questions. In this research, questions are developed to fulfill the basic objectives of this study: to collect information about the internationalization processes of companies of the Danish textile and clothing industry.

##### Survey questions

While developing the questions, this thesis’ objective was to be general and clear in the formulation, and to make it easy to answer the questions to enhance the reliability of the sample (Kuada, 2014). This research followed the guidelines for writing questionnaires in Kuada (2014, p. 108), therefore all questions on a particular topic are grouped together. The formulations are as brief and clear as possible, without any misspellings or grammatical errors. Furthermore, double-barreled questions are avoided, to make sure the respondents only must consider answering one issue at a time. Finally, the questions are asked objectively, to avoid leading or loaded questions to make sure the respondents’ answers are not guided toward a specific answer (Kuada, 2014). Each question in the questionnaire is developed as a closed question, to enhance the generalizability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In questions where the subject is not extensive, in the possible answers, respondents can choose to write their own answer. This is applied to make sure to catch the whole, considering some of the respondents might have subjective experiences, which is not possible to predetermine. Thereby, the possibility to identify tendencies in the sample is enhanced, which increases the ability to spot differences and similarities between the quantitative and qualitative research. Therefore, the output will be useful to make an analysis of the findings to compare and crosscheck with the findings from the qualitative case study research. The survey questions are found in Appendix 3. The amount of questions is kept at a minimum to enhance the possibility of receiving more answers.

All questions are developed to suit its purpose to catch the whole about the population’s practical experience with establishment and development of international activities. As presented in Appendix 3, are following a so-called Likert Scale. The Likert Scale applied uses the numerical indicators from 1 to 5. The reason for applying multiple-indicators is to recognize the potential problems with reliance on just a single indicator. Furthermore, this creates a more reliable set of data, since respondents have to weigh the factors that are measured to complete the specific question (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Therefore, this method makes it possible to measure the importance of the different variables included in the investigation, which is the primary focus of the quantitative analysis.

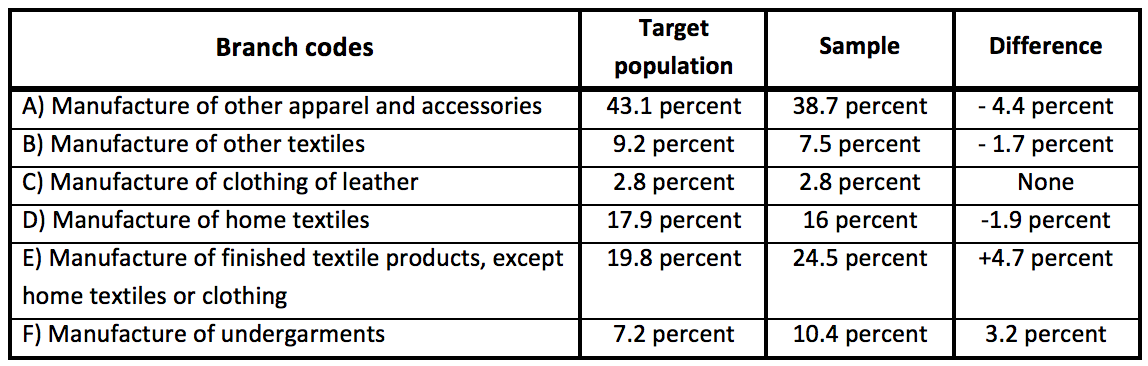
##### Sampling

The data sample is based on a population extracted from the database NN Markedsdata. The population is all companies within the six mentioned branch codes within the Danish textile and clothing industry. This thesis sample frame, known as the target population, is the companies within the six branch codes, whose contact information is available through NN Markedsdata. The conducted sample frame counted 469 companies in total. This selection of the sample is the listing of all the units in the total population, from where the sample is selected. Since, the sample frame is selected, based on the availability of contact information some has a bigger chance of being selected than others. This sample is therefore a non-probability sample, where respondents are not selected using a random selection method. The companies with the provided contact information through the database are more likely to be selected, than the ones without contact information. This thesis is aware of the pitfalls of using a non-probability sample, and will address the sampling bias accordingly. Moreover, non-sampling error will be addressed to clarify non-response bias, if any. The non-response rate will be determined to clarify the non-response bias. Furthermore, presenting the frequencies of each of the branch codes within the target population in comparison to the sample, will address, the sampling error. Accordingly, a mean comparison of the year of foundation between the target population and the sample, will address the homogeneity in relation to the age of the companies represented in the sample. Therefore, the frequency distribution, and the years of foundation means are compared to investigate whether the sample chosen is reprensentative for the population.

The target population was 469 Danish companies and the sample size reached 106 respondents, making the response rate 22,6% (Appendix 4 – Survey Response Rate). To use the sample for further analysis, the sample will be verified in the following paragrphas. This thesis uses frequencies of the samples branch codes in comparison to the frequencies of the target population branch codes, to evaluate the non-response bias. The frequency within the branch codes illustrates the relative distribution sample compared to the target population, thereby the reliability in relation to the industry branches is outlined (See Appendix 4 – Target population versus Sample Frequencies).

The target population of 469 companies is a collection of the six branch codes, as outlined above (See Appendix 4). The composition of the target population varies from the smallest group representing 2,8% of the companies, to the biggest group representing 43,1%. Since there exists a significant difference in the size of the target population’s branch codes, this will be addressed by a comparison of the obtained sample (See Appendix 4). The comparison of frequency distribution of target population and the sample, transparently illustrates the differences within the branch codes:

Table 1 – Comparison of branch codes in target population and the sample



(Source: Own Creation, Appendix 4)

All the branch codes are represented in the sample. Considering their size in the target population, and the size of the actual sample, make A, B, C and D slightly less represented. Moreover, E and F are slightly overrepresented. Thus, there will be a slight non-response bias, according to the individual branch codes of the target population.

Another variable is used to clarify whether there exists homogeneity in accordance to the age of the companies within the target population, and the actual sample (See Appendix 4 – Companies’ year of foundation). The average year of foundation of the target population was 2003. Comparing this year to the actual sample, it is outlined that the sample are aligned in accordance to year of foundation. (See Appendix 4). Companies of the sample are on average founded in the same year as the target population. The sample error, taking non-response bias into consideration, is small; thus, there exists a slight error. The year of foundation of the companies indicates that the units of the sample are of same average age, but the branch codes are not equally represented in the sample. Therefore, the sample represents some homogeneity, since it is not one hundred percent equally distributed for the targeted sample. This makes the findings of the analysis weaker for some of the branch codes (A, B, C and D). Thus, this is not considered to be crucial, as the difference in the representativeness is not significantly high for the overall picture because the branch codes of the investigation are within the same industry.

##### Quantitative data analysis

Presentation of the quantitative data will found the basis of the quantitative analysis. To analyze the data, this thesis explains the general tendencies by development of frequencies, which enables the publication of the descriptive part. Moreover, an analytical part is applied to further analysis of the data. The data analysis is computed by a multiple logistic regression model in SPSS, whereby the data and the calculated outputs from SPSS, found the basis for analysis of the variables. Therefore, the data analysis will be practical-oriented, in the sense that the focus relies on the outputs from the calculations through SPSS. This means that the calculations are made by software support and will be computed automatically.

##### Multiple logistic regression

For the quantitative analysis part of this thesis, multiple logistic regression will be applied as the primary method for testing and analyzing what effect the factors under investigation have on the dependent variable (Born Global vs Traditional). As expressed, these factors are extracted from the literature review (Presented in section 4. Framework). The multiple logistic regression analysis of this thesis will be limited to a more practical approach, not explaining the statistical foundation of the analysis method, thus explaining why the analysis is appropriate for this research and how to interpret it. This thesis will use SPSS as the main tool for the analysis. Therefore, the output extracted from the SPSS will form the analysis. Statistical measures will be explained along the way when applied.

Multiple logistic regression is a specialized form of regression that can predict and explain a binary variable (a variable that can only take two possible states), in this case the time for internationalization of the surveyed companies. This is also where multilple logistic regression differentiates from multiple regression, which is not a suitable test model for this thesis. Otherwise, multiple logistic regression reminds rather much about multiple regression. Discriminant analysis could also have been applied, but is excluded, since the multiple logistic regression has the advantage of being less affected than discriminant analysis when certain assumptions, particularly normality of the variables, are not met. Normality of the variables in this case are primarily not met due to the spread of answers from respondents facilitated by the scale in which the respondents had to express their views. Although, in a multiple logistic regression, it is not assumed that the dependent variable should be normally distributed. Accordingly, discriminant analysis is better suited in cases for three or more groups from the dependent measure. Multiple regression analysis is excluded since the dependent variable of this thesis (time to internationalize) is a two-group variable. If multiple linear regression should have been applied the dependent variable should not have been a binary variable instead a continuous. Multiple logistic regression may be described as estimating the relationship between a single binary dependent variable and a set of metric or nonmetric independent variables. Technically, the analysis proceeds with the estimation of the probability of occurrence in each of the groups. The binary measure (time to internationalize) is translated into the odds of occurrence and then a logit value that acts as the dependent measure. This is the primary difference from multiple regression as well as the assumption of normaly distribution is not necessary. The model form in terms of the independent variable is somehow identical to multiple regression. In this thesis, the relationship between time to internationalize and the factors under investigation will be analyzed. Therefore, the objective of the multiple regression analysis is to test which factors have influenced Born Global companies and traditional companies respectively, and to test the framework extracted from the literature review. (Hair Jr. *et al.*, 2009)

Statistical analysis will normally be based on several hypotheses. Thus, the questions to scientifically investigate raised in the literature review will found the basis for the analysis, and work almost as a hypothesis. The hypothesis, in relation to the multiple logistic regression analysis, will be to test whether to reject or accept the null-hypothesis. Therefore, H0 will express that the factor under investigation has *no relation to the dependent variable*. This will be done through interpreting the SPSS output column called “Sig.,” which is an expression of the significant level on the given factor, here at a 95% confidence interval. The significance level will be used to measure the degree of explanation that the factor can give the analysis. To assess a factor’s influence on time to internationalize, the value “Exp(B)” is used. This is the “Beta” value used in multiple regression transformed into a new valued suited for the multiple logistic regression model. Therefore, this value works as a measure of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. (Hair Jr. *et al.*, 2009) In other words, it wishes to estimate the best linear connection between the dependent variable and the independent variable by estimating the Beta-values.

The general picture in the analysis can be highly affected by the fact of having many variables to explain the time to internationalize. Variables can “steal power” from each other and correlations can thereby be understated. The situation is called collinearity and is more precisely *“a situation in which two or more of the independent variables are highly correlated with each other”* (Weiers, 2005, p. 730). When happening, the regression coefficients become both statistically unreliable and difficult to interpret. The collinearity test can be made through a correlation analysis but will exceed the scope of this thesis. A correlation analysis removes all insignificant variables by measuring the strength of the relationship between the variables. However, having many variables can increase the significance level of models or course overfitting. Therefore, the idea of the correlation analysis is to find the most appropriate model for explaining time to internationalize, without any variables steeling power from each other. This thesis faces general issues in significance levels above the accepted level, which indicates that many variables fail in explaining much about the time to internationalize. A reason for that might be that the respondents’ answers are very fragmented and not very unambiguous. Readers of this thesis should therefore be aware that the results will partly rely on trends made clear by the data. The descriptive statistics will be included to draw an overall picture of the respondents’ answers, which in combination should provide scientifically accepted tendencies about the companies’ internationalization.

### 2.2.3. Reliability and Validity

*The following section will evaluate the research design applied for this thesis, primarily by discussing the validity and reliability of the results. Both concepts can be discussed from several terms, which will be outlined continually. First, reliability and validity in relation to the quantitative research will be discussed. A discussion of reliability and validity regarding the qualitative research will follow, while an overall discussion and evaluation of the research design will end this section.*

Overall, reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. Here, the researchers should ask themselves whether the research would arrive at the same conclusion if the exact same research were done again. Validity refers to the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from the research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Bryman & Bell (2015) discusses reliability and validity in quantitative research as consisting of several concepts. Below, a discussion of internal reliability, inter-rater reliability as well as interval validity will be made in relation to the quantitative findings. Furthermore, Yin (2014) discusses the concepts of validity and reliability in relation to case studies in the following terms: *construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability* of the research design. Below, these concepts will be discussed in relation to the qualitative research method.

#### 2.2.3.1. Reliability of survey

##### Internal reliability

To test for the *internal reliability* of the sample, this thesis has used the Cronbach’s Alpha. A more in-depth method is the test-retest method, which will not be used due to the time-consuming aspect of this test. The Cronbach’s Alpha is a measure of internal consistency, which is how related a set of variables are as a group. In a Cronbach’s Alpha test the values may range from 1 (denoting perfect internal reliability) to 0 (denoting no internal reliability), with higher values indicating higher reliability. Bryman and Bell (2015) suggest a minimum of 0,7, but in cases where the sample is rather small, the coefficient might be even smaller. The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient in SPSS (See Appendix 6 – Chronbach’s alpha) shows a value of 0,633, which shows some consistency of the sampling instrument. This value is rather low compared to what is suggested. When having rather low values the results will lack reliability. Therefore, the researchers must be aware that the analysis cannot necessarily form the basis for major decisions. However, the value is still seen as being acceptable, due to a small sample size. Therefore, the results can still be used to look at patterns and trends, which is acceptable for this research, since a rather large amount of the data was measuring the same underlying construct. One reason for rather low value, might be explained by the Inter-Item Correlation Matrix provided by SPSS in relation to the test. In general, it shows rather low correlation scores (below 0,5, where perfect correlation = 1), meaning that there exist rather low correlations between the variables investigated (See Appendix 6 – Inter-Item Correlation Matrix). To increase correlations between variables, a full correlation analysis should have been made by removing variables that are least correlated. In general, only two of eleven variables in the multiple regression analysis proved to be statistically significant with p-values below 0,05. Therefore, the results of the multiple regression analysis do not provide a uanbiguous answer, and therefore a large part of the analysis is not realiable. This means that if this investigation were done again, the researchers would most likely appear at a different result than the one provided in this thesis. The reason lies witin the fact that the sample of this thesis is rather small. Although, together with the analysis of the frequencies in the respondents’ answers, tendencies can be outlined and be subject to further analysis and discussion.

##### Inter-rater reliability

The inter-rater reliability is developed and secured by structuring the survey and asking closed-questions; thus, there are no coding errors and no subjective categorizations of findings. Accordingly, all respondents represented as the population are Danish, and as the questionnaire is composed in Danish, there are neither translation issues nor related issues in the processing of the data sample when coding their answers. However, the Likert-scale might distort the results, as respondents sometimes tend to avoid the extreme categories (not significant or very significant). There is also the risk that many tend to just agree with the presented postulate, and, finally, some respondents might answer what would make them appear as best as possible. In the survey of this thesis, this is expressed by rather fragmented answers.

#### 2.2.3.2. Reliability of interviews

Yin (2014) further claims that reliability of a research design concerns whether another researcher, following the same procedures, can replicate the findings and conclusions in the same cases. Therefore, the goal is to minimize the errors and bias in a study.This research analyses the time for the first internationalization of five case companies. Due to the eventual lack of informants’ knowledge according to first internationalization, there is a risk that the reliability of the statements is adversely affected. This is due to the possible time span between the present interview and the past first international activity of the companies. Therefore, there will naturally be things about the internationalization process that the respondents might not be able to recall. In relation, this thesis opts for improving this by primarily interviewing managers and CEO’s of the companies. Here four out of five respondents have been a part of the internationalization process, which increases the reliability of the results. Accordingly, time lines were validated by the informants, increasing the reliability of the information. In accordance, brief descriptions of the historical develop of all five companies were made, as well as a brief introduction to the companies. Accordingly, the interviews were in Danish, since it was expected that respondents were better able to engage in a conversation in their mother tongue. This ensures same understanding of questions and answers, which might otherwise be difficult due to the difference in academic background of the researchers and the respondents. In relation, transcription was written in Danish as well, to avoid bad translation and misinterpreting. This also makes it easier to probe the answers from the respondents. To further improve reliability, a design figure of the research is made. The design figure describes every step in the research to ensure consistency and a red threat in the research (see section 1.3). According to Yin (2014), reliability of a study can be improved by using a study database. In this thesis, the case study database included the recordings and transcriptions from all interviews.

#### 2.2.3.3. Validity

##### Face validity

Face validity is secured by pilot testing. Five independent students and former academic students, as well as a practitioner holding the position as sales director of the German multinational KNAUF, tested this survey where used as test panel for the questionnaire. The test panel was used to gather feedback about outline of the questionnaire, the applicability of the questions, as well as whether the question fitted to the overall purpose of the research. Feedback was collected and questions were adapted according to that.

##### Construct validity and internal validity

Construct validity is connected to the data collection process. Normally, the construct validity would address the issues around subjectivity in a case analysis. Thus, since this research also collects data from a quantitative analysis, comparing the results of both analyses reduces the issues on subjectivity. Accordingly, connecting the theoretical background from the specific research area into an interview guide strengthened the construct validity. The interview guide then worked as the basis for every interview. Furthermore, another factor contributing to the construct validity is by making key respondents review the time lines developed in relation to the CIT. This also increases the trustworthiness of the results (Butterfield *et al.*, 2005). The general explanation process enables the reader to follow and understand the logical process in the data collection, and is therefore argued to strengthen the construct validity of the research design. In tight connection to the construct validity, is internal validity, which can be connected to some of the same principles. Internal validity concerns the data analysis process and can be connected to explanation building, since it refers to the explanation how and why event X leads to event Y (Yin, 2014). Therefore, internal validity also concerns quantitative research. Furthermore, a transparent coding process secures internal validity, where no variables are manipulated. One of the reasons for conducting the data analysis of the qualitative data collection was to apply a series of quotations from the empirical foundation, and reflect upon these using the theoretical considerations of the papers included. This is argued to improve internal validity of the thesis.

##### External validity

External validity refers to whether the study’s findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study (Yin, 2014). Alone, the case studies do not provide generalizable data; however, this thesis tried to maximize external validity by including five cases that could all explain parts of traditional internationalization and Born Global internationalization respectively. In relation, the intention of utilizing multiple cases was to broaden the empirical foundation to strengthen the final recommendations. If the intention instead had been to replicate data, external validity might have been improved. By combining quantitative and qualitative research this thesis opts to improve external validity further. Statistic findings are, in nature, more generalizable due to larger sample sizes. Despite this, the statistical findings of this thesis proved to not be very statistically significant, meaning that the research design lacks statistical generalizability.

### 2.2.4. Evaluation of the research design

According to Green *et al.* (1989), a mixed method enhances the research in five major ways: *triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion.* The overall study is strengthened by *triangulation*, which is an approach to maximize validity and reliability of the study. By using several methods, both quantitative research, qualitative research and document studies, this thesis creates a broader foundation of the investigation, which is strengthening the overall results. In addition, a multiple paradigm approach is used. These are then guiding the data collection and the analysis in different ways, which is supported by the chosen methods. Thereby, this thesis combines the better of the two approaches and minimizes the limitations of each method applied respectively. In specific, the qualitative study in this thesis provides more depth to the statistical data obtained, which is a matter of *complementarity* that strengthens the overall research design. In relation to *development*, by using different methods, this thesis incrementally build on the results obtained from one method, using subsequent methods. Regarding *expansion*, this thesis obtains greater richness and detail in the study by exploring the specific features chosen of each method. Thereby, quantitative and qualitative methods were applied to tell the whole story of the phenomenon under investigation. By combing methods, the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts, which supports the other concepts, in the sense that combining the methods provides a more extensive picture of reality. (Green, *et al.* 1989)

**3**

# Literature Review

*Internationalization is the interaction between a company and its foreign environment. Internationalization has long been an important aspect in companies’ search for greater sales, more market shares and greater competitive advantages. Traditionally, companies have been internationalized through a gradual development of the company’s international commitment regarding the geographical spread in markets, products and operations. Today, there seems to be a tendency that companies internationalize more rapidly, leapfrogging some of the traditional steps in the internationalization process. The following literature review will present both approaches and highlight some of the differences between the two. There literature therefore serves as the development of attributes that are necessary for both internationalization processes.*

## 3.1. Traditional internationalization

*The first section of the literature review contains a description of what this thesis understands about traditional internationalization.*

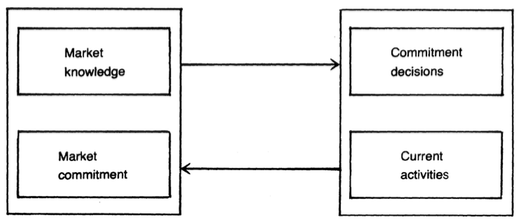
In a historical perspective, research on small and medium sized businesses’ internationalization gained attention in the Nordics back in the early 1970’s. Here, the thoughts about stage models of internationalization was founded and produced. The internationalization process of small and medium sized businesses can traditionally be defined by as *“a gradual acquisition, integration and use of knowledge about foreign markets and a … successively increasing commitment to foreign markets”* (Kalinic & Forza, 2012, p. 695). As Rask *et al.* (2008, p. 320) put it *“internationalization of the firm constitutes the process of adaptation, change, and development in a long range of successive transformations within the firm’s fundamental functions, systems, and structures”*. As the citations indicate, the internationalization process affects the entire company and is a complex undertaking. Traditionally, firms have been focusing on building up a solid base on the domestic market for many years, and then gradually internationalized their operations by building up experience and commitment in small incremental steps (Rialp *et al.*, 2005; Freeman & Cavusgil, 2007; Sultan and Wong, 2011; Kraus *et al.*, 2017; Rodríguez-Serrano & Martín-Armario, 2017). When companies then internationalize they tend to do it to neighboring markets. Thereafter, firms traditionally expand to other countries, but still on the same continent. Only thereafter, and when they have gained enough international knowledge they start globalizing their business (Laanti *et al.*, 2007). In relation, traditional internationalization is characterized by having no clear distinction of time before or between the stages (Morgan-Thomas & Jones, 2009). The Uppsala model is one of the most well-known internationalization models following the traditional process. Therefore, this model will be a fundamental part for this following section. During the past 20 years, focus has changed and is now on internationalization in networks, by which the firm has different relationships not only with customers but also with other actors in the environment (Hollensen, 2011). Therefore, another fundamental part of this literature review is the network approach by Johanson and Mattson (1988) to internationalization. All three aspects form the basis for what is called traditional internationalization in this thesis. The perpectives will be used to collect crucial attributes related to traditional internationalization processes.

### 3.1.1. The Uppsala Model of Internationalization

##### Basic mechanism of internationalization

Johanson and Vahlne (1977) developed a model to explain the internationalization process of businesses. The empirical background is based on Swedish firms’ international operations, which is explained by internationalization of their operations in small steps. This theory contributes to the internationalization theory, where internationalization of companies happens in gradual stages. This theory builds on findings of firms’ internationalization typically starting by exporting through agents then establish a sales subsidiary before they finally might establish production facilities in the foreign market (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). To explain this incremental internationalization process, Johanson and Vahlne (1977) developed an internationalization model containing four basic elements as mechanisms explaining the process and development of international operations. The four basic mechanisms are: market knowledge, commitment decisions, current activities, and market commitment. The model is developed with the assumption that companies strive to increase their long-term profit, and to keep risks in the growth process as low as possible. The model is shown in figure 4 below, and illustrates the state aspects of companies, which is the market knowledge and market commitment, and the change aspects as commitment decisions and current business activities.

Figure 4 – The Uppsala model of Internationalization – State and Change aspects



(Source: Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, p. 26)

The amount of resources committed and the degree of commitment explains the company’s commitment to a particular market. Thereby, resources committed to a market decide the degree of commitment in that market, which includes investments in marketing, organization, and personnel for a specific market (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). In relation to market commitment, the market knowledge is relevant to make decisions about committing resources to foreign activities. The theory points out that knowledge of opportunities or eventual problems initiate the decision-making process. Another important aspect of the market knowledge aspect is the evaluation of alternatives. To be able to make decisions based on alternative evaluations, knowledge about the market environment and performance of various activities are important. Each single market’s demand and supply, competition, channels for distribution, payment conditions and transferability of money are deciding factors (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). The two aspects, market commitment and market knowledge, are, according to the theory, two state aspects at a given point of time. Market commitment affects the company’s perceived opportunities and risk. Higher degree of market knowledge thereby causes more valuable resources and stronger commitment to the market (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). In addition to the state aspects, the model includes two change aspects, which is the current business activities and the decisions to commit resources to foreign operations. The current business activities are the sources of experience, which includes the essential firm experience and market experience. Experience about markets can be brought into the firm by hiring personnel with prior experience, but it takes time for the company to integrate the knowledge in the firm activities. Therefore, the learning process is an important factor in relation to why internationalization processes slowly (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977).

The second change aspect within the internationalization process is the decision-making, in relation to committing resources to foreign operations. The decisions are depended on the alternative decisions and the outcome of those decisions. The decisions are a product of identified opportunities or problems, explained in the theory as *“the awareness of need and possibilities for business actions”* (Johnson & Vahlne, 1977, p. 29). That awareness is dependent on the experience, both firm experience and market experience. Opportunities are perceived by those working on the market, which leads to extension of the operations on the market. Thereby, there is a relation between the company’s identification of opportunities and the environment it is interacting with. The decisions in relation to foreign operations will be related to the ones currently performed on the market. The alternative solutions to problems or opportunities are related to the ones already performed in the market, which is in line with the gradual development of the company (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977).

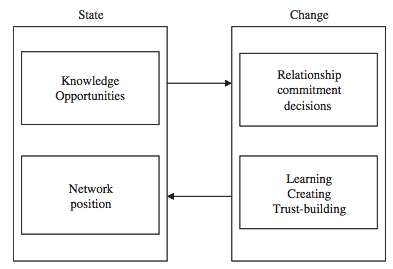
### 3.1.2. The Business Network Internationalization Process Model

Research has shown that the role of networks and relationships has an impact on the market selection and the mode of entry, regarding the businesses internationalization to foreign markets. The researchers Johanson and Vahlne (2009) have developed a model, which describes the evidence of importance of firms’ networks in the internationalization process. Their model is called the Business Network Internationalization Process Model, and it focuses on the business networks as central parameter as they understand the networks as a market structure in which the internationalizing firm is embedded (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). Furthermore, the Business Network Internationalization Process Model argues that a keystone in the internationalization is the business network. The business network of one firm is described as connected relationships, where exchange in one relationship is linked to exchange in another. Since the firms engage in relationship building, it can exchange knowledge within the network and thereby acquire knowledge about partners, their resources, needs, capabilities, strategies, and other relationships (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). By engaging in these relationships, the firm gain possibilities to learn and acquire more knowledge, to successfully internationalize the activities to foreign markets.

The successful internationalization happens when a firm is represented in one or several networks, thereby becomes an insider. According to the researchers Johanson and Vahlne (2009), it is through the relationships the company learns and builds trust and commitment, which are the crucial elements of internationalization of a company in the Uppsala model. Companies who are outsiders and thereby do not have a position within a network of relevance will suffer from what is called liability of outsidership and foreignness. To become an insider and minimize liabilities of foreignness, the firm engages in relationships to learn from foreign actors, develop and build trust, and develop commitment. Researchers argue that the engagement in relationship allows the firms to identify and exploit opportunities, which is essential in business development and internationalization (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009).

It is emphasized by Johanson and Vahlne (2009) that the beginning of the internationalization is greatly influenced by the management team of the firm’s prior relationships, which provides the firm with important knowledge to successfully internationalize. Moreover, the Uppsala model is based on the basic mechanism of experimental learning as one of the key factors throughout the internationalization process. Another key factor in building knowledge along the internationalization process is the establishment of trust between partners in the relationships. Since there is a degree of uncertainty in internationalization of the company, trust is important as it persuades people to share information and promotes the building of joint expectations (Madhok, 1995: cited in Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). Accordingly, the trust within the firm’s relationship is an important determinant of commitment. Johanson & Vahlne (2009) argue that this trust building is a costly and time consuming process, which is why the internationalization process is seen as a gradual process, as commitment is developed late in the process. *“The process of internationalization is a matter of interrelated processes of knowledge development and commitment to an opportunity”* (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009, p. 1419). Thereby, successful internationalization is developed by one firm learning and understanding another firm’s needs, capabilities, markets, and network. By positioning the firm in the network, they identify foreign opportunities and that is how the internationalizing process model describes the gradual business network development (See figure 5).

Figure 5 – The business network internationalization process model



(Source: Johanson & Vahlne, 2009, p. 1424)

The illustration of the business network internationalization model as presented above is the layout presented by Johanson and Vahlne (2009) for understanding firms’ internationalizing. Their model is known as the Business Network Internationalization Process Model and is used to explain the gradual development of business networks and thereby the internationalization of firms. The context of the firms is determined by their network, and to become successful the firm establish trust and commitment in their partnerships. Thereby, the company gains access to knowledge and become able to identify opportunities and exploit those. That is how the firms gradually internationalize their activities to foreign markets, according to Johanson and Vahlne (2009).

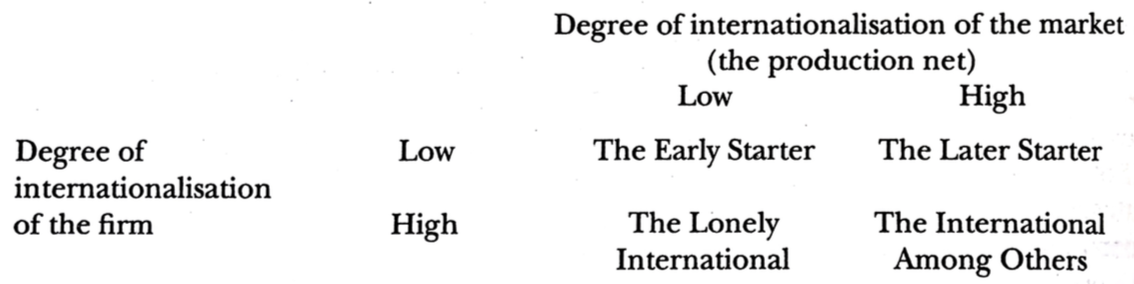
### 3.1.3. The Industrial Network Model

As can be expressed from the above section about the Uppsala model, this model treats internationalization independently of the situation and the competition of the market. But as the following statement puts it:

*“A basic assumption in the network model is that the individual firm is dependent on resources controlled by other firms. The companies get access to these external resources through their network positions. Because the development of positions takes time and depends on resource accumulations, a firm must establish and develop positions in relation to counterparts in foreign networks”* (Hollensen, 2008 p. 62).

Johanson and Mattson’s (1988) industrial network model tries to combine the two aspects. The model has two dimensions which firstly is the *degree of internationalization of the market* and secondly *the degree of internationalization of the firm* (Johanson & Mattson, 1988). The firm’s degree of internationalization refers to those positions that the company has in different nets, how strong these positions are, and how integrated they are. The degree of internationalization of the market refers to how internationalized the industry already is. A low degree of internationalization means that the national nets have few relationships with each other. On contrary, a high degree of internationalization of a production net implies that there are many and strong relationships between the different national sections. Therefore, this model can be used to determine to what degree the company should engage in and position itself in the networks. The two dimensions has created a matrix consisting of four different situations: the early starter, the lonely international, the late starter, and the international among others (Johanson & Mattson, 1988). The following figure shows this:

Figure 6 – The industrial network model



(Source: Johanson & Mattson, 1988, p 204)

The early starter is the situation where the degree of internationalization of the market is low and the degree of internationalization in the firm is low. In this situation, there are not important relationships among competitors, customers, suppliers, and other firms in neither the domestic market or the foreign market. In relation to the Uppsala model, this is where the company moves forward gradually and slowly (Johanson & Mattson, 1988).

The lonely international is the situation where there is a low degree of internationalization of the market but a high degree of internationalization in the firm. Here, the company has relationships with others in foreign countries and has therefore already acquired the knowledge needed to handle environments with different cultures than from the home market. This knowledge is therefore very useful when establishing the firm in a national net (national nets refer to the relationships of firms according to national borders). Suppliers, customers, and competitors are less internationalized than the firm, so initiatives to further internationalize must come from the company itself, which is also possible due to the relationships already established (Johanson & Mattson, 1988).

The late starter is the situation where the degree of internationalization of the market is high but the degree of internationalization of the firm is low. Here, it is more likely that the less internationalized companies are being pulled out of the domestic market by its customers or suppliers to the customers is more likely to happen. However, this step can be rather extensive. When going abroad in this situation, a SME must be highly specialized and adjusted to solutions in specific sections of the production nets (production nets are relationships among firms which are involved in the same product), meaning seeking niche markets. The reason is that it is difficult to find niche markets in a highly-internationalized net, when the company becomes too big. In contradiction to the early starter, the late starter might find it difficult to establish new positions in a tightly structured net, since the best distributors are already linked to the competitors (Johanson & Mattson, 1988).

The international among others is the situation where the degree of internationalization of the market is high and the degree of internationalization of the firm is high. In this situation, the company has the possibility to exploit their existing position in their networks by bridging over to other nets, regarding both extension and penetration. This requires tight control and coordination of the international activities along the value chain. Therefore, companies can benefit from their networks and it might therefore be possible to utilize their production capacity for sales in other markets. The establishment of sales subsidiaries might happen faster by high internationalization, since the level of international knowledge is higher (Johanson & Mattson, 1988).

### 3.1.4. Attributes of traditional internationalization

*The following section will be used as a summary of the above theoretical descriptions of the traditional internationalization theories, and will be used to construct crucial attributes related to traditional internationalization. Here, the most important attributes will be selected. This is to be able to compare the attributes in the traditional internationalization pattern by the attributes of Born Global internationalization, which will be outlined in a later section.*

Key attributes to become successful following the traditional internationalization is, according to the literature, first of all a matter of resources. Resources are a crucial attribute to the company’s internationalization, since the external resources are needed to be able to internationalize. Other firms control those external resources; therefore, another important attribute in successful internationalization is the engagement and positioning in business networks. To be able to acquire resources external of the company, and thereby be successful in foreign markets, it must engage in a foreign network and position itself in a favorable position. By connecting to others through networks, the company becomes able to take part in connected relationships, and thereby establish trust between network partners. The process of developing business network happens gradually, when trust is built gradually between partners. Their trust is therefore crucial to get the partner within the network to share knowledge. That is why firms engage in these networks, they build relations to exchange knowledge. A company can be an insider to a foreign market by engaging in a network with partners already familiar with that particular market. Networks are enabling internationalization without extensive investments and commitment in a market as such, rather commitment to a particular network or partnership. Successful commitment to foreign markets is another key attribute, to successful internationalization. As expressed, networks can increase the access to markets by committing to a network and building strong partnerships with foreign partners. The usual process of commitment to foreign markets starting with export through agents, later establishing sales subsidiary, finally might establish production facilities on the foreign market. Successful commitment is crucial, since these investments are important in relations to their extensive investments in a particular market, therewith a failure or mistake to commit to certain foreign market can be fatal. The amount of resources committed is according to the literature explaining the degree of commitment in that particular market. To make the internationalization a success, and make the right decisions in the process of internationalization knowledge and especially market knowledge is needed. Therefore, gradual acquisition, integration and use of knowledge, are another key attribute to successful internationalization. When acquiring knowledge, companies might hire new personnel or engage in foreign networks to access valuable market knowledge. This process of acquiring, integrating, and using knowledge is made in small steps, as an incremental process, which is crucial to become successful in the process of internationalization. Lastly, to be able to meet objectives and integrate and use the acquired knowledge, adaptation, change and development within the firms’ functions, systems and structures are an important attribute during the process of internationalization. By identifying opportunities or problems, managers can make decisions based on different alternatives, and thereby adapt and develop the company gradually toward the objectives. That is needed to use the resources beneficially, and to commit in the right foreign markets. Thereby, to make the best possible decisions to gradually internationalize and be successful on the selected foreign markets.

## 3.2. Born Global Internationalization

*The following section contains an extended overview of what Born Globals are according to existing literature. First, a description of how the phenomenon arose is presented. Next, definitions and characteristics are outlined, where after success drivers of the Born Global internationalization process are presented.*

In the beginning of the 1990’s, researchers experienced internationalization processes that deviated from the traditional, slow, incremental process, where companies gradually involve in international businesses. A new phenomenon of early and rapid internationalizing companies arose, which was soon after named Born Globals. The concept emerged since many small and medium-sized companies started an internationalization process, which were different from the mainstream or traditional internationalization processes that researchers had investigated so far (Laanti *et al.*, 2007; Rodríguez-Serrano & Martín-Armario, 2017). Researchers identified an increasing number of companies, which did not follow the traditional stages pattern, instead they would aim at international or even global markets right from inception (Madsen & Servais, 1997). This kind of internationalization became possible among other things because of the general development in the worlds markets, but mainly due to the liberalization of trade and advances in technology, especially the internet, which implied that even small-scale operations could benefit even more from specialization, customization, and niche production. Accordingly, money and goods could flow more easily through the world’s countries than before, making the barriers for an international approach smaller, and thereby making these markets more accessible. Therefore, the ability of human resources to exploit these technological changes in the international markets is seen as a vital part of the rise of Born Globals (Madsen & Servais, 1997; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994; Vissak, 2007). Vissak (2007) further stresses that the increasing role of global networks and alliances, specialize, and customized products: shorter product life cycles, larger domestic and international competition, homogenization of buyer preferences, more elaborate capabilities of people, and inherent advantages of small companies, including quicker response time, flexibility, and adaptability (Vissak, 2007).

### 3.2.1. Definition and characteristics of a Born Global

The term Born Global first came into existence in 1993 in a research produced by the McKinsey Consulting Company based on ideas from the Australian Government (Sultan & Wong, 2011). The word Born Global is often used interchangeably with several other terms with little or no distinction. A reason might lie within the newness of the phenomenon and lack of uniformity in the existing literature. In relation to this, Aspelund *et al.* (2007) argue that there is no concurrence in the literature about the definition of International New Ventures. The term Born Global has several synonyms, such as *“International New Venture”* and *“global start-ups”* (Oviatt & McDougal, 1994; Madsen & Servais, 1997; Sultan & Wong, 2011). In this paper, we stick to the term Born Global since it is the most represented term in the existing literature. Some definitions of Born Globals are more specific than others. Researchers agree that a company must be international within a certain number of years. However, not all researchers agree on how many years must pass before they should be international, and thus, not all agree on when a company can be classified as a Born Global company. Some researchers are a bit loose in their definition while others are very specific. Kraus *et al.*, (2017) has a basic statement and argue that a Born Global should *“Start international activities early after founding and have a high speed, scale and scope of internationalization as core characteristics”* (Kraus *et al.*, 2017, p. 2). Knight and Cavusgil (2004) is equally basic in their definition and claim a Born Globals are *"business organizations that, from or near their founding, seek superior international business performance from the application of knowledge-based resources to the sale of outputs in multiple countries"* (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004, p. 124). So are Rodrírguez-Serrano and Martín-Velicia (2015), who claim that the company should internationalize early on and have a global vision of their markets (Gabrielsson & Kirpalani, 2004; Rodrírguez-Serrano & Martín-Velicia, 2015). Laanti *et al.* (2007) agree that the Born Global should start their globalization immediately after inception, but add that the company must not have any prior domestic operations or simultaneously with domestic business operations. They further follow Oviatt and McDougall (1994), claiming that the company *“from inception, seek to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of the resources and sales of outputs to multiple countries”* (Oivat & McDougall, 1994 p. 49, Laanti *et al.*, 2007, p. 1104). This last definition is what some authors define as an International New Venture, which is an expression of the similarities between the terms (Madsen & Servais, 1997; Taylor & Jack, 2011). Nonetheless, they put greater attention to the advantages gained by being international from inception. Kraus *et al.* (2017) are rather reluctant to say that Born Globals must only have an international orientation with a global view on their markets from the beginning. They further argue that Born Globals are leapfrogging, meaning that they jump straight from domestic to the global phase where psychic distance plays a minor role in the internationalization process (Kraus *et al.*, 2017). Sekliuckiene (2015) indicates that Born Globals are often small high-tech oriented companies that adopt a global market vision from the beginning of their activities and embark on rapid internationalization, skipping some stages of the traditional internationalization process (Sekliuckiene, 2015). Romanello and Chiarvesio (2016) claim that a Born Global company is defined as *“small, entrepreneurial firms that derive a substantial proportion of their revenues from selling their products or services in international markets from or soon after their establishment”* (Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016, p. 5). They thereby agree that the company must be international soon after establishment, but further indicate that a substantial proportion of the companies’ revenues must come from international markets.

While the above definitions are rather simple, other researchers are more specific. Freeman and Cavusgil (2007) further argue that the company must begin exports within two years of their establishment. Accordingly, a minimum of 25% of sales most comes from international markets within these two first years (Oviatt & MacDougall, 1994). Focusing on a specific number of years and a specific number of international sales required they extend the definition of a Born Global. Vissak (2007) slightly disagrees, saying that the Born Global should internationalize during the first three years after their establishment, but extends their definition by arguing that the company must enter five or more foreign countries and earn at least 25% of turnover from abroad (Vissak, 2007; Andersson & Wictor, 2004: cited in Sekliuckiene, 2015). In relation, Holtbrügge and Wessely claim that: *“A BGF is a company with at least five foreign operations in two or more cultural clusters and geographical regions. The time span between foundation and the first foreign-market entry should be no longer than three years. At least 25% of total sales should be achieved outside the home market"* (Holtbrügge & Wessely, 2009, p. 235). Kraus *et al.* (2017), suggest that the Born Global must have *“25% of total sales in foreign countries in the first year of trading and set a benchmark of 75% export intensity within two years after inception,”* and thereby slightly agree with Sultan and Wong (2011). Some authors argue that 25% is too little, and claim that Born Global firms should count 50% of their sales outside their domestic market (Luostarinen & Gabrielsson, 2006: cited in Sekliuckiene, 2015).

So, depending on the school of thought and the characteristics of those companies existing researchers have investigated, following criteria of defining Born Globals have been used. There must be a vision to become international, they must seek to derive competitive advantage from the use of resources from and sales of output in multiple countries, the time to become international is varying from immediate to three years from inception, foreign sales must represent a minimum of 25% of total sales, a benchmark of 75% export intensity must be set within the first two years after establishment, the number of countries penetrated varying from one to five within the specific time period, the companies seen as Born Globals are often high-tech companies. The lack of uniformity in the definitions used in existing literature is here seen as a challenge regarding the comparability of the results.

### 3.2.2. Attributes of Born Global companies

*In the following paragraphs, we will outline which factors existing research argue are most important for Born Globals to have success. We are aware that these factors might vary across industries, but to get a most extended overview, we will ignore this fact for now. This section is divided into four aspects, which represent factors related to the entrepreneur or the founder of the company, factors on the company level, factors on industry level and factors on national level. This is an important distinction in this paper, since it will be the main foundation for the investigation of Danish companies.*

#### 3.2.2.1 Attributes of the founder/management team

Attributes of the founder is by existing literature the most crucial driver of success for Born Global companies. According to Danik and Kowalik (2015), a manager must have competencies such as responsiveness, ethical business conduct, and experience. Whereas the first two competencies seem to stand alone in relation to other findings, the latter is among the most represented attributes. In addition, Taylor and Jack (2011) expresses the drive and the vision of the founder as the key drivers in the internationalization process of Born Globals. In consistent with above, Sekliuckiene (2015) expresses the entrepreneurial orientation, including innovativeness, networking, taking risks, international experience, and learning, as core competences for Born Global success. According to Rodríguez-Serrano and Martín-Armario (2017), such an entrepreneurial orientation affects absorptive capacity, resulting in innovation performance. Rodríguez-Serrano and Martín-Velicia (2015), Vissak (2007),and Laanti *et al.* (2007)agree that experience is crucial, but Rodríguez-Serrano and Martín-Velicia (2015) further add that the entrepreneur must also reinvent, innovate, and develop new products to affect the company performance in the long run, and to stay ahead of competitors and new entrants (Rodríguez-Serrano & Martín-Velicia, 2015).While experience can be many things, most researchers agree that knowledge and skills are core attributes. The experience that the founders and management team had prior to establishment of the company is, according to Laanti *et al.* (2007), called the *“stock of experience.”* Understanding the stock of experience of a certain company can be useful to predict internationalization patterns in the early stage of a company. The internationalization patterns are predictable, since research found that there exists a causal relation between the stock of experience within a management team and the selection of internationalization strategies. Madsen and Servais (1997)is further elaborating on this by saying that market knowledge, personal networking of the founder, international contacts and experience transmitted from former occupation, relations, and educations are the key components that the company must acquire prior to the establishment of the firm. Furthermore, the companies’ international processes differ due to differences in these exact factors. By having international experience already from the birth of the company, entrepreneurs can avoid domestic path dependence, since the company has already established routines for managing a multicultural workforce, for coordinating resources located in different nations and for targeting customers in several geographic places simultaneously (Madsen & Servais, 1997). This decreases the psychic distance and enables these companies to more easily take commitment decisions concerning international markets (Madsen & Servais, 1997; Laanti *et al.*, 2007).

Karra *et al.* (2008) is especially focusing on what they call entrepreneurial capabilities, which is *“the ability to identify and acquire the necessary resources to act upon opportunities identified in the market, or to create new market opportunities.”* They argue that the most important capabilities are *“international opportunity identification,”* *“institutional bridging,”* and *“preference and capacity for cross-cultural collaboration.”* These so-called capabilities should be the foundation to develop international activities. Accordingly, it is the combination of the capabilities that decreases the company’s liability of newness, and thereby the uncertainties and complexities associated with entering international markets (Karra *et al.*, 2008). Sultan and Wong (2011) specifically puts attention to what they call international entrepreneurships, which is a combination of innovative, proactive and risk seeking behavior that crosses national borders. Sultan and Wong (2011) have a slightly different definition of international entrepreneurship, which they define as *“the discovery, enactment, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities across national borders to create future goods and services.”* While this definition seems different, the basic idea behind it is rather similar to what other researchers have defined as the attributes/capabilities/competencies. In summary, the above indicates that the most salient success factor of Born Global internationalization is not necessarily the product or service itself, but rather the characteristics of the entrepreneur. In addition, Efrat and Shoham (2012) even argue that the entrepreneurial capabilities (experience from previous positions) can be a substitute for the lack of firm-level experience. Thereby, all start-up companies have the possibility to become a Born Global, if the company has the right entrepreneur or if not, is adept at recruiting the right people to carry the development in the right direction and have the necessary experience. Therefore, the genetics of Born Globals have roots back to firms and networks in which the entrepreneur have already gained experience (Karra *et al.*, 2008). A quite noteworthy and important implication of this is that the determinants of success for Born Globals develop well before the actual establishment of the firm.

#### 3.2.2.2. Attributes of the firm/organization

##### Strategic focus

Researchers do also agree that the founder cannot handle the internationalization by himself. Therefore, a lot of firm-specific abilities needs to be in place as well. Danik and Kowalik (2015) argue that a firm-specific factor is the strategic attributes of the firm. This refers to the *“resources and capabilities that enable the firm to develop and sustain competitiveness on international markets at an early stage in its life cycle”* (Danik & Kowalik, 2015, p. 362). In relation, the Born Global company must have a competitive strategy to enable themselves to exploit those resources and capabilities (Baranowska-Prokop & Sikora, 2015). Such a strategy plays a more important role than sector-specific determinants in the success perception of Born Global firms. This means that by having the right competitive strategy, here, the right use of marketing tools means the industry becomes less important. In addition to this, Sekliuckiene (2015) claims that network and relationships among customers, suppliers, business agents, competitors, and universities are crucial firm-specific factors for Born Global companies. Sultan and Wong (2011) argue that company performance in international markets is highly influenced by business strategies in terms of global technological competence, unique products development, quality focus, and leveraging foreign distribution competences (Sultan & Wong, 2011). The Born Global strategy is characterized by a proactive international strategy, which is selected by the decision makers of the company (Vissak, 2007).

According to Taylor and Jack (2011), the management team also influences which choice of entry mode a Born Global company employ depending on their background and experience. The general characteristics is commonly classified in accordance to the speed of the internationalization process itself, the scale of foreign market selection, the importance of psychic distance, and the management teams’ networks. In addition, many Born Global companies select export as an entry mode. Taylor and Jack (2011) found that the reason for this is that exporting increases the company’s ability to access systems and adapt to changes quickly as well as being more cost-effectively. Therefore, it is considered preferable, while exploring foreign markets. Other Born Globals select entry modes differently and choose international joint ventures or acquisitions. Those choices are according to Taylor and Jack (2011) made because of the characteristics of the management teams, firm-specific characteristics and cultural similarities of the markets.

##### Business networks

The specific characteristics of a Born Global company is decided and grounded in the networks and firms where the founders of the company and the managers have gained their experience. Therefore, Born Globals differentiate depending on the attributes of the managers and the founders’ experience and knowledge. A Born Global company is thereby formed by the genes of other companies, depended on the networks and experience of the individuals and the decisions makers within the company (Madsen and Servais, 1997; Gabrielsson & Kirpalani, 2004; Laanti *et al.,* 2007; Sultan and Wong, 2011; Sekliuckiene, 2015). Born Global companies should take advantage of resources of other actors by establishing links with them (Laanti *et al.*, 2007). This implies that the company should engage more in the sector-specific determinants, slightly conflicting with Baranowska-Prokop and Sikora (2015) who are, to some degree, neglecting industry factors. In relation, Gabrielsson and Kirpalani (2004), Kalinic and Forza (2012), and Sultan and Wong (2011) are supporting the notion that networking is an effective way of overcoming the scarcity of resources. For such networks to work, it is then crucial that those partners in the network share common vision and objectives (Gabrielsson & Kirpalani, 2004). According to Sultan and Wong (2011), the Born Global company can develop networks internationally in three different ways. First the company can establish country networks that are new to the firm. Second the company can develop relationships in the networks already known to the firm already established by managers and decision makers. Third, the company can use existing relationships as bridges to other networks in different countries (Madsen & Servais, 1997: cited in Sultan & Wong, 2011).

##### Knowledge creation

The innovated mindset might be rooted in the organizational culture of the company to work as specified (Rodríguez-Serrano & Martín-Armario, 2017). Another part of the culture is knowledge creation (Efrat & Shoham, 2012; Kalinic & Forza, 2012). Knowledge creation can minimize uncertainty and should facilitate Born Globals’ rapid internationalization. Accordingly, they will be better at managing risks with foreign activities, while creating a competitive advantage (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). This goes in line with Gabrielsson and Kirpalani (2004), Kalinic and Forza (2012), and Sultan and Wong (2011), who attach a great emphasis on networking as a method of creating the right knowledge, skills, and knowhow to internationalize faster. To create a culture of knowledge creation, both institutional knowledge, business knowledge, and internationalization knowledge, the company must expose themselves in foreign countries. Whereas situational knowledge is the knowledge about foreign institutions, current rules, and regulations, business knowledge is specific knowledge about clients, their needs and their decision-making process. Internationalization knowledge then refers to the internal resources of the internationalizing firm (Sultan & Wong, 2011). Rodríguez-Serrano and Martín-Armario call this a market-oriented culture, which should reinforce the behavior of individuals with the organization and drive the company to deliver superior value and to adopt a continuous process of knowledge capture, knowledge absorption, and knowledge exploitation. When Born Global companies repeat this process it will foster absorptive dynamic capability, which is a key to success, when embedded in the organizational culture (Rodríguez-Serrano & Martín-Armario, 2017). Absorptive capabilities are explained as being the company’s ability to capture, absorb, and exploit knowledge. The process of capturing, absorbing, and exploiting knowledge is essential for companies and those who manage to improve their absorptive capabilities have enhanced possibilities to create value and develop continuously (Rodrírguez-Serrano & Martín-Velicia, 2015). Research have found that Born Globals that constantly invest in the assimilation of external knowledge and the exploitation of it are more prepared and will more likely be able to capitalize on changes. In the international environment, changes occur rapidly. Companies are constantly challenged by the creation of innovative products that meet emerging markets. The Born Globals’ absorptive capabilities are an essential success criteria in the longer run, since it can even contribute to the innovation performance as enhancing processing of external knowledge as well as transferring the knowledge across the company (Oxtorp, 2014; Rodrírguez-Serrano & Martín-Velicia, 2015). Thus, surviving in the ever-changing global markets is enhanced by the ability to exploit new knowledge. As a Born Globals’ absorptive capability is one of the main criteria to cope with changes in the market, it is consistent with others’ research arguing that Born Globals must stay innovative to consolidate and enhance its global market position (Mahdjour & Fischer, 2014). In addition, research has confirmed that these firms’ ability to achieve and maintain superior performance in the longer perspective, is influenced by their ability to adapt their capabilities to the dynamic environmental changes (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). This causes Born Globals to not just capture external knowledge, but also exploit and transfer knowledge throughout the organization to enhance organizational learning and improve innovative performance.

Sultan and Wong (2011) see these internal resources as the fundamental source of competitive advantage for Born Global companies. Agreeing with the abovementioned, Sultan and Wong (2011) argue that innovation is a crucial part for Born Global companies’ success, especially when creating new knowledge. The right innovative culture in the company would therefore lead to the development of organizational capabilities, consisting of critical competences and embedded routines, which will then lead to greater performance. The better the Born Global is to adapt their capabilities to dynamic environmental changes, the better it will be to internationalize faster (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). This is by Efrat and Shoham, recognized as being one of the main assets of a Born Global company.

##### Market commitment and competitive positioning

Important factors to survive and become profitable and successful in the long-term is explained by the company’s market commitment and positioning in the global markets. The Born Globals’ market commitment is, according to Efrat and Shoham (2012), defining the company’s future success within the markets of foreign activities. In addition, future growth rather than the current size of the market is considered as indication for the market potential of the firm in the long run. The maintenance of the competitive positioning in niche markets with high future growth potential, is crucial in the long-term. Mahdjour and Fischer (2014) as well as Taylor and Jack (2011) argue that important factors are to protect intangible assets and thereafter penetrate market niches (Mahdjour & Fischer, 2014). Innovation should help the company to create these niche markets and by that minimizing direct competition and improving the success rate for the Born Global company (Taylor & Jack, 2011). The reason why niche markets are crucial is also that these markets are relatively small and therefore less competitive. Thereby the Born Global company should be able to exploit the full benefits of a niche’s growth potential (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). Efrat and Shoham (2012) further found that the Born Globals of high-growth markets are more likely to survive than those operating in low-growth markets. Accordingly, entering high-growth markets have stronger short-term strategic performance, as well as the markets’ growth rate help the post-entry performance (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). The market commitment is described by the amount of resources committed in relation to the size of investment in a certain market, including investments such as marketing, organization and personnel. Furthermore, a company’s difficulty in finding alternative use for its resources and transferring them to alternative use decide the commitment (Madsen & Servais, 1997). Born Globals’ market commitment is commonly low, since they often establish their distribution channels through hybrid structures, facilitating their export, and marketing activities to the foreign markets. These hybrid structures are often formed by close relationships and network partners (Gabrielsson & Kirpalani, 2004). The rapid and accelerated internationalization in the early internationalization stage often makes the Born Globals select entry mode through local distributors (Taylor & Jack, 2011). Therefore, these Born Globals often rely on supplementary competences from other partner firms in their network and close relationships in their distribution channels (Madsen & Servais, 1997). Market commitment is influencing the future success in the market, but the risk for Born Globals is reduced because they commonly rely on the hybrid structures, and therefore have less investments in foreign markets.

To gain competitive advantages and positioning the company in longer term, it is clarified by researchers that the performance is defined by market share, sales growth, and pre-tax profitability (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004: cited in Sultan & Wong, 2011). The performance and ability to stay competitive in the global markets is affected by the company’s technological competence, unique product development, quality focus, and leveraging foreign distributor competences (Sultan & Wong, 2011). The market commitment and ability to positioning themselves preferable in a competitive market is therefore influencing Born Global companies’ ability to stay successful in the longer perspective. Usually these companies achieve success by an adaptable approach to the global markets with relatively low market commitment, exploiting their networks through hybrid structures. The continuously competitive positioning is affected by the company’s competences and their exploitation of the network and partners’ knowledge.

There exists both internal and external challenges and development barriers for Born Globals. For small- and medium-sized businesses, internal barriers are often related to the price of the company’s own product or service. This is a barrier due to the traditional high costs of internationalization. The external barriers of internationalization vary from lack of available capital, lack of adequate information as well as lack of adequate public support (Danik & Kowalik, 2015). The internal barrier of a company’s resources restricts the growth possibilities of a Born Global firm. That is why Born Globals often uses existent networks of the founders and managers to seek leverage of the other actors’ resources by establishing activity links with them (Laanti *et al.*, 2007). Researchers found that the Born Globals’ restricted resources influence and challenge the early internationalization stage. However, the greater amount of resources and capabilities they can acquire through their networks, the faster and more accelerated the internationalization process can be developed. Thereby, overcoming the challenges of restricted resources and capabilities advances the opportunity to more demanding product strategies, operation modes and market strategies (Laanti *et al.*, 2007). Commonly these resource barriers require expensive investments, which the Born Globals struggle to meet. In addition, Baum *et al.* (2000: cited in Laanti *et al.*, 2007) found that the Born Globals liability of newness can also hinder the globalization of the company. Therefore, these companies often rely on existing distributors to be able to manage the challenges and grow out of the early establishment stage, by relying on external resources within their network. (Laanti *et al.*, 2007) These findings support Madsen and Servais’ (1997) argument that the challenges of limited resources are commonly met by relying on hybrid structures by engaging in distribution channels, controlling sales, and marketing activities through networking and strategic alliances on a worldwide scale. To engage in hybrid structures such as a joint venture, a global network, or alliances is an important managerial challenge of Born Globals to overcome their resource and capability restrictions (Madsen & Servais, 1997). Entrepreneurs of Born Globals find that their entry modes to penetrate foreign markets are limited to exporting, licensing, and special projects. Therefore, these companies commonly decide to engage in hybrid structures, rather than seeking foreign direct investments (Freeman & Cavusgil, 2007). This causes Born Globals’ founders and managers to face the challenges of marketing their products in markets with no physical presence. To overcome such challenges, managers and founders mostly rely on their networks and earlier experiences. Thereby, Born Globals predominantly choose to enter markets with minor cultural differences in accordance to their existing experience and networks (Taylor & Jack, 2011).

##### Technology

Technology can be assessed from both a firm perspective and an environment perspective. At first, firm-specific technological competences will be outlined. Later, environment-specific technology will be displayed.

Kraus *et al.* express that producing leading edge technology products is a key feature of Born Global firms, where quality, innovative technology, and product design are enabling them to internationalize more rapidly. By developing technology-based products, companies should be able to reach a position as innovation leader in the market, which should ensure the competitiveness of the company (Kraus *et al.*, 2017). In relation, Andersson and Berggren (2016) argue that technology can help the company developing niche products, which can enhance their possibilities in penetrating international markets at an earlier stage. Rodríguez-Serrano and Martín-Armario (2017) further elaborate by claiming that the development of technological and knowledge-related resources facilitates the discovery of new opportunities and thereby the ability to internationalize rapidly. Sekliuckiene argues that the speed of internationalization as Born Globals is enabled by technology motivated by competition, mediated by the entrepreneur’s perceptions and moderated by the knowledge intensity of the international networks of the company. Thereby relating other factors to technology as well. Those technological abilities should warrant successful development and effectiveness of innovations, creating a competitive advantage for those companies (Sekliuckiene, 2015). Laanti *et al.*, (2007) further argue that technology, among other things, can reduce uncertainties in the international market place. Accordingly, they claim that Born Globals tend to leverage technological innovativeness that can improve abilities to grow more rapidly. The technological competences should come from the founders or the management team and be present already from inception (Laanti *et al.*, 2007). Holtbrügge and Wessely (2009) conclude that the speed of internationalization of a firm is dependent three aspects, where one is the technology intensity of its products, further backs the fact that technology is a decisive factor for Born Global internationalization. In addition, Efrat and Shoham (2012) claim, by investigating several hypotheses, that Born Globals with stronger technological capabilities have a higher probability of survival than Born Global companies with low technological capabilities. Thereby emphasizing the need of technological competences to be able to stay in the market and be competitiveness in the long run (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). An empirical study in Sultan and Wong (2011) confirms that performances in international markets are influenced by the technological competences, among other things.

#### 3.2.2.3. Attributes of the industry/environment

Alongside attributes of the founder and attributes of the firm, researchers have identified some industry environment factors that influences the strategies of internationalizing firms. Born Globals face different threats and challenges regarding being successful in their foreign activities. Researchers have identified the ever-changing global environment as one of the key determinants in Born Globals success. To become successful, the Born Globals access knowledge and resources through their networks, but Evers *et al.* (2012: cited in Andersson & Berggren, 2016) argue that it is a matter of having the capacity to adapt to the dynamic global environment, which highlights the environments importance. This is also supported by Rodrírguez-Serrano and Martín-Velicia (2015), who suggest that companies investing in assimilation of new external knowledge and its exploitation are much more likely to capitalize on the environmental changes by creating innovative products that meet the needs of emerging markets.

Due to the rapid changing environment of Born Globals’ surroundings, researchers argue that innovations support companies’ ability to respond to the changes. Thereby, these companies enhance the opportunity to respond to the demands of the business environment in a more effective manner, and improve their performance (Rodrírguez-Serrano & Martín-Velicia, 2015). In addition, the organizational culture of Born Globals is developed by different elements, such as learning and the continuous search for information in the business environment. That is to be able to gain the needed insights from the environment and interpret it by innovations, coordination, and collaboration that assist the ability to exploit the opportunities arising from the environment. Thereby, to gain success from the ever-changing environment, the Born Globals often adapt a positive and open-minded attitude toward changes in the surroundings (Rodríguez-Serrano & Martín-Armario, 2017).

In relation to environmental change, researchers have found that specific factors regarding the home market, target market, and industry are context related. However, some factors are highlighted to be the environmental variables that influence the companies’ short-term international performance. According to Efrat and Shoham (2012: cited in Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016), market growth, technological turbulence, and the country risk of the target market are essential variables Born Globals need to be aware of to be successful in the internationalization process. Additionally, the size of the domestic market has an impact on the Born Globals’ decision-making process on whether to early internationalize. This means that if the home market is small, companies tend to internationalize more rapidly than if the home market is large (Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016). Aspelund *et al.* (2007) argue that factors such as regulations, market size, growth rate, degree of competition, degree of internationalization of networks in the market place, and product life cycle differences between markets all influence the development path and market strategy of the Born Global. Accordingly, Aspelund *et al.* (2007) suggest that the environmental factors are as influential and important as the internal and organizational factors in the internationalizing process.

##### Technology on environment level

On an environment level, the technological development has also had an influence for the Born Global companies. Thereby, Kraus *et al.* (2017) express that global networks and alliances are made possible by the development of advanced communication technologies, which among other things, accelerate the transfer of information around the globe. Laanti *et al.* (2007) express that the Born Global companies has come to public attention, mainly because of changes in the external environment over the last few decades. Among other factors, they argue that faster information flows, improved communication and transportation networks, and high technology investments that cannot be covered by sales in domestic markets only are dominant influencers on the emergence of Born Global companies. This is backed up Efrat and Shoham (2012), who indicate that developments in processing and communication technologies, accompanied by a growing trend of niche markets, have created a solid foundation for the appearance of Born Global companies. Efrat and Shoham (2012) further investigate a series of hypothesis and conclude that Born Globals entering highly technologically turbulent markets show stronger short-term strategic performance than those entering stable markets. They argue that Born Global companies operating in dynamic environments where they exploit technological trends enabling them to redefine their products and markets. This can enable them to create niche markets, which is by several other authors an important factor for Born Global companies. Thereby, they claim that technological turbulence helps these firms achieve competitive advantages by decreasing the risk of other companies imitating their products (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). Sultan and Wong (2011) agree with this by arguing that the emergence of Born Globals is made possible by niche markets, advances in electronic process communication technology, and flexibility and adaptability of doing business. In relation, the internet has been a critical factor to find networks and to select partners that can support the company in expanding the business (Sultan & Wong, 2011). Sultan and Wong (2011) further argue that the success of Born Global companies is dependent on the company’s ability to find and exploit resources, knowledge, and, not least, networks and technology. In relation, knowledge, including knowledge about technology, provides advantages that facilitates foreign market entry and operations (Forsgren, 2002). Furthermore, the advancement of network technologies such as information technology, can facilitate the expansion of new markets. Therefore, business networks and resource acquisition have become more easily accessible than before, which is especially utilized by Born Global firms (Sultan & Wong, 2011). Some of the studies are carried out on technology based industries, which might distort the picture of this factor. Nonetheless, these studies show to a high level that technology influences the speed of the companies investigated, which does indicate that technology is a critical attribute.

#### 3.2.2.4. Attributes of the national environment

Alongside attributes of the founder, attributes of the firm, and attributes of the industry environment, Laanti *et al.* (2007) have identified some national dependent factors, which have had fundamental impact on the strategies of internationalizing firms. These external factors include reduced trade barriers, improved communication and transportation networks, social developments including a more homogeneous alignment in needs, tastes, and values from global consumers. In addition, globally standardized products, high technology investments, global sourcing of resources and ideas, globalizing competitors and competition as well as free movement of capital goods, services and people has been drivers for the Born Global companies when internationalizing more rapidly. (Laanti *et al.*, 2007) Small countries with advanced economies also influence the motivation to internationalize rapidly (Vissak 2007; Kraus *et al.*, 2017). Researchers have found that the national context with small countries with advanced economies is a center to develop Born Globals, as these surroundings have the right setup in relation to economy, but not the market. Therefore, businesses more frequently expand rapidly and decide to focus on global activities (Fan and Phan, 2007; Almor, 2013; Schuessler *et al.*, 2014: cited in Kraus *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, a small home market influence the internationalization path of companies. This is especially the case in Chetty and Campbell-Hunt’s research of sixteen New Zealand-based companies. Their research shows that the size of the country highly influences companies in their internationalization process, making them internationalize more rapidly, when home markets are small (Chetty & Campbell-Hunt, 2004). In relation, the main driver for success here, is that the founder of the firm and the management team is aware of this, and are thereby not exploiting resources on a market that will soon after establishment be too small (Chetty & Campbell-Hunt, 2004; Taylor & Jack, 2011; Kraus *et al.*, 2017). Accordingly, Kraus*et al.* (2017) also points to advanced economies as being a success driver, since operating in these countries reduces the communication and transportation costs, reducing overall costs (Kraus *et al.*, 2017). This is in line with what Gabrielsson and Kirpalani (2004), Laanti *et al.,* (2007), Sultan and Wong (2011), and Kalinic and Forza (2012) claim about networking at enterprise level, since it would be easier to engage in a network in advanced economies than countries that are less developed (Kraus, *et al.*, 2017). Thereby, a careful market selection becomes crucial to drive a Born Global to successful internationalization (Taylor & Jack, 2011). Through testing of several hypothesis, Efrat and Shoham (2012) stress that entering high growth markets, highly technologically turbulent markets, and low risk countries, although, not necessarily on the same time, is crucial for Born Global success. Their argument is that Born Globals following this path show stronger short-term strategic performance and have thereby stronger probability of survival (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). Vissak agrees to this by also claiming that stable market conditions are a prerequisite for the success of Born Globals. In their study of four Estonian companies they argue that this criterion has been the main reason for their success in foreign countries far from the home market (Vissak, 2007). Aspelund *et al.* (2007) further argue that regulations and growth rates of a country is essential conditions for Born Globals to be able to perform what optimal in the long run perspective.

After the successful early internationalization, with establishment of activities in foreign countries, the Born Globals face a turning point around year 4-5, as the company enters the post-internationalization stage (Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016). It is important to notice that the post-internationalization stage is affected by the selection of markets in the early stage of the internationalization process (Efrat & Shoham, 2012). The risks of internationalization are, in the pre-phase, reduced by careful selection of the foreign activities (Taylor & Jack, 2011). Hereafter, at this post-internationalization stage, the company slows down the rapid internationalization, and adapts a focus on improving the business performance (Rodríguez-Serrano & Martín-Velicia, 2015). While Born Globals entrepreneurial capabilities are crucial in the inception and initial stage of early internationalization to become successful in the short run, they become less relevant as the venture matures (Karra *et al.*, 2008). Born Global operates in a highly-globalized context, which brings great uncertainty, rapid changes, and fast pace in the surrounding environment. Researchers have found that Born Globals, due to the ever-changing environment, are forced to focus on fast and efficient transactions. Accordingly, these companies must handle their liability of smallness, compared to multinationals, by exploiting their resources efficiently to leverage the outcomes (Kraus *et al.*, 2017). This is supported by findings of Rodrírguez-Serrano and Martín-Velicia (2015), claiming that Born Globals must reinvent themselves by innovations and constantly develop new products, which enhances the possibilities to survive over time and improve the business performance. Thereby, one can argue that the business model plays a significant role in being able to achieve long-term success in the post-internationalization stage. The reason is that the business processes, actions, outcomes and configuration of a Born Global company’s resources have a major impact on the continuously firm performance (Kraus *et al.*, 2017). The entrepreneurial capabilities allow the firm to develop the business model to enable bundles of resources that can provide sustained competitive advantages in the post-internationalization stage (Karra *et al.*, 2008).

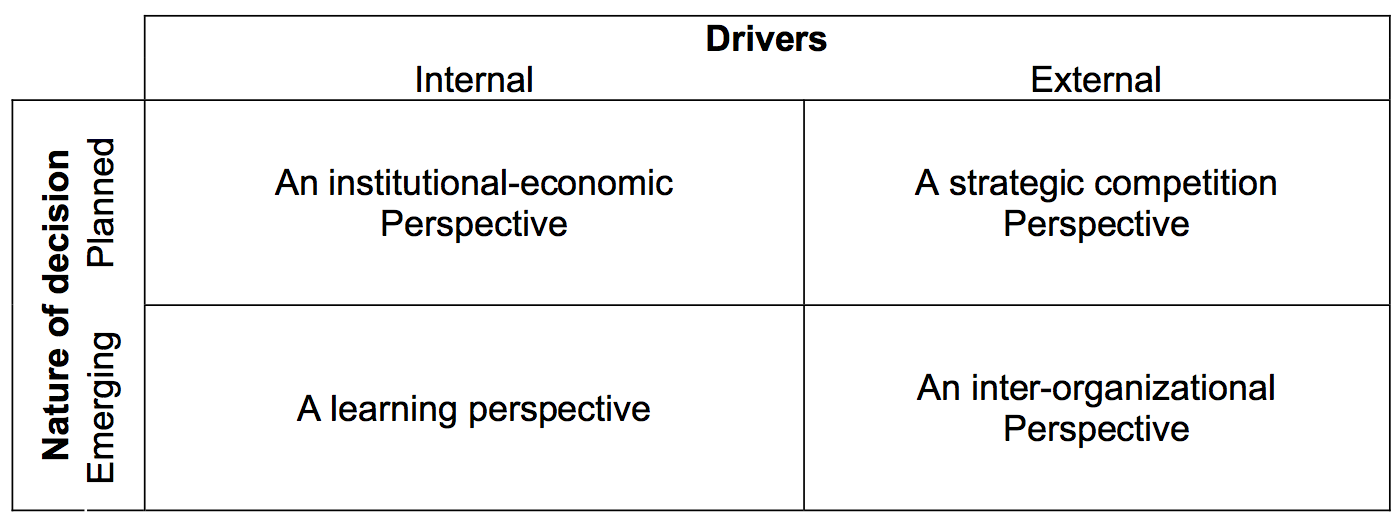
## 3.3. Comparison of traditional internationalization and Born Global internationalization

*The following section contains a comparison of the Born Global perspective and the traditional internationalization perspective, which is made to give an overview of what the bearing differences are in the two perspectives. At first, a matrix of four theoretical perspectives to internationalization will be presented and an explanation of where the two perspectives are placed in relation to each other is made. This can help explain some of the similarities and the differences in the theories. In relation, this section contains several tables, which works as in-depth comparisons of the two perspectives. This is done to show if there are any remarkable differences between the two perspectives.*

### 3.3.1. Four theoretical perspectives to the firm’s internationalization

In general, a firm’s internationalization can be divided into four theoretical perspectives. The four perspectives presented by Rask *et al.* (2008) are the institutional-economic perspective, the learning perspective, the strategic competition perspective, and the inter-organizational perspective. The four perspectives are categorized into two dimensions named driversand nature of decision*.* The so-called drivers refer to whether the internationalization is an internal development process where resources, competences, and skills are combined and exploited, or whether it is externally determined by outside conditions. As the word indicates, the drivers are the factors that initiated the internationalization process of the company, and thereby the reason for entering international markets. Nature of decisions refers to whether the internationalization of the company is planned or emergent. Furthermore, this dimension relates to the decision-making process underlying the internationalization. The following figure 7 shows how the four perspectives are put into a matrix including the two before mentioned dimensions.

Figure 7 – Four Theoretical perspectives to the firm’s internationalization

****

(Source: Rask *et al., 2008*)

In the upper left-hand corner, the institutional-economic perspective is found. Theories within this square are characterized by internal drivers and planned decisions. Here the internationalization process is thoroughly planned in relation to the international resources available. The theories within this perspective are mainly concerned with the transaction cost when internationalizing. Transaction cost analysis stresses that the company should internalize international operations if the costs of controlling the external transactions are higher than integrating it in the system of the company (Rask *et al.*, 2008).

The learning perspective, placed in the lower left-hand corner is categorized with internal drivers and emergent decision-making. This mainly relates to the stages theories where a company launches several foreign activities and gradually acquire experience through these. Therefore, the internationalization happens through a process that is gradually emerging. Here commitment and experimental learning are driving forces, which is contradicting those companies acting based on a rational plan (Rask *et al.*, 2008). Within the learning perspective, the Uppsala model is placed, which, previously expressed, assumes that the internationalization process is dependent on the level of knowledge and experience of the market. The more the companies learn, the higher commitment they have, which makes them learn more (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). These factors influence the market selection and entry mode choice. Accordingly, another affecting factor when selecting markets is the psychic distance. The general notion is that companies choose markets with lower psychic distance first, due to language, culture, etc. and thereafter expand to countries with higher psychic distance (Rask *et al.*, 2008).

The strategic competition perspective is placed in the upper right-hand corner with external drivers and planned decisions. Here industrial economic theories and strategic management theories are represented. The focus is on the competitive advantages and how the company can utilize comparative advantages from other countries on the international markets. Since the internationalization here is planned, the objective is to maximize profit and survive on the market. This is done through thorough analysis of the environment and the industry and a detailed strategy based on that. It is through this the company must create a competitive advantage (Rask *et al.*, 2008).

The inter-organizational perspective is in the lower left-hand corner and is characterized by external drivers and emergent decision-making. Here, relationships and networks between companies are the focus, and thereby also how these relationships influence the internationalization of the firm. Decisions on internationalization are based on relationships and networks to lower the uncertainty and the risks associated with the process. Here, networks and relationships decide which country or countries to enter domestic relationships with, and networks are used as a bridge to networks in foreign countries.

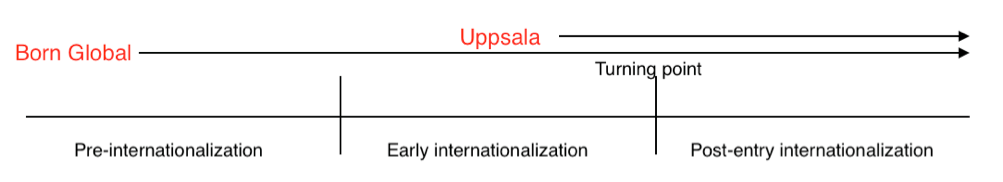
Each perspective has a different approach to internationalization. This is, therefore, also the case for those perspectives included in the literature review of this thesis. As expressed, the original Uppsala internationalization model together with other stages models is placed in the lower left-hand corner as a learning perspective to internationalization. The reason is that this internationalization model prescribes that companies must learn before they can internationalize, and when they do internationalize, choose markets with short psychic distance. On the contrary, the network approach belongs to the lower right-hand corner in the inter-organizational perspective, since relationships and networks between companies are the essential aspects of this theory. The revised Uppsala internationalization model can be seen as a bridge between the original Uppsala internationalization model and the network approach, since the revised Uppsala is incorporating the network as an essential factor for companies when they internationalize. However, the main assumption that companies must internationalize in stages has not changed. It can therefore be argued that the revised Uppsala model is placed somewhere between the learning perspective and the inter-organizational perspective. The Born Global theory puts great attention to networks as well, and is to some degree the opposed theory to the stages theories. However, it can be argued that Born Global theory relies on a combination of experimental learning, ICT, and inter-organizational networks to explain their rapid internationalization process. Therefore, it can be argued that the Born Global perspective belongs to the inter-organizational perspective together with the network approach. If this is the case, it can be further argued that, from this point of view, the differences between some parts of traditional internationalization theory and Born Global theory are not remarkably large. The following paragraphs include a further comparison of the Born Global perspective and the traditional internationalization perspective and outlines the differences made clear above.

### 3.3.2. Comparison of internationalization phases

Another comparison to make is inspired by Romanello and Chiarvesio (2016), who divide the internationalization process of Born Globals into several phases called pre-internationalization, early internationalization, turning point, and post-entry internationalization. The initial internationalization phase is referred to as the pre-founding, start-up period, or pre-export phase (Madsen & Servais, 1997; Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016). That is the idea stage including the creation of the company and commonly preparations for early export. Second, and most characterized for Born Globals, is the early internationalization stage. Following the early internationalization stage, research shows that Born Global companies enter a so-called turning point, where the company transits from entrepreneurial capabilities to firm dependent variables. Thereafter, the company enters the post-entry internationalization phase. The post-entry phase occurs commonly around year four to five, where the Born Global company are characterized by their ability to use and develop factors such as the entrepreneurial team, dynamic capabilities, orientations, research, and development and marketing initiatives (Romanello & Chiarvesio, 2016).

On behalf of the above, this thesis argues that the Born Global internationalization process and the Uppsala internationalization process differ in relation to these phases. Following the figure below, this thesis claims that, while a lot of the focus of Born Globals lies in the pre-internationalization phase where the founder’s earlier experience plays a significant role, the Uppsala internationalization companies focus more on the stages around and just before the turning point, since they focus rather on the learning in the first couple of years of their existence. Therefore, the internationalization attributes differ in relation to this figure. To name an example, the time to internationalize is for a Born Global right from inception whereas the Uppsala model company not necessarily has a plan about it and internationalize when learning and knowledge is on a superior level. Therefore, the Born Global theory and the Born Global companies rely much more on what lies before the actual establishment of the company, which is very different from the focus of traditional internationalization.

Figure 8 – Internationalization phases on Born Global and Uppsala internationalization theories



(Source: Own creation)

### 3.3.3 Market driven versus technology driven internationalization

In the above literature review, it was recognized that there is a tendency that Born Global companies and Uppsala model companies differ in relation to what this thesis call market orientation/customer orientation and RBV orientation/technology orientation. As expressed, Uppsala model companies tend to focus on markets with small psychic distance and thereby those customers who are like those on the home market. Conversely, Born Global companies tend to create niche markets in markets not necessarily close to the home market through networks established before establishment. Accordingly, Born Global companies are more technology and resource driven. This means that where Born Global companies are dependent on several resources, such as international experience, right from the beginning, Uppsala model companies acquire these resources gradually. In addition, Born Global companies acquire lacking resources through their networks, often through hybrid structures. Here, Uppsala model companies tend to acquire these resources as they learn and enhance market knowledge and market commitment. Therefore, the market and the customers are driving Uppsala model companies, whereas technology drives Born Global companies. Both Born Global companies and Uppsala model companies rely heavily on networks. The difference is that Born Global companies see it as crucial in relation to their distribution channels to enable rapid internationalization. On the contrary, Uppsala model companies see it as an important source to knowledge and organizational learning. Thereby, Born Global companies and Uppsala model companies also differ in what drives their decisions.

### 3.3.4 Comparison of speed, scale and scope

In addition, to compare or distinguish between Born Global and traditional internationalization, Kraus *et al.* (2017) use speed, scale, and scope as key dimensions to define Born Globals. The three key dimensions are defined as follows:

* Speed is defined by *“the internationalization process has to happen within the first five years after foundation”*.
* Scale is defined by *“≥25% of a company’s total revenue has to be gained through international sales”.*
* Scope is defined by *“at least four foreign markets have to be conquered – these markets have to dispose of a high psychic, cultural and geographic distance”.*

While these three key dimensions are used to measure and to define Born Globals, they will in this paragraph be used to compare Born Globals with traditional internationalizing companies. Speed is a fundamental dimension in relation to measuring whether a company can be classified as a Born Global. In Kraus *et al.* (2017) terminology, the internationalization process must happen within the first five years of the company’s existence to be Born Global. Comparing this to the traditional internationalization, speed is not an important dimension. That is because traditional internationalization is a gradual process, which does not have to happen within a certain amount of time after foundation, only when the company is ready. Furthermore, Kraus *et al.* (2017) use scale to measure Born Globals, by classifying whether the company has at least 25% of its total revenue gained through international sales. For companies following the traditional internationalization process, there are no lower boundaries for what percentage of sales must be international. Finally, Kraus *et al.* (2017) measure Born Global companies by the scope as the number of foreign markets in which they operate. They argue that to be counted as a Born Global at least four foreign markets must be conquered, and those markets must dispose of a high psychic, cultural and geographic distance. Comparing to the traditional internationalization perspective, these companies do not have to conquer a certain number of markets, as well as the nature of the traditional internationalization seeks risk avoidance by internationalization through markets similar to those in which they are already established. This comparison is included since the differences between the two perspectives are shown very well. Although, this thesis uses other definitions of Born Global companies made clear by a large proportion of the authors used in the liteterature review. This thesis is the opinion that a company must internationalize within two years, but no specific number of markets must be penetrated.

#### 3.3.2.1 Comparison of attributes from the perspective of traditional internationalization

*The purpose of this section is to create crucial attributes for traditional internationalization. The section will then work as a sum-up of the above literature on traditional internationalization as well as Born Global internationalization as well as the comparison of the two perspectives.*

Table 2 – Comparison from the perspective of traditional internationalization

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Internationalization attributes** | **Traditional internationalization** | **Born Global** |
| **Organizational capabilities** |  |  |  |
|  | **Resources** (access external resources) | Important to exploit external resources to be able to internationalize | Used to access global markets from inception, especially technological resources |
|  | **Business network** (engage in foreign networks, establishment of partnerships, building trust and relationships) | Needed to access knowledge and become an insider on foreign markets | Crucial to access global distribution rapidly |
|  | **Market commitment** (degree of commitment, amount of resources committed to home market) | Crucial in internationalization process | Not central, since psychic distance plays no significant role |
|  | **Market knowledge** (Acquisition, integration, use) | Incremental process in small steps | Acquired from establishment through founder's prior experience |
|  | **Adaptability** (change and development of functions, systems and structures) | Gradual process of learning and adapting the firm to the market needs | High level, due to entrepreneurial orientation |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from literature review)

In the traditional internationalization literature, within those theories presented in this research, the key attributes to internationalize are identified in Section 3.1.4 (Attributes of Traditional Internationalization). This paragraph lays out a comparison of these traditional key attributes in the traditional internationalization literature of Uppsala and Network theory, while it is compared to findings collected in the literature review. The key attributes in the traditional internationalization theories are resources, business network, market commitment, market knowledge, and adaptability (see table 2). The resources and the company’s ability to access external resources are an important attribute to enter foreign markets. In comparison to Born Global theory, resources are also important, but especially technological resources are crucial to enable access to global markets from soon after inception. Accordingly, business networks are an important attribute to internationalize. In traditional internationalization, business networks are needed to access knowledge and become an insider of foreign markets. According to the Born Global internationalization, business networks are also crucial, but not necessary to become an insider. Rather, they are needed to enable hybrid distribution structures, which make it possible to rapidly internationalize and accelerate the process. Another crucial attribute in traditional internationalization is the market commitment, as the degree of commitment and amount of resources committed to a specific market affects the company’s success or failure rate. Thereby, a company that is heavily committed to a certain foreign market has invested and bound a large amount of resources, and, therefore, is dependent on those markets the companies are committed to. It affects the internationalization pattern, in that sense that traditional internationalization is gradual, often establishing foreign activities on markets similar to the ones they already have conquered. In relation to Born Global companies, where physic distance play no role, and they do not commit a lot of resources to one foreign markets, since these companies usually rely on their distribution network. The market knowledge is another key attribute in relation to successful internationalization. In traditional internationalization market knowledge is acquired, integrated, and used within the organization, which is a gradual process. That is a learning process, where the market knowledge is built over time. According to the Born Global literature, market knowledge is, to a high degree, already inside the company, since the founder and management team of Born Globals are expected to have international experience. Thus, the international market mechanisms and some specific knowledge are already part of the company before internationalization. Finally, adaptability in relation to change and development of functions, systems and structures are an important attribute of traditional internationalization. On the other hand, the Born Globals are also concerned about being adaptable, with a high level of entrepreneurial orientation and readiness to change and adapt to the changing international environment.

#### 3.3.2.2 Comparison of attributes from the perspective of Born Global internationalization

As provided in the first part of the literature review about traditional internationalization, this second part regarding Born Global internationalization founds a basis for selection of key attributes to successful internationalize as a Born Global. These Born Global attributes are extracted from the literature review. The key attributes have their origin in the Born Global literature, and the most important ones are selected and will be presented in this section with the purpose to make a comparison to traditional internationalization.

To further compare Born Global internationalization theory and traditional internationalization theory, the different dimensions of the companies and attributes of internationalization processes will be presented in tables below. The tables are divided in the same way as the attributes in the literature review of Born Globals, since this is the focus of our thesis. Therefore, the tables are divided into *table 3*: *attributes of founder, table 4: attributes of firm, table 5: attributes of industry/environment, and table 6: attributes of nationality.* The identified internationalization attributes in relation to the founder and team are managers’ competencies, entrepreneurial orientation, and individual networks. The firms’ capabilities are considered as pace of internationalization, time to internationalize, product features, adaptability to changes, relational resources, customer orientation, technological resources, organizational resources, and market orientation. In relation to industry and environmental attributes of internationalization, the important factors are the home market, industry characteristics, degree of internationalization of the industry, and financial sources. Finally, the national environmental attributes consist of economic development, country differences, and cultural aspects. In the coming paragraphs these attributes will be compared according to their importance and relevance to Born Global and traditional internationalization. The following paragraphs will outline what is illustrated in each table.

Table 3 illustrates that in the Born Global theory, the founder or leading managers are the primary driver for establishment of foreign operations, which is influenced by their prior international experience. The traditional internationalization approach does not rely on managers’ prior experience, since the market knowledge is obtained gradually, and thereby it is not essential that the founders or the managers have prior international experience. Furthermore, Born Global theory claim that the highly entrepreneurial approach of the founder and the managers presents an important attribute in the internationalization process. By adapting an entrepreneurial approach there is a bigger focus on innovation and the founder/management is less risk averse. In contrast, the traditional and gradual approach to internationalization considers risk avoidance as an essential factor in the development of foreign operations. The traditional internationalization process is a slow and gradual enhancement of market knowledge and market commitment, whereas the Born Global approach rely on founders’ and managers’ personal networks to establish global partnerships early after inception, and therewith enable the possibilities to accelerate rapid internationalization through personal networks and their partners’ networks.

Table 3 – Internationalization attributes of the founder/management teams

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Internationalization Attributes** | **Born Global** | **Traditional internationalization** |
| **Founder/Management Team** |  |  |  |
|  | **Managers competencies** (prior experience, skills, knowledge, vision, commitment) | Extensive international experience | No international experience expected |
|  | **Entrepreneurial orientation** (innovational orientation, orientation toward risk) | Highly entrepreneurial | Risk avoidance |
|  | **Individual networks** (personal relations) | Accelerator of rapid internationalization | Not in focus |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from literature review)

As presented in table 4 below, firm capabilities are crucial in both approaches to internationalization. There exists a clear distinction between the Born Global and traditional internationalization in relation to the pace of internationalization and time to internationalize. Born Globals are classified by their ability to rapidly internationalize, whereas the traditional internationalization, as, for example, described in the Uppsala model, is a gradual internationalization process. Born Globals internationalize within a few years from inception, while the traditional internationalization is a slow process over a long period of time. Furthermore, the products of Born Globals are often specialized niche products, whereas the traditional internationalization company often produces standardized products suited for the mass market. Furthermore, through gradual internationalizing, companies acquire market knowledge and gradually commit resources to market related activities. On the contrary, the Born Global companies possess a high degree of adaptability and thereby these companies rarely commit resources to a specific market due to hybrid structures. Their ability to adapt to the ever-changing global environment they serve is critical to succeed in the internationalization process. Relations and engaging in networks are crucial in both the Born Global perspective and traditional internationalization perspective, but where Born Globals engage in hybrid structures to penetrate global distribution channels, the traditional internationalizing companies primary function is to build relations and business networks to gain knowledge and enhance their organizational learning. The orientation towards the customers is also approached differently in the two perspectives. While Born Globals typically are highly customer focused, the traditional internationalization gains the customer knowledge and relations gradually, as they are committing to the home market. Another crucial internationalization attribute of Born Globals is their technological resources, since these companies are found in the literature to use technology as a key to access global markets. There exists a great distinction compared to traditional internationalization, since they do not necessarily depend on technological resources in the internationalization processes. Organizational resources are essential for both approaches to a company’s internationalization. Traditional internationalization is highly dependent on the organizational resources, since this theory claim that it is crucial to develop organizational learning, and thereby enhance the market knowledge, which avoid some of the risks related to committing resources in new markets. Born Globals have another approach to gain organizational resources, since they rely on business partners and networks already known to the firm to be able to accelerate their internationalization process. Finally, an interesting aspect of internationalization attributes of the firm is their global market orientation. According to the literature physic distance plays no significant role for Born Globals, since these companies rely on business partners’ networks, which can help the company access any market. Conversely, companies following the traditional approach, internationalize only when extensive market knowledge is gained before they develop commitment to a new market.

Table 4 – Internationalization attributes of the firm/organization

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Internationalization Attributes** | **Born Global** | **Traditional internationalization** |
| **Firm/Organization** |  |  |  |
|  | **Pace of internationalization** | Rapid | Gradual |
|  | **Time to Internationalize** | Within a few years from inception | Slow |
|  | **Product features** (brand recognition, product quality, innovational performance) | Typical specialized, niche products | Often standardized products |
|  | **Adaptability** (absorptive capacity, strategic flexibility, business model design) | Important to profit in changing environment | Gradually acquiring market knowledge |
|  | **Relational resources** (scope of networks, business networks, partnerships, strategic alliances, distribution networks, partner networks) | Crucial as distribution channels to enable rapid internationalization | Important as source of knowledge and organizational learning |
|  | **Customer orientation** (customer focus, customer relationship) | Customer focus is essential | Obtain customer relations gradually |
|  | **Technological resources** (competencies, assets, reliance on technology) | Technology is key to access global markets | Not central to the internationalization process |
|  | **Organizational resources** (financial resources, efficiency, intangible assets, organizational learning, pace of learning) | Acquisition of resources through networks to accelerate pace of internationalization | Crucial to firm success as organizational learning is key to enhance market knowledge and market commitment |
|  | **Global market orientation** (market selection, entry modes, market knowledge, market commitment) | Psychic distance plays no significant role, rapid internationalization through network partners | Builds market knowledge gradually before committing resources to international operations |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from literature review)

The market and industry related attributes (presented in table 5) play a significant role in the decision making of establishing foreign operations. Both Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization theory are influenced by sector specific attributes. The home market plays a significant role in both internationalization patterns. From a Born Global perspective, the home market is not central to the success of the company, although it strengthens the incentives to rapidly internationalize if the home market is small. The traditional internationalization relies on a high degree on the home market. Here, the home market is an essential element of the further development and international growth of traditional internationalization. The reason is that these companies penetrate the home market before even considering expanding its activities to foreign markets and thereby using the networks made up here to expand. Another attribute to include in this comparison is the industry and sector specific determinants. Born Globals often operate in high-tech industries while traditional internationalization is applicable for most industries. To become a successful Born Global the global demand is essential, thereby it is often industries in developed countries in which this internationalization approach is applicable. The industry’s degree of internationalization is not important in the traditional internationalization, since those companies gain market knowledge before committing resources to a new market. Finally, Born Global companies are open toward and access finance support to become able to accelerate their internationalization. The traditional internationalization seeks to minimize risks and will first and foremost finance their own activities.

Table 5 – Internationalization attributes of market and industry

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Internationalization Attributes** | **Born Global** | **Traditional internationalization** |
| **Market/Industry Environment** |  |  |  |
|  | **Home market** (size, demography, growth, development) | Not central to the company, but small home market enhances the incentives to rapid internationalization | Essential to firm success, since home market is developed first and founds the base of foreign operations |
|  | **Industry characteristics** (technological dependence, research and development) | Typical high-tech industries | Applicable for most industries |
|  | **Degree of internationalization** (level of global demand, competition, global business networks) | Global demand is essential to firm success | Industry's degree of internationalization is not important |
|  | **Financial sources** (private investments, strategic investments) | Access financial support to rapid internationalize | Finance its own activities to minimalize risks |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from literature review)

The national environment (presented in table 6) influences both the Born Global internationalization process and traditional internationalization. As Born Global companies are highly dependent on global markets, which they access through technology, they rely typically on developed countries. In relation to traditional internationalization, the development of economies in terms of technology is not as central. Political systems and the stability of these influence Born Globals to a higher degree, since these companies are more willing to enter markets of higher risks. Companies internationalizing traditionally strive to avoid and control risks. Therefore, they evaluate all alternatives and decide to commit their resources based on markets like the markets already known to the company. Furthermore, cultural aspects as an attribute of internationalization are treated differently in the two perspectives. Born Globals treat cultural and behavioral differences as a challenge, which makes their marketing strategies crucial to firm’s success. They typically rely on their foreign business partners, since they have the required market knowledge to reach customers of different cultural background. In the traditional internationalization perspective, cultural knowledge is being absorbed gradually by acquisition of personal or engagement in local networks.

Table 6 – Internationalization attributes of the national environment

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Internationalization Attributes** | **Born Global** | **Traditional internationalization** |
| **National Environment** |  |  |  |
|  | **Economic development** (advanced economy, infrastructure) | Important to access customers and technologies | Not central to the internationalization, since neighbors are gradually penetrated |
|  | **Country differences** (political system, political instability, bureaucracy, currency fluctuations) | Enhances risks of operations | Knowledge about country is acquired gradually before commitment |
|  | **Cultural aspects** (cultural differences, behavioral differences) | Marketing initiatives becomes crucial to obtain success | Gradually adapting by acquiring market knowledge |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from literature review)

The above collection of attributes will found the basis for Chapter 4. Framework, which is presented in the next section.

**4**

# Framework

*The following chapter contains the development of a framework based on the attributes extracted from the literature. The framework should then work as the analytical tool to investigate the configuration of internationalization attributes in the five case companies. In relation, it should assist in develop quantitative scientific questions that should be tested in the quantitative analysis. This will be outlined below.*

This chapter provides the thesis with a framework. The purpose is to extract important attributes of internationalization from the literature review (Chapter 3). The extracted attributes found the fundamental basis of answering the research question. Moreover, the framework has the purpose to found the basis of the following analyzes both quantitatively and qualitatively to investigate the attributes’ influence on the internationalization process of the five case-companies and in general of the companies surveyed. In line with the literature review, attributes are extracted from both traditional internationalization theory and Born Global theory. Thus, the traditional internationalization is more aligned in relation to attributes influencing the internationalization of a company. The Born Global literature is very fragmented, which is why the theory has provided so many different attributes represented above. To make it more manageable for the further analysis of Danish SME’s, this chapter outlines configurations of the most essential attributes related to internationalization within both a Born Global perspective and a traditional perspective. The attributes are selected based on two factors. The first is that these attributes are those mostly represented in the literature. The second is that these attributes are those that have had relatively greatest importance in the literature. One factor is therefore not necessarily a factor that is mentioned most frequently in the literature, but those researchers who do, have completed the most thorough studies of why this factor is important.

Traditionally, when companies have internationalized their activities, it is extracted that a few elementary attributes characterize the internationalization process. Fundamental attributes classifying traditional internationalization are the development of, and engagement in, **business networks**. This attribute is in the traditional internationalization literature a crucial attribute, used to become an insider of foreign markets and get access to external **resources**. Furthermore, the process of internationalization is developed gradually, as the company develops their position within the business net. Companies develop their position within the net by **market commitment** through commitments to their business network. Thereby, companies traditionally internationalize through the acquisition of resources and commitment to their business nets. Moreover, the traditional internationalization process is attributed through enhanced **market knowledge**, which is gradually acquired through acquisition of resources. Internationalization is thereby established by successful commitment of resources in particular nets of foreign markets. The process is a gradual development according to the configuration of the attributes and in accordance with traditional engagement in business nets through gradual acquisition of market knowledge; thereby, acquirement of resources to enhance the market commitment. This gradual looping process is fundamental in the traditional internationalization literature.

The traditional internationalization process of a company is threatened by the Born Global literature. A larger number of researchers have investigated Born Global internationalization recently. Thus, a lot of studies within Born Global internationalization have been developed but the present literature is very fragmented in their findings. According to attributes of Born Global companies, the literature does not agree on the configuration of the companies’ attributes, which found the basis for Born Global internationalization. This is outlined in the literature review and presented in Appendix 1. Empirical studies agree that the pace of internationalization is rapid, thus, market selection is sporadic with no importance of physic distance. In line with the literature review, the extraction of crucial attributes in the internationalization process, this thesis selects the most common characteristics as the fundamental attributes, classifying Born Global internationalization. If these attributes are present in the right format in the company from establishment, this dissertation argues that start-up companies have the ideal configuration of attributes to Born Global internationalization as an alternative to the traditional internationalizing.

The fundamental ability to follow Born Global internationalization in a company, relies, according to the theory, on the characteristics of the founder. The **founders’ experience** **prior to establishment** regarding knowledge, skills, and personal relations are crucial for the company to become Born Global. The importance of international experience and networks prior to foundation of the company is extracted to influence the company’s ability to execute Born Global internationalization. In relation to this, a strong international/global vision is essential, having a **global market orientation** when founding the company. This attribute relies on the founder’s previous experience and vision to exploit this experience to access global distribution networks**.** Moreover, the company’s ability to adapt their routines is a crucial attribute to exploit these global markets. Therefore, the company’s **adaptability** is crucial, according to the literature, to serve customers from foreign markets and navigate between different networks and distribution channels. In line with the company’s adaptability, companies are now, more than before, able to establish sales on several markets at the same time without having to focus on one market at a time and learn from that. This is outlined in the Born Global literature as another key attribute in Born Global internationalization, as the company’s application and exploitation of **technological resources**. This includes both adaptability and the exploitation of technological resources regarding the company’s products and processes, but also the technological development in the environment. This attribute is frequently outlined in the literature as a decisive attribute to Born Global internationalize. The reason is that relying on technology and being in possession of technological resources increases the company’s ability to create technology based resources and products, that enhances differentiation to competitors on global markets. The crucial attributes of Born Global internationalization are thereby outlined to be founder’s prior experience and the establishment of a global market orientation. Furthermore, the adaptability of the company is a crucial attribute to manage the dynamic global markets and to navigate between networks and distribution channels. Moreover, the technological resources are a crucial attribute, which are decisive for the company’s ability to develop competitive advantages and become able to access global markets from or near inception. According to theory, this is therefore the ideal configuration of Born Global internationalization, which will be used later in the discussion of the empirical findings.

In the literature review a clear differentiation of traditional internationalization and Born Global internationalization is the pace of internationalization, and the traditional gradual process opposite to the Born Global sporadic process of internationalization. As mentioned, the development of a framework founds the base for the further analysis. The purpose of the framework is to outline critical attributes within traditional and Born Global internationalization. Including the fundamental attributes from both streams of theory enabling this thesis to investigate different configurations of attributes, in relation to companies’ internationalization. The framework in figure 9 below includes the eight extracted attributes: 1) business networks, 2) resources, 3) market commitment, 4) market knowledge, 5) founder’s prior experience, 6) global market orientation, 7) adaptability, and 8) technological resources.

Figure 9 – Framework



(Source: Own creation)

Further analysis is to be conducted to investigate the configuration of the attributes in relation to the five case companies. Qualitative research (Section 5.2 Analysis of the five case companies) is being applied to investigate and understand the five cases in depth. This will enable a discussion of the case companies’ configuration of internationalization attributes according to the framework above. Thereby, the qualitative analysis will contribute to a unique understanding of internationalization and their configuration of the attributes during the process. Quantitative research (Section 5.3. Analysis of the survey) will be applied to test which attributes are generally decisive in the internationalization process of a Danish SME’s within the Danish textile and clothing industry. Thereby, the objective is to confirm what configuration leads to Born Global internationalization as well as what configuration leads to traditional internationalization. To be able to that in the quantitative analysis, scientific questions are developed in the following paragrpahs.

##### Scientific questions to quantitatively investigate

The following paragraphs contain a development of scientific questions. The questions are extracted from the literature review and are based on the attributes collected. In addition, the questions work as a supplement to hypothesis, and will therefore be tested in the quantitative analysis part. Furhtermore, all questions will help address the problem formulation as well as research question 3.

With reference in the literature, the key attributes presented in the framework will found basis for conducting the quantitative survey. The first attribute is the *business network*. This thesis raises the scientific question to be answered, as to be able to understand business networks impact on internationalization. The question to scientifically investigate is: **To what degree have business networks had impact on the time to internationalize?** Thereby, this thesis will measure the importance of already established business networks, in which the company where engaged prior to internationalization. This will be represented in the survey question, as the Measure 1 (M1): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we had contacts – a network – on the international market already prior to foundation”* (Appendix 12, S\_16). The Measure M1 indicates how important the business networks have been in the establishment of international activities.

According to the key attributes presented in the framework, the *resources* of the company are investigated to be able to understand the resources’ impact on the establishment of foreign activities. This thesis raises this question to scientifically investigate: **How has the company’s ability to exploit their resources cost-efficiently had an impact on the time to internationalize?** In the survey this attribute will be measured by the company’s ability to reach foreign clients through channels, which does not require a lot of investments. It will be presented in the questionnaire by the Measure 2 (M2): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we could reach foreign clients through sales channels, which did not require extensive resources, e.g. agents”* (Appendix 12, S\_12). The Measure M2 indicates how important resources have been in the establishment of foreign sales. Thereby, indicating the role of the company’s resource regarding foreign expansion.

The third attribute of the framework to be investigated is the attribute of *market commitment*. To investigate how the surveyed companies rely on committing their resources in their foreign markets, the question to scientifically investigate is: **How has the company’s ability to commit resources by acquisition of new resources and to commit to business nets, and to accept the riskiness related to foreign activities had an influence on the time to internationalize?** The attribute of market commitment will be investigated in three measures of the survey, to be able to gain enough insights in the market commitments’ influence of the surveyed companies’ time to internationalize. First Measure 3 (M3) will be regarding company’s dependence on neighboring markets, which is represented in the measure: When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we could initiate export/international activities to the neighboring markets”* (Appendix 12, S\_11). The measure M3 measures the importance of markets similarities, during the commitment of resources to international activities. The second measure of market commitment will identify the accessibility of foreign partners on multiple markets presented in the survey through the Measure 4 (M4): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we could identify partners on multiple markets simultaneously, without extensive investments”* (Appendix 12, S\_19). This measure indicates the company’s market commitment, in accordance to the importance for the surveyed companies to develop foreign activities, and expanding to multiple markets simultaneously, which has an influence on the pace of internationalization. Thirdly the approach to foreign markets in accordance to market commitment will be outlined, through investigation of the company’s process of committing resources in new markets. That will be measured in the survey through the Measure 5 (M5): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we could initiate small steps, and enhance experience, before taking bigger steps”* (Appendix 12, S\_14). The measure M5 measures the market commitment of the surveyed firms, through the indicator of the degree of gradual development of foreign activities. As outlined in M3, M4, and M5, these three are the measures for the attribute of market commitment. All three will be handled separately in the analysis.

Next attribute presented in the framework is the company’s *market knowledge*. The attribute of market knowledge, in relation to pace of internationalization of the surveyed companies, will be addressed by scientifically answering the question: **How has the market knowledge had an influence on the time to internationalize?** This will be investigated in two measures in the survey, in regard to know-how’s influence and the knowledge acquired through extensive consolidation at the domestic market. First, the measure of market knowledge will be presented in the survey as Measure 6 (M6): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we could reach foreign customers, without too much risk”* (Appendix 12, S\_13). M6 is measuring weather the company were managing their establishment of foreign activities through calculated risks. Moreover, this measure indicates the importance and achieved market knowledge already established in the firm prior internationalization. The second measure of market knowledge is presented in the survey as the Measure 7 (M7): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we had a product, which were already well established and tested on the Danish market”* (Appendix 12, S\_15). Measure M7 is a measure for the market knowledge of the company, indicated by the company’s establishment and test of their products on the home market, prior to internationalization. The importance of exploitation of the home market indicates the company’s level of market knowledge. These measures, M6 and M7, found the basis of investigating the relation of market knowledge and pace of internationalization.

Moreover, the *founders experience* is extracted from the literature as a key attribute. This thesis opts to scientifically investigate: **How has the founders’ previous experience had any influence on the time to internationalize among the surveyed companies?** The founders prior experience is crucial in initiation of foreign activities, which is presented by Measure (M8): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we prior the foundation had experience with international activities”* (Appendix 12, S\_17). M8 thereby measures the importance of the founder’s experience, and his or her personal relations, which indicates the founder’s importance of the initiation of the company’s international activities.

Another important criterion regarding the theory is the *global market orientation* of the company and the founder. The question to scientifically investigate is: **How has the size and potential of the home market had an influenced the pace to internationalize?** This is presented in the survey by Measure 9 (M9): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we thought, the potential on our home market were limited”* (Appendix 12, S\_20). This measure investigates the attribute of global market orientation, by measuring the founder’s or the company’s preconception of its products regarding the domestic market. That is indicated through M9 as the global potential of the products outside of the domestic market.

Moreover, the attribute of company’s *adaptability* in dynamic international markets is considered as an important attribute regarding the companies’ pace of internationalization. This is scientifically investigated through the question: **Have the possibility of establishment of activities of multiple markets had an impact on the internationalization process?** It is presented in the survey by Measure 10 (M10): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we could establish sales on multiple markets simultaneously”* (Appendix 12, S\_18). This measure indicates the ability and willingness of the company to navigate in dynamic international markets. Thereby, M10 measures the adaptability of the company whereby it had influence on the internationalization process of the surveyed companies.

The final attribute extracted from the literature is the *technological resources* within the company, and its importance regarding the internationalization process. This thesis raises the question to scientifically investigate: **Has the company’s ability to exploit technological competencies influenced the surveyed companies in their establishment of foreign activities?** That is presented in the survey as the Measure 11 (M11): When the company initiated its foreign activities, it was important *“That we were able to exploit technological competencies to expand to new markets”* (Appendix 12, S\_34). Thereby, M11 measure the degree of technological dependence and qualifications the company used in the internationalization process. This is measured through the indicator of the company’s ability to exploit their technological competencies in the establishment of international activities.

To answer the research question, these measures of the scientifically questions are a fundamental instrument. These measures are included in the survey, which will be computed and reported in the quantitative analysis, to enable a cross sectional analysis to understand their influence on time to internationalize and their relations to Born Global and traditional internationalization.

**5**

# Analysis and Discussion

*The following sections include the mixed method analysis of this thesis. First, an introduction of the Danish textile and clothing industry is presented. The objective for this section is to develop a basic understanding of the industry this thesis have chosen. To develop an understanding of the industry a historical perspective will be presented, followed up by a description of the development within the industry, and finally a presentation of future tendencies developed by professionals. Afterwards, quantitative and qualitative analyses and discussions are conducted separately, which contributes to the findings addressing the research questions.*

## 5.1 The Danish Textile and Clothing Industry

##### Historical perspective

Historically the textile and clothing industry have, for numerous of years, had a significant position in the Danish economy. The textile industry is a branch within the industry that manufactures and colors textiles. Due to industrialization, this industry has been undergoing a radical development and change throughout the years. During the 1800s, the industrialization had its impact on the industry as machines became increasingly efficient (Gyldendal, 2017). An example of the ongoing development of the industry is the development and change of the business environment within the Danish city of Herning and its surroundings. Around 40 years ago, in the 1970’s, the textile industry was dominant in the Herning area. Today, less than a quarter of the number employed in the 1970’s is presently employed within the industry, and the number is still shrinking, according to Berlingske Business (2004). The reason for this development is the environmental changes, as customs walls were broken down in Denmark and production jobs were outsourced to countries with cheaper labor and other terms of production. The outsourcing of production facilities was a product of Denmark’s entry to the European Community (later European Union), and again after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The outsourcing of production facilities throughout the last around 40 years has resulted in job loss in the textile industry of around 1,000 jobs a year, only in the Herning area (Berlingske Business, 2004).

##### Development of the industry

The textile and leather industry is continuously developing. It includes all sorts of manufacturing of textiles, blankets, clothes, shoes and other garments. As a result of the outsourcing, the latest available numbers show that the industry only contributes to 1.2% of total revenue, and 1.9% of total employment in the total industry of Denmark. Thereby, the textile and leather industry is one of the smallest industries in Denmark, even though it has a long history in the country, but as introduced the production has largely moved out to other countries (Danmarks Statistik, 2013). As an illustrative example of the ongoing development, turnover in the textile and leather industry fell from DKK 14.4 billion in 2000 to 7.5 billion in 2012. Accordingly, the employment decreased during the same period from 14,500 employees to 5,600 employees (Danmarks Statistik, 2013). This development shows clearly a still struggling industry, one which once was a blooming industry, but has now developed into a less important industry in Denmark. Another aspect of the industry is the amount and value of investments within the textile and leather industry. During the years from 2000 to 2012, investments declined from 906 million DKK to 208 million DKK. In the period the investments fell as much as 80% (Danmarks Statistik, 2013). Thereby, the future for the industry, according to this development, is that the manufactures are facing hard times. Also, the most recent numbers, in accordance to revenue in the textile and leather industry, confirms that the development has stagnated since 2012 (See Figure 10).

Figure 10 – Total turnover of the Danish Textile- and Leather Industry

\*Units: DKK 1,000

(Source: Adapted from Danmarks Statistik, 2017)

As illustrated by figure 10 the total turnover has stagnated recently. Thus, in general, the industry is met by challenges, but as the numbers show there has not been any particular decline in the total turnover, since the financial crises hit Europe around 2008. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark, the collected industry of fashion and textile branches employs around 10,000 people in Denmark today (Udenrigsministeriet, 2017).

In relation to the export within the Danish textile and leather industry, the development is also negative presented by the latest available report of Statistics Denmark (2013). The export counted 8.8 billion DKK in 2000 and declined to 5.5 billion DKK in 2012. These numbers are relatively the largest decline in exports among the total industrial sectors of Denmark during the period. The most important markets in accordance to the textile and leather industry are traditionally the neighbor countries, counting the Nordics, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Poland. An analysis of the industry developed by the branch organization Danish Fashion & Textile supports that Germany is the largest export market, as well as Netherlands and the Nordics (Dansk Mode & Textil, 2013). The development of the exports to the neighboring markets have especially declined in relation to the markets within the European Union in the period from 2001 to 2011, almost 90% of the decline in exports were to markets within the European Union (Danmarks Statistik, 2013). According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark, the traditional local markets as Scandinavia and Germany contribute 75% of the export within the collected fashion and textile branches (Udenrigsministeriet, 2017).

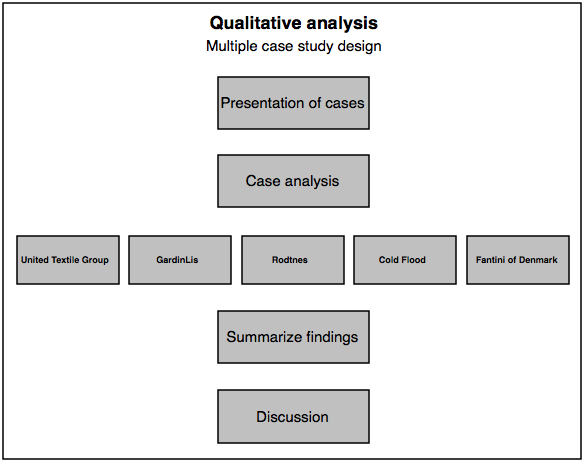
##### Present and future tendencies

Professionals have declared their hands-on experience in an analysis from Danish Fashion & Textile, which is the trade association for Danish textile and clothing companies. After the latest data from Statistics Denmark, the most recent report from Danish Fashion & Textile indicates growth in the export; especially France, Italy, and Spain, which have reached a growth of 20%. According to Michael Hillmose, International Chief, more and more companies test new markets, such as Canada and South Korea, with great success. In his opinion, those successes can enhance the possibilities for other Danish companies within the industry as well. The export to the near markets is, however, expected to still be the key markets for the fashion and textile industry, as Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom still have an enormous unexploited potential (Dansk Mode & Textil, 2015). On the global scale, the world fashion industry is expected to rebound in 2017 after a tough year in 2016. McKinsey states the industry is rapidly changing, and companies must therefore adapt very quickly to be able to fulfill the consumers more discerning and less predictable shopping habits (Bloomberg, 2016).

## 5.2 Analysis of the five case companies

*The following chapter contains the analysis of the five case companies one by one. First, the design of the chapter is illustrated in figure 11. Next, all five case companies are briefly presented, before critical incidents and the internationalization process of each company is analyzed, summarized and discussed.*

Figure 11 – Multiple case study research design

****

(Source: Own creation)

### 5.2.1. Presentation of case companies

*In the following section a short description of the five case companies will be provided. Common for all companies is that they have established international activities outside Denmark. Furthermore, they are categorized within the same industry. Another common criterion is that sales of products include business-to-business.*

#### 5.2.1.1. United Textile Group

The Møller family founded UTG in 1968 (United Textile Group, 2017). The Møller family is, to this day, represented in the company by the Chief Executive Officer and board member Aksel Rene Møller. The firm and the present organizational structure were established in 1996. The most recent figures present a gross profit of 21 million DKK, and a result before tax of 3.2 million DKK in 2016 (Proff, 2017, 1). As the firm has developed through the years it now has its core competencies in the design and production of fashion tops for woman. The company has more than 40 years of experience in fabrics and trims, and has now a wide range of suppliers, as well as their own people in Denmark, England, Turkey, Bangladesh, and China. For 25 years, UTG has had their own designers, and have, today, established design teams in Denmark, London, and Istanbul. In 1993, the first factory was established in Lithuania, followed by the establishment of a factory in Ukraine in 2004. In Turkey, four factories were established in 2007 and three in 2011. The newest factory was established in Bangladesh in 2012. Today, the concept is to deliver unique designs and fast production, generating revenue for their customers. In 2016, the company delivered more than six million tops, and still operates and owns factories in Ukraine, Lithuania, and Turkey. UTG delivers jersey products, which includes design, production, and logistics to selected large European customers, such as H&M, Esprit, and BESTSELLER (United Textile Group, 2017).

#### 5.2.1.2. GardinLis

GardinLis was established in 1984 by the then 27-year-old Lis Bilde, who is still in charge of the business today, employing more than 30 people. Alongside the curtain business, Lis had several other projects running. This included a kiosk and a barbecue bar and later a small local grocery store. In 2008, Lis decided to fully concentrate on the curtain business and moved to a new, larger 1400 m2 building near Randers. Since then, the business has been running from there and, today, involves consulting and sales, furnishing and assembly, sewing, furniture polishing, washing and cleaning, housing of curtains, as well as administration and development of the same. GardinLis is present in most parts of Denmark, and a newly established cooperation with Idemøbler, one of the largest furniture stores in Denmark, has resulted in increased activities around the country. GardinLis services private persons, companies, and institutions with customized solutions within curtains, awnings, blinds, panel curtains, shutters, sun protectors, and related accessories (GardinLis, 2017).

#### 5.2.1.3. Rodtnes

Architect and designer Mette Rodtnes founded Rodtnes, in spring 2012, as a proprietorship. The company designs, manufactures, and distributes leather bags and accessory products made of premium natural leathers. From the inception of the company, the signature and focus have been exquisite quality of the used materials and fashion designs. Rodtnes is a manufacture of leather goods, which has developed their own online retail. Rodtnes.com is the name of the web shop, which is a global online store in English. Their web shop delivers to global consumers, adding a flat rate of 20 euros in shipping costs. The products are further distributed through handpicked retail customers in Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Germany (Rodtnes, 2017).

#### 5.2.1.4. Cold Flood Prevention

Cold Flood Prevention was established in 2014 (Proff, 2017, 2) with the idea of creating a mobile and re-useable storm flood barrier. From the beginning, the focus has been on creating a barrier that is easy to set up, and thus ensure that the set-up can be done without prior training in a quick way and be fully operational within a maximum of two hours. Accordingly, the products should be able to be re-used, as opposed to sandbags, which are primarily used today. Furthermore, the products should be produced in accordance with the customer’s specific needs and desires in relation to shape and length as well as the barriers must be lightweight, and thereby be able to be handled without help from machines. During the development of the flood barriers, Cold Flood Prevention has engaged in cooperation with Cold Sejl, Hirtshals, which has great expertise in designing of plastic materials. Through this close relationship, the products are still being produced in Denmark today. The barriers are being produced in relation to flood protection, road safety, sewage protection, and wastewater plugs. The idea behind the products is to replace the traditional sandbags that are most often used for flooding. (Cold Flood Prevention, 2017)

#### 5.2.1.5. Fantini of Denmark

Søren Fantini founded the company in 2014. His company focuses on the combination of style and technologies. The products are manufactured by pure cotton and innovative Swiss technology, which makes the clothes water-repellent and self-cleaning. Fantini of Denmark produces and distributes retail fashion clothes for men and women. The company has a green profile, focusing on environmental issues. Therefore, their textiles are Bluesign certified. The innovative approach to fashion clothes makes the Fantini products unique, as the use Swiss technology to be hydrophobic and breathable, while keeping the soft and flexibleness in their cotton textile products. Their textile products are retailed online through their own web shop fantiniofdenmark.com. The web shop is in English and the currency is the euro, but provides free shipping worldwide (Fantini, 2017).

### 5.2.2. Multiple case analysis

The following is an analysis of all five cases individually in conjunction with the framework (Figure 9). All aspects of the framework will be considered and involved in the analysis if the attributes have had an impact, both positively and negatively, on the individual case in relation to companies’ internationalization process. The objective is to test the framework and consider the degree of which the attributes, in the constellation made from the theory, are improving the internationalization process of the selected companies. An overall assessment of the framework is made in the discussion in the end. Since the transcription is made in Danish, all citations needed to be translated into English. The goal is to get as close as possible to the correct quotation without distorting or misinterpreting what has been said.

#### 5.2.2.1. United Textile Group

##### Critical incidents in the history of United Textile Group

The case UTG as it is today, has an extensive record, counting back to the year 1968, where the Møller family established the business formerly known as Lani-Ka. During the first years of existence, Mr. and Mrs. Møller were in charge of their own sewing workshop. The firm was established because of the development of the society after Second World War. The peat industry was a key energy resource during the war, but the need dropped dramatically after the war, and sewing and textile production took over.

Therefore, it was a natural for the families around Herning to begin sewing and weaving cloth and textiles. According to CTO and CFO Mogens Ravnholdt, this natural employment within sewing and weaving was a reason that the Møllers established the company Lani-Ka (Appendix 7). The following period during establishment and growth, they faced higher demand in the local and national market. The competitors were eager to capture the market shares, which evolved a high degree of price competition, nationally. Therefore, the Møllers faced some tough years during the 1970’s. The pressure from the development of the market made them plan to establish foreign production, to reduce labor costs in Denmark. Initially they did not execute the idea, but in 1980 they managed to establish export activities when a contract as a supplier to the Danish fashion brand BESTSELLER was made. Following the first export through the Danish agent, Lani-Ka established exports to customers in Hamburg, Germany and later in Berlin, Germany and the Netherlands. Accordingly, exports to customers in England were also achieved. Then, in 1985, the son of the Møllers, Rene Møller, completed his education as an accountant and stepped in full-time in the company. Six years later, in 1991, Rene Møller was promoted to CEO, and the founders retired after 23 years in charge of Lani-Ka. According to Mogens Ravnholdt, the new CEO had a different approach to business, and wanted to scale up and develop the company in an efficient and effective direction (Appendix 7, UTG). The plans tracked back to the ‘70s of acquiring production facilities abroad are being executed in 1993. Lani-Ka acquired the first foreign factory in Lithuania, to reduce wages in the production. In 1999, the René met two business owners in the local area around Ikast, who decided to merge their textile businesses to become competitive in global terms. Thereby, Lani-Ka was merged with the new company, which is thus name UTG. In 2001, internal managerial disagreements occurred, and in 2002 Rene Møller acquired the whole company. Two years after, UTG acquired their second factory, this time in Ukraine. The reasoning was to spread out risks by owning factories in two countries. In 2007, the capital fund JFK provided external resources and acquired the stock majority of UTG. The increased liquidity enhanced the ability to push for international growth. The same year, UTG initiated global strategies to become more global-oriented. As a result, a subsidiary sales office in Istanbul, Turkey, named UTG Istanbul, and a joint venture named UTG Textile were established. Later that year UTG acquired new production facilities in Canicas, Turkey, called UTG Canicas. At that time, Corporate Social Responsibility was also being implemented in the company to enhance value and differentiate on the global markets.

In 2011, UTG establishes a co-brand as a sub-division named WSG A/S. However, the project was shut down after a short period of time to focus operations on being a loyal supplier. The factory UTG Canicas was then expanded to handle double capacity, counting 340 workers. In 2012, UTG established a joint venture sourcing department in Bangladesh to become more flexible and efficient in future production operations. In 2015, UTG implemented a new IT system, upgrading their old system, by implementation of enhanced logistic control and availability of information throughout the organization. The development of UTG in critical incidents are outlined in table 7 below. The following analysis of UTG will follow the logic of the table.

Table 7 – Critical incidents in the history of United Textile Group (1968 – 2017)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Incident** | **Comments** |
| **1968** | Establishment of Lani-Ka | Mr. and Mrs. Møller founds the company as they establish sewing facilities |
|  | Mr. and Mrs. Møller share the operation of the company in every aspect from design, production to business administration |  |
| **1970’s** | Mr. and Mrs. Møller face high demand and price competition |  |
|  | Mr. and Mrs. Møller plans to establish foreign production to save wage costs |  |
| **1980** | Export activities are established as a supplier to BESTSELLER | BESTSELLER is a Danish fashion clothing company, who becomes the first agent of international sales |
|  | First direct export is established to customers located in Hamburg, Germany | Decision of going abroad is executed because the Danish market are consolidating and Lani-Ka face high competition |
|  | Within a year Lani-Ka establish export to customers in Berlin, Germany and customers in Netherlands |  |
|  | Establishment of export to England |  |
| **1985** | Son of Mr. and Mrs. Møller, Rene Møller finish his education as accountant | Rene Møller have been visiting and partly working in Lani-Ka, since he was a child |
|  | Rene Møller steps in as full-time employee, working as salesperson |  |
| **1991** | Rene Møller is promoted to CEO of the company | Generational change, Mr. and Mrs. Møller steps back, and promote their son |
| **1993** | Acquire production facilities in Lithuania | The location for production facilities are chosen because of low wages in the country |
| **1999** | Foundation of UTG | Three local, Ikast, textile manufactures merge their companies, to the present company UTG |
| **2001-2002** | Internal managerial issues arise | The three business owners meet internal disagreements, about future strategy and plans for the company |
| **2002** | Rene Møller acquire full ownership of the company |  |
|  | Rene Møller streamlines the company, focusing on efficiency and foreign business development |  |
| **2004** | Acquire production facilities in Ukraine | Ukraine is chosen because of their low wages, and to minimalize risks of relying 100 percent on one production plant |
| **2007** | Capital investment by JFK Capital who acquire the stock majority | To be able to accelerate growth internationally |
|  | UTG becomes more international oriented | Focus on export as an entry mode to the European and global markets |
|  | Establishment of sales office (UTG Istanbul) in Istanbul, Turkey | The sales office is established to be localized in Turkey, to be interlinked and related to the Turkish textile industry, and closer connected to the availability of raw materials |
|  | Establishment of joint venture (UTG Textile) in collaboration with Ali Dokan, an insider in the Turkish textile industry | UTG Textile function as purchaser and trader of raw materials |
|  | Acquisition of production facilities in Turkey (UTG Canicas) | The decision is based on the logistical benefits of being placed right next to the 'Silk road' and the local supply of raw materials |
|  | CSR are being implemented in the strategy of UTG, to add value and differentiate from global competitors | This includes requirements of quality checks and certification throughout the value chain |
| **2011** | UTG decides to develop their own co-brand in the sub-division company WSG A/S |  |
|  | The co-brand, WSG, is within few months turned down, to focus on loyalty toward the customers of UTG |  |
|  | Expansion of the factory UTG Canicas to 340 workers |  |
| **2012** | Establishment of sourcing department in Bangladesh as a joint venture with Gulan Faruk | Gulan Faruk is a native who studied textile in Denmark. The decision is made to search for new possibilities to increase efficiency in the value chain |
| **2015** | Upgrade of IT system, Navision, integrating PDM and De Lock to enhance technological in house resources and improve processes | Improvement of logistics infrastructure and integration of design styles in the system across all departments |
| **2016** | Sales of 6 million tops yearly |  |
| **2017** | First global contract as supplier to online retailer (Amazon) |  |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from Appendix 7)

##### The internationalization process of United Textile Group – Interpretation of key incidents

**Resources**

The first era of the company Lani-Ka, under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Møller, has from the inception been characterized by resource limitations. The two founders developed the company gradually as many other small textile manufactures around Herning. According to Mogens Ravnholdt, *“all the buildings, carports and basements in Ikast were in use for sewing”* (Appendix 7, p. 195). This indicates that the business was popular in and around Herning, also for Mr. and Mrs. Møller. The foundation of the company was a natural way of making a living for them. In the beginning, the only employees were the husband and wife themselves. The production facilities were in Denmark and they only had Danish customers. Lani-Ka required external resources by natural development of their own design department. In relation to the development of the design division, Mogens expresses, *“I don’t want to say it's unique, but it's one of the parameters that helps us meet those customers and we can still get in and get new customers. That's where we differentiate ourselves”* (Appendix 7, p. 199). In that sense, design had developed into becoming an important resource to be competitive. Mogens further explains, *“Morality and ethics. That's probably our most important attributes, along with the design skills. Because you can say, everyone can sew. There we do not differ. We have some skilled seamstresses, but there are many of them, we are not unique in that sense”* (Appendix 7, p. 199). Accordingly, no strategic plans have been made to evolve the business and distinguish from competitors. Mogens expresses, *“It's been a natural development, the sparkling mentality, where you see what makes our competitors and what needs to be done to separate us from the mainstream”* (Appendix 7, p. 199). As the company developed, it accessed additional financial resources by an increasing revenue. Thus, the salaries of Danish workers kept challenging the company. As Mogens states, *“With the development, especially the wages in Denmark, it becomes more expensive to produce, therefore you seek elsewhere and see if you can get produced cheaper. So, the driving force has been the wage”* (Appendix 7, p.195). Due to increasing wages in Denmark, the founders planned to exploit external resources, and acquire a foreign factory to access cheaper labor. Even though Lani-Ka experienced high growth, the plans to establish foreign production were never fulfilled.

The first radical development of the company happened when Rene Møller, son of the founders, replaced his parents as CEO of the company. Mogens states that *“René got some things started”* (Appendix 7, p.197), which indicates that René was a new, persistent, and committed resource in the company. Thereby, Mogens expresses René’s entrants as being an important in terms of resource added to the company, bringing in new ideas, practices and strategies for the company. The second radical change happens when Lani-Ka merges into a new corporation. About the process Mogens tells: *“In the late ‘90s, it has happened that three business owners who, in particular, have hardly experienced that it is insanely difficult to do business out of Denmark … Then they are like, probably over a good glass of red wine or two, agreed that they must settle together. Because if they are together they can be stronger”* (Appendix 7, p.196). During the merger of the three businesses, a lot of external resources were brought in to the joint corporation. Mogens refers to this as, *“Just immediately after (The merger, red) there were fewer economic resources. There were 120 to 130 employees in these premises, in relation to the merger and several years after. Rene Møller has subsequently brought the number of workers down. He has been in charge of the process of pushing for internationalization and boosting things up, to develop as it is today”* (Appendix 7, p. 196). In relation to resources, the business was streamlined, but the managerial composition of the new merger lasted only for three years, when managerial issues arose. Rene, therefore, became the only owner in 2002. Rene reached out for external resources, which he achieved to find by the financial investment in UTG by JFK Capital, who brought in explicit external resources, in terms of finances and international business knowledge. As Mogens expresses it, *“There you actually get some muscles to activate and expand the foreign activities”* (Appendix 7, p. 197). The importance of accessing new external resources was therefore a crucial element in developing and prepare the business for foreign activities. It took UTG 39 years to access the needed resources, to become an international company with an international vision and strategy. The process of developing the company from establishment in 1968 to the point of time where JFK Capital acquired the stock majority has been restricted and controlled by the limitation in recourses.

**Market knowledge and business networks**

The path to acquisition of international customers has been developed over time. The process has gradually been implemented through the years from being Lani-Ka, with only Danish customers and local production facilities in Denmark, to being the internationalized UTG. UTG, with facilities in Lithuania, Turkey, Ukraine, and Bangladesh, is a product of the gained knowledge, which is gradually acquired and built through learning by doing, and common sense. It all began as a small Danish manufacturing company, but as the market knowledge gradually increased, it has now evolved into an international company, which today, according to Mogens, is globalized. This implies that the company has six employees in Lithuania, 300 in Ukraine, where they have the possibility to double the capacity by bringing in approved sewing workshops. Then they have 32 at their office in Istanbul, and about 340 employees in Canicas, Turkey, on the silk road. Then there are five employees in Bangladesh.

An example on how the company builds market knowledge gradually is their important partnership as a supplier of BESTSELLER. Mogens states, *“I do not know when you (The management, red) saw BESTSELLER's potential internationally. But there is no doubt that UTG's reputation and position have benefited from having BESTSELLER as a customer reference, because the market knows them”* (Appendix 7, p. 202). Since, BESTSELLER is one of the oldest customers, it has been a pleasant customer to be in possession of. Having a customer as BESTSELLER, one of the largest corporations within the clothing and textile industry has improved the position of UTG, both on the home market, but also on foreign markets. Accordingly, the partnership with Disney has improved their reputation and the interest in UTG by foreign companies. Mogens expresses that having Disney as a customer is better than being a Royal court supplier and is a sign of quality that can attract other customers: *“When you have Disney, when you have BESTSELLER, then it’s sometimes better than being a Royal Court supplier in Denmark, because it is a seal of approval”.* (Appendix 7, p. 198)

The second era of the company’s history as UTG relied on the knowledge gradually absorbed over the years. JFK Capital brought a lot of knowledge, which enhanced Rene’s abilities to internationalize the company. The cooperation with JFK Capital made it possible to engage in businesses in Istanbul, which Mogens described as being an important step to reach new potential customers, *“Istanbul is a deliberate choice, about accessing know-how and the right ingredients. They are skilled down there on textile and have several thousand years of experience. … So, we can get everything down there. We use the office today, as a sales office and to make samples. The advantage of being in Istanbul is that there is virtually no material that the customer can ask for as we can’t have within a few hours”* (Appendix 7, p. 197). So, UTG acquires knowledge by establishing a sales office, and thereby enhances the possibilities to reach global customers. Another example of acquisition of market knowledge is their joint venture in Turkey and Bangladesh. About the Turkish joint venture the decision was made to access valuable insider knowledge from the Turkish textile industry.

**Global market orientation and market commitment**

The limitation of resources made the company commit to their home market in the beginning of existence. During the first twelve years of existence UTG had only sales to Danish customers. As the company developed and committed more resources in the Danish market, they initiated export activities in 1980. The first export activities were initiated through sales agents in Denmark, as the Danish customers began their international activities. Lani-Ka began committing resources to the export activities in 1980. Regarding this, Mogens states: *“You can drop the fishing line and the first place you throw it is in Hamburg. And then there is a bite. So, you stop there in the first place and then you subsequently moved on to Holland and England. Historically, you have had customers in almost all of Europe”* (Appendix 7, p.196). This indicates that the first international activity was established by coincidence and by a certain degree of randomness. Mogens further expresses, *“Much of this development has probably been random. Attempts have been made to seek the luck, but there is no strategic process ahead of the development that has been through. It is in Jutland manners. It's on common sense”* (Appendix 7, p. 203). Thereby, visiting the neighboring countries south of Denmark, where the language barrier was low, and the market conditions basically like those on the home market, gradually gave them the first foreign customers. The gradual process of expanding and committing the resources is described by Mogens, *“We took the easy solution, drove south of the border, so we were there”* (Appendix 7, p. 204). The decision to expand to Germany where based on the instant success and similarities in the market, which has reduced the overall risks. About the expansion strategy and plans as a gradual process, Mogens told, *“… also convenience and language. It went just fine. You have had a lot of German customers, the first were just in Hamburg. Berlin came afterwards, then further down south and then the Netherlands”* (Appendix 7, p. 196). Since the capacity is bigger than the demand on the Danish market, it is a natural action to internationalize, also because the industry in the 1970’s and 1980’s evolves into a highly-internationalized industry. According to Mogens, *“there is a greater capacity than there is demand for. And then you're looking abroad, that's also because the brands figure out, that they can buy elsewhere. It is too expensive to purchase in Denmark, so they buy abroad. Thereby we need to find some other suppliers. That's where it starts”* (Appendix 7, p. 195). This indicates that Lani-Ka faced challenges in operating in a small home market. That is, among others, the reason for Lani-Ka to initiate the internationalization of the company, by acquisition of the factory in Lithuania. Thereby, changes in the market are making Lani-Ka to look abroad and commit more resources to foreign markets. This is expressed by Mogens, *“Lithuania also produced to customers abroad”* (Appendix 7, p. 196).

In the second era of the company where Rene is the only owner and CEO, the commitment to foreign markets is taking over the earlier reactive establishment of foreign activities. Thereby, Rene is in charge of acquiring a new factory in Ukraine to be able to meet the demands from the international customers. When JFK Capital invests in UTG the company already had increased the intensity of international operations. However, the investment further boosted the internationalization, by establishment of a joint venture in Istanbul, Turkey, to access the raw materials, as well as a sales office to improve the possibilities to meet the international customers’ requirements. As Mogens explains, the commitment in foreign markets has brought new opportunities, *“In fact, Disney is a customer in Istanbul, and it is more for the European customers who are customers down there, because it is such like, they believe Denmark is too expensive for purchasers. We never get past the main entrance, by potential customers because we come from Denmark”* (Appendix 7, p. 197). Thereby, the Turkish sales office has opened doors, which were sealed before the establishment and commitment in Turkey. Furthermore, the commitment in Turkey made easy access to raw materials. In addition, UTG commits a lot of resources to a factory in Canicas, Turkey, as well, to increase their commitment to the international markets. Thereby they localize the production near by the supply of raw materials. This has strengthened the international profile by improving the agility and adaptability in accordance to customers’ demands.

#### 5.2.2.2. GardinLis

##### Critical incidents in the history of GardinLis

From 1977 until 1984, Lis was employed at Faber, a Danish company selling curtains in Denmark. As she was employed there, she felt that she could not move on, since the headquarters were on Funen and she was not happy about moving away from the Randers area. As Lis ended her job at Faber, she decided to start her own business. She had been selling curtains at Kirs and latest Faber for around eight years, so the choice was obvious and she decided it should be a business selling curtains. The first couple of years she ran the business from a small room in Hornslet where she was accompanied by only a single technician. Lis wanted to do something more exciting and challenging than just being a sales person at another company. Therefore, Lis took advantage of being a seller at several other curtain businesses, where she had learnt certain basics about making products made of fabrics. As a result, GardinLis was established.

As aforementioned, GardinLis started in a small business premise in Hornslet, which was the base of the company for the first couple of years. From here Lis and the technician handled everything from sewing on a couple of sewing machines to sales and transportation. In the beginning of the ‘90s, Lis acquired a kiosk and grill bar in Nielstrup, to where she also moved the business. In 1996, Lis bought a small grocery store in a small city called Voldum, and the kiosk and the grill bar were again shut down. From the shop in Voldum, Lis ran both businesses in the same building. The curtain business on the upper floor and the grocery store on ground floor. From here, Lis ran the business for above 10 years, when she finally decided to move to larger facilities near Randers. Around the same time, GardinLis had received “Børsens Gazellepris,” which is an award for companies doubling their turnover and revenue within a three-year period. The reason was just normal domestic demand. Due to increased demand, a 1400m2 new office in Randers opened in 2009.

Lis then sold the grocery store and focused 100% on GardinLis. At that point of time GardinLis had three curtain busses, three technicians, and two seamstresses. Lis was relatively inexperienced in running medium-sized businesses and did not know much about strategies and other business tools. Therefore, she participated in different network events, such as “Platogruppen,” to develop competencies in running and developing businesses. Then the financial crisis hit GardinLis and the turnover went stagnant. Due to increases public investments, GardinLis received orders from Danish municipalities, who needed curtains for different institutions. This gave GardinLis its first business customer, which currently accounts for 50% of sales today. The B2B sales increased the volume at GardinLis and enabled them to get better purchasing agreements at their suppliers.

Through Lis’ friend, who was hired at a hotel in Norway, GardinLis got access to the Norwegian market, where they agreed to deliver a few orders. The goal was to establish exports as an easy and manageable approach to a foreign market. From this beginning, this thesis will follow the development of GardinLis through a set of critical incidents like some of those presented above, and which can also be accessed and summarized in table 8 below. All incidents are reported by Lis herself and in cooperation with her trusted co-worker, Brian.

Table 8 – Critical incidents in the history of GardinLis (1974-2017)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Incident** | **Comments** |
| **1974** | Lis finishes the lower secondary education |  |
| **1975 - 1977** | Lis works as a receptionist at a hotel in Bornholm |  |
| **1977-1978** | Lis is hired by Kirsch a company selling curtains | Kirsch' customers were curtain shops, which is Lis' first contact with the curtain business |
| **1978-84** | Lis works at Faber | Faber was a bigger competitor to Kirsch, also selling curtains |
| **1984** | Lis establishes GardinLis together with a technician | Lis sews on her own sewing machines in a small shop in Hornslet |
| **1991** | Lis now owns a kiosk in Voldum | At the same time, Lis moved the business to Voldum |
| **1992** | Lis now owns a grill bar in Voldum | All three business are now gathered on the same location |
| **1996** | Lis now owns a small grocery store in Voldum. The kiosk and the grill bar is shut down | The curtain business and the grocery store is now in the same building in Voldum. GardinLis has three curtain busses, three technicians and two seamstresses |
| **2007** | Lis starts sponsoring the football club RandersFC | The reason is to improve the network |
|  | Participation in the Plato group, established by "Væksthus Midtjylland", consisting of 10 companies | The objective is to develop the companies. Lis learns about business plans, SWOT-analysis and other useful tools |
| **2007/2008** | GardinLis mainly sells to private customers (around 95%) |  |
|  | Turnover on 14 million DKK - revenue on 1 million DKK |  |
| **2008** | Lis sells the grocery store and focuses now 100% on the curtain business |  |
|  | GardinLis is awarded “Børsens Gazellepris” | Since 2005, GardinLis has had a doubling in turnover and revenue |
| **2008/2009** | The financial crisis hits GardinLis | The government keeps the business world alive by making public investments. GardinLis benefits and their first B2B contracts are agreed on. Several institutions are serviced --> higher volume and better supply contracts |
| **2009** | GardinLis moves to larger facilities in Randers where they are also located today | Moves to Paderup near Randers in a 1400m2 new office. Higher fixed costs --> stagnation in turnover due to financial crisis. Lis chose Randers because of better availability of credit and lower risks |
| **2011** | Participation in "Genvej til ny viden"(shortcut to new knowledge) - the project failed. | The objective was to get knowledge about international affairs. The project failed due to misunderstanding of the purpose of the money received. GardinLis meets Morten Lund, a researcher in Business model innovation. He brings in new knowledge to the firm. Today he still recommends GardinLis to his network |
|  | Invitation to Shanghai on a trip of development by "Randers Business and Development Council | Lis Meets Brian, which at that time is employed by Randers Business and Development Council |
| **2012** | Lis hires a knowledge pilot | The company can receive grants for salary for 12 months. Brian is hired in the knowledge pilot position |
|  | Participation in "Eskportpakken", which is export preparation by the Danish Export Council | The objective was to learn more about exporting and how to approach it |
|  | First international activity - Norway | Through Lis' network, an agreement with a large Norwegian hotel chain is made |
|  | Participation in exhibitions in Norway | Receives random orders from Oslo. Learning by doing approach is applied |
|  | GardinLis plans a joint venture with a Vietnamese company in Danida project | Due to disagreements in volume and the machines that GardinLis had found, the project was shut down before it started- The risks were too big. Andersen Consult, a consultancy, assisted the process. |
|  | Brian is hired permanently as a project and development coordinator | Brian brings in some international experience from earlier workspaces. Brian has had a huge impact on the development since. |
|  | Sponsorships in various other Danish football clubs, a single handball club and a single basketball club are established | Brøndby is mentioned as one of the most important networks. The network has resulted in several orders from both the club and members of the network. The AGF (Aarhus football club) is also mentioned as being a good customer |
| **2012/2013** | GardinLis acquires Arvid in Møldrup | Arvid was earlier a customer at GardinLis. The acquisition extends the network |
|  | The business in Norway is paused | The reason was challenges around the paperwork, and lack of knowledge and preparation, especially around VAT. |
| **2014** | GardinLis acquires Corneliussen in Vodskov. Corneliussen was a small competitor | GardinLis takes over Corneliussen’s business area, stock and telephone numbers. Customers are still returning from that area today. The acquisition extends the network |
|  | An agreement with Tæppeland is made. | The agreement gave GardinLis a lot of leads and thereby customers in both Zealand and Funen. The turnover increased |
| **2015** | GardinLis makes an agreement with Idemøbler, one of the biggest furniture chains in Denmark | GardinLis establishes a shop solution at Idemøbler. The awareness of GardinLis is now extended to all parts of Denmark on the B2C market. |
|  | A Copenhagen department and Aalborg department is established | GardinLis has now departments spread around most parts of Denmark |
| **2016** | An agreement with Boligtrend in Svenborg is made | A car and telephone numbers are acquired. The business is now extended to Funen |
|  | GardinLis acquires 50% of Botex in Hobro accompanied by Vita, Lis' sister | GardinLis expands the business to cover bigger parts of the country including northern Jutland. The network is therefore extended. The Botex name is changed to Boligtrend, like the one in Svendborg |
| **2016/2017** | Meetings with potential clients in Hanover, Germany | Shop solutions with partners selling beds e.g. is considered due to lower risk |
| **2017** | Nominated for this year's academic prize |  |
|  | A green strategy is implemented | Including circular economy. GardinLis is among the first in the business with a green strategy. The objective is to improve awareness of GardinLis |
|  | Sponsorship in AaB (Aalborg football club) | The reason is to develop the network in the northern Denmark. All networks combined give great access to large Danish companies. Sponsorships in Germany are considered as an easy way to reach the market |
|  | Norway lies in the surface and waits for resumption |  |
|  | Odense is established as a department |  |
|  | Services both private customers (50%) and businesses and institutions (50%) | A larger proportion is business customers and municipalities which means greater volume and better supply contracts |
|  | Turnover of above 30 million DKK - revenue on around 500.000 DKK |  |
|  | GardinLis employees 30 people and has GardinLis busses driving around the whole country - head office is still in Randers | The departments in Odense, Copenhagen and Aalborg has autonomy to run rather independently, but Lis is still part of the strategic considerations and the economy |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from Appendix 12)

##### The internationalization process of GardinLis – Interpretation of key incidents

**Resources**

While the founder of GardinLis, Lis herself, had little business experience from small grocery stores, etc. and no academic background to support her in the decision-making process during the first years of establishment, her coworkers had neither. Lis started the business with only one technician; thus, no international experience as an intangible resource was at place in the company from beginning. Therefore, the company needed to learn everything from the bottom or acquire new resources before they could establish foreign activities. Since these resources were not available, Lis had to acquire them in an incremental process in small steps. An example of this is when Lis hired Brian in the knowledge pilot position in the beginning of 2012. Brian brought in international experience from earlier work places, which kick started the internationalization process. Regarding this, Lis expresses, *“And I also must say that Brian has been a big part of us being able to develop ourselves as we have done because the things Brian has contributed with and can do, I would never have ever written down on a piece of paper”* (Appendix 8, p. 213). Shortly after, GardinLis established their first foreign activities. Norway was selected for convenience and due to network relationships. Additionally, GardinLis could export to Norway without taking any big risks, since no effort were put into strategic considerations of the market analysis and selection process, partner analysis, competitor analysis, etc. Accordingly, no significant economic liabilities were attached to the activities. Nonetheless, Lis had started doing business in small steps to build up a solid foundation. However, it turned out that Norway was too complicated due to lack of knowledge about doing foreign businesses and because Norway is not a part of EU. It created a heavy workload of paperwork and issues around VAT accounts. Regarding this situation, Lis states: *“We have tried with Norway, and it has definitely not been so easy... but before we finished the paperwork, we agreed that it was probably not Norway we should try, because it was too heavy paperwork, and that is because they are not a part of EU, that’s simple, that’s not the easiest thing”* (Appendix 8, p. 207)*.* Brian further communicates: *“I’m sometimes wondering that it could probably have become more. But our focus and preparation were just not good enough, and then there were some internal competences which we did not really control”* (Appendix 8, p. 208). This resulted in only a few orders being delivered to Norway. Thus, GardinLis’ capitalized, among other things, on the experience Brian brought in to the company.

**Business networks**

When first engaging in international activities, the approach has been rather accidental. In this regard, Lis’ network has had an influence on the decision on exporting to Norway. A friend of Lis had contacts to a large hotel chain in Norway, which is already established around Europe. As Lis express it, *“we had a fairly easy access to it (Norway) because I had a colleague who was employed there, who really got us some jobs at a hotel where they needed some new curtains”* (Appendix 8, p. 207). The entry mode was pure export, securing minimum of resources attached to the activities and minimum risk. Accordingly, by participating in different activity groups such as “Platogruppen” arranged by “Væksthus Midtjylland,” consisting of 10 other companies on the same level as GardinLis, Lis developed her company by learning about business plans, SWOT-analysis and other useful tools, several years before first foreign activity. About this, Lis expresses, *“And that was the first time I encountered something called business plans, SWOT-analysis and all sorts of things. And that’s probably what I thought we wanted something more”* (Appendix 8, p. 213)*.* This is a strong indicator saying that the company firstly needed to learn how to run a business properly before developing the company. As part of the network dimension, Lis has made sponsorships in various Danish football clubs. Through these sponsorships, GardinLis has established a strong domestic network and created relationships with many large companies all around the country. Especially the AGF and Brøndby network has benefitted GardinLis, since large orders are secured through the network. Regarding the sponsorships, Lis expresses, *“For example, now the AGF network. It’s a really good network. The club and we have just upholstered 300 chairs there, and we have also delivered a huge order to Brøndby. I believe that the money I put in sponsorships, I earn that back when the club needs something”* (Appendix 8, p. 222). This indicates that GardinLis has a strong focus on building up the home market position as will be expressed later in this section. Accordingly, GardinLis has made sporadic acquisitions of local companies which has extended her network around the country, and assisted in building up the domestic market. Furthermore, agreements with Tæppeland and later Idemøbler has gradually developed the position on the home market by also increasing the customer base. The deal with Idemøbler was enabled through a deal with Tæppeland. About this episode, Lis expresses:

*“That was because I made an agreement with Tæppeland, and then Tæppeland went bankrupt. And I actually think we got many good leads from Tæppeland, which was all around Denmark. So suddenly I could get customers in Zealand and Funen, just by getting references from them. And then I called Idemøbler to ask if they were interested. And when I called they told that there were curtains on their to-do list, which they should talk about if it was something for then. So, we made a deal with them where we a have such a shop out in their stores. And of course, it has made is nationwide in the private market.”* (Appendix 8, p. 219)

This indicates that, through networks in Tæppeland, GardinLis could make an agreement with Idemøbler, and further strengthen the position on the home market.

**Market Commitment**

GardinLis’ primary focus has been to establish a solid foundation on the Danish home market, before engaging in foreign activities. As Brian expressed during the interview, *“I think it is important to control the home market, and have a solid foundation. We also prefer to land an 8-10% of revenue on the bottom line, so we have some economic resources to exploit”* (Appendix 8, p. 220). The quote indicates that GardinLis is a bit conservative and emphasize having a solid foundation for allocating funds to internationalize. The approach shows that the company is rather risk averse. Furthermore, GardinLis acquired access to external resources by acquiring several competitors. The reason was to establish a stronger foundation nationally, by being present in larger parts of the Denmark. The home market does therefore have an influence on GardinLis’ choices regarding international activities and focus is today on building a stronger foundation in Denmark. Lis is convinced that Norway could have been a huge market for GardinLis, since they were already established by a large hotel chain. Accordingly, both Lis and Brian express that the interest from other potential customers was large due to networking and participation in exhibitions. Brian expresses: *“There are some contacts that can be revived. Both at the fairs.”* Lis continues, *“He has actually written to us if we are going to the fair again. And I really feel that when I was there with Mette from customer service. It is ignorance of us, of course, because it was the first time. But looking back, I could feel we could have gotten a lot of agreements”* (Appendix 8, p. 222). Nonetheless, GardinLis did not have the in-house knowledge about doing foreign business, and were forced to shut down operations in Norway. Although they tried hiring lawyers to take care of the paperwork, it turned out to be a costly decision. Accordingly, the plans of making a joint venture with a Vietnamese company later in 2012, as market number two, also failed due to different approaches to the business. After two failed attempts, GardinLis is now focused on the neighboring markets. They are now focusing on the German market, since the risks of moving to Germany are relatively smaller. Accordingly, an opportunity in Hanover in Germany has arisen. Lis expresses about the opportunity, *“Therefore, we have definitely been tempted by exports and have actually just spoken about Germany, and have also met with some from Hanover, who might be interested in us. They actually came to Denmark with a small amount of money to make some Danish companies settle down in Hanover”* (Appendix 8, p. 208). She states that the decision to consider Germany as the next market is partly based on this incident, but also due to one of her employees. About that, Lis explained, *“one of my salesmen and fitters living in Fredericia to said, why don’t you go to Germany, I would like to drive down there. It’s just down the border, and so you’re actually out of the country. And then I thought he is right, maybe it was a little easier”* (Appendix 8, p. 209). In Germany, a shop solution with partners selling beds is in consideration. The reason is that a minimum effort is expected from GardinLis and minimum of resources need to be attached to the activities. Thereby, GardinLis can benefit from the goodwill the German company has already created without taking any substantial risks. About the Germany situation, Lis expresses the following when asked whether the decision of trying Germany was due to the fact that it was right next to Denmark, *“yes, I had such a feeling. I know that’s not what matters, but yet I had a feeling where I thought that we could probably manage, it is a bit closer”* (Appendix 8, p. 209). When asked about whether risk and resources had an influence on the choice of market, Lis expresses, *“Yes, that was probably what I thought in principle. And then afterwards we have been to a meeting with those from Hanover. And I also have some acquaintances selling to Germany today. They sell beds, for example, and hotel rooms, as they make, thinking that I might have a sparring and approach if we would like it. And if we were to do shop solutions in Germany, you might come in where they have their beds standing. That’s what I though could be next”* (Appendix 8, p. 209). Lis confirms that risks and resources have had an influence on the choice of market, probably because of unsuccessful businesses in Norway.

#### 5.2.2.3. Rodtnes

##### Critical incidents in the history of Rodtnes

Rodtnes is a relatively newly established manufacturer of leather bags. In its five years of existence, the company has been through a rapid development. It was founded by coincidence as the founder, architect Mette Rodtnes, found it almost impossible to find a fashionable ladies handbag, in which she could carry her lap-top. Therefore, she designed a bag, and initiated production of the bag in three colors. The first design was produced in 2012, and the original idea was just to sell a few bags to the founders own friends, combined with a few sales on her web shop. Within a few months selling only few bags online, Mette was contacted by retailers in Denmark who wanted to add her bags to their assortment. That incident became crucial in relation to the future development of the brand, thus it initiated the founder to put in more time and effort in developing the business. Already a season later in 2013, the retailers once again reached out for Rodtnes’ designs, but at this point no additional designs were created. Mette therefore decided to create a new collection and moved back to Denmark (lived in Switzerland before) to start up full time. Mette manages to find a more agile and flexible manufacture in 2014 to produce her new designs. She then attends in fairs and begins to export to Japanese, Norwegian, and English customers in 2015. She recognizes that no foreign export sales can be maintained without any effort, therefore she turned her focus to the Norwegian market and later Germany. Here she hired sales agents to take care of customer relations in the two countries. Along this development of the company, she moved into new facilities to the present network office paring up with two experienced entrepreneurs (Appendix 9, Rodtnes). The critical incidents are presented in table 9 and will be further analyzed after the table.

Table 9 – Critical incidents in the history of Rodtnes (2012 – 2017)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Incident** | **Comments** |
| **2012** | Design of first bag | Mette Rødtnes designs an appealing lap top leather bag, inspired by the issues of finding a bag with the functionality and look that could fulfill her needs |
|  | Establishment of contact to manufacture in Turkey | By screening the opportunities, Mette was lucky to find a supplier who was willing to produce her first design |
|  | The web shop Rodtnes.com was introduced with an international profile presented in English | Provides world-wide shipping from inception |
|  | The first design was produced in three colors, which were the only available products on the web shop |  |
|  | First Danish retailers contacts Mette | The retailers are interested in the brand and wants to add it to their assortment |
| **2013** | A season later, the retailers pull for a new collection by Rodtnes |  |
|  | Founder decides to design more collections |  |
|  | Moves to Denmark from Switzerland |  |
|  | The founder chooses to focus all her attention to Rodtnes | Until this decision is made, the bag project has been developed while working full-time, on architect projects |
|  | Establishment of the company Rodtnes | The owners are partners in their private life (Husband are strategically involved, Mette is the creative asset and in charge of operations) |
|  | Hire agency to take care of online marketing | Responsibilities including Facebook Ads and Google Ad Words |
| **2014** | Change manufacture supplier to new more agile factory, also located in Turkey | Because of improved conditions, and increasing the ability to order small quantities and quicker production and shipment |
| **2015** | Visit fashion fairs in Paris and New York, to establish contact to foreign retailers |  |
|  | First Export. The first fair visit abroad provides Rodtnes with new customers in Japan | The Japanese customers ordered big quantities, which made Mette decide to rely more focus on international sales |
|  | Export to England. Three new retail customers in London | Retailers contact Rodtnes, and want to add the products to their assortment |
|  | Export to Norway. New customers are acquired through fair activities in Copenhagen |  |
| **Aug 2016** | Moves from home office to the fashion hub Head Start Fashions shared office facilities by Aarhus Harbor | To enhance networking activities and get feedback |
|  | Sales agent is hired in Norway | Founder, Mette, find a sales agent through social media Instagram |
|  | Rodtnes hire consultant to co-develop a future business strategy | The consultant is hired to bring in external knowledge and develop the future direction for the company |
|  | Sales agent is hired in Germany | As a co-result of the consultant’s work, she gets to an agreement with a German sales agent |
|  | Establishment of contact to manufacture in Hong Kong | Decision is made to avoid threats (political instability) in Turkey, and to be more competitive and agile when having two options for production. |
| **2017** | PR-agent in Denmark is hired, to increase awareness of the brand locally | The agent publishes articles in media magazines and gets social influencers to wear the bags (i.e. Top influencer Christiane Schaumburg-Müller, and musician Shirley) |
|  | Moved to new improved and bigger facilities, together with two other entrepreneurs with extensive experience within entrepreneurship | The entrepreneurs in the first network “Head Start Fashion” was inexperienced, could not provide the needed feedback and had a lack of knowledge in relation to founder Mette's own level of experience |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from Appendix 9)

##### The internationalization process of Rodtnes – Interpretation of key incidents

**Founder’s previous experience**

Two partners, who had their expertise in design and international business, established Rodtnes, where Mette Rødtnes and her former husband partnered up in the development of the company. The story behind it is rather typical of an entrepreneurial attitude toward foundation of a business. Mette expresses the process of founding the company as a coincidence, *“To tell the story of my business. It has been a bumpy road. It was not that I started saying ‘Now I'm doing a bag brand.’ I just made a bag, first, I'm an architect, and have worked as an architect for many years. I also had my own architectural bureau. It was really just for fun I made it”* (Appendix 9, p. 224). The incidence of designing the bag were possible due to her background as a well-established architect, with several years of experience. Furthermore, she said about the foundation, *“It was just a little fun, I sat and drew on it, and my husband who is very entrepreneurial. He comes from an entrepreneurial family and such. He said, ‘Why not make it, just make it’ you know he said, ‘make a web shop and sell it there’. That's what I did as a start”* (Appendix 9, p. 224). Thereby, the pre-inception of the company was initiated by their common set of experience and entrepreneurial orientation. In relation, her ex-husband had international experience from his own businesses within software development. According to Mette there were not a lot of similarities, in relation to the two founders’ earlier experiences and the industry in which Rodtnes operates, *“… But there is no connection between the two industries. As in not at all. The only thing there is an overlap in, is the design process for me personally”* (Appendix 9, p. 239). Besides the design process, their earlier experience could not be transferred directly to the development process of Rodtnes. Thus, the two founders had experience within the creative environment, and international business in general. Mette had knowledge within functionality and design, being an architect, and her ex-husband had a business-oriented approach. Those earlier experiences and the developed knowledge within each of the fields worked as the incentive to create the bags and sell it online. As the process of founding the company developed, Mette was solely in charge of the operations. To be able to enhance the opportunities she attended in a personal network, being part of a business hub called Head Start Fashion. The incubator worked as a personal network, which she could benefit from by sparring with like-minded entrepreneurs. She thereby took advantage of the opportunities to strengthen her personal network.

**Business networks**

From inception, the two founders’ prior experience had an impact on their approach to the operations. At least it made them reach out for foreign customers on an early stage of the company’s history. As Mette expresses it, *“Denmark is a small country, and it is quite difficult to sell bags in Denmark. So, I knew quite soon that I had to look outside Denmark too. I did so first by going to fairs. Partly in Denmark and went to Paris and New York and in some places to meet some foreign customers”* (Appendix, 9 p. 225). This indicates that foreign affairs were in focus from or nearby the inception of the company. In addition, the web shop is also developed with world-wide shipment from the beginning. The reason for this approach is found in the founders’ perception of the Danish market as a small and almost inconsiderable market. Rodtnes started from an early phase to enhance its business network by building partnerships to sales agencies, to enable retail sales in foreign markets. About the development of distribution networks Mette told, *“… That said, it's not an easy task to find the right agents, it's not”* (Appendix 9, p. 234). Additionally, she has hired experts to manage public relations, as well as a marketing agency to take care of online advertisements. The development of partnerships and building trust and relations toward agents has therefore had an influence in developing the company.

**Adaptability and market knowledge**

The entrepreneurial orientation has been a key stone relating to the inception of the company. As expressed Mette were solely in charge of the operations and primary focusing in the development process of the company. Along the process, she has been flexible and open towards market opportunities. The assessable knowledge and business opportunities have been integrated to the company, as it arose. An example can be expressed through the openness towards new sales channels. In the beginning, Rodtnes only distributed their products through their own web shop to consumers, but as Mette tells it, *“Then I was contacted by retailers, who asked, if they could add the bag to their assortment. And that was fine enough, I was just flattering. Then I had to figure out how you are doing retail pricing, since they also must earn on their sales. Then I began to calculate prices for retail and such”* (Appendix 9, p. 225). Thereby, she learned how to negotiate and distribute the products to other retailers, and she found out that it was an appropriate business opportunity to focus on. This new knowledge was rapidly adapted to the strategy, and from that incident she implemented new routines, and begun to attend in fashion fairs. Following the new strategy of acquiring new retail customers, she rapidly learned that a close relationship to the customers is needed to become successful on the foreign markets. As Mette expresses, *“But I found out quickly that you must be close to your customers, you must be in close dialogue with them to sell. They do not just purchase by themselves. They did so in their first purchase, but when you want to sell more, you must be close to them. And I could not be because I was sitting here and they were in Japan”* (Appendix 9, p. 225). Thus, Mette had to change the strategy once again to be able to meet her objectives and develop stronger customer relations to sell more products. She further expresses, *“So, we did change the strategy ... We found out that it makes no sense to invest in foreign markets unless you are represented on foreign markets”* (Appendix 9, p. 233). Following the increased market knowledge and by understanding these mechanisms, Rodtnes adapted their focus to only develop sales on the markets, where an agent could be in charge of the customer relations. Mette backs this adaptation up with the statement, *“Now I’m not believing that attending in fairs will work anymore. I actually do not. I think there are some other ways to get in dialogue with the major purchasers”* (Appendix 9, p. 231). During the development of the company, Mette learned more about the market. She also changed manufacture and made a corporation with an extra manufacture. This decision was made to be more flexible and agile in relation to production of the bags. In that sense, Rodtnes is improving and increasing the abilities to meet requirements from the customers.

**Global market orientation and market commitment**

Already from inception the founders have been focusing on the foreign sales, as already outlined. Their approach towards the global markets is backed by the international profile of the web shop, with worldwide shipping. Thereby, Rodtnes could export directly to their consumers already from inception. Additionally, Mette did rapidly learn about market conditions, and quickly built market knowledge. As she expresses, *“So I quickly realized, to be represented in a foreign market, I need an agent or a seller who can be close to the customers. …to constantly be there in their (customers, red.) consciousness”* (Appendix 9, p. 225). The orientation towards global markets was already existing during the start-up period. Thereby, they used the knowledge to change market strategy and use sales agents when establishing international activities. They decided to use entry modes, where they did not have to commit a lot of resources to a specific market. However, as their market knowledge increased, they figured out that it is needed to commit the company to the foreign market to be successful. In this regard, Mette exposes, *“If we are to enter new partnerships with agents, then we must be extremely focused on the fact that it is the right partnership we enter. Because it's a very fragmented crowd, those agents”* (Appendix 9, p. 236). Basically, in the beginning of the company and the start-up phase, they focused on not committing too many of their limited resources to the global markets. As the knowledge increased, Rodtnes changed the market penetration strategy to be more committed to the local markets and neighboring countries. The plan is to become an international brand at a later stage.

#### 5.2.2.4. Cold Flood Prevention

##### Critical incidents in the history of Cold Flood Prevention

In 1992, Michael Cold established Cold Sejl, later re-named to Cold A/S. Michael was tired of going to school, therefore he started his own business at the age of 22. The primary focus of Cold Sejl was to produce products to the marine industry, primarily made of tarpaulins. The company is in Hirtshals, where the production still runs today, in their large 2500m2 production facilities. During the years, Cold A/S both has had domestic sales and foreign sales in, among other places, Japan. Today, Cold A/S mainly produces tarpaulins for slurry tanks for agriculture and biogas, larger tents, and products for sports and playground equipment such as inflatables.

In 2005, Michael Cold extended his personal network when meeting Lars Andersen, CEO at Andersen Consult. Andersen Consult assists Danish companies in their international activities. Later that year, Lars assisted Michael in seeking Danida grants to establish a business in Bangladesh. Cold A/S was granted 4.6 million DKK, and shortly thereafter, they established a joint venture with a local company. The joint venture was named Cold Play School Products Ltd., and was controlled by one of Michaels employees for three years. In 2008, they moved the facilities from the jungle into an export zone, the so-called IPZ (or duty free) zone. Today, the production unit is being used to support the production of flood barriers. The production of flood barriers primarily started in 2014 when Michael, in cooperation with two partners, established Cold Flood Prevention. The idea came from a business man from Copenhagen, who could not find any suitable manufacturers for his idea. Cold A/S was chosen as the right business partner, and today Cold A/S has all production rights to produce the patented flood barriers sold at Cold Flood Prevention. The relationship with between the two companies can be complicated, but the thing is that Cold A/S produces some of the products for Cold Flood Prevention to minimize costs for Cold Flood Prevention. Thereby, Cold Flood Prevention draws on many of the facilities at Cold A/S. This also applies to experience, network, and knowledge. During the years, Cold Flood Prevention has received grants to develop production facilities, etc. which has been an important part in the development of the business. From the beginning, Michael’s focus has been to sell products to Asia. A partnership with Falck is under development to secure sales of products in Denmark as well. Today, the ownership is reduced to two, and Michael owns 50% of Cold Flood Prevention. In 2016, Cold Flood Prevention received grants from “Markedsmodningsfonden,” which was the primary beginning of their international activities. From now, an extensive analysis of Cold Flood Prevention will follow, from the development of the company through a set of critical incidents. The critical incidents can be assessed in table 10. All incidents are reported by Michael Cold himself.

Table 10 – Critical incidents in the history of Cold Flood Prevention (1992 – 2017)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Incident** | **Comments** |
| **1992** | Michael establishes Cold Sejl - now Cold A/S | Primary focus was the marine industry as well as production of tarpaulins. The company is in Hirtshals. It has both domestic and foreign sales. |
|  | Cold A/S has 2500m2 production facilities in Hirtshals |  |
| **2005** | Michael extends his personal network with Lars Andersen (CEO at Andersen Consult) | Andersen Consult assists Danish companies in international activities. |
|  | Michael establishes a small business in Bangladesh. A joint venture is made between a Cold A/S and a local company. The company is named Cold Play School Products Ltd | Lars Andersen helps seeking Danida grants in relation to the establishment. A grant of 4,6 million DKK was received. A man was sent out to control the business in Bangladesh for three years |
|  | Michael engages in a larger network created by Lars Andersen | Michael explains the network as being very important for doing business in foreign countries |
| **2008** | New production facilities in Bangladesh is build. The facilities are moved from the jungle to an export zone (IPZ - duty free zone) | Today the production unit is being used to support production of flood barriers. |
| **2012-2013** | A business man from Copenhagen contacted Michael Cold about a sketch | The man addressed Michael with a sketch of some flood prevention products he has not been able to produce elsewhere |
|  | Michael starts developing products in cooperation with the Copenhagener |  |
|  | The product is fully developed in the beginning of 2014 | The storm flood barrier is developed as it stands today |
| **2014** | Cold Flood Prevention Aps is established | Michael owns 0% of the company |
|  | A partnership with Cold A/S is made | Cold A/S is owned by Michael Cold. Cold A/S is used to cut the fabric by using computer technology. The production rights to produce the flood barriers worldwide belongs to Cold A/S |
|  | Experience, knowhow and network and relationships are transferred into Cold Flood Prevention from Cold A/S |  |
|  | Due to challenges related to production, Michael receives 10% of the company. | The deal was made instead of receiving money for produced products |
|  | Michael's focus is on selling products in Asia | Lars Andersen assists since he knows the Asien market |
|  | Lars Andersen (CEO at Andersen Consult) recommends Michael to search grants at "Markedsmodningsfonden" | "Markedsmodningsfonden" aims to promote growth, employment and export, especially in small and medium-sized companies in areas where Denmark has special strengths and potential |
|  | Initial negotiations with various partners in Vietnam begins | Vietnam was chosen due to Lars Andersen's network |
|  | Cold Flood Prevention lost one of their first orders in Vietnam due to change of mayor |  |
| **2015** | Demonstration of products in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam | The trip was arranged in cooperation with EKF (Danmarks eksportkredit) and Jyske Bank - the goal was to sell more than hundred kilometers to the Vietnamse customers worth 180 million DKK - the project stalls |
|  | Cold Flood Prevention moves to other facilities in Hjørring | From the location at Skibsbyvej, they produce the flood preventers |
|  | Cold Flood Prevention tries to sell the products in Thailand and the Philippines – it failed | The reason is lack of money from potential customers |
| **2015/2016** | Cold Flood Prevention has a few domestic sales | Sales to Ringkøbing and Copenhagen |
| **2016** | The ownership is reduced to 2 and Michael now owns 50% of Cold Flood Prevention | Allan Sørensen is his only partner. Allan is not a part of the daily business |
|  | Partner search in Asia begins |  |
|  | An agreement of partnership is made with Jepsen & Jessen in Indonesia | Jepsen & Jessen is large and old Danish corporation with its headquarter in Aabenraa in Denmark |
|  | Cold Flood Prevention receives grants from "Markedsmodningsfonden" as the only company in the northern Jutland | Grants of 1,5 million DKK is received. The background for the selection is: high news value, creating jobs in northern Jutland, found a partnership with a large corporation that was known (Jepsen & Jessen) |
|  | In cooperation with Jepsen & Jessen, testing of products starts in Asia | The objective was to test whether the products are suited outside Europe. Jepsen & Jessen helps finding test areas and therefore potential customers |
|  | First international sales to Hanoi is initiated |  |
|  | Cold Flood Prevention receives 200.000 from "Lag-gruppen" in support to build tables and buy machines |  |
|  | Negotiations with Falck are initiated | Falck wants to control the sales of the flood preventers in Denmark, including Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland |
|  | Australia is tested as a potential market |  |
|  | Michael participates in an Interview with 24 Nordjyske about the grants they received from "Markedsmodningsfonden" |  |
|  | An article about Cold Flood Prevention is printed in Hirtshalsavisen | Cold Flood Prevention received an order because of the article |
|  | Matilde is hired | Matilde is hired by Cold A/S as their marketing manager. She also works for Cold Flood Prevention |
| **2017** | Production of the order to Hanoi is under way | A military airport is at increased risk of flooding - an order on 200 kilometers are under way |
|  | An order from the parliament in Colombo, Sri Lanka is under way | The parliament has received money from the world bank to buy flood preventers. The order is on 1,5 kilometers (3 million DKK) and shall be invited to tender in August. Cold Flood Prevention has been promised that the order is theirs |
|  | 400 meter of flood prevention will be sent to Norway |  |
|  | Cold Flood Prevention secures several summer houses in Sønderballe Strand on their own free will | The incident created positive publicity which increased interest from Falck |
|  | Patents are secured | In Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Australia, Singapore, Philippines and USA |
| **July 2017** | The deal with Falck is about to be signed | Falck will control all sales in Denmark. The objective is to increase domestic sales. The expectation is that having Falck as customer will create goodwill around the world |
| **2018** | The goal for 2018 is to produce 25 kilometers of flood barriers |  |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from Appendix 14)

##### The internationalization process of Cold Flood Prevention – Interpretation of key incidents

**Founder’s previous experience and market knowledge**

The history of Cold Flood Prevention is rather new, but the story of Michael Cold, one of the owners of the company is not. At the age of 22, he established the company Cold A/S, which produces tarpaulin products. Cold A/S has since then operated in both Denmark and in international markets, such as Japan. Michael expresses clearly that his experience and knowledge from more than 20 years of business has had a positive influence on the development of Cold Flood Prevention, *“Yes, yes, it is especially my knowledge and my network is precisely everything. It’s from there it comes (Cold A/S, red)”* (Appendix 10, p. 252). In the Cold A/S context, Michael formed a joint venture with a local company, establishing a production unit in Bangladesh in 2005, which supports both companies in producing products today. From this, Michael has learned how to operate in foreign markets. The specific market knowledge is thereby transferred into the new company Cold Flood Prevention already before and around the establishment of the company in 2014. Michael further expresses that by being personally present in different foreign countries is crucial if business is to be successful *“Lars was out there last time. He also says that I (Michael, red) must come every time. The Sri Lanka order was on 3 million DKK, so they really want to see the big ugly wolf sitting down the end (of the table, red). I don’t have to say anything. Just that I’m there and can answer some questions, that is the most important”* (Appendix 10, p. 247). Therefore, he has visited many countries in relation to his operations in Cold A/S. It is through these trips Michael has gained his experiences, but also learned his lessons. An example is the strategic consideration of moving the production facilities in Bangladesh from the jungle into an export zone (IPZ – duty free zone) to make workflows easier. The extensive experience from previous business has therefore been a clear influential factor on the rapid internationalization of Cold Flood Prevention.

**Business networks**

As experience and market knowledge is transferred into Cold Flood Prevention, business networks are transferred as well. Michael expresses his relationship with Lars Andersen, CEO at Andersen Consult, as being one of the most important assets of the development of both Cold A/S and Cold Flood Prevention *“It is Lars’ network, and because Lars knows the different countries. If you don’t know him (Lars, red) then you can… it is the network, it means everything”* (Appendix 10, p. 248). Lars has an extended network in Asia because of more than 20 years of experience from the market. Thereby, Lars is being used as an external resource to access foreign markets without attaching larger amounts of resources on the operations. Through Lars, Cold Flood Prevention as well as Cold A/S have received millions in grants to develop and run the foreign activities. Among other things, Cold A/S received 4.6 million DKK in 2005 to establish the production facilities in Bangladesh. The grant therefore made it possible to engage in foreign business without attaching significant resources of their own. Accordingly, in 2016 Cold Flood Prevention received 1.5 million DKK from “Markedsmodningsfonden” to develop the company. Michael expresses that grant in general has been an important factor in the development of Cold Flood Prevention. One reason might be that it reduces the total costs of operation:

*“The next thing is that I have been lucky to receive those grants. It is 1.6 million DKK. And out of this, there are travels back and forth. And then I received some money for the materials. So, the type (of material, red) we must use out there is also this one, so now we know how to make the new. The type 3 we are about to make now, we can hopefully sell in Hanoi in a few months. This, we have learned from out there. It has really helped a lot to receive those grants. And I received the 200,000 DKK or was it 187,000 DKK it ended up with, has also done that from we started, less say from the first of October, I have paid also 400,000 DKK in rents and insurances that last 2 years, and then I have used a lot of money on building those tables and to buy the machines for 300,000 each. And I have made the plant (production plant, red). So, it is clear that those 200,000 DKK I received from that, also means a lot.”*

(Appendix 10, p. 255-256)

The grants were secured in close cooperation with Lars Andersen and the possibility to exploit his knowledge and experience about seeking grants.

The partnership with Cold A/S is also a network operation that has assisted Cold Flood Prevention in their internationalization process. From the beginning, Cold Flood Prevention established a partnership with Cold A/S that should produce the products developed at Cold Flood Prevention. Thereby, Cold Flood Prevention could save large amounts of resources in finding manufacturers and buying their resources. In relation, Cold A/S’ joint venture in Bangladesh has assisted in producing some parts of the storm flood barriers during growth periods. The partnership helps keeping costs down and causes that a minimum of resources must be allocated to the production at Cold Flood Prevention. Michael expresses, *“The objective is to make as much as possible home in Hirtshals or Hjørring, and then use my manufacturing company (in Bangladesh, red.) out there to help us. We have to”* (appendix 10, p. 257). Therefore, Cold Flood Prevention can produce larger amounts of flood barriers than was else possible. Michael expresses that business networks are very essential if a company has a desire to do business in foreign markets in general, *“He had a network and that is the most important. That is simply the network, otherwise you will not get anywhere”* (Appendix 10, p. 243). He argues that it would be difficult to locate potential business partners without any insider knowledge about such. About a question regarding this, Michael expressed, *“You can’t, where are you going to search? Who are you going to talk to?”* (Appendix 10, P. 252). Therefore, he also used Lars to get in contact with Jepsen & Jessen. Michael is aware that Cold Flood Prevention would not have been the same without the extensive network transferred from Cold A/S.

**Technological resources**

Cold Flood Prevention’s technologically uniqueness is related to the product itself, which is new and unique within this business. Therefore, Cold Flood Prevention has secured patents in Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Australia, Singapore, the Philippines and the United States. Michael expresses that nobody has told him that they do not like the products, *“…and all those people that I have shown this to, no matter if it was my 90-year-old great grandmother, nobody has ever told me that this is not working”* (Appendix 10, p. 242). The only reason why it is difficult to sell is because many municipalities and emergency centers do not have the necessary money to buy it. Michael states, *“Then we were in the Philippines, who is also very interested in it. And we have been in Thailand. And every time we are close to make a deal, then it all stops because nobody has money. The emergency centers in Denmark have no money either”* (Appendix 10, p. 243). In addition, not many private companies have money for it. The reason is also that the product is so new and different from what is seen before that no one is convinced that it is working yet. Michael states, *“The fire brigade needs it, but it takes too long time, because the product is still so new that nobody knows about it”* (Appendix 10, p. 245). Nonetheless, the uniqueness has secured a deal with Jepsen & Jessen, a large and old trading company with headquarters in Denmark, but with operations in larger parts of Asia. The partnership can be seen as a hybrid deal, where Jepsen & Jessen help finding test areas and thereby potential customers in Asia against receiving a percentage of revenue. Accordingly, negotiations with Falck are about to come to an agreement. The deal is enabled by being unique and different from what is already seen, the traditional sandbags, which needs to be managed by too many people, trucks, and cranes. The deal with Falck will secure all sales in Denmark, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland. About this Michael expresses, *“So we have been fighting home in Denmark, and our competitors, as you have seen in television, their products do not hold, and then it is too expensive to set it up and take it down. They are a little bit cheaper than we are, men if you include the costs of setting it up with trucks, then we are cheaper. There we are about to make a deal with Falck, that Falck wants the sales in the Kingdom of Denmark. Falck wants the sales in Denmark and the Faroe Islands and Greenland”* (Appendix 10, p. 243)*.* Thereby, Michael can focus on the Asian markets. Michael expresses that the uniqueness of the products has been an influential factor when negotiating with potential customers, *“So the advantage of it is that I have a product that is 100% unique”* (Appendix 10, p. 255). Especially in the Philippines where potential customers were convinced that the Cold Flood Prevention storm flood barriers are a better solution than the existing sandbags. In this specific situation, it is calculated that when using the storm flood barrier twice, it has paid itself off. The reason is, as previously mentioned, that the procedure when using sandbags is too complex. When using Cold Flood Prevention’s storm flood barrier, the procedure can be managed by two to four people without any help from trucks or cranes.

**Global market orientation**

Due to close cooperation with Lars Andersen, Michael was determined to focus on the Asian market right from inception. Together with his partner Allan, they decided that Michael should focus mainly on the Asian market. About the international markets, Michael expresses, *“Well, that’s where we saw the biggest opportunities to start with. And then I also got permission from those I have the company with that I wanted to have Asia together with Lars, because I knew Lars, and he could see this (the potential in the products, red)”* (Appendix 10. p. 249). The process of selecting specific markets has been rather random. No such market analysis was made, and markets were chosen based on the previous knowledge, experience and network relationships enabled by Lars Andersen. Therefore, Michael chose to mainly apply for patents in Asia to secure future rights of the product. This indicates that Cold Flood Prevention was highly focused on the global markets right from inception. In relation, Michael expresses that the potential is larger in Asia due to the amount of people living there, but also because it rains more there than in Europe, *“Abroad was due to Lars. Because they (abroad, red.) had major problems. It’s raining more out there than here”* (Appendix 10, p. 243).

#### 5.2.2.5. Fantini of Denmark

##### Critical incidents in the history of Fantini of Denmark

Fantini of Denmark is a newly established Danish manufacturer of polo t-shirts. The idea of transferring the technology from the clothes used in the kitchen industry, to modern fashion clothes was developed in 2014. The idea came when Søren Fantini stumbled upon a Facebook post. The idea was to adopt the technology of dirt and water repellent industry clothing into modern men’s wear. After some market research, Søren Fantini developed a partnership, with a Swiss owner of the technology, allowing him to use the technology in his designs. In 2014, Søren found Fantini of Denmark. In the following year, he moved into an incubator network and began the design process. During 2015, he managed to find a manufacture in China who could produce his designs. The first sales were acquired through an Internet campaign, launched on the world’s largest funding platform Kickstarter (Kickstarter, 2017). The founder hired interns to develop the marketing campaigns and established a design division in 2016. An investor invested needed financial resources in early 2017 by acquisition of 50% of the stocks. The incidents are accessible in table 11 and a further analysis of the internationalization process of Fantini is made under the table.

Table 11 – Critical incidents in the history of Fantini of Denmark (2012 – 2017)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Incident** | **Comments** |
| **2012** | Søren Fantini begins his education in innovation management at Aarhus University |  |
| **Oct 2014** | Søren Fantini being presented for the technology used in kitchen environments | By coincidence Søren stumble upon the technology on his Facebook Wall |
|  | Søren schedule a meeting with the founders of the technology in Switzerland | The meeting is successful and a contract of access to the technology is provided |
|  | Market research | Screening the market for competitors, talking to people regarding interest in the clothes, and production opportunities |
| **Dec 2014** | Foundation of company Fantini of Denmark |  |
|  | Moving into Entrepreneur Network in Aarhus | Provides support and counseling from external advisors |
| **2015** | Design of first collection | By assistance from his network Søren designs the first collection |
| **Ultimo 2015** | Establishment of contact to manufacture in China | Quantities of 2500 pieces |
| **2016** | First interns hired to take care of marketing initiatives |  |
|  | Launch Kickstarter campaign to acquire pre-orders | To access customers outside of Denmark and achieve sales matching the quantities. Also, to gain proof of concept and proof of business. |
|  | Development of web shop Fantiniofdenmark.com | By an international profile with world-wide shipping presented in English |
|  | Development of Facebook page and Instagram account to represent Fantini on social medias |  |
|  | First export. Kickstarter campaign ends 135% funded, by customers on all continents | Results is not enough to meet manufactures quantity requirements, but by this Fantini gain access to their first customer database which provide valuable customer reviews |
|  | New manufacture in Italy with enhanced agility and lower quantities | Quantities of 100 pieces. Bluesign certified (reduction in water consumption in the production of cotton) |
|  | First customer is a Danish ecommerce |  |
|  | Total sales of 2016 represent 10% of Danish customers, 90% foreign customers |  |
| **Jan 2017** | New partner and investor Christian joins Fantini, as he acquires 50% of the shares | Christian provides needed liquidity and assist on a strategic level. He has international entrepreneurial experience |
|  | Enhancement of social media initiatives by hiring new marketing interns | The enhances focus to social media have pushed the interest, gaining 100+ followers on Instagram a month |
|  | Initiate negotiation to sales agency in England | The agency incepted the contact to Fantini |
|  | Focusing on branding of Fantini in Denmark and foreign countries especially in France and Scandinavia | Negotiate collaborating collections with foreign yacht clubs and Danish and foreign golf clubs |

(Source: Own creation, extracted from Appendix 11)

##### The internationalization process of Fantini of Denmark – Interpretation of key incidents

**Resources**

Fantini of Denmark is a young company founded in 2014. Throughout the start-up of the company, they have faced limitations in resources. The founder explains that the development has been a gradual process of designing and establishing the needed contacts to suppliers. He states, *“It has been a long start, of course, we should develop a collection and all that is tough, it is tough to be ready for the new season when the season starts. It actually starts half a year before the season, so we had to wait until the next year. That's how it was, and we thought we could do it all, we wanted two collections a year. But, I did not think about where the hell the money should come from”* (Appendix 11, p. 261). Søren’s expression indicates that Fantini faced liquidity issues, in relation to developing their first collections. The first manufacturer in China also required huge quantities, which made it almost impossible for the founder to find the required financial resources to initiate the production. The process of developing and initiating the first production required external resources, Søren told: *“A year went by. Well, just to get it all to fall into place, and talk to the bank too”* (Appendix 11, p. 262). Following the accomplishment of starting up the production he once again reached out for external resources. In need of competencies within marketing, Søren managed to hire interns, to take over the development of the marketing campaigns. About the interns’ influence he expresses, *“They have meant a lot to me, also personally. As an entrepreneur, you have all the hats on yourself, and it (the interns, red.) takes a lot of weight from your shoulders. Of course…some are better than others…”* (Appendix 11, p. 267). To be able to meet objectives and manage to continuously develop the company, Søren urged to increase the liquidity of the firm. To access the needed financial resources, a new partner entered Fantini of Denmark, as Christian another entrepreneur, stepped in and acquired 20% of the company (Appendix 11). In relation to the products, Fantini has tried to add some innovation to the traditional ways of clothes and textile production. Thereby, the company exploited external resources by adapting knowledge from the kitchen industry to fashion clothing. The uniqueness of the products of Fantini rely on a combination of style and functionality. By adapting new technology to the product, it seeks to captivate the special feature of being dirt and water repellent. The technology applied in the production process adds innovative features to traditional clothes. As Søren expresses, *“It was our mission to develop a product, which is more than just clothes. In fact, it meant that we had a reason to exist”* (Appendix 11, p. 262). Accordingly, without the application of the innovative technology, the products would not have any uniqueness. It can be said that the reliance on technology, in the way it is applied as an innovative addition to textile manufacturing, has strengthened the features of the product.

**Business networks**

Already in the early stages of developing the company, Søren engaged in foreign networks to access foreign customers. Thereby, he wanted to test the interest in the company’s products on global markets. For this purpose, the crowd funding platform Kickstarter was used. The decision was made to access pre-orders, which were needed to fulfill the manufacturer’s minimum requirements to order quantities. Søren describes the decision, *“To get some pre-orders because we had the big minimum quantities we had to order. So, we could not just sell 10 pieces here and 10 pieces there. Because then there will not be enough and we might have to wait 1 year, maybe 2 years before we had enough (to place an order and start production, red.). It was also to get the name out, people hear about it and to get the first customers”* (Appendix 11, p. 264). The actual outcome of the campaign was satisfying, though not enough to complete the quantity requirements. Engagement in this Kickstarter project did not meet the expectations of the founder. Another example of the company’s engagement in foreign distribution networks is their decision to use sales agents in foreign markets. Regarding the future strategy, Søren told, *“Now we are talking to an agency in England to just push the products out in England. They have contacted us, so that's nice (that they are interested in the products, red)”* (Appendix 11, p. 265). It is recognizable that the company wants to benefit of foreign partnerships to be able to expand the international activities.

**Founder’s previous experience and market knowledge**

Søren has a background in the retail industry, thus had no experience within ecommerce and the clothing industry. During the idea generation of development of his own company, he relied on his personal interests in golf and sailing. The founder himself had an extensive network in those environments. As Søren expresses, *“I've always had the interest in clothes and quality, and I did not think I could find anything in the world that could fit (my needs, red). … some clothes that looked good but also had a feature, where you just do not worry about it (to be dirty and spill on yourself, red)”* (Appendix 11, p. 260). In that sense, the foundation of the company takes on an entrepreneurial approach. Just following the founders’ common sense, and establishing a clothing brand with no real concerns about the risks involved. Furthermore, during the start-up phase of the company, he figured out his personal network was a valuable source of knowledge and sparring. The benefits that the personal network can bring of new business opportunities have, in this case, been essential for the future development. Søren states the importance of his personal relations as, *“What is very important in entrepreneurship, it's contacts. Such that when you are alone, you can pull them in and get help to design that clothes, and then look at the production, you can ask ‘what's your experience,’ and then use it. Sometimes I have used some who were not the right people, and sometimes it just helped a lot. But you have to try it out at least (red. to talk to your peers)”* (Appendix 11, p. 261). Additionally, Fantini of Denmark settled in an incubator, which provides expert advisors to the entrepreneurs. This incubator network has brought a lot of good sparring to the founder. He said, *“Exactly, that is too my concern, one of the best (sources of knowledge, red)”* (Appendix 11, p. 268). Meaning that the networks have had a significant influence on the development of the company. A new partner, Christian, joined the company in 2017. He already has entrepreneurial experience in foreign markets, and the strategy is to benefit from the partnership. Additionally, this partnership brings in supportive advice on a strategic level to the founder. By this incidence, the new partner is planned to assist on strategic development of the company, which already have improved future plans according to Søren.

**Global Market Orientation and Market Commitment**

The impact of the founder’s personal network has been decisive in relation to the market orientation. Søren has, as already outlined, been sailing and playing golf for years, which made some valuable contacts. The way his personal network affected the market orientation can be described by his objective to use yacht clubs and golf clubs in his foreign activities. Søren has put a lot effort into the development of enabling business opportunities in collaborations with Monaco Yacht Club. He said, *“It is through some of my contacts, and it is both as retailers and for their members. Actually, at the Monaco Yacht Club, I had two or three who had contact to the Yacht Club”* (Appendix 11, p. 263). His engagement in the sailor’s environment has made him point his attention to the Riviera in France as one of the primary markets already from foundation of the company. Furthermore, the development of the initial campaign through crowd funding indicates that the resource limitations and high quantity requirements from the first manufacture has made the founder decide not to invest a lot of resources in foreign markets, even though the focus from inception has been toward international customers. As Søren said about the online sales, *“There are international customers, of course, also partly from Denmark…I've figured out, when I also include the Kickstarter campaign. …Actually, less than 10% is from Denmark, but a lot from Switzerland”* (Appendix 11, p. 266). The learning process has made the founder aware of the small proportion of Danish customers, which accordingly have strengthened his focus toward global markets. The focus on foreign markets contributes to the vision of being an international company. About the vision of future activities Søren expresses, “Well, first, it would be a good thing to develop sales all over Europe…Scandinavia, France, Switzerland, Germany, England, Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands” (Appendix 11, p. 266). It is noticeable that the market orientation of the company is global. The resource limitations do not slow down their global vision and the focus on global markets.

### 5.2.3. Summary of empirical analysis of the five case companies

*In the following section, a summary of the above empirical analysis and common and non-common features for the five case companies will be highlighted. This analysis will form the basis of the development of a table that works as the final comments on this cross-case analysis between traditional and Born Global internationalization.*

The five case companies were chosen based on an expectation that their internationalization approaches/processes have been different from each other. As the above analysis shows, the five case companies vary in characteristics and, thus, also what critical incidents have had an influence on the internationalization processes. Therefore, their internationalization processes have also been different. UTG and GardinLis have developed their companies gradually mainly focusing on experimental learning from the home market and nearby markets. Therefore, it took UTG 12 to establish foreign activities, and it took GardinLis 28 years. During the inception of both companies, respectively, limited resources have been a critical factor. Even though GardinLis already had knowledge from the industry prior to foundation of the company, Lis lacked resources in common business knowledge and about doing business abroad. While both companies have acquired these necessary resources along the way, especially through new and skillful employees, their international activities have varied in success. As they increased the amount of resources, UTG established foreign activities to become an insider of the international markets. This process has not yet been adapted by GardinLis, since they have focused on developing their domestic networks to acquire further resources. UTG has, in their own opinion, been successful, whereas GardinLis still struggles with the establishment of foreign activities.

The three other companies, Rodtnes, Cold Flood Prevention, and Fantini stand out from the other companies. All three companies have had international sales to several markets within the first two years of inception. Accordingly, the founders of all three cases have, to some degree, had a significant importance for the global orientation. In the case of Rodtnes, the founders already had some international experience, although no experience within the industry. Cold Flood Prevention’s founder had extensive international experience within the industry and well-established networks prior to founding the company. Fantini’s founder had no international experience, but an international personal network. The cases of Rodtnes and Fantini had both limited amounts of financial resources and knowledge during foundation and development of the company, but both acquired external resources in terms of financial investments. Cold Flood Prevention, which had extensive knowledge prior to foundation, also received external resources in terms of grants. These three companies have chosen a rather similar approach to engagement in business networks, as they all rely on development and engagement in the networks to acquire new customers. The cases of Cold Flood Prevention and Fantini both distinguish from Rodtnes in the way that their products are more unique. Both Cold Flood Prevention and Fantini have adapted innovative technology in their products, which made them focus on global niche markets. In this regard, Rodtnes established foreign sales because of the small size of the home market. In all three cases, the size of the home market and opportunities to expand to global markets fitting their products have had a significant impact on their approach to internationalization. Although there are many differences in the internationalization approaches, at least one similar factor is found in all companies as having an influence on the internationalization process: the network. Following the above and the analysis of the five cases, Table 12 below illustrates the attributes of the internationalization process in each case.

Table 12 – Cross case internationalization attributes of the case studies

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Internationalization Attributes** | **United Textile Group** | **GardinLis** | **Rodtnes** | **Cold Flood Prevention** | **Fantini of Denmark** |
| **Resources & Capabilities** | Gradual development | Gradual development | Exploit external resources | Exploit external resources | Exploit external resources |
| **Market Commitment** | Home market (local customers) | Home market (local customers) | Foreign markets (ecommerce and fairs) | Foreign niche markets (business networks) | Foreign niche markets (Crowd funding and personal network) |
| **Market Knowledge** | Incremental process | Experience within industry and incremental process | Incremental process | Experience within industry and business networks | Incremental process |
| **Adaptability** | Gradual process | Gradual process | Entrepreneurial orientation | Entrepreneurial orientation | Entrepreneurial orientation |
| **Business Networks** | Used to become insider of international markets | Used to acquire customers | Used to acquire customers | Used to acquire customers | Used to acquire customers |
| **Founder’s Experience** | No experience but local relations | Experience from industry | International experience within other industry | International experience from industry | No experience but international relations |
| **Global Market Orientation** | Gradual process of committing resources | Gradual process of committing resources | Global orientation (Web shop and fairs) | Global niche markets (business networks) | Global niche markets (Crowd funding and web shop) |
| **Technological Resources** | No technological uniqueness | No technological uniqueness | No technological uniqueness | Innovative technology unique product | Innovative technology unique product |

(Source: Own creation)

As a result, this thesis therefore categorizes UTG and GardinLis as following the traditional internationalization approach, whereas Cold Flood Prevention, Rodtnes, and Fantini are following a Born Global approach to internationalization.

### 5.2.4. Discussion of empirical findings

*In the following section, a discussion of the attributes identified in the literature review as being the most essential attributes for both traditional internationalization companies and Born Global companies, will follow. The section is divided in attributes earlier identified, which will be discussed individually in proportion to their applicability: Resources, market commitment, market knowledge, adaptability, business networks, founder’s experience, global market orientation, and technology.*

##### Resources

The internationalization process of UTG, GardinLis, Fantini, and Rodtnes have all been characterized by lack of resources. Anyway, Fantini and Rodtnes has succeeded in engaging in international activities at an earlier stage than UTG and GardinLis. One reason might be the speed of which Fantini and Rodtnes engaged in or acquired these resources. Whereas, for UTG, it basically happened when René was promoted to CEO around twenty years following establishment. The employment of Brian got things started at GardinLis, but that was nearly 30 years after inception. Conversely, Fantini and Rodtnes focused on acquiring these resources from inception due to the desire to expand to foreign markets rather quickly. Clearly, when UTG and GardinLis got more resources, their internationalization strategies were sped up. Therefore, there is a clear tendency that for companies to engage in international activities around inception of the company and soon after, it is necessary to either have the resources internally as Cold Flood Prevention or acquire these resources rapidly. Therefore, it is argued that those companies following a Born Global internationalization process do so because the founder of the company succeeded in exploiting existing resources or acquiring the necessary resources within a short period of time after the establishment. For Cold Flood Prevention and Rodtnes, it has especially been a resource-efficient way to reach international markets, since customers outside Europe have contacted them with interest in their products.

##### Market knowledge

From the traditional internationalization process perspective, it is theoretically argued that market knowledge should be acquired, integrated, and used in an incremental process in small steps. Here, there is a clear distinguish between the five case companies. A reason why GardinLis and UTG are following the traditional internationalization process might lie within the fact that these two companies have acquired market knowledge in smaller steps than Cold Flood Prevention, Rodtnes, and Fantini. This has, for example, been done through several acquisitions of local competitors, and through participation in different activities and ventures that should increase knowledge about doing business in general and about doing business abroad. Here, Cold Flood Prevention made a partnership with Lars Andersen and Cold A/S already from establishment to gain knowledge about foreign markets. Accordingly, the two founders of Rodtnes both had some international experience and entrepreneurial experience that could push the internationalization rapidly forward.

##### Market commitment

The market selection process of all case companies has been rather random, with no specific strategies followed. Therefore, the amount of resources committed to the home market has varied from case to case. For GardinLis in particular, the home market has had an essential influence, since they have committed the majority of resources to building a solid foundation in the home market. In accordance, GardinLis has focused their international activities on countries surrounding Denmark, due to geographic closeness, easiness, and similarities. For UTG, which is also characterized as a traditional internationalization company, the situation has been rather different. For UTG, psychic distance has played a minor role, and they have therefore established international activities on distant markets. This action goes in line with the strategies of the three Born Global companies. Here psychic distance has played no significant role. This goes, therefore, in line with what researchers argue about psychic distance and market commitment related to both the traditional perspective and the Born Global perspective. Since GardinLis and UTG have chosen different markets, as they are both traditional companies, it cannot be argued that there is a correlation between traditional companies and psychic distance. Nonetheless, it can be argued that there is no correlation between psychic distance and the choice of markets for the three Born Global companies. Thus, GardinLis has focused on the neighboring markets, while Cold Flood Prevention, Fantini, and Rodtnes have focused on the distant markets. This, however, is to some degree denied by UTG, which is notoriously traditional in its actions, but has focused on markets that are not necessarily close. For GardinLis, it was clearly a matter of resources that made the close markets chosen, while Cold Flood Prevention, Fantini and Rodtnes have used resources that have made it possible to target markets that are geographically far away. This includes previous experiences and networks that will be addresses later, but also a Kickstarter campaign have opened for sales to the distant markets. As a contrast, psychic distance does matter for Rodtnes, now focusing on Norway and Germany. The theory is disagreeable at this point. Some argue that psychic distance plays a role for Born Global companies, some does not. This supports this disagreement as Rodtnes finds great value in the neighboring markets to save resources.

##### Adaptability

Adaptability is a company’s ability to change and develop functions, systems, and structures. For companies following the traditional internationalization pattern, this happens in a gradual process of learning and adapting the firm to market needs. On the contrary, adaptability should be at a high level due to the entrepreneurial and global orientation of Born Global internationalizing companies. One reason GardinLis is following the traditional internationalization process might be because they are characterized as being slow in adapting the company to new conditions, such as when they first tried to enter Norway where not enough resources were allocated to the operation, despite both Lis and Brian thinking it could be a huge market for them.It shows how GardinLis has been rather cautious in their internationalization approach, which has clearly resulted in a slow and incremental learning process where adaptability to new market conditions was needed over time. On the other hand, Cold Flood Prevention has shown that they are able to adapt to the needs of the market. This is shown through their focus of markets, which is on where customers have the money to buy their products. Therefore, they can adapt quickly to start negotiations of more countries than expected. Rodtnes show the same willingness to adapt to market needs, operating in not only England, but Norway and Germany as well. The same is applied for Fantini, which shows great adaptability and focuses on the markets where the customers are willing to buy their shirts. This attribute shows that there is a clear difference between the three Born Global companies and the traditional companies, and the factor might therefore explain why some of the companies internationalize faster than others.

##### Business networks

The attribute “business networks” is from both the Born Global literature and the literature on traditional internationalization, and is characterized as being an important factor. Despite this, it has been highlighted that the approach to business networks can differ. As a recap, the traditional internationalization companies do it to build trust and relationships to access knowledge and to become an insider on foreign markets, whereas business networks have several dimensions for Born Global companies. While some of these will be discussed a bit later, one is discussed in this paragraph. For Born Global companies business networks are crucial to access global distribution channels rapidly. In relation to the case companies, it is seen that GardinLis especially engages in domestic networks to build up the foundation on the home market. Conversely, Cold Flood Prevention, Fantini, and Rodtnes engage in business networks to access global distribution. The difference is that GardinLis’ business networks are primarily domestic, making it rather difficult to utilize these networks to enter foreign markets, but instead, build up their position in the home market. Conversely, Cold Flood Prevention, Fantini, and Rodtnes have all engaged in foreign business networks that have pushed their products abroad. For Rodtnes, the network of agents has been an important factor, whereas, for Fantini, it has been networks related to golf and yachting, which have secured a few deals abroad. Despite the lack of resources, it has been possible for Rodtnes and Fantini to internationalize more rapidly due to these networks. For Cold Flood Prevention, there was no such lack in resources, since a close partnership with Lars Andersen from Andersen Consult was established years prior to the establishment of the company. Already from inception, Cold Flood Prevention could exploit Lars’ international network, and thereby engage in negotiations with foreign partners quickly after inception. It can therefore be argued that the business network must be international and not just domestic to internationalize rapidly.

##### Founder’s experience

In continuation of the above, a discussion of the factor “founder’s experience” will now be discussed. Founder’s experience prior to the establishment of the company is, in Born Global literature, seen as one of the most important factors among all studies. This includes both individual networks and the founder’s earlier experience, skills, knowledge, etc. Founders’ experience differed a lot between the Born Global companies and traditional companies identified in this case analysis, but also among the Born Global companies individually. For Cold Flood Prevention, especially, and Rodtnes, to some degree, it has been essential that the founder, Michael Cold and Mette Rødtnes, respectively, had international experience, despite Mette’s lack of specific industry experience.

The fact that both Cold Flood Prevention and Rodtnes are characterized as being Born Globals can be partly justified in that the founder has had experience prior to establishing the company. However, Fantini contrasts with the other Born Global companies, since the founder had no prior experience, yet internationalized rapidly. Therefore, there must be other attributes that have been more essential for Fantini. Instead of experience, Fantini’s founder has an entrepreneurial orientation including innovativeness, networking, and is more willing to take risks than, for example, GardinLis. Thereby, Fantini stands out as being unique, due to the technologically smart clothing. In addition, by launching the Kickstarter campaign, Fantini managed to target customers in several geographical places simultaneously. On the other hand, GardinLis and UTG have been internationalizing in a traditional way. One reason might be that the founders of both companies had no international experience at all, no such experience within doing professional business, and no personal networks to push the company towards international markets. A justification for their internationalization process can therefore be found within this attribute. In theory, it was argued that the founder’s experience has an influence on a company’s ability to internationalize more rapidly. Evidence from this multiple case study has confirmed this fact, and also confirmed that those companies internationalizing in a traditional way did not have this attribute.

##### Global market orientation

In theory, the global market orientation goes strictly in line with the founder of the company. There, it was argued that a founder and the management team must be highly oriented in their vision towards the global markets already from inception. The reason is, among other things, that when having that focus from beginning, the company allocates the necessary amount of resources to it. Global market orientation is also about market commitment. According to theory, market commitment should be fairly low among Born Globals, since they often establish their distribution channels through hybrid structures. In this attribute, there are differences in the five case companies that have had influences on their internationalization path as well.

Fantini, through using Kickstarter, Rodtnes, through using sales agents, and Cold Flood Prevention, trough using a joint venture in Bangladesh, all take advantage of the ability to establish distribution channels through hybrid structures, where a minimum of resources can be allocated to the foreign activities. The reason might lie within the technological resources, which will be discussed shortly after this paragraph. It is therefore argued that Fantini, Rodtnes, and Cold Flood Prevention are Born Global companies because the founders had an international orientation focusing on opportunities outside Denmark. Conversely, a reason why GardinLis and UTG are characterized by following the traditional internationalization approach may be found in the fact that there was no global orientation and that there was no global market potential for the company.

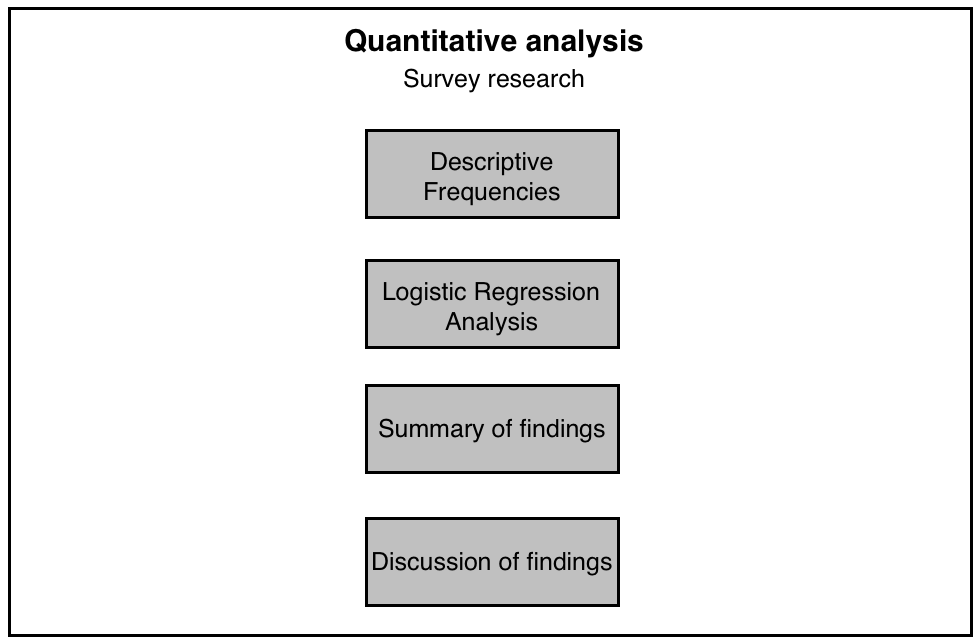
##### Technological resources

A further difference between the Born Global companies and the traditional internationalization companies is their use in technological resources. From inception, Cold Flood Prevention has a unique product that is patented in larger parts of Asia due to technologically smart solutions. From inception, Fantini uses technological solutions to target customers all around the world, and simultaneously has a product that differs from competitors. From inception, Rodtnes uses the internet to create a web shop through which they can sell their products to customers all around the world. None of these technological resources were used during the establishment of GardinLis or UTG. A reason might lie within the time when the companies were established. While the three Born Global companies are established later than 2010, GardinLis and UTG are both established before the internet became available worldwide. Thus, it can be argued that technology has played a significant role for Cold Flood Prevention, Rodtnes, and Fantini in their ability to internationalize more rapidly. It can also be argued that it has played no role for GardinLis and UTG, since the technological resources were less common when they were established. It is therefore difficult to say whether GardinLis or UTG would have benefited from technological resources had both companies been established in recent times.

## 5.3. Analysis of the survey

*The following sections will contain the analysis of the survey. This quantitative analysis is divided into two parts. First an analysis of frequencies is conducted to report an overview of the respondent’s answers. Next, a multiple logistic regression analysis is conducted to investigate what effect the attributes extracted from the literature review have on both Born Global companies and traditional companies. The objective is to test the scientific questions from chapter 4. The design of this section is shown in figure 12 below.*

Figure 12 - Survey research design

**

(Source: Own Creation)

### 5.3.1. Descriptive frequencies analysis

*In the following an initial descriptive analysis of the respondents’ answers will take place, including age of companies, first international market, entry mode of first international market, time to second international market and choice of second international market. This will be done from both a Born Global perspective and a traditional perspective combined, which will provide an overall picture of the data provided by the respondents. The objective is to look for tendencies to further investigate in the multiple regression analysis.*

##### Time for first international market

The most decisive factor of the quantitative analysis is the time prior to entry into their first international market. This factor indicates how long the surveyed companies have operated before they internationalized the first time. This factor is in the quantitative analysis explaining or categorizing which companies are Born Global companies and which companies are the so-called traditional companies. The results show that 30 companies are categorized as Born Global companies, since they have internationalized within the first two years of inception. An additionally 28 companies are categorized as being so-called traditional companies, since they have started internationalization after more than three years from inception. This thesis is aware that some researchers argue that the limit for being a Born Global is three years, while others claim that it must be within five years. Nonetheless, this thesis draw the line at two years due to enhanced possibility of receiving useful data. It is on this factor that the rest of the analysis will be based on (Appendix 16, “time to first internationalization”).

##### First international market

The overall picture of the choice of first market for the surveyed companies is somehow more similar than it was for the age. Among the Born Global companies, above 85% of the companies indicate that the first international activity was to a nearby country, such as the Nordic countries, Germany, or England. In that, 43.3% of the Born Globals have chosen Germany or England as their first market for international activities, while 43.3% have chosen the Nordic countries. Among the traditional internationalizing companies, 85% expresses that the first international market was a Nordic country, such as Sweden, Norway, Finland or Iceland. Accordingly, only a few have answered that Germany or England was the first market, while another few have answered that another EU country was chosen. Therefore, none of these companies have chosen emerging markets as their first markets, while four Born Global companies have chosen countries outside EU (Appendix 12, “First international market”).

##### Entry mode of first international market

Among those companies categorized as being traditional in their internationalization process, the most applied entry mode when internationalizing for the first time is agents in foreign countries (35.7%). In relation, foreign distributors are used to some degree (21.4%), while domestic agents are used by 14.3% of these companies. 14.3% have used strategic alliances. None of these companies have established sales offices in a foreign country, established production in a foreign country, established a joint venture with a foreign partner, as well as they haven’t used licensing or franchising. The most applied entry mode among the Born Global companies is similarly agents in foreign countries (33.3%). 20% has used agents in Denmark, while 26.7% has used foreign distributors. 20% has established sales and production in the foreign country chosen. None of the Born Global companies have used franchising, strategic alliances, or joint ventures with foreign partners. Moreover, none of them have established sales offices abroad.

##### Time for second internationalization

Among the Born Global companies, 80% has internationalized the second time after maximum four years after the establishment. This means that 80% of the companies have internationalized into more than one country within four years of inception. The majority of those companies (28%), categorized as being traditional in their internationalization process, have spent more than eleven years from establishment of internationalizing to the second foreign market. Accordingly, another 18% express that they have spent around nine to ten years entering the second foreign market. Despite that, 21.4% have entered the second market after just three to four years. Despite many companies expressing that they have internationalized to the second market quite shortly after establishment, there is also a large proportion of the companies internationalizing to the second market after more than eleven years, making this group very different from the Born Global companies (Appendix 12, “time for second international market”).

##### Second international market

For the traditional internationalizing companies, the nearby markets were also chosen as the second international market. Thereby, 50% of these companies express that the Nordic countries were chosen and 43% express that Germany or England was chosen. Among the Born Global companies, the Nordic countries were chosen as the second market by 40%. In addition, 20% favored Germany or England. In addition, there is a trend that the Born Globals slightly favor other EU markets and countries outside EU compared to the traditional companies, although only 20% chose other EU countries and 10% chose countries outside EU (Appendix 12, “choice of second international market”).

##### Age of companies

The overall answers from the respondents gave an indicator that the Born Global companies and the traditional companies differentiated in age. The mean age of the companies categorized as being Born Globals is fifteen years, whereas, for the companies categorized as being traditional, it is around forty years. The mean age for the total respondents is twenty-seven years. This shows that the Born Global companies in general are much younger than the traditional companies (Appendix 12, “Age distribution among the groups”).

#### 5.3.1.1. Frequencies of the attributes

##### *The following will outline the frequencies of attributes related to each measure derived from the scientific questions.*

##### Measure 1 – Businesss networks

Among the Born Globals, the respondents’ answers on the importance of having a network already before the establishment of the company are more fragmented. It is basically equally distributed on all response options with a slight distribution towards being more significant than not significant. When asked about networks, the traditional companies’ answers were also fragmented. 14.3% expressed that when internationalization first time, networks on the international markets were not significant. Nonetheless, 35.7% expressed a neutral attitude towards the network, while more than 42.9% indicated that the network to some degree was significant (Appendix 12, “s\_16”). Therefore, it initially seems like both groups rather agree on this point.

##### Measure 2 – Ressources

For the Born Global companies identified, it has been significant or very significant that they could reach customers by sales channels that do not require many resources, such as sales agents. This counts for just above 70% of all Born Global companies. A larger majority of the traditional companies, counting 78.6%, finds it significant or very significant that they could reach foreign customers through sales channels, such as agents, which did not require a lot or resources or investments (Appendix 12, “s\_12”). Therefore, both groups of companies have rather similar opinions about this factor.

##### Measure 3 – Market commitment

For around 70% of the surveyed companies categorized as a Born Globals, it is shown to be either significant or very significant that the company could internationalize to nearby markets. It is worth mentioning that 20% of these companies find it “not significant” that they can internationalize to markets that are geographically close. The majority (64.3%) of the companies categorized as being traditional in their internationalization approach find it either significant or very significant that they could start their international activities to nearby markets (Appendix 12, “s\_11”). Thereby, there is an initial tendency that both groups of companies rather agree on this point accordingly.

##### Measure 4 – Market commitment

Almost 50% of the surveyed Born Global companies considered it significant that they could identify potential partners on many markets simultaneously without making any major investments. In total, almost 70% consider it either significant or very significant. The tendency in importance of identifying partners on many markets simultaneously among the traditional companies is not very clear. About as many companies answer that it is both very significant and not significant. In addition, around 21% of these companies express that it has neither nor been significant. Although, the largest proportion of the companies answer that it is significant (Appendix 12, “s\_19”). This indicates that Born Global companies tend to answer more in favor of identifying potential partners in many markets.

##### Measure 5 – Market commitment

In continuation of above, 40% of the Born Global companies indicate that it was significant that they could start quietly and get experience before they took bigger steps. Despite 20% of the companies do not have an opinion and answer “neither nor,” 26% have indicated that it is a very important aspect. In relation, the majority (64.3%) of the companies categorized as being traditional finds it significant or very significant to start in a small scale and gain experience before developing the business to something larger (Appendix 12, “s\_14”). Thereby, there is a greater tendency that the traditional companies favor-doing things in small steps more than the Born Global companies.

##### Measure 6 – Market knowledge

The Born Global companies surveyed do not appear to be particularly risky as almost 80% of the companies respond by answering that it was significant or very significant that they could reach international customers without running greater risks. Just below 80% of the traditional companies expresses that it has been significant or very significant that they could reach foreign customers without running any greater risks. Accordingly, a very small portion (7.1%) consider it not being significant at all (Appendix 12, “s\_13”). This also shows similarities between the two groups of companies that are both not very risk averse.

##### Measure 7 – Market knowledge

As a counter pole to the above, 53% of the surveyed Born Global companies answered that to have a product that is well established and tested on the Danish market is not significant when internationalizing first time. Despite this, over 30% find it significant or very significant, which indicates that the companies among this group do not fully agree on this point. 64.3% of the traditional companies finds it significant or very significant to have a product that was well-established and tested on the home market, when they internationalized the first time. (Appendix 12, “s\_15”) This shows that there is a tendency for the traditional companies to favor having a product that is well-established and tested on the Danish market than the Born Global companies.

##### Measure 8 – Founder’s previous experience

In relation to experiences prior to establishment, 33.3% of the Born Global companies answer that it has not been significant when internationalizing first time. In addition, another 33.3% answer that it has been very significant to have experience with international activities from previous jobs. Despite this, 20% of the Born Global companies expressed that this factor was rather signifant nor a little significant. For the traditional companies, experience with international activities prior to establishment was mainly not significant. Here, a total of 35% indicated that it was not significant while only 14.2% expressed that it to some degree was significant (Appendix 12, “s\_17”). In addition, 50% answered neither nor, meaning that a large propotion of the traditional companies did not think it was significant but neither not significant as well. Therefore, there is a tendency that Born Global companies to a higher degree have indicated that this factor was important than for the companies categorized as being traditional.

##### Measure 9 – Global market orientation

When asked about the potential of the home market, a fragmented result is shown. 33.3% of the Born Global companies consider it not being significant, while 33.3% of the companies consider it significant. In total, 53.3% consider this factor above a level of significant, while only 40% consider it not being significant to some degree. Almost the same picture applies for the companies categorized as traditional. Here the largest proportion of the companies express that it is either not significant or a little significant, therefore being below the middle score (Appendix 12, “s\_20”). In addition, around 21% expressed a neutral opinion about this variable indicating a fragmented answer.

##### Measure 10 - Adaptability

A majority (33.3%) of the Born Global companies consider establishing sales on many markets simultaneously as being very significant when internationalizing the first time. However, 20% finds it not significant and 26% consider it irrelevant (“neither nor”) for their first international activities. Among the traditional companies, 71,4% of expressed that establishing sales in many markets simultaneously has not been significant at all when internationalizing the first time. In addition, 25% considered it neiter nor for their first international activities. Accordingly, only one of the companies has indicated that it was significant while none has indicated it was very significant (Appendix 12, “s\_18”). Therefore, the respondents tend to answer more differently between the groups when asked about this factor as Born Global companies expresses to a greater extend that it is important to establish sales on several markets simultaneously.

##### Measure 11 – Technological ressources

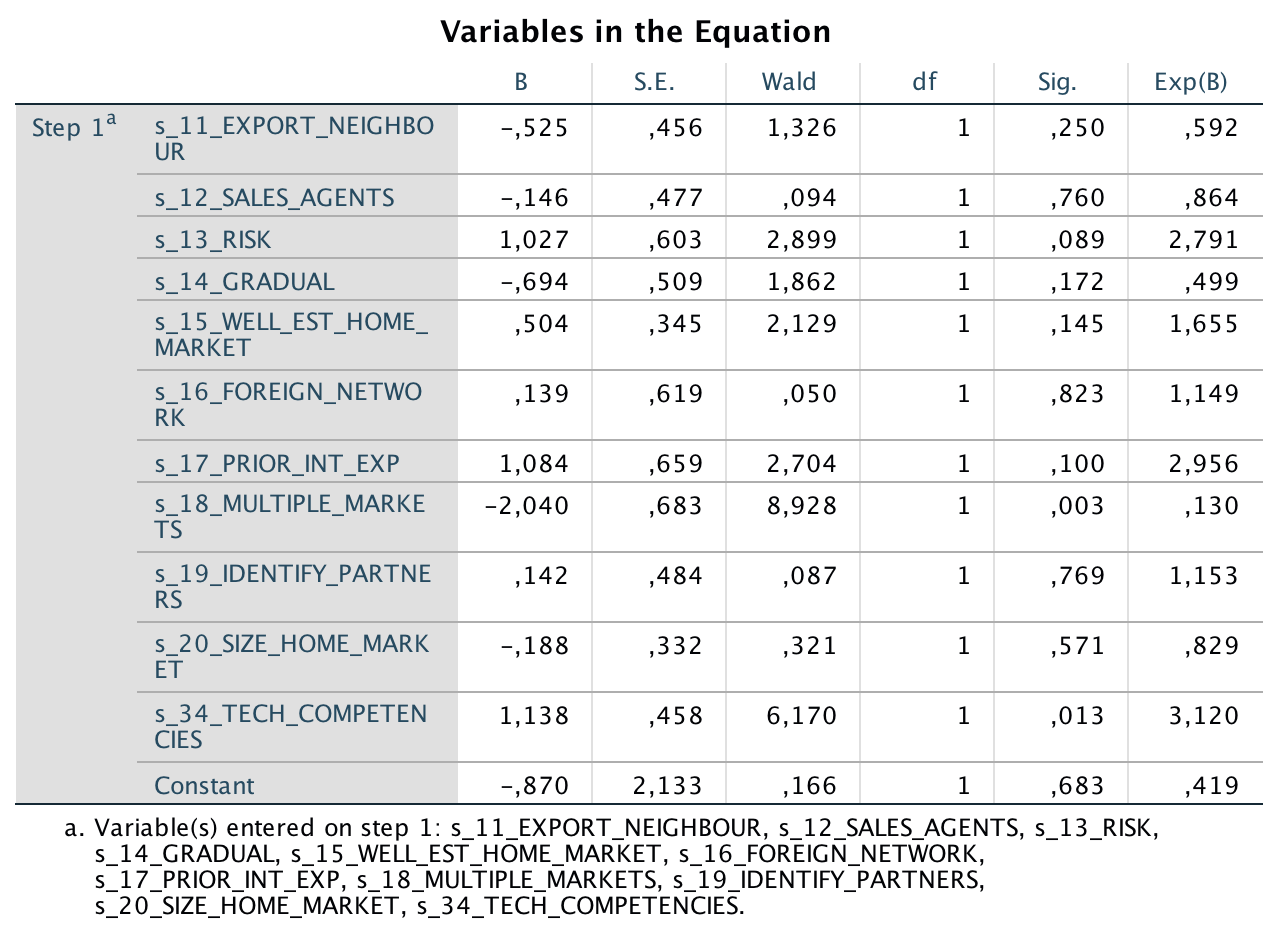
When asked about technology, the companies categorized as Born Globals gave a clear answer. 66.7% of the Born Global companies find technology to not be significant at all when internationalizing the first time. What is worth mentioning is that no Born Global companies express that technology has either been significant or very significant. Among the traditional companies, technology does not seem to be significant either. Neither a little significant, both answer groups together counting for 50%. Although, almost 30% of the traditional companies expressed that technology was actually significant when internationalizing the first time (Appendix 12, “s\_34”). This shows that there is a larger proportion of the traditional companies who have answered that technological competences have been significant when internationalizing the first time than among the Born Global companies.

The distributed frequencies in general, initially, indicate that the Born Global internationalization companies, to some degree follow the attributes of *business network* (Measure 1), *market commitment* (Measure 3), and *global market orientation* (Measure 9). Furthermore, the Born Global companies also follow the attributes of *resources* (Measure 2) and *market knowledge* (Measure 6) to a certain degree. Moreover, the frequencies indicate that the Born Global companies to a higher degree than those traditional internationalization companies, follow the attributes of *market commitment* (Measure 4), *founder’s prior international experience* (Measure 8), and *adaptability* (Measure 10). The indications of the frequency analysis will not be interpreted further, since the descriptive analysis in general lack explaining the relationship of the variables on the time to internationalize. Therefore, the above works as an initial analysis of the respondents’ answers, whereas the following multiple logistic regression analysis in section 5.3.2 will test the initial assumptions from above further. Therefore, the following multiple logistic regression is performed to assess the impact of several factors on the likelihood that the respondents would fell into the Born Global group or the traditional group. The model contained eleven independent categorical variables, and proved statistically significant with X2 (11, N=58) = 41.23 and a p-value lower than 0.001 (Appendix 13, “Omnibus Tests of model Coefficients”), indicating that the model can distinguish between respondents who reported that they were Born Global companies and traditional companies. The model as a whole explained between 50.9% (Cox & Snell R Square) and 67.9% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance in internationalization status (Appendix 17, “Model summary”), and correctly classified 84.5% of cases (Appendix 13, “Classification Tablea”). As is shown in Table 13 – Logistic regression model, only two of the independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (Measure 10 and Measure 11). Therefore, the data will to a high degree not be reliable, due to a small population and the fragmentation in the respondents’ answers. Therefore, the Measures about every variable/measure should be seen as tendencies only, and not concluding or final and uambiguous anwers.

### 5.3.2. Multiple logistic regression analysis

Table 13 is used to analyze the variables’ influence on the surveyed companies’ foreign activities. Moreover, this part of the analysis is conducted to identify to what extend the business networks, resources, market commitment, market knowledge, founders experience, global market orientation, adaptability, and technological resources were significant when the surveyed companies internationalized the first time. This will be accomplished through an evaluation of the eleven underlying Measures through a multiple logistic regression analysis (Table 13). Herewith, the configuration of the attributes for Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization will be analyzed, to explore the influence of the attributes of the company on the dependent variable, time to internationalize. Thereby, the analysis will be used to determine the most influential variables on companies categorized as Born Globals and traditional based on the answers gained from the questionnaire.

Table 13 – Multiple Logistic Regression Model



(Source: Own production; Output from SPSS)

The objective of the regression analysis is to statistically distinguish between the variables on two groups of companies. The groups in this thesis are defined by the time that they have spent to internationalize the first time. Here, it is distinguished between Group 0: zero to two years from establishment (<=2), and Group 1: three years or more after the establishment (>2). Therefore, all the respondents in the sample are classified into either Group 0, which are then categorized as “Born Global internationalization” or Group 1 called “Traditional internationalization.” (Appendix 12 – S\_31). To access the influence of the attributes on the companies’ internationalization process, the configuration of the variables from the theoretical framework, are tested through the questions to scientifically investigate by Measure 1 to Measure 11 (presented in Chapter 4).

The regression model displayed by *Measure 1 (S\_16)* illustrates that the odds of having an international network, already prior to foundation of Group 1, is 1.149 times greater in relation to Group 0. Thereby, it is outlined there exists a greater probability for use of already established international networks to be more important for traditional internationalization than Born Global companies.

*Measure 2 (S\_12)* shows that odds of reaching foreign customers through channels that do not require many resources for Group 1 is 0.864 times less in relation to Group 0. This means there exists a greater probability that the possibility to acquire new customers through, for example, sales agents, at a low cost, are more important to Born Global companies than for companies internationalizing in the traditional way.

*Measure 3 (S\_11)* displays that the odds of the importance of the neighboring market for Group 1 is 0.592 times less compared to Group 0. This indicates there exists a greater probability that neighboring markets are more important for Born Global international, than for traditional internationalization.

Moreover, *Measure 4 (S\_19)* indicates the odds of the importance of companies being able to identify partners in many markets at the same time, without major investments for Group 1, is 1.153 times larger than for Group 0. This shows a greater probability, that the ability to identify partners in international markets, without major investments, is more important to traditional internationalization, than Born Global internationalization.

Next variable, *Measure 5 (S\_14)* shows the odds of the importance of initiating activities by small steps and then gradually gain experience, before the company took greater steps for Group 1 is 0.449 times less compared to Group 0. It means a greater probability, that it is more important for Born Global internationalization, in relation to traditional internationalization, to initiate foreign activities by small steps and gradually gain experience, before the company takes greater steps in establishment of foreign activities.

Moreover, *Measure 6 (S\_13)* illustrates the odds of the companies importance to reach foreign customers, without greater risk, when initiating international activities of Group 1, is 2.791 times larger than for Group 0. The importance to be able to reach foreign customers without too much risk, has a greater probability to be more influential to companies of traditional internationalization, than Born Global internationalization.

Furthermore, *Measure 7 (S\_15)* shows the odds of the importance of companies having a product that was well established and tested on the domestic market, for Group 1 is 1.655 times larger than for Group 0. In this sense, there exists a greater probability that testing of products and being well represented on the domestic market is more important to traditional internationalization, than Born Global internationalization.

Next is *Measure 8 (S\_17)*, which displays the odds of the significance that the founder before establishment, had international experience from previous professions for Group 1 is 2.956 times greater, in relation to Group 0. Thereby, there exists a greater probability for the founder's previous international experience is more important to traditional internationalization, in relation to the Born Global internationalization.

Furthermore, *Measure 9 (S\_20)*, displays the odds of a limited domestic market for Group 1 is 0.829 times less, in relation to Group 0. Thereby, there is a greater probability that the limitation of the domestic market potential (in terms of size or population) is more important for Born Global internationalization, than the traditional internationalization.

Moreover, *Measure 10 (S\_18)*, shows the odds of importance to be able to establish sales in several markets at the same time for Group 1 is 0.130 times less than for Group 0. This mean there exists a greater probability that expanding to many markets at the same time is more important for Born Global internationalization, in relation to the traditional internationalization.

Finally, *Measure 11* *(S\_34)*, shows the odds of importance related to the companies’ ability to exploit technological skills in the internationalization process of Group 1 is 3.120 times greater than Group 0. Thereby, there exists a greater probability that utilization of technological skills and competencies, in the internationalization process, is more important traditional internationalization, than for Born Global internationalization. To achieve and present an overview of the descriptive analysis and the multiple regression analysis, a summary will be provided next.

### 5.3.3. Summary of empirical analysis from the survey

By measures being transferred to and analyzed as attributes, they will be indirectly answered through the following summary and discussion. According to the multiple logistic regression analysis, the Measures (despite insignificant results) indicate whether there exists a greater probability of each measure variable’s influence on Group 1 (Traditional) in relation to Group 0 (Born Global). The findings of the analysis show that there exists a greater probability that five of the Measures are more important to Born Global internationalization. These five measures includes; Measure 2, Measure 3, Measure 5, Measure 9, Measure 10.

Transferring the measures to the attributes, it is indicated, through the analysis, that access to *resources* (M2) seems to be more important to Born Global firms, regarding being able to reach foreign clients through sales channels, such as agents, compared to the companies internationalizing in the traditional way. Another attribute indicated to be more important to the Born Global companies is *market commitment*, regarding initiating international activities to the neighboring markets (M3). Thereby, it seems like the neighboring markets is of a higher importance to the Born Global companies. Additionally, *market commitment*, regarding initiating foreign activities in small steps (M5), seems to have greater importance to Born Global firms compared to the traditional firms. Furthermore, there exists a tendency that *global market orientation*, regarding the companies’ thought on the potential of the domestic market (M9), seems to have greater influence on Born Global firms in relation to those companies of traditional internationalization. This indicates that Born Global companies weigh the potential of the domestic market as more important, compared to the traditional firms. Finally, the attribute of *adaptability*, regarding establishment of sales on multiple markets simultaneously (M10), seems to be of greater importance to Born Global firms. This indicates that the Born Global firms seem to enter more markets simultaneously compared to the traditional firms. The findings will be further elaborated in the discussion of the quantitative analysis.

On the other hand, the analysis found some tendencies in the respondents’ answers of traditional internationalization. The findings outlined a greater probability that six of the Measures are of greater importance to traditional internationalization compared to Born Global internationalization. Those six Measures included: Measure 1, Measure 4, Measure 6, Measure 7, Measure 8, Measure 11.

Transferring the measures to the attributes, it is outlined that *business network* (M1) seems more important to traditional internationalization. Accordingly, the *market commitment* of Born Globals, indicated by M4, seems to be more important to traditional internationalization companies, represented by the ability to identify multiple partners in foreign markets. Thereby, these companies seem to rely more on foreign partnerships than the Born Global companies. Moreover, there exists a tendency that *market knowledge* (M6) is of greater importance to the traditional internationalizing companies; thus, seem to reach out for foreign customers without too much risk to a higher degree than the Born Global companies. This is supported by the tendency in the measure *market knowledge* (M7) also favoring the traditional internationalization companies in the importance of testing the products and being established on the domestic market. Thereby gaining knowledge about the products on the domestic market seems to be more important for the traditional internationalization companies, than for Born Global companies. The *founders prior experience* (M8) is another attribute measured, which according to this analysis seems to have higher importance to the traditional internationalization companies. Finally, the *technological resources* attribute (M11) indicates that it is more important for traditional internationalization firms to exploit technological resources, when internationalizing than it is for the Born Global internationalization companies.

### 5.3.4. Discussion of empirical findings from the survey

*The objective of this part is to discuss the findings of the multiple logistic regression analysis in relation to the theoretical attributes, and the configuration of Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization.*

As outlined in Chapter 3 the literature review derived several attributes related to both Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization. A configuration of attributes was selected consisting of five attributes, which must be present in a company to internationalize as a Born Global (See chapter 4. Framework). Moreover, the four attributes of traditional internationalization were included, which is set to develop international activities through stages in incremental steps (See chapter 4. Framework). To be able to internationalize rapidly as a Born Global firm, the company must according to the theory rely on the *founder’s prior experience* and *networks*. Furthermore, the company needs a *global market orientation* from the foundation, and is *adaptable* in the sense of being able to acquire, integrate, and use knowledge, and adapt to the ever-changing dynamic international environment. Accordingly, the company must apply and *exploit technological resources* to access global markets within the two first years of existence. These attributes were by theory presented as being crucial abilities for the Born Global companies, in order to rapid internationalize. In addition, the framework consisted four attributes related to traditional internationalization extracted from the theory. These four attributes are resources, market commitment, and business network and market knowledge.

Despite the insignificant data, this research has outlined some tendencies in relation to the selected attributes. Regarding *founder’s prior experience and network*, it is reported that this attribute seems to be more important to traditional internationalization firms (M8) compared to the Born Global companies. Therefore, according to the findings, traditional internationalization firms indicated that it was an important attribute when internationalizing for the first time. This is contradicting with the theory, which presents the founder’s prior experience and personal relations as key capabilities, in order to achieve Born Global internationalization. Whereas, the traditional internationalization theory does not state specifically, that it is important to have obtained international experience prior to foundation. Furthermore, the analysis outlined that the size and potential of the domestic market had less influence on the traditional internationalization firms, regarding establishment of foreign activities (M9), compared to the Born Global internationalization companies. This finding is in line with the theory, since the Born Global firms ought to apply a *global market orientation* from inception. Moreover, according to theory, the Born Global firms must be *adaptable* to operate in foreign markets early after foundation. Thus, the findings illustrate that it is of greater importance for these companies to access multiple markets simultaneously (M10) compared to the traditional companies. Thereby, the findings indicate that it seems to be important for Born Global firms to enter several markets simultaneously, which also is in line with the theory. In addition, the findings of the analysis have indicated that Born Global firms rely on *technological resources*. The findings from the analysis showed that traditional internationalization firms seem to exploit technological competencies when internationalizing (M11), rather than the Born Global internationalization firms. This finding is contradicting with the derived attributes of the fast internationalizing companies, as these companies ought to exploit technologies in their internationalization process.

According to the theory, companies have to apply those five attributes, to be able to rapidly internationalize. Due to the invalid data, it is only possible to confirm or invalidate the attributes of the configuration extracted from the theory as *adaptability* (M10) and *technological resources* (M11). The valid findings confirms that Born Global internationalization companies are adaptable, since the reported findings have shown that these companies to a greater extend weigh it important to access multiple markets simultaneously of a greater importance, than traditional internationalization companies. Thereby, the attribute of the Born Global configuration adaptability is accepted. Furthermore, the reported findings invalidate the attribute of exploitation of technological resources. According to the findings of this survey, traditional internationalization companies weigh the exploitation of technological recourses of greater importance, in relation to the Born Global internationalization companies. Thereby, the attribute of the Born Global configuration is rejected.

**6**

# Conceptualization of findings

## 6.1 Final recommendations

*The following section will include a final discussion of the empirical findings in relation to the configuration of attributes and therefore the framework from chapter 4. This section therefore provides an overview of the degree of applicability of the attributes extracted from the literature. In addition, this section aims at provided a final recommendation or thinking pattern that can be used by start-up companies to address the internationalization process in the future. At first, the quantitative findings will be discussed shortly where after the qualitative findings will be discussed shortly.*

Although it was not possible to generalize findings due to lack of significant data caused by limited number of respondents, as well as a very fragmented literature, tendencies about the eleven variables’ influence on both groups of companies were provided. In general, these tendencies showed limited contribution to the chosen configuration of attributes both from a Born Global perspective, but also from the traditional perspective. The only attributes that showed contribution to the Born Global configurations are as expressed in the discussion the global market orientation and adaptability. Regarding the traditional companies, market knowledge, business networks and partly market commitment showed contribution to the configuration of traditional companies. In general, the chosen attributes/configurations showed a general lack of contribution from the quantitative analysis. Despite this, the qualitative data analysis showed strong contribution to the chosen configurations.

According to theory, companies must have several attributes expressed previously to be able to internationalize rapidly, and thereby be a Born Global company. Evidence from the analysis above shows that Rodtnes, Fantini, and Cold Flood Prevention have been able to internationalize faster than GardinLis and UTG. The reason might lie within the fact that their company characteristics follow the Born Global attributes to a higher degree than the traditional attributes. The constellation of Born Global attributes was by Rodtnes, Fantini, and Cold Flood Prevention followed to a high degree. One of the main reasons why these three companies are categorized as being Born Globals is due to their global market orientation from beginning, and the fact that two out of the three companies had prior experience from earlier businesses both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, two of the Born Global companies, Cold Flood Prevention and Fantini, are in possession of technological differentiated products that, to some degree, have created a niche market for them. Accordingly, the Born Global companies could rely on international networks to a larger extent than GardinLis and UTG, which, during establishment, primarily focused on national networks and building up the domestic market. The reason can be found in the lack of resources explained and due to a rather conservative opinion in taking risks, before substantial resources were acquired. Although the three Born Global companies also faced a lack of resources, they prioritized differently and focused on exploiting those resources available on foreign markets and on exploring new resources that could help them, for example, build foreign partnerships instead. In relation, the degree of market commitment seems to be rather similar for the majority of the companies. All companies, except UTG, had only committed few resources to the foreign markets. Although there are many differences, similarities are found as well. Evidence actually shows that both GardinLis and Cold Flood Prevention had market knowledge, both from previous work experiences. Cold Flood Prevention had built-up knowledge through owning another company with international sales, whereas GardinLis lacked competences in doing business in general. Therefore, a reason that Cold Flood Prevention could internationalize faster might be found in the experience in doing foreign business before the establishment. UTG, Fantini, and Rodtnes lacked industry-specific experience, but had different sets of competences available to internationalize differently. The difference is found within the fact that both Fantini and Rodtnes relied on the Internet as technological tool to reach the foreign markets. Therefore, the technological development can have an influence on companies’ ability to internationalize more rapidly. Thereby, the qualitative analysis provided clear evidence that the chosen configuration of attributes for both Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization is followed.

Naturally, these attributes are inter-related. As an example, a firm’s ability to develop technological resources and capabilities should depend on its surrounding environment in terms of the technological development in general. In relation, it may influence the company’s attractiveness for potential network partners and thereby help them develop further. Despite lack of generalizability, the characteristics provided by the Born Global configuration may be used as a checklist for managers on newly founded firms who reflect upon internationalization decisions. For firms without these distinctive features, a gradual and stepwise internationalize may prove to be more efficient. Therefore, this thesis suggests that a company in possession of the above attributes can chose to internationalize more rapidly.

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# Conclusions, limitations and future research

*This chapter serves as the conclusion of this thesis in relation to the problem formulation the corresponding research questions. Further, it addresses the limitations faced during the research process and the implications associated. At last, future research suggestions are provided.*

## 7.1 Main conclusions

*This section illustrates the main conclusions based on the proposed problem formulation and research questions of this thesis. With reference to Chapter 1, the general problem formulation and research questions were:*

*Problem formulation:* ***How can Danish companies enhance the possibility to decide whether to internationalize as a Born Global or in the traditional way?***

***RQ1****: What are the characteristics of both Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization, and what are the main differences?*

**RQ2:** *What main attributes must be present to internationalize as a Born Global company and a traditional company, respectively?*

**RQ3:** *Which configuration of attributes should a start-up possess to internationalize rapidly at an earlier stage?*

As a precondition to answering especially research questions one and two, Chapter 3 included a comprehensive review of the literature on Born Global internationalization and traditional Uppsala internationalization. Through identifying key attributes in internationalization literature from both a traditional internationalization perspective and a Born Global perspective, this thesis discusses the difference between Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization. It argues that a different configuration of attributes possessed by a company is necessary to either internationalize as a Born Global company or internationalize in the traditional way. The main differences in the two perspectives is therefore outlined in these different attributes. Whereas it for the traditional companies is resources, market commitment, market knowledge, business networks that is in focus, it is for Born Global companies a global market orientation, the founder’s prior experience, international business networks and technologically differentiated solutions that contributes to internationalizing rapidly. It is these attributes and that are subject to the analysis of this thesis and therefore also the discussion.

Through a mixed method research design the third research question was answered. This thesis collected data both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitatively, a multiple case study was chosen. Five companies were interviewed using the CIT method to search for critical incidents related to the companies’ first international activities. The interviews proved to contribute with valid data about all five companies’ internationalization processes. Findings showed that the configurations of Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization respectively were followed to a large extent by the chosen companies. The quantitative analysis should improve the overall investigation by generalizing the data. However, the quantitative survey research showed lack of evidence towards both configurations. The reasons were firstly a rather small sample size and secondly fragmented answers which resulted in insignificant data. Although the frequency analysis and the multiple logistic analysis provided the thesis with general tendencies about the answers of the respondents. Still, the configurations were rarely followed by the surveyed companies, and the research therefore lacks generalizability. Despite this, the qualitative analysis proved strong evidence towards the configurations. Therefore, this thesis came up with suggestions on how to internationalize rapidly. It argues that if a company possesses the following configuration of attributes global market orientation, the founder’s prior experience, international business networks and technologically differentiated solutions, the company enhances the possibility to decide whether to internationalize rapidly and thereby as a Born Global company. Since the suggestions are primarily based on the qualitative research, companies must take the recommendations for thorough consideration before applying them.

## 7.2 Limitations

This research is conducted following the code of conduct within the laws of social science. However, some limitations according to the applied research methods influence the generalizability of the findings. The research is developed with foundation in the fragmented literature of Born Global theory, and accompanied by well-known stage theories drawn from the traditional internationalization theory.

This study emphasizes a narrow focus regarding the fragmented literature of Born Global firms. Many of the articles included in the literature seem to be of newer date, neglecting many of the original articles about Born Global theory. However, the articles included were the ones suited best for the specific research topic. Due to the fragmented literature, the framework of this study is based on chosen attributes of Born Global literature. Thereby, a limitation is that some of the excluded attributes might occur to have influence on the researched companies. However, the chosen attributes have shown to have appropriate support regarding the findings. The main criterion of being Born Global, in this research, is built on the firm’s pace of internationalization. Thereby, the research is a snapshot of the present international activities of the included firms. Other criteria could have been included, such as the company performance on foreign markets. This is a limitation of this investigation that could be implied, through long-term observations, measuring the included firms’ development and performance over time. Furthermore, the research is based on six branch codes, within the textile, clothing, and leather industry, which have limited the research in focusing on these. Some companies might be excluded, since these branch codes of the companies are based on the primary operations. Thereby, other relevant companies serving the same branch codes, as a secondary profession, could possibly contribute further to the research findings. Regarding the chosen industry, this research is narrowly conducted on this one specific industry. In this regard, findings cannot be generalized and transferred to other industries.

A specific limitation of the case study is the diversity in the case companies and the limited amount of cases. During the process, contact to several companies of interest was initiated, but implications occurred since some companies did not want to participate. Initially, companies within textile were approached; however, the ability to set up an interview ended up including cases of different branch codes. Thereby, the product groups of the cases included are diverse, which caused difficulties regarding the comparison of their internationalization processes. Those limitations are suggested to address in further research of the Danish textile industry. The multiple case studies showed that there exists a convergence related to use of technology and the age of the companies. The two older companies had not applied the use of technology in their internationalization. This should be tested further to determine whether there is further evidence to draw from these conclusions.

Regarding the conducted quantitative analysis, some of the relevant companies were not possible to reach due to the protection of their contact information. Additionally, the limited number of respondents have caused variation in the responses. Thereby, the limitation of respondents influences the findings, which implicated the generalizability of the findings. It is recommended to develop further quantitative research within the field to address this limitation. However, this research presents the tendencies in the responses to be further investigated. Due to the limitations, no universal framework is developed, since the achievement of generalizable data is not achieved. Although, final recommendations are made primarily based on the qualitative findings and the tendencies found in the quantitative analysis.

## 7.3 Future research

This research is limited by the time available to complete the thesis. The implication of this is limited number of cases and lack of time to get enough respondents to make the study generalizable. Therefore, future research should focus on validating the attributes through surveying a larger sample to make the findings stronger. This thesis suggests a longitudinal study that involves repeating observations of the same variables over a longer period. This would enhance the possibility to determine variable patterns over time, as well as it might enhance validity and reliability of the findings compared to a cross-sectional study. Furthermore, this thesis primarily dealt with attributes related to the time between establishment and first international activities. Although interesting data could appear if extending this by involving a long term financial perspective and a more post-internationalization orientation as well. This would provide the analysis and discussion with broader knowledge about the differences in Born Global internationalization and traditional internationalization in the long run, including what attributes should be present to survive in the long run.

This research was based on findings from only one specific industry, which provides the thesis with in-depth knowledge about that specific industry. Despite this, researchers are aware that the findings of this research are not necessarily applicable across industries. Therefore, future research should focus on testing the findings, primarily the attributes on companies from other industries, except the technological sector. The researchers are also aware that findings are not necessarily applicable across countries. To increase generalizability of the results gained in this study, it would be necessary to test the framework by conducting the analysis in other countries.

As also expressed, this research chose attributes based on a rather subjective basis. Therefore, future research could benefit from investigating what exact attributes are the most crucial for Born Global companies. This would require an investigation of a large proportion of existing literature on this field specifically. In addition, this research included several attributes to investigate. An in-depth analysis of one or two attributes would be interesting to make a clearer definition of which attributes are important for Born Global companies. Therefore, further studies of the influence of e.g. the network on the Born Global internationalization process is suggested. This dissertation can thus be used to inspire further study of Born Global internationalization processes. Furthermore, this research neglected industry specific factors such as competition in the market, competition from suppliers etc., that could have had an influence on a company’s ability to compete in the market and therefore also to internationalize. Future research therefore suggests including an analysis of the competition in the market to detect valuable information that can affect a company’s behavior. The above are suggestions on how future research should make recommendations, develop a framework, a reference frame or the like to make suggestions on how Danish companies should internationalize in the future.

**8**

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**9**

# Appendix

*In this section, the appendix is presented by chronological order in relation to when it is presented in the thesis.*

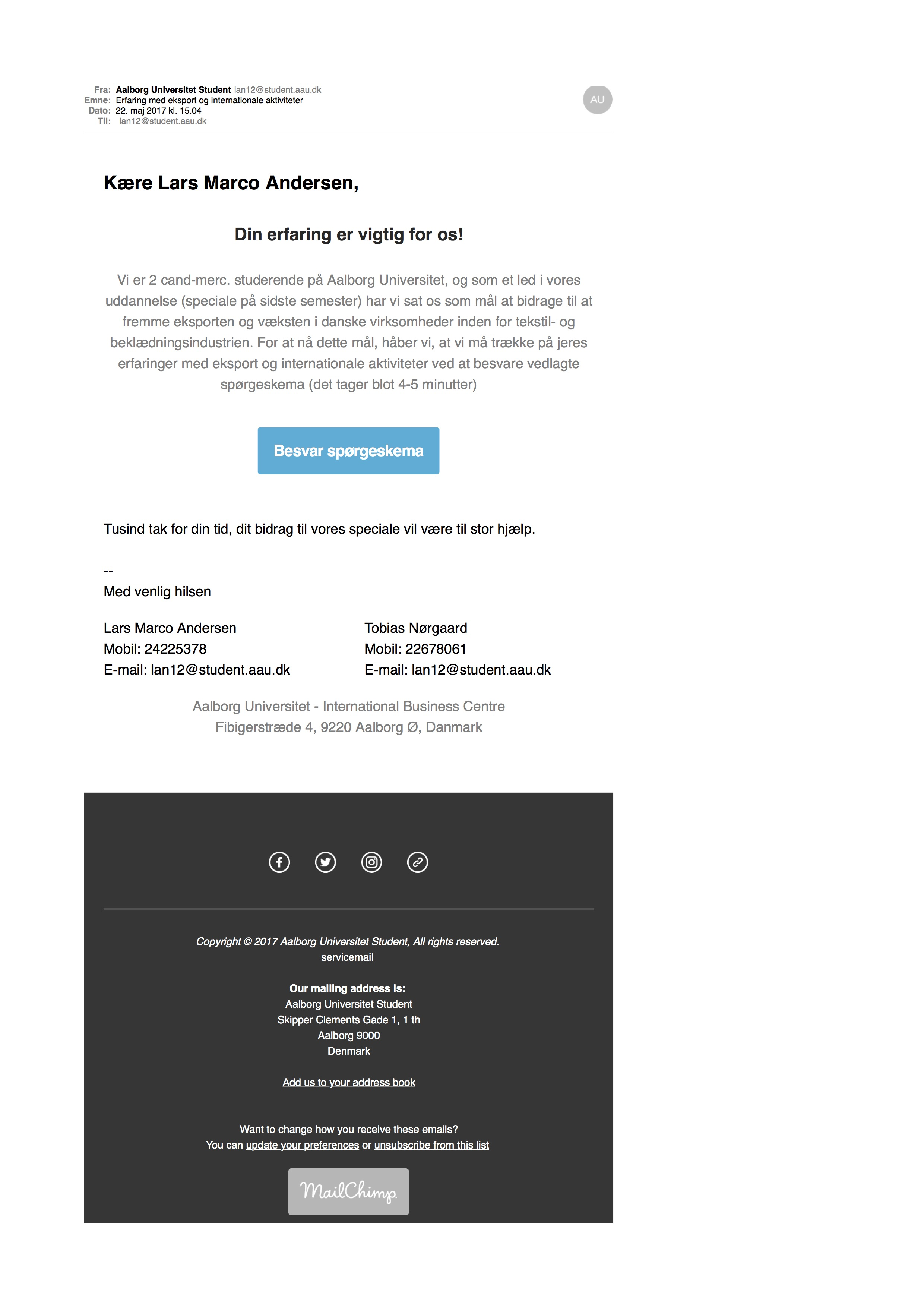
## Appendix 1 – Literature Review

*Appendix 1 presents the literature collected and used in for the literature review in this thesis. The tables serve as an overview for the reader to quickly gain an understanding of the literature reviewed, and works as a the researchers’ guide to conduct the literature review.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Definition:** | | **Dimensions** | **Country/ Context** | **Findings** | **Driving forces** |
| **Article** | **Born Global** | **Traditional** |  |  |  |  |
| **No. 1, 2015, Lidia Danik and Izabel Kowalik** | "Business organizations that, from inception, seek to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries" | **-** | Succes factors of born global companies - Barriers to the development of the born global enterprises | Empirical study - 10 cases from Poland from both the high tech industry and low tech industry | Attributes of the firms such as maintenance of high product quality and custumer focus are threated by managers/founders critical attributes in competition with other internationalized SMEs … Firm factors are central to an international new venture's success. **Three key success factors**: Close contact with the customer and resulting knowledge of his needs, Brand recognition and product quality. Managerial competencies such as responsiveness, ethical business conduct, and experience were treated by mangers as crucial success factors | **Success**: Delivery time, negotiating skills of the salesforce, after sales service, high product quality, flexibility, pricing policy, offer's complex character, customer relations, **Threats**: lack of financing, 'brain drain' by TNCs, lack of possibility to explore new tendencies globally, lack of surficient knowledge, language barrier, errors in managing company, too low domestic market potential, lack of government support, economic crisis, political instability and bureaucracy, exchange rate fluctuations/currency instability, lack of customers trust |
| **No. 2, 2017 Sascha Kraus, Alexander Brem, Miriam Schuessler, Felix Schuessler and Thomas Niemand** | **First**: "The distinguishing characteristics of BGs are that they start internationalizing rapidly, right after their foundation or soon afterwards and sell a high share of their output abroad" **Second**: "25% of total sales in foreign countries in the first year of trading, benchmark of 75% export intensity within two years after inception"**Key dimensions to define BGs**: *Speed* (The internationalization process has to happen within the first five years after foundation) *Scale* (≥25% of a company's total revenue has to be gained through international sales) *Scope* (At least four foreign markets have to be conquered - these markets have to dispose of high psychic, cultural and geographic distance) | "Traditional firms focus on the domestic market for many years and gradually internationalize their operations by building up experience and commitmemt step by step" | Business model design and its role for Born Globals - Links the influence of efficiency-centered and novelty-centered business model design on international firm performance | Empirical study. Quantitative survey with 252 founders of international companies in Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Qualitative case study of 11 Born Globals | **First**, BG companies offer access to products and services that are strongly individualized and sold directly to customers. Product portfolio is narrow and dept of in-house production is high. **Second**, BGs target business is b2b-oriented within international niche markets. BGs mainly serve end customers with whom they buil strong transformational partnerships. **Third**, The core capabilities of a BG company are its strenghts in sales and marketing, as well as technology. **Fouth**, A BG company stands out against the competition either through high efficiency or innovaton; its image is based on speed and its products and services are of high quality. **Fifth**, Due to a combination of products and services BGs have mixed revenue sources which generate more likely low volumes. They are able to achieve high margins and keep their operating leverage low. **Sixth**, BGs pursue a clear growth strategy via international markets. | **Innovativeness** on **individual-level** (entrepreneur, experience and knowledge), **firm-level** (networks and alliances, resources as technological, organizational, relational and human nature, and hubrid structures as extensive outsourcing to partners), **national-level** (country size, advanced economies as reduction in communication and transportation costs). **Uniqueness** of business model, effictiveness of business model design, ability to commercialize innovations (processes, actions, outcomes). |
| **No. 3, 2016 Svante Andersson and Eva Berggren** | "Firms that from inception view the whole world as a market and as a source to access resources … a company that has avhieced a foreign sales volume of at least 25% of total turnover within 3 years of its inception and that aims to derive signivifant competitive advantage from the use of resources and sales of outputs in multiple countries ... Firms access knowledge and resources primarily through their networks, and successful firms have the capacity to adapt to a dynamic global environment" | **-** | The role of universities for entrepreneurship and regional growth - Academic entrepreneurship and university spin-offs | Empirical study. Multiple-case study based on cases originating from Halmstad University (Sweden). 10 cases followed and inverviewed from 2007-2015 | Confirms several factors such as international networks and smaller home market. Different types of entrepreneurs influence firms' international development together with their closeness to a university. Focus on customer demand at inception positively influenced firm growth. The size and characteristics of home market and the 'globalness' of the offer influences the decision to go international. Universities have positive influence on firm creation and its further international growth. | **Performance** (context dependend): Nature of resurces provided by the universities, the individuals as founders, the combination of competences in the entrepreneurial team, developing network capabilities and networks. **Factors**: Customer focus, Technology focus, Entrepreneurs' life cycle, Entrepreneurial network, Home market demand, International market demand |
| **No. 4, 2015 Ewa Baranowska-Prokop and Tomasz Sikora** | "Born globals are typically operating in niche markets and in technology intensive industries … are active in the relatively homogenous markets that enables them to apply standardized strategies suitable for firms with limited resources." | **-** | Success perception of Polish born globals. Compare the impact of two factors: competitive strategy (marketing-mix) and sector-specific determinants (industry type) | Empirical study. Qualitative questionnaire from 256 Polish SMEs. Case sample: Established after 1990, not an outcome of M&A, not a branch of a foreign firm, has not been privatized, belongs to sector C (manufacturing firm), has reached at least 25 percent of revenue from exports | Unlike the born globals from highly developed countries, the success perception of decision makers from Polish born globals is only weakly affected by industry type. Decision makers stongly support that the success of their firms depends on competitive strategy and marketing tools applied. | Branch-specific characteristics (firms foreign succes by industrial branch). **Marketing strategies**: product strategy (quality, new product development capabilities), price strategy (competing through low or high prices, adaptability of price setting to changing market environment), promotion strategy (branding and use of promotion), distribution strategy (capacity to deliver products to customers) |
| **No. 5, 2015 M. Ángeles Rodríguez-Serrano and Félix A. Martín-Velicia** | "Begin export within 3 years of existince. Their exports representing for at least 25% of their total sales volume and operating in high and medium technology environments" | **-** | Superior performance of born global firms through the dynamic capabilities approach - Performance is shaped by a capability to garner valuable knowledge, with a view to its assimilation, its combination with existing knowledge and its exploitation | Empirical study. Sample of 102 Spanish born globals (established less than 15 years ago, began export within 3 years, export represent at least 25% of total sales, operating in high and medium technology environments) | **First**, Companies are better equipped to promote the launch of new products and services, and new management processes and improvements when the integrate the organizational process of absorptive capability into their routines. **Second**, The performance of born globals is shaped by a capability to garner valuable knowledge, with a view to its assimilation and eventual combination with existing knowledge and finally, its exploitation in line with market requirements. **Third**, Absorptive capability is the key to success. **Fourth**, Capturing, absorbing, and exploiting the knowledge that consistently held with the aim of creating value will lead to the development of an absorptive dynamic capability. | Market orientation (organizational culture that gives rise to characteristic values and beliefs that deliver superior value to customers), Absorptive capability (assimilation and the retention of knowledge), Innovation performance (capitalize on changes that occur in the environment through creation of innovation products meeting needs of emerging markets), Firm performance (reinvent, innovate and develop new products) |
| **No. 6, 2017 M. Ángeles Rodríguez-Serrano and Enrique Martin-Armario** | "small and medium-sized enterprises venture into internationalization early on and have a global vision of their markets" | "Traditionally, firms followed the pattern of gradually involve themselves in a slow process of internationalization" | Dynamic absorption capacity and the influence of an entrepreneurial market-oriented culture of born globals | Empirical study. Sample of 102 Spanish born globals (established less than 15 years ago, began export within 3 years, export represent at least 25% of total sales, operating in high and medium technology environments) | **First**, Dynamic absorptive capacity plays an essential role in the innovation performance. **Second**, The organizational culture are important in the deployment of the absorptive capacity.Third, deployment of absorptive capacity is necessary in managing knowledge and turns it into innovative products adapted to the demands of the market, also assist to manage the risks inherent in internationalization and to accumulate resources that allow exploitation of the opportunities. | **Market orientation** (reactive, proactive), **Entrepreneurial orientation** (innovation, risk assumption, proactivity), **Dynamic absorptive capacity:** exploratory learning (recognize, assimilate), transformative learning (maintain, reactive), exploitative learning (transmute, apply), **Innovation performance** (administrative innovation, technical innovation) |
| **No. 7, 2016 Rubina Romanello and Maria Chiarvesio** | "small entrepreneurial firms that derive a substantial proportion of their revenues from selling their products or services in international markets from or soon after establishment" | **-** | Factors influencing growth during entry and post-entry internationalization stages. The 'growth process' of the born global are investigated with particular focus on the 'transition' of the venture from the entry to the post-entry phase | Empirical study. Exploratory case study (interviews) of six Italian manufacturing born globals at different stages of development | The entrepreneurial capabilities of the founders play an important role in driving the early internationalization during the entry stage, while firm variables become fundamental to settle the born globals growth in the long run. During the passage from the entry to the post-entry stage, born globals face a turning point that represents a crucial phase of transition for the initial survivability. | **Entry phase**: Individual (founders' characteristics, backgrounds, networks, capabilities) Firm (firm orientation, strategies, resources) Environment (home market, target market, industry) **Post-entry phase**: Entrepreneurial team, organizational learning, orientations, dynamic capabilities, R&D, technology, marketing, production |
| **No. 8, 2015 Jurgita Sekliuckiene** | "Born globals, which are often entrepreneurial, small and high-tech oriented, tend to adopt a global market vision from the beginning of their activities and embark on rapid internationalization through exportation or any other entry mode, thus skipping some stages of the traditional internationalization process" | **-** | Linking entrepreneurial motivation, orientation and network relationship | Empirical study. Interview survey sample of 28 Lithuanian born globals (companies have international activities, income of at least 25% from international activities,) | **First**, main motives which push born global firms to act quickly in international markets are risk distribution and small Lithuanian market. **Second**, Entrepreneurship, knowledge and abilities of born global's managers makes the greatest influence upon the beginning of internationalization of firms. **Third**, external relations and the role of networks are an influential factor and the born globals collaborate with various national and international organizations. **Sum-up**, entrepreneurial features of the manager and organization contribute to entrepreneurial start-up survival and activity development. Vision, flexibility, ability adapt in an indefinite situation as well as formation of a team becomes very important. Proactiveness towards international opportunities as risk attitude and innovativeness are most important features. The proactiveness towards opportunities draws from active interaction with customers and other external partners. The accelerator of internationalization becomed the effect of network and partnership support between born global firms and their partners. Universities provide support, knowledge and infrastructure. | **Born global network**: 1) International entrepreneurial orientation, motivation and opportunity 2) Entrepreneur's features 3) Firm's resources 4) Characteristics of the network 5) Suppliers, suppliers' partners 6) Customers, customers' partners 7) Competitors, competitors' alliances, universities and research centres, NGOs, GOs 8) Technology |
| **No. 9, 2014 Liliya Altshuler Oxtorp** | "An INV is a business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries" | **-** | Aspects of dynamic managerial capability of technology-based international new ventures - Long-term competitive advantage | Empirical study. Qualitative longitudinal process case study of a Danish firm. | Successful performance of technology-based International New Ventures in the long term are depended on dynamic managerial capabilities. Several aspects influence the dynamic managerial capability: 1) Wide-reaching environmental scanning processes 2) Involving managers from different levels and functions in the environmental scanning processes 3) Implementing formal structures and decision rules for R&D resource allocation based on business, technological and strategic fit 4) Understanding and protecting the firm's core competencies 5) Internal processes for knowledge sharing & learning among different levels of specialists & managers 6) Collegial managerial decision making 7) External supervisory board | The foundation process, strategic alliances, product development, management, dynamic capabilities |
| **No. 10, 2014 Sarah Mahdjour and Sebastian Fischer** | "Born globals or international new ventures are young companies that internationalize early after their inception" "Born global makes a first attempts towards internationalization within the first three years of its lifecycle and a second attempt within the following three years, and second, the internationalization activities take place in five or more countries, two different cultural clusters or two different geographic regions. In order to enter markets, born globals exploit various opportunities to access networks, partners and build strategic alliances via licensing, joint ventures or franchising" |  | Motivations and benefits of five early internationalising spin-alongs in the Information Communication Technology industry | Empirical study. Multiple case study (interviews) of five of Telekom Innovation Laboratories (Germany) spin-along ventures | Early internationalization can avoid or reduce challenges that spin-alongs face when entering domestic market. Four major motivations for early internationalization is 1) avoid termination based on parent's perceived threat of cannibalisation of existing products, 2) enable a venture's collaboration with competitors, 3) overcome restrictions of parental assets in the domestic market, 4)address markets that offer greater chances for success than domestic market does. | Entrepreneurial orientation, the ability to enter international markets early, to protect intangible assets, to penetrate market niches. |
| **No. 11, 2005 Alex Rialp, Josep Rialp, David Urbano and Yancy Vaillant** | "The so-called born global approach raises the issue of accelerated internationalization, as these firms seem to become international soon after their establishment" | "The so-called traditional or gradualist approach posits that internationalization is a slow, incremential process" | Factors and specific conditions underlying the emergence and further expansion of born-global exporters - Compared to other counterparts, which do not share their rapid internationalization character from inception. | Empirical study. Comparative case study of four Spanish exporters (both low and high tech, manufacturing and service industries, located in urban and rural areas) | Both the gradual development pattern abroad, as described by the traditional stage models, and the early and accelerated export internationalization process underlying the born-global model have been indeed found to constitute two consistent and distinctive patterns of firm's international expansion. Second, born globals seem to be more entrepreneurial regarding their export entry behaviour into foreign markets than gradual exporters. | **Founder's characteristics** (managerial vision, prior international experience, managerial commitment, networking), **Organizational capabilities** (market knowledge and market commitment, intangible assets, value creation sources) **Strategic focus** (Extent and scope of international strategy. Selection, orientation, and relationships with foreign customers. Strategic flexibility.) |
| **No. 12, 2007 Susan Freeman and S. Tamer Cavusgil** | "firms that interationalize within three years of establishment", "firms that achieve a significant international presence within two years", "born globals enter foreign markets between two and six years after inception", **finally** "companies that from or near founding obtain a substantial portion of total revenue from sales in international markets" | "Focus on the domestic market and gradually internationalize their operations, slowly building up experience and commitment" | Commitment states among managers of born globals | Empirical study. Qualitative exploratory case study of 12 born globals from Australia | **First**, Entrepreneurs' capabilities and their networks' capabilities are the key factors that influence the mind-sets of top managers with regars to their environment and, ultimately, their firms' international expansion. **Second**, presenting a proposed typology of four entrepreneurial attitudinal states (approaches) for accelerated internationalization as 1) The responder 2) The opportunist 3) The experimentalist 4) The strategist | **Environment**: Industry factors (Market; smallness, saturation, isolation, and Effects of globalization), Internal firm-based factors (Investment; network knowledge, ambitions, interests, connected relationships, network internationalization, and Firm factors; managerial commitment, organizational characteristics) **Internationalization (attitude)**: Attitude of Top Managers (international orientation, psychic distance, decisions, values, vision) **Entreprenurial Capabilities**: Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking **Capability of the Network**: Relationships (person centered, organizational centered) **Strategic Partnerships**: Relational Entry Modes (alliances, joint ventures, deinternationalization through exclusive reseller arrangements) |
| **No. 13, 2007 Riku Laanti, Mika Gabrielsson and Peter Gabrielsson** | "from inception, seek to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of the resources and sales of outputs to multiple countries" | Traditional theories of the internationalization of a firm define it as a incremental and gradual process … first doing business within domestic markets, then started to internationalize by entering neighboring international markets, and later expansion to other countries, still on same continent and only thereafter starts to globalize by entering the markets of other countries | Globalization strategies of business-to-business and its unique capabilities and resources that enable born global firms to enter global markets rapidly | Empirical study. Cross-case analysis of 4 born globals from the Finnish wireless technology sector | **First**, there exists a clear interconnection between the resources and capabilities of the company and the globalization strategies of born globals. **Second**, the complementarities of the experiences and skills of the founding team is a significant factor influencing the rapid globalization, as well as resources acquired through forming links with global actors. | **Resources and capabilities (firm-level)**: Founders/management (international experience, skills, entrepreneurship), Networks (domestic network actors, international network actors), Finance (founders/banks, government subsidies, private investors, strategic investors), Innovation (technological innovations, new rapidly growing business, first in niche markets) |
| **No. 14, 2009 Anna Morgan, Thomas And Marian V. Jones** | "The process of internationalization for such firms is neither necessarily incremental, nor constrained by a lack of resources … geography may not be a significant problem and firms are likely to extend their efforts over several rather than few countries" | "internationalization dynamics is presented as a sequential and often linear process identified by distinct stages of development with no clear demarcation of time before or between stages" | Post-entry dynamics of internationalization. Investigating speed of internationalization as rapid, regular and reluctant internationalizers. | Empirical study. Quantitative survey (structured questionnaire) of 200 British SMEs within different sectors | Including International New Ventures and longer established firms, Rapid international sales development is associated with higher dependence on one key country market, higher country market diversity of sales and higher reliance on informantion and communication technologies. | Speed of international sales development: Knowledge intensity, reliance on information and communication technology, international diversification strategy, international channel strategy |
| **No. 15, 2007 Aspelund, Madsen and Moen** | "There is certainly no concurrence in the literature about the definition of an INV" | **-** | International market strategy - Founding process versus international marketing strategy - Organizational issues versus international marketing strategy - The environment versus international marketing strategy - International marketing strategy versus performance | Review article. Collecting the published articles from 1992 to 2004. Only empirical studies included. 41 empirical studies identified. | Recent empirical findings as to INVs offer insight beyond traditional models of internationalization, and more theory driven research in the area is required. | **International Marketing Strategy**: Rapidness of the internationalization process, Niche products, Commodity products, International intensity, Global diversity, Market selection, Entry modes. **The founding process**. **Organizational factors**. **Environmental factors**. |
| **No. 16, 1997 Tage Koed Madsen and Per Servais** | "a business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources from and the sale of outputs in multiple countries" | Both streams (U-model and I-model) of research contend that firms become international in a slow and incremental manner which may be due to lack of knowledge about foreign markets, high risk aversion, high perceived uncertainty, or similar factors | - Driving forces and theoretical approaches - Links to orriginal Uppsala Internationalization model - links to other approaches and theories - theoretically and empirically derived propositions - Founder, organization and Environment | Summarize emperical evidence reported about Born Globals in mostly high-tech companies | A strong entrepreneur with international experience is crucial, penetrating niche-markets is important, hybrid strcutures are important, high innovative skills, firms in small domestic markets have a higher propensity to become Born Globals. | Foreign client followership, targeting niche markets, experience prior to establishment, personal networking of the founders/managers, earlier education, changing market conditions, technological changes, client followership abilities, market knowledge |
| **No. 17, 2004 Mika Gabrielsson and V.H. Manek Kirpalani** | we define that born globals ‘‘from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sales of outputs in multiple countries’ - born globals from their inception pursue a vision of becoming global and often globalize rapidly without any preceding long term domestic or internationalization period | **-** | The economic school and the process school - Entrepreneurship and channel importance | Finland, Israel - mainly high-tech companies | Thus, the major imperative emerges that the born global must utilize large channels provided by MNCs, networks, and/or the Internet to receive substantial revenues and cash flow rapidly. These channels also provide learning, technology, and evolutionary growth | MNCs acting as systems integrators, MNCs distributing born global products/services, Networks, Internet, value systems |
| **No. 18, 2011 Murray Taylor, Robert Jack** | a ‘small and usually technology oriented firm that expands into international markets, virtually from its inception' | **-** | Internationalization pace, scale and pattern | Australian, non high-tech companies | case study of four non-high-tech Australian ‘born global’ firms suggest that entrepreneurial interpretation is a factor in determining the pace with which a firm internationalizes. Other key implications include the importance of product imitability in assessing the extent of a firm’s international operations, the significance of psychic distance in the assessment of prospective international markets, and that entry mode choice is influenced by the prevailing trends established in each firm’s industry and the need to maximize its internal resources. | Founders entrepreneurial drive, enter countries with similar culture as your own to enable your self to show a successful product history, small size of domestic market, maximize entry into each market to gain market share, careful market selection, global vision, partnerships abroad, right business culture to replicate to locals, search niche-markets with innovative products |
| **No. 19, 2012 Kalanit Efrat, Aviv Shoham** | **-** | **-** | Long term and short term performance drivers | 107 Israels Born Globals from Israel | BGs initially entering high-growth markets have stronger short-term strategic performance. - BGs initially entering highly technologically turbulent markets show stronger short-term strategic performance than BGs entering stable markets. - BGsinitiallyenteringhigh-risktargetcountriesshowweaker short-term strategic performance than BGs entering low-risk countries - BGs operating in high-risk countries have a lower probability of survival than BGs operating in high-risk countries. - BGs with stronger technological/R&D capabilities have a higher probability of survival than BGs with low technological capabilities. - BGs that base their marketing capabilities on developing market knowledge will show stronger short-term strategic performance than BGs without such knowledge. - BGs that base their marketing capabilities on active mea- surements of marketing effectiveness have a higher probability of survival than those BGs who lack this. - BGs with stronger management capabilities have a higher probability of survival than those BGs with weaker management capabilities. | Enter high-growth markets, enter highly technologically turbulent markets, enter low risk countries, have strong technological/R&D capabilities, base marketing capabilities on market knowledge, use active measurements of marketing effectiveness, strong management capabilities |
| **No. 20, 2012 Igor Kalinic and Cipriano Forza** | - | The U-model describes the SMEs internationalization process as ‘‘a gradual acquisition, integration and use of knowledge about foreign markets and operations and a . . . successively increasing commitment to foreign markets’’. "In this dynamic model, internationalization of the firm is seen as a process of a company’s international involvement increasing as a result of different types of learning" | Rapid internationalization of traditional SMEs: processes, patterns | Multiple case-study of SMEs of Northeast Italy from different industries | We argue that traditional SMEs are able to speed up their internationalization process by, thus, rapidly catching up with the increasing global competition | Prior international experience/knowledge, international networking, managerial vision, strategic focus: proactive and highly aggressive international strategy, direct and close relationship with foreign partners, flexibility in adapting to external opportunities. |
| **No. 21, 2011 Parves Sultan, Ho Yin Wong** | “business organizations that from inception seek to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries”.. "as the firm that reaches foreign sales of at least 25% within three years of their establishment"... "born globals begin exporting one or several products within two years of their establishment and tend to export at least a quarter of total sales". | The conventional stage theories emphasise the need to build up the domestic base thoroughly before entering the international arena, and posit that internationalisation is a gradual process | Entrepreneurial cognition, motivation, resources, knowledge, network --> financial and strategic performance | Study Born Globals from a entrepreneurial cognition and motivation perspective. | Based on a existing literature, this article finds that entrepreurial cognition and motivation has a positive relationship with Born Global firms' strategic and financial performance | Entrepreneurial traits, skills and motivations, technological competences, unique products development, quality focus and leveraging foreign distributor competences. |
| **No. 22, 2008 Neri Karra, Nelson Philips, Paul Tracey** | Firms that operate internationally from at or near their inception | **-** | Entrepreneurial capabilities: What are these capabilities, where they come from and how they can be developed | An in-depth case study of an entrepreneu who created two Born Globals in Turkey. | The case-study shows that international opportunity identification, institutional bridging and preference and capacity for cross-cultural collaboration are key entreprneurial capabilities when creating a Born Global. The Born Global must experience, connect and explore to build these capabilities. | Entrepreneurial capabilities: international opportunity identification, institutional bridging, capacity and preference for cross-cultural collaboration |
| **No. 23, 2004 Knight and Cavusgil** | "Business organizations that, from or near their founding, seek superior international business performancefrom the application of knowledge-based resources to the sale of outputs in multiple countries" | "Operate in the domestic market for many years and gradually evolve into international trade" | Born Global firms as early adopters of internationalization - Key orientations and strategies that engender international success among innovative firms. | Mixed method research. Qualitative in-dept interviews of 33 professionals to develop key constructs and linkages. Quantitative survey of 900 manufacturing firms from United States. | Youth and lack of experience, as well as paucity of financial, human, and tangible resources, are no longer major impediments to the large-scale internationalization and global success of the firm. | International entrepreneurial orientation, and international marketing orientation construct and link to global technological competence, unique products development, quality focus, leveraging foreign distributor competencies, which constructs performance in international markets. |
| **No. 24, 2007 Tiia Vissak** | "True born globals are those firms that internation- alize during the first three years since their establishment, enter five or more foreign countries and earn at least 25 percent of turnover from abroad"… "these firms should be able to generate at least a half of total sales from outside their own continent maximum after 15 years since starting their operations"... | The Uppsala assumes that internationalization is usually a long, slow and incremental process driven by experiential market knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge is gradual. Consequently, companies pass through steps from no regular export activities to export via independent representatives/agents, overseas sales and production/manufacturing subsidiaries. They first begin exporting to neighboring countries or the comparatively well-known and similar ones, and after that, try to enter farther markets | The Business (environment), the firm's network relationships, the management's global orientation, unique resources and capabilities. | Case-study of four Estonian fast internationalizers in the biotechnology and IT industry | From the case study evidence it can be concluded that all the four companies have been relatively successful in foreign markets despite their young age: they have already entered some countries outside Europe | Network relationships, stable market conditions, small home market, founder or managers' role: global orientation, developing unique resources and capabilities, selection of co-operation partners |
| **No. 25, 2008 Morten Rask, Jesper Strandskov, Dorthe Døjbak Håkansson** | **-** | The internationalization of the firm constitutes the process of adaptation, change, and development in a long range of successive transformations within the firm’s fundamental functions, systems, and structures. | Four perspectives of internationalization of firms | This paper offers a meta-theoretical overview of four perspectives within international business economics | Internationalization theory can be classified into four perspectives: An institutional-economic, a strategic competition, a learning and an inter-organizational perspective. | **-** |
| **No. 26, 2004 Sylvie Chetty and Colin Campbell-Hunt** | Firms that began to internationalize within two years of their inception. In addition, 80% of their sales are in global markets | as firms learn more about a specific market, they become more committed to it by invest ing more resources into that market. The learning and commitment stages that a firm gradually progresses through as it internationalizes are as follows: no regular export, export through agents, founding of an overseas sales subsidiary, and overseas production. In this traditional view, firms make their export debut when they have a strong domestic market base. The choice of markets also occurs in stages; firms begin to export to a market that hasa close psychic distance, and then they expand export sales into markets that have increasingly greater psychic distnace. | Time to internationalization, capability to internationalize, importance of the home market, psychic distance, influence of firm strategy, and use of networks. | Literature review of existing theory + In-depth historiographic case research of 16 New Zealand firms | Domestic market pays a key role, prior internationalization experience was not a key as such to success for the Born Globals, no differentiation of Born Globals and trad. Internationalizers when it comes to extent and pace of internationalization, the logic of psychic distance continues to apply to firms that they have classified as Born Globals, the pace of learning might need to be more rapid among Born Global firms, We conclude that strategy-driven rapid internationalization is not a new phenomenon but that, in the born-global firm, it applies from the firm's inception. Use of ICT is not a powerfull discriminator between Born Global and traditional internationalization. Use of networks of business partners distinctively characterizes the Born-Global firms. | Rapidity and scope of the networks developed by Born Globals, pace of learning needs to be more rapid, |
| **No. 27, 1994 Oviatt & McDougall** | "A business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources from and the sale of outputs in multiple countries" | **-** | Comparison to stage theory, the changing international environment, necessary and sufficient elements for sustainable international new ventures | **-** | Technological development has been a key factor in the absence of international new ventures, due to quicker communication ways and shorter transportation time etc. Four different types of international new ventures exist: Export/import start-up, multinational trader, geographically focused start-up and Global start-up. | Alternative governance structures, foreign location advantages, unique resources, network structures, technology, mobility of knowledge, |
| **No. 28, 2009 Holtbrügge and Wessely** | "A BGF is a company with at least five foreign operations in two or more cultural clusters and geographical regions. The time span between foundation and the first foreign-market entry should be no longer than three years. At least 25% of total sales shpuld be achieved outside the home market". | **-** | Founder, firm, environment (both industrial and national), Resource-based view, market-based view, initiating forces and success factors | Literature review of 19 case studies from different countries and industries | Acknowledge the use of RBV and market-based view to analyse Born Globals, Country-specific factors (e.g. market size, intensity of competition), industry-specific factors (e.g. technological intensity), organizational, physical, technological, financial resources (organization), social, personal, physical resources (founder) | International experience, networks with suppliers, customer and cooperation partners, market knowledge, clear strategic focus and vision, technological leadership, entreprenerial and international orientation for the founders and top-managers. |

## Appendix 2 – E-mail to respondents

*Appendix 2 shows the E-mail sent to the target population. The e-mail was addressed to the contact person of each company.*



## Appendix 3 – E-mail questionnaire

*Appendix 3 shows the questionnaire distributed to the target population.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Kære Virksomhedsleder,**  Vi er 2 cand. merc. studerende på Aalborg Universitet, som er i gang med det afsluttende semester, hvor vi undersøger virksomheders internationale aktiviteter med fokus på, hvordan internationaliseringen, f.eks. eksporten startede og udviklede sig. For at lave en god og relevant opgave vil vi gerne - udover teoretiske betragtninger - inddrage de praktiske erfaringer, som udvalgte danske virksomheder har haft. Vi håber, at du vil dele dine erfaringer med os ved at besvare nedenstående lille spørgeskema. Spørgeskemaet består af 7 spørgsmål og tager ca. 5-7 minutter at udfylde.  For at få et fyldestgørende billede er det vigtigt at alle spørgsmål bliver besvaret. Dine svar behandles naturligvis fortroligt.  Vi håber du vil dele dine erfaringer med os og ser frem til at modtage dine svar. Har du spørgsmål, kommentarer eller behov for yderligere information, kan du kontakte os på følgende e-mail: tnarga12@student.aau.dk eller direkte på telefon: 22678061.  **Med venlig hilsen** Lars Marco Andersen & Tobias Nørgaard  Aalborg Universitet - International Business Centre - Fibigerstræde 4, 9220 Aalborg Ø, Danmark |

Opgiv venligst din stilling i virksomheden (F.eks. direktør, salgschef el.lign)

\_\_\_\_\_

Inden for hvilken industri er jeres virksomhed?

(1) ❑ Fremstilling af boligtekstiler [13.92.10]

(2) ❑ Fremstilling af færdige tekstilvarer undtagen boligtekstiler og beklædningsartikler [13.92.20]

(3) ❑ Fremstilling af andre tekstiler i.a.n. [13.99.00]

(4) ❑ Fremstilling af beklædningsartikler af læder [14.11.00]

(5) ❑ Fremstilling af underbeklædning [14.14.00]

(6) ❑ Fremstilling af andre beklædningsartikler samt tilbehør [14.19.00]

(7) ❑ Anden branche (angiv venligst) \_\_\_\_\_

I hvilket årstal blev virksomheden etableret?

\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
| De følgende spørgsmål vil omhandle din virksomheds internationale aktiviteter som f.eks. eksport. |

Hvilket land var det første virksomheden eksporterede til/etablerede internationale aktiviteter i og hvornår? (antal år efter virksomhedens etablering)

(1) ❑ Et nordisk land (Sverige, Norge, Finland eller Island)

(2) ❑ Tyskland eller England

(3) ❑ Andet europæisk land

(4) ❑ Ikke-EU land

(5) ❑ Endnu ingen internationale aktiviter

Hvor betydningsfulde har nedenstående faktorer været for, at I ikke har internationale aktiviteter endnu?

|  | 1 - Ikke betydningsfuld | 2 - Lidt betydningsfuld | 3 - Hverken eller | 4 - Betydningsfuld | 5 - Meget betydningsfuld |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| At vi har valgt udelukkende at fokusere på det danske marked | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vi har haft svært ved at etablere kontakt til udenlandske samarbejdspartnere | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vi har vurderet, at internationale aktiviteter har været forbundet med for store risici | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vores produkt ikke er testet og afprøvet på internationale markeder | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vi har manglet international erfaring på ledelsesgangene og i medarbejderstaben | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vi ikke har haft succes med at etablere det nødvendige netværk og relationer til rette aktører (både på hjemmemarkedet og internationalt) | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vi ikke har haft tilstrækkelige økonomiske ressourcer til rådighed | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vi gerne ville have etableret os solidt på hjemmemarkedet | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| At vi ikke havde begrænset teknologiske kompetencer | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |

Hvilke af følgende måder benyttede I da I påbegyndte jeres internationale aktiviteter? (Vælg gerne flere svarmuligheder)

(1) ❑ Eksport via agenter lokaliseret i Danmark

(2) ❑ Eksport via agenter lokaliseret i udlandet

(3) ❑ Distributører i udlandet

(4) ❑ Etablering af eget salgskontor i udlandet

(5) ❑ Etablering af produktion og salg i udlandet

(6) ❑ Joint venture med udenlandsk partner

(7) ❑ Licensproduktion

(8) ❑ Franchising

(9) ❑ Strategisk alliance

(10) ❑ Anden måde (angiv venligst) \_\_\_\_\_

Da virksomheden påbegyndte sine internationale aktiviteter, hvor betydningsfulde var da nedenstående faktorer? (Besvar venligst alle spørgsmål)

|  | 1 - Ikke betydningsfuld | 2 - Lidt betydningsfuld | 3 - Hverken eller | 4 - Betydningsfuld | 5 - Meget betydningsfuld |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (S\_11) At vi kunne påbegynde eksport/internationale aktiviteter til nærmarkederne | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_12) At vi kunne nå de udenlandske kunder gennem salgskanaler, der ikke krævede mange ressourcer/investeringer, f.eks. agenter | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_13) At vi kunne nå de udenlandske kunder uden at løbe større risici | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_14) At vi kunne starte i det små og få erfaringer før vi tog større skridt | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_15) At vi havde et produkt, som var veletableret og afprøvet på det danske marked | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_16)At vi havde kontakter - et netværk - på det udenlandske marked allerede før starten | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_17) At vi før etableringen havde erfaring med internationale aktiviteter fra tidligere erhverv | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_18) At vi kunne etablere salg på mange markeder samtidig | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_19) At vi kunne identificere partnere på mange markeder samtidig uden større investeringer | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_20) At vi kunne se, at potentialet på hjemmemarkedet var begrænset | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |
| (S\_34) At vi kunne udnytte teknologiske kompetencer til at udvide til nye markeder | (1) ❑ | (2) ❑ | (3) ❑ | (4) ❑ | (5) ❑ |

Hvilket land var det andet virksomheden eksporterede til/etablerede internationale aktiviteter i og hvornår (antal år efter virksomhedens etablering)

(1) ❑ Et nordisk land (Sverige, Norge, Finland eller Island)

(2) ❑ Tyskland eller England

(3) ❑ Andet europæisk land

(4) ❑ Ikke-EU land

(5) ❑ Endnu ikke udvidet internationale aktiviter til flere lande

|  |
| --- |
| For at dine besvarelser bliver gemt, er det vigtigt at du klikker på knappen "afslut".  Vi takker for din besvarelse, du har været til stor hjælp.  Venlig hilsen Lars og Tobias |

## Appendix 4 – Validating the sample

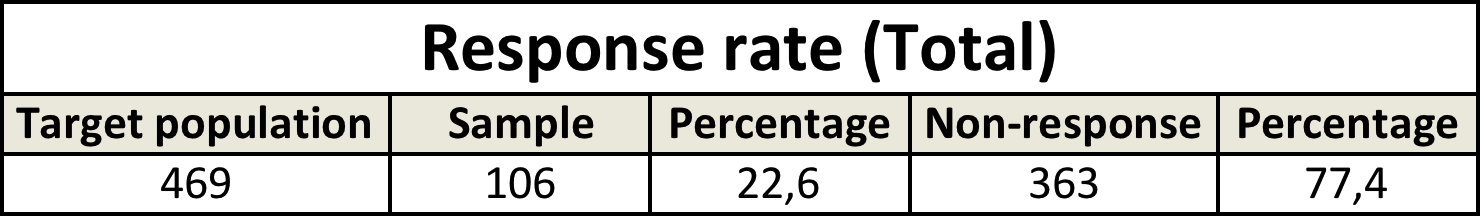
*Appendix 4 contains all calculations used for validating the sample of this thesis. First, this includes a digital Excel spreadsheet containing relevant contact information of the target population for the survey. Next it contains calulations of response rate. Afterwards, the response rate of the survey is calculated. Then the frenquencies of branch codes for the target population and the sample are compared. At last, the all companies’ year of foundation is compared. All calculations are made to validate the sample.*

##### Target population for the survey

*This document is attached as digital appendix.*

##### Survey response rate

*The below shows the response rate according to the companies’ available information in the digital Excel spreadsheet.*



##### Target population versus sample frequencies

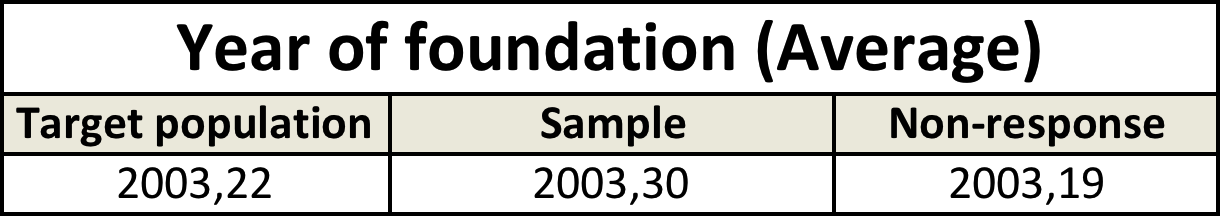
*The following calucations show the frequency distribution output from SPSS. Using the available company information from the target population and the respondents’ company information (presented in Appendix 4), the branch code frequencies of the two groups was caluclated.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TARGET POPULATION FREQUENCIES** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | **Frequency** | | **Percent** | | **Cumulative Percent** | |
| Valid | A) Manufacture of other apparel and accessories | 202 | | 43,1 | | 43,1 | |
| B) Manufacture of other textiles | 43 | | 9,2 | | 52,2 | |
| C) Manufacture of clothing of leather | 13 | | 2,8 | | 55,0 | |
| D) Manufacture of home textiles | 84 | | 17,9 | | 72,9 | |
| E) Manufacture of finished textile products, except home textiles or clothing | 93 | | 19,8 | | 92,8 | |
| F) Manufacture of undergarments | 34 | | 7,2 | | 100,0 | |
| Total | 469 | | 100,0 | |  | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SAMPLE FREQUENCIES** | | | | | |
|  | | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
| Valid | A) Manufacture of other apparel and accessories | 41 | 38,7 | 38,7 |
| B) Manufacture of other textiles | 8 | 7,5 | 46,2 |
| C) Manufacture of clothing of leather | 3 | 2,8 | 49,1 |
| D) Manufacture of home textiles | 17 | 16,0 | 65,1 |
| E) Manufacture of finished textile products, except home textiles or clothing | 26 | 24,5 | 89,6 |
| F) Manufacture of undergarments | 11 | 10,4 | 100,0 |
| Total | 106 | 100,0 |  |

##### Companies’ year of foundation

*The below calculation illustrates the response rate according to the companies’ available information in the digital Excel spreadsheet.*



## Appendix 5 – Interview guide

*Appendix 5 includes the interview guide applied for the conducted interviews.*

**1) Nærmarkeders betydning**

Hvor vigtigt var jeres kendskab til nærmarkeder i forhold til internationalisering?

Havde det nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning havde det, at i kunne udvide til nærmarkederne?

**2) Entry mode**

Hvordan ekspanderede i til internationale markeder, brugte i salgsagenter?

Havde det nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning havde det, at i brugte salgskanaler, der ikke krævede mange ressourcer/investeringer?

**3) Reducering af risiko/Kalkuleret risici**

Har risikoen forbundet med internationalisering været en begrænsning hos jer?

Havde risici nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning har lysten til at løbe risici haft?

**4) Starte i de små**

Havde det nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning havde det, at I ønskede erfaringer fra hjemmemarkedet inden i etablerede jer i udlandet

**5) Produktkvaliteten**

Har jeres produkts kvalitet haft indflydelse på afsætning til nye markeder?

Havde det nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning havde det, at I havde et veletableret og afprøvet produkt på det danske marked?

**6) Etablering af netværk/Eksisterende netværk**

Hvordan har i anvendt eller etableret partnerskaber eller alliancer med udenlandske aktører?

Havde det nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning har udenlandske kontakter haft før og under etableringen af virksomheden?

**7) Tidligere erfaringer/Founder**

Hvordan har grundlæggeren af virksomheden påvirket dens udvikling i forhold til at satse på nye markeder?

Havde det nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning har grundlæggeren haft i forbindelse med internationaliseringen? Havde vedkommende internationale erfaringer virksomheden kunne trække på?

**8) Markedets modenhed/Homogent globalt marked**

Hvordan har den globale tekstil og beklædnings industri påvirket jeres internationalisering? Har der været efterspørgsel fra udlandet fra starten, på netop jeres produkter?

Har det haft betydning, om i kunne etablere salg på mange markeder samtidig?

**9) Meget internationaliseret marked/Internationaliseringsgrad**

Hvordan har den globale konkurrencesituation præget jeres eksport?

Har det haft betydning, om i kunne identificere partnere på mange markeder samtidig uden større investeringer?

**10) Størrelse på hjemmemarked**

Hvordan har Danmark som hjemmemarked påvirket jeres internationalisering? Har i brugt Danmark som test for nye markeder? Har i vundet markedsandele i Danmark før i gik på nye markeder? Har det haft betydning, at Danmark er et lille land?

**11) Teknologiske ressourcer**

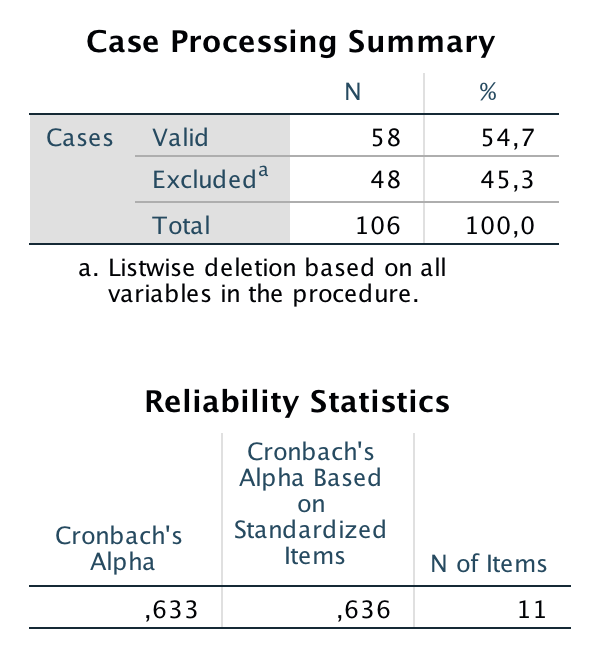
Har i haft særlig teknologi og faciliteter i har kunne gøre brug af i forbindelse med erobring af nye markeder?

Havde det nogen betydning/Hvilken betydning har de teknologiske ressourcer haft?

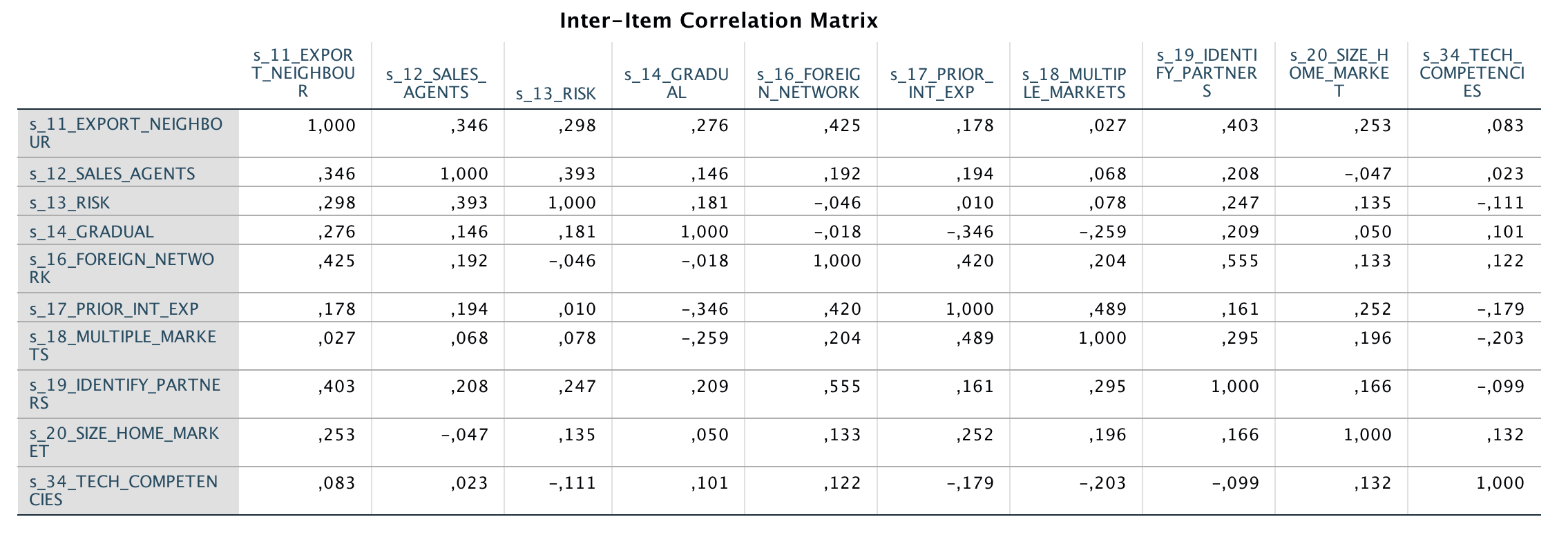
## Appendix 6 – Chronbach’s Alpha

*Appendix 6 presents the Chronbach’s Alpha outputs from SPSS, as well as the inter-item correlation matrix used to address the reliability of the survey.*

##### Cronbach’s Alpha test



##### Inter-Item Correlation Matrix (Cronbach’s Alpha analysis)



## Appendix 7 – Transcription of interview with United Textile Group

*Appendix 7 presents the transcription of the interview (in Danish) with UTG. In addition an audio file with the recorded interview are attached as a digital appendix file.*

* Mogens Ravnholdt Jensen (Informant - Head of Finance and IT)
* Tobias Nørgaard (Interviewer)
* Lars Marco Andersen (Interviewer)

##### Transcription

MOGENS: Vi laver private label jersey production, og det betyder vi producer for mærkerne I jersey. Det betyder det er stræk meter varer, der bliver anvendt.

MOGENS: Hvis jeg giver nogle eksempler på nogle yderpunkter. Så kender I godt Ilse Jacobsen, en af Løverne. Hende er vi begyndt at arbejde sammen med. Hun er I den gruppe kunder, som tager hele pakken. Det består af at få inputs fra vores designer, vi er egentlig hendes design og produktionsafdeling. Hun har nogle indkøbere over hos sig, som vi egentlig sparre med, og så nogle sælgere som ligesom siger, de der styles og det I er kommet med der, det synes vi ser spændende ud. Det vil vi gerne have produceret og det vil vi gerne købe nogle af. Så star vi for hele processen, og sørger for at der på et eller andet tidspunkt bliver leveret x antal kasser med x antal trøjer. Som om at hun havde det hele I sin egen produktion. Det er det ene yderpunkt, hvor hun har alt hvad vi kan.

MOGENS: Det andet yderpunkt, er sådan nogle som Disney. De har et eksempel og siger, hvad skal i have for at producere den her trøje? Så er vi egentlig bare produktion. Nogle gange har de sagt hvad vi skal købe, de har nogle preffered suppliers der skal levere de her ting, om det er os der giver ordren eller dem selv, det er sådan lidt. Men vi har ingen indflydelse på det, så alt er givet og styret. Det eneste vi sælger og tilfører er arbejdskraft. Lige fra det at få det syet, pakket og sendt. Og vi har ellers ikke nogen indflydelse på noget som helst. Så det er ligesom de to yderpunkter, og så har vi egentlig alt hvad man kan forestille sig derimellem.

MOGENS: Vi har f.eks. Bestseller som ligger lidt midt i mellem. Så der vores designer snakker også med deres designer, og indkøber og fungere i princippet som en udvidelse til deres eksisterende design. Det er mere for at få noget ny inspiration og drage nytte af vores erfaringer. Så er vi også på banen med at købe metervarer og ting og sager, der er også lidt forskellige frihedsgrader til det. Så er der endelig det, hvor de kommer med det og siger, vi har tidligere fået det produceret det her, hvad skal i have for at producere det. Igen er det så bare arbejdskraft der bliver lagt til.

*LARS: Det der er vores fokus er selve salget, eksporten og etableringen af internationale aktiviteter og hvad ligger der bag, i forhold til produktions faciliteter eller andet. Så vores formål er at vi skitsere en tidslinje, der viser hvad er det for en udvikling som i som virksomhed har været igennem, herunder hvilke hændelser har været essentielle på godt og ondt i forhold til de internationale aktiviteter, særlige eksport og salg generelt. Vi er interesseret i at finde ud af, hvordan er i kommet til hvor i er i dag, fra Møller etablerede virksomheden, herunder Møllers baggrund.*

MOGENS: Virksomheden er til næste år 50 år gammel, og hvis vi spoler 50 år tilbage, var alle bygninger, carporte og kældere i Ikast var i brug til at sy. Så det er jo en udvikling der er sket efter krigen. Det her område er lidt specielt fordi man har ikke fået noget som helst, man har skulle arbejde sig til alle ting. Så havde man tørv under krigen, og gravede det. Da det ikke var en beskæftigelses mulighed mere, så kom tekstil industrien der startede op og blev meget stor i en periode. I takt med udviklingen specielt lønudviklingen i Danmark, så bliver det dyrere at producere, derfor søger man andre steder hen, og ser om man kan få produceret billigere. Så drivkraften har jo været arbejdslønnen. Hvor er den billigst henne? Det første sted man etablere sig er Litauen. Hvor man kigger på lønudviklingen der og mulighederne der, hvorfor man vælger at slå sig ned der.

*TOBIAS: Det er så første gang man vælger at tage til udlandet, er det så også der man siger at man har første salg til udlandet, eller har man hidtil haft salg i udlandet?*

MOGENS: Den gang er der begrænset salg til udlandet, der er det mere via at man som underleverandør til danske virksomheder. Det er vel 25-30 år siden at man begynder med eksport. De ældste af kunderne man har de er godt 20 år gamle.

*TOBIAS: Hvad var sådan baggrunden for det?*

MOGENS: Det er igen det der sker i tekstil industrien, fordi de bliver også presset og der bliver færre. Der starter allerede den koncentration af virksomheder, som jo bliver forstærket igen indenfor de sidste 5-10 år. Hvor det er blevet svære. Der begynder man med eksport, men kommer ikke så langt. De første kunder ligger nede ved Hamborg. Så det er den typiske danske tilgang til eksport. Det er klart så går vi ned syd for grænsen, og den første by vi kommer til er Hamborg, og de ligger faktisk der.

MOGENS: Det er jo handelsfolk, det er iværksættere, igangsættere, der starter alt det her. De har primært fokus på selve produkter og det at producere, knap så meget på salg. Men de kan jo godt se at det vi laver, det skal jo også sælger, og når kredsen af aftagere i Danmark bliver mindre, eller vil give lave priser, så bliver man nød til at søge alternativer, der kan supplere. Der starter den udlængsel efter at finde nye kunder udenfor Danmarks grænser.

*TOBIAS: Kan man snakke om at Danmark som land blev lidt for småt?*

MOGENS: Ja. Der er en større kapacitet end der er efterspørgsel til. Og så er det man søger væk, det er jo også fordi mærkerne finder ud af, jamen vi kan købe andre steder. Det er for dyrt at købe i Danmark, så derfor køber vi i udlandet. Så vi skal finde nogle andre leverandører. Det er jo der det starter.

*TOBIAS: Salg til Hamborg, var det før eller efter Litauen?*

MOGENS: Det er efter Litauen.

*LARS: Inden da, har man solgt gennem salgsagenter og andre mærker?*

MOGENS: Man har aldrig haft sit eget mærke. Man forsøgte, men det er aldrig blevet til noget, fordi der kommer man i dilemma i forhold til dem man samarbejder med. Hvor man har valgt at holde sin sti ren som private label producent. Hvilket man har holdt fast i mere eller mindre hele tiden, og være tro mod det.

*TOBIAS: Er du bevidst om nogle faktorer der gjorde det var Hamborg?*

MOGENS: Man kan stoppe fiskesnøren ud og det første sted man kaster den i det er Hamborg. Og så er der bid. Så stopper man der i første omgang, og så er man efterfølgende kommet videre til Holland og England. Historisk set har man jo haft kunder i stort set hele Europa. Man har også kunder i USA indenfor de sidste 15-20 år.

*TOBIAS: Kan det have noget med risiko at gøre?*

MOGENS: Ja, men også bekvæmmelighed og sprog. Det gik jo fint. Man har haft en del tyske kunder, de første var bare i Hamborg. Berlin kom efterfølgende, dernæst længere nede sydpå og så kom Holland til.

*LARS: Hvad med al den tid der er gået fra etablering, til man etablere faciliteter i Litauen, har man da udelukkende fokuseret på danske kunder?*

MOGENS: Litauen producerede også til udlandet. Så i starten var produktionen udelukkende i Danmark til danske kunder. I 1999 der blev UTG stiftet, som vi kender i dag. Før hed det Lanica, ligesom fabrikken i Litauen.

MOGENS: I 1999 stifter tre forskellige tekstil virksomheder, hvor efter tre år bliver de to købt ud af Rene Møller, da de simpelthen ikke kunne enes. Det var tre for forskellige kulturer der blev bragt sammen. Og de var alle tre iværksættere, med hver deres tilgang til tingene. Det kunne de ikke blive enige om.

*TOBIAS: Havde det nogen betydning for de internationale aktiviteter efter den hændelse?*

MOGENS: Lige umiddelbart efter var der færre ressourcer, i form af kapital. Der var 120-130 ansatte i de her lokaler i forbindelse med fusionen og flere år efter og det har Rene Møller efterfølgende fået bragt ned. Det er ham der har stået for processen med at få sat skub på internationalisering og sat skub i tingene, til at det udvikler sig som det er i dag.

*LARS: Kan man sige at virksomheden i 1999 bliver genfødt og reetableret?*

MOGENS: Der i slut 90’erne, er det der er sket, at de sidder tre virksomhedsejere, der hver i sær har på den hårde måde, oplevet at det er sindssygt svært at drive virksomhed ud af Danmark, med produktion og ting og sager. Så er de ligesom, formentlig over et godt glas rødvin eller to blevet enige om at de bliver nød til at slå sig sammen. Fordi, hvis de er sammen så kan de stå stærkere. Nu kender jeg ikke de to andre, andet end jeg har mødt dem begge, men jeg kender selvfølgelig Rene. De er krejlere og igangsættere, med hver deres tilgang til det. De har svært ved at der er nogle der skal bestemme over dem og at de ikke kan gennemfører deres ide. Så langt havde de ikke tænkt, de havde nok tænkt de havde en god sag, og alternativet var måske at man ikke kunne klare den.

MOGENS: Rene får jo så sat nogle ting i gang, får også etableret fabrik i Ukraine i 2004. Det er igen på grund af penge, og lønforhold. Det behøver vi ikke gøre noget ud af, det er ikke fordi der som sådan er ret meget andet. Man kan simpelthen ikke konkurrere.

MOGENS: Så etablere man også et salgskontor i Istanbul. Fordi der er tilgang til nogle fantastiske metervarer og det at være på markedet dernede. Der for Rene skabt nogle kontakter til en der hedder Ali Dokan, og man opretter faktisk 2 selskaber dernede. Et der hedder UTG Istanbul, som vi stadigvæk har, og så laver man et fælles selskab med ham Ali Dokan der hedder UTG Textile, som har til formål at købe metervarer hjem. Så vil man få til UTG men også til andre.

MOGENS: Istanbul er jo et bevidst valg, om at få adgang til know-how og de rigtige råvarer. De er dygtige dernede på tekstil og har flere tusinde års erfaring. Altså de var jo en handelsby, back i tid. Det var jo en hovedåre, og det afspejler også situationen den dag i dag. Altså vi kan få alt dernede. Vi bruger kontoret i dag, som salgskontor og til at lave prøver. Fordelen ved at være i Istanbul er at der stort set ikke er den metervarer som kunden kan spørge på som vi ikke kan have indenfor ganske få timer.

*TOBIAS: Så det er sådan set en ret central station i forhold til resten af jeres aktiviteter?*

MOGENS: Ja lige præcis, det er et rimelig centralt knudepunkt.

*TOBIAS: Hvornår rykkede i til Istanbul?*

MOGENS: Det er i 2007, samtidig med at man får JFK ind, som er en kapital fond, der køber nogle af aktierne. Der får man faktisk nogle muskler, til at man kan aktivere og udvide sine udenlandske aktiviteter.

MOGENS: Et par år efter køber man så UTG Kanikas, og så får lavet produktion i Tyrkiet også. Det har man også i dag.

MOGENS: Det som Istanbul kontoret skulle bruges til er det sted man sourcer, og køber metervarer. Du har en god kvalitet, og det er vel også næsten det eneste positive jeg kan sige om Tyrkiet. Det er at de der ting er der styr på dernede, der er de fremme og de er med, så de kan leverer i god kvalitet metervarer. Og så bliver det også brugt til at få kunder som ikke vil handle med en dansk virksomhed. Faktisk er Disney kunde i Istanbul, og sådan er det for flere at de Europæiske kunder, som er kunder dernede, fordi det ligger sådan at Danmark er for dyrt et sted at købe ind. Vi kommer aldrig forbi hovedindgangen, ved potentielle kunder fordi vi kommer fra Danmark. Vi får aldrig fortalt budskabet. Selvom vi ligger i Danmark, er det kun en lillebitte del der ligger i Danmark. Resten ligger de andre steder. Så vi er faktisk konkurrence dygtige.

MOGENS: Det vi styrer fra Danmark, det er hele design delen og CSR delen. De steder vi kommer igennem og de hører det. Så har de større tillid til at den der CSR del, at den har vi faktisk styr på. Når vi siger vi kommer fra Danmark af. De har også større tillid til at dokumentationen omkring de metervarer der er brugt og de materialer der indgår, at det også svarer til de specifikationer der bliver lagt frem.

*LARS: Nu nævner du CSR?*

MOGENS: Ja, det er jo der vil har tilført produktet værdi. Fordi vi er med inde og sikre de der ting er i orden, så vi er med til at løfte dem, både i Tyrkiet og Ukraine. Vi hjælper dem med at få styr på den dokumentation, der ligger bagved. Der er jo ikke der vi ikke har specificeret. Den er dokumentation har vi fuldstændig styr på, lige fra hvem der har produceret det, hvad indgår der i produktet, sikkerhed for at dem der har lavet denne metervarer ikke har brugt børnearbejde, at de har ordnede forhold, udbetaling af overarbejde osv. osv.

*TOBIAS: Har det haft nogen betydning for jer, for at åbne op for nogle salg udenlands?*

MOGENS: Ja, når du har Disney, når du har Bestseller, så er det nogle gange bedre end at være Kongelig Hofleverandør i Danmark. Fordi det er en blåstempling. I branchen der er Disney og Bestseller kendt for at være dem i den allerhøjeste ende i de krav de stiller. Så selvom vi får BSCI of CELIX, det er sådan nogle internationale auditører der tjekker udstedelse af certifikater for overholdelse af visse standarder. Til trods for vi har dem, så har Disney deres egen auditør, de tror simpelthen ikke på dem. De er ude at kontrollere selv, de har en standard der ligger over. Det ved alle i branchen. Det vil sige at når du er leverandør til dem, så er det også en blåstempling af det.

*LARS: Så kontrakterne i har, åbner også nye muligheder for jer?*

MOGENS: Ja, hos nogle. Hvis i kender nogle så vil jeg gerne have dem til at undersøge sammenhængen mellem det mærkerne siger og det de gør. Mit postulat er at en stor del af mærkevarerne, også de store, som siger de lever op til alle de her standarder og krav og ting og sager. Det gør de ikke, de vender det blinde øje til, og lader stå til. De tørre deres røv af ved at sige, vi har en underleverandør, vi har en underskrift som specificere vi har vores på det rene. Velvidende at det ikke passer.

MOGENS: Jeg synes Dansk Supermarked er et godt eksempel på det, med NETTO. Med alle de kopier. Den sidste sag der var fremme med Kenneth Plummer, det er sjovt han har 9 sager i retten lige nu, det er da utrolig. Der må da være noget om det, at der så ikke er nogen indkøber i NETTO, der reagere, og siger at der er et eller andet galt her, det er simpelthen bare for ringe. Det må jeg ærligt sige, det synes jeg. Jeg kan forstå en enkelt gang, de er nogle af verdens bedste med Photoshop og manipulere med PDF dokumenter, så det kan være svært. Så derfor kan jeg godt forstå at sådan nogle som Disney, selv er ude at kontrollere. De er jo så store, de er så mange steder i verden, og der er jo ikke ret mange steder i verden, at man har så høj en standard som vi har i Danmark. At man kan tro så meget på det der bliver sagt, at det er rigtigt, dem er der måske 10 lande i verden, med hensyn til troværdighed og rigtighed i tingene. Så derfor er Disney rigtig mistroiske og kontrollere det selv.

MOGENS: Moral og etik. Det er nok vores vigtigste, sammen med design delen. Fordi, man kan sige, alle kan sy. Der adskiller vi os ikke. Vi har nogle dygtige syerske, men dem er der mange af, der er vi ikke unikke.

*TOBIAS: Så det er ikke produktet der er unikt?*

MOGENS: Nej, vi bestemmer som sådan ikke kvaliteten af produktet. Det er jo kunden der bestemmer, hvilken metervarer der skal bruges. Men vores syninger er i orden, vores pakninger er i orden, du får labels på. Du kan regne med det der puttes i kasserne det passer osv. Men det kan de fleste, der hvor vi adskiller os, er at vi har hele design delen med, som eksempelvis Ilse Jacobsen kan tage med ind, men BESTSELLER bruger den jo også. Vi har nogle der følger med i hvad der sker, og kan være en sparring, i forhold til det man selv har ikke også, og i det hele taget være med til at man følger og har et moderigtigt produkt. Så har vi CSR delen på den anden side, hvor der styr på alt hvad der kræves at have styr på, og det kræver noget disciplin, hvor man har nogle ressourcer der godt ved man ikke hopper over hvor gærdet er lavest. Det har taget mange år at få det bygget op, og det er jo så den disciplin og den DNA der er i organisationen, som man ruller ud.

*LARS: De 25 år med design delen, har det også været essentielt for hvordan man har skabt en øget værdi for kunderne?*

MOGENS: Jeg vil ikke sige det er unikt, men det er et af de parametre der er med til at vi står godt overfor de kunder og vi stadig kan komme ind og få nye kunder. Det er der vi adskiller os. Det er sket som en naturlig udvikling, den der krejler mentalitet, hvor man ser hvad gør vores konkurrenter og hvad skal der til for at adskille os fra mainstream. Der har man så været heldig, for der var faktisk en mulighed for at få design delen med, og ikke bare være en kopi af alle de andre. Hvem der nøjagtig har fået ideen, der er jeg svar skyldig.

*TOBIAS: Du nævner Rene, har han haft en stor betydning?*

MOGENS: Altså det var jo hans forældre der startede Lanica. Så kommer Rene ind, han startede med at komme her som lille knægt, fordi forældrene var her altid. Vi er 50 år tilbage, der var ikke andet i Ikast end systuer. Specielt hans mor havde det der drive, der skulle til og var god til at organisere. Det er vel hende der i bund og grund har skabt den DNA og den ordentlighed, som kendetegner virksomheden i dag. Hun har været det man vil kalde af ’den gamle skole’, og det er det der har præget. Jeg har aldrig mødt nogle af dem, men jeg har indtryk af at Renes far har været krejler og handelsmand, hvor de to så har fået det løbet i gang. Hvor Rene bliver den der samler og siger nu har vi noget her, og det skal struktureres noget bedre og tilfører det. Han bliver udlært revisor og efter det, for 25-30 år siden kommer han ind i virksomheden.

*TOBIAS: Da Rene kommer ind, der har virksomheden så ingen internationale salg endnu?*

MOGENS: Nej det har man ikke. Det han kommer med, vi er gået lidt tilbage til nogle gamle dyder. Vi har en sælger der er kommet på som rent kanvas, som Rene gjorde i starten. Pakker simpelthen bilen, forsøger at lave nogle aftaler, men det er meget svært. Så kører han bare af sted, og har fundet 5-6-7-8 emner på vej ned der skal besøges, og banker på, og forsøger at lave aftaler.

MOGENS: Når han kommer hjem efter en lille uge, og har været i Sydtyskland og en tur inde i Holland, hvor han bare har fået noget tæsk og kun fået to aftaler. Sådan har virker lidt modløs, så siger Rene ’Jamen for fanden, jeg har været der jo.’ Det er hårdt, der er ikke andet for end at blive ved. Det har så også vidst sig at der er kommet den første kunde i Holland, på denne her måde. Så det er igen bare kæmpe, du skal ud at røre ved kunderne, det der med at sende en mail og så tro der kommer noget, og med telefon opkald, du kan måske forsøge at få en aftale. Men det er stadigvæk noget bøvl, det er svært at komme igennem of snakke med de rigtige. Så det er at få lavet lidt research, hvem man skal have fat i ved de respektive firmaer, og så bare møde op. Så får man en aftale om måske at komme om 14 dage eller tre uger, det er noget lettere. Man bliver ikke på samme måde afvist. Så hit raten i at få aftaler og møder i stand, den er relativt høj, og kan slet ikke sammenliges med hvis du sender en mail. Fordi der får du ikke respons.

*LARS: Hvor stor var virksomheden da Rene kom til?*

MOGENS: Ja, man tjente styrtende med penge i perioden. Fra Rene bliver alene indtil en 2009 til 2010, der tjente man rigtig mange penge. Man begår den fejl, at tingene går for godt, det kører bare på fuld skrue. Så der er en masse ting man ikke får styr på, fordi de ikke fylder så meget, man har nogle omkostninger og nogle ting i specielt i Tyrkiet, der er helt til hest. Det fylder ikke så meget, man tjener stadigvæk mange penge, så at man smider to eller tre millioner på noget som var unødvendigt, det drukner i mængden, så der ridder man på bølgen.

MOGENS: Man kører så ind i finanskrisen i 2012 til 2013. Der rammer finanskrisen UTG. I sommerferien 2014, hvor jeg bliver ansat 1. Oktober 2014. Da jeg starter, der har man stadigvæk en tro på at det stadigvæk kører godt. Men Rene siger noget tid efter, at han ikke havde det så godt før sommerferien, der var ligesom noget galt. I kundernes adfærd og kundetilgang osv., så der bliver man ramt af finanskrisen. Der kan man sige at i 2014 og 2015, der gør det rigtig ondt.

MOGENS: Da jeg kommer der er vi godt 40, men de er blevet halveret på den tid. Vi har lukket Lanica. Der var to afdelinger i Kanikas, hvor der var to fabrikker i hver, med 300 mand i hver ansat. Der har vi så lukket den ene. Det har så været to år hvor vi virkelig har været nede og kigge på tingene og se på omkostninger og ting og sager. Alle steder hvor det blødte, kunne man ikke se blødningerne fordi festen var i gang, så det er først dagen derpå. Hvis i har prøvet at være i byen, man tænker hold da kæft, slog jeg min arm der, hvorfor ser jeg sådan ud. Sådan kan det bedst sammenlignes. Det har så været en kold tyrker, at være det igennem. Men det er vi ved at få styr på nu. Vi har kaldt det at vi har været igennem en turnaround.

MOGENS: Vi har fået lukket nogle af de steder der ikke har været styr på. Vi har skiftet ledelse i Istanbul og Kanikas. Der er mange ting, strømlinet nogle ting, måske været en lille smule hårdere end man har været tidligere. Når du er på den der bølge og det hele kører. Det og være sammen med reklamefolk, det er ligesom de lever i en verden for sig, på nogle områder minder det om det her. Går man ind på et reklamebureau, så minder det lidt om det her, også vores malerier og rundt omkring. Der er sådan ligt reklamebureau agtigt, specielt design og sælgere, ikke. Det er sådan lidt juhu!, og det har der måske været lidt for meget af. Så er der noget der er faldet lidt ned mellem nogle stole, uden der er nogle der samler op. Det har vi så fået skåret fra. Så nu har vi ikke rigtig noget fedt tilbage på kroppen, så det er vi ved at prøve at bygge op igen.

MOGENS: Vi er ved at genfinde os selv, og har nogle synes jeg nogle rigtig spændende planer, for de næste to til tre år. For at tilføre mere værdi. Der bliver branchen udfordret, tror jeg, på sådan nogle områder som logistik. Fordi de her store mærker, vil ikke selv have omkostninger til logistik til det. Forbrugernes forventninger til levering ændrer sig også. Det skal bare gå hurtigere og hurtigere. Mange gange, næsten de fleste, hvis man bestiller kl. 22 så har du varen næste dag. Det her med at passer varen ikke så kører retur også i systemer. Det er ikke nogen show stopper, at du skal returnere nogle varer fordi de ikke passer eller lever op til forventningerne, det kører uden problemer. Selvfølgelig skal du bringe det er sted hen, men det er typisk et sted du kommer i forvejen, når du handler, og de har nogle systemer GLS f.eks., som bare fungere. Så jeg tror på at vi indenfor en periode på 3, 5 eller 10 år, så skal vi leverer til slutbrugeren, og have et system der kan det.

MOGENS: Kravene fra vores kunders side til integration til deres systemer vil også stige. Så vi vil blive meget mere IT orienteret end vi er nu. Vi fungerer jo i princippet, om du sidder i Bangladesh, Litauen eller hvor pokker du sidder, så sidder vi og kan arbejde på samme dokumenter og kan flytte ordrene rundt. Alt det der tilhører en style med hensyn til dokumentation og information kører rundt ved hjælp af vores it løsning.

*TOBIAS: Har i haft det i mange år?*

MOGENS: Nej, det er noget der er sket indenfor de sidste 1,5 til 2 år. For 1,5 år siden opgraderede vi Navision system, og fra 1/10 sidste år integrerede PDM så Navision og De Lock omkring styles kan arbejdes på globalt. I princippet kan alle tilgå Navision, så det har været en stor hjælp. Nu har vi ligesom bygget soklen, så nu skal vi bygge ovenpå den, hvor logistik kommer til at blive en vigtig faktor.

*LARS: Det vil sige at logistik og distribution bliver mere teknisk?*

MOGENS: Ja, selvom det er meget teknisk i dag, så skal det løftes. Du ved jo nøjagtigt hvor din vare er henne med Track&Trace, med SMS osv. det fungerer bare. Det er virkelig smart og brugervenligt. Vi har rigtig mange prøver det cirkulerer rundt, hvor kunden gerne vil se produktet ingen de giver ordren, hvor de ser om produktet er som forventet, eller om der skal ændres lidt. Så vi sender mange DHL pakker, der er det også en god ting vi kan se hvornår den er leveret. Vi kan binde modtager og pakke samme, og sige til kunden den er sendt, og den er faktisk lige afleveret til receptionen.

*TOBIAS: Jeres internationale salg, som H&M og BESTSELLER, hvornår kommer de i hus?*

MOGENS: BESTSELLER er en af de ældste kunder. Har næsten været med fra starten. Rene har tit været i London sammen med Troels Holch Poulsen. De har været tæt samarbejdspartner, da de jo er etableret lige herude i Brande. Men der kan man så sige at BESTSELLER, er løbet fra UTG. Men man har haft samarbejde næsten altid.

*LARS: Kendte de hinanden fra lokalområdet?*

MOGENS: Ja, der var så mange herude, der var et tættere netværk og kendskab til hinanden dengang, end der er i dag. Man var bedre til at samarbejde den gang. Måske så man knap så meget hinanden som konkurrenter, som man gør i dag.

MOGENS: Der er nogle der ligner os lidt, men der er ikke ret mange der selv har systuerne. Jeg tror faktisk ikke der er andre end os. De fleste står bare for sourcing. Dem der gør det samme som os har nogle systuer som underleverandører, og shopper så rundt blandt dem, afhænging af pris og opgave.

*TOBIAS: Er det en fordel for jer?*

MOGENS: Jeg tror at overfor de kunder hvor CSR betyder noget, der er det helt klart en fordel, at vi har styr på det. Vi har også mulighed for at bruge andre systuer, men de skal være godkendt. Mange gange er systuer kun 10-15 ansatte, så det er svært at have styr på ellers.

*LARS: Første udenlandssalg sker sådan set igennem BESTSELLER, for at nå de udenlandske kunder, har man da altid brugt kanvas approach?*

MOGENS: Nej, den måde man historisk har fået, er at en indkøber fra en kunde, flytter fra en virksomhed til en anden. Så har indkøberen nogle gode erfaringer, og så tager de erfaringerne med f.eks. fra BESTSELLER til B.Young, så ringer de om at nu er de ikke hos BESTSELLER længere, men hos B.Young og vil hører om vi vil give en pris på det. Det er specielt hvad der er sket i Tyskland. Derfor er det at få skabt nogle relationer selv indkøberne er vigtige, fordi indkøberne er dine ambassadører. Dels i den virksomhed du handler med, men også videre ud, når de flytter, hvis de skifter job.

*TOBIAS: Har det været vigtigt at bygge en solid forretning i Danmark før man søgte udenfor landets grænser?*

MOGENS: Jeg ved ikke hvornår man så BESTSELLERS potentiale internationalt. Men der er ingen tvivl om at UTGs renome og position, har haft godt af at man har haft BESTSELLER som kundereference, fordi dem kender man i markedet. Indkøberne ved godt hvem BESTSELLER er og at de har gjort det godt, samt at de stiller nogle store krav. Det er en god reference at have, men hvornår det slår igennem, det ved jeg ikke.

*LARS: Har man opkøbt kontrakter eller andre virksomheder?*

MOGENS: I Bangladesh har vi fem mand der står for sourcing, ellers er vi ude og forsøge at have to primære fabrikker, og arbejder på at få en eller to mere i Bangladesh.

*LARS: Hvorfor lige Bangladesh?*

MOGENS: Bangladesh, det er fordi man fik kontakt til Gulan Faruk, som vi har ansat i dag. Han har læst og studeret i Danmark. Det var via ham, som har fået en tekstil uddannelse i Danmark, så det var igennem ham man siger okay nu ansætter vi dig derude, han har faktisk en lille andel af det lille selskab derude, for at holde ham til. Hvis man ikke have mødt ham, kunne det være et hvilket som helst andet sted som Kina, Indien, Parkistan eller hvor pokker det nu kunne være. Det er rent tilfældigt, at det lige er blevet Bangladesh, men i dag tror jeg man er glad for det blev sådan. Det vi har derude fungere, de samarbejdspartnere og relationer vi har fået derude, det fungere rigtig godt. De er meget vestligt orienteret, de vil gerne udvikle og dygtiggøre sig. De vil gerne leve op til de krav, det er ikke bare banditter derude alle sammen. Der er faktisk nogle der gerne vil det bedre, både for medarbejderne og have ordentlige forhold. Det er ikke noget man gør over natter, det er et langt stræk, men de bliver bedre og dygtigere.

*TOBIAS: I forhold til Hamborg som første marked, hvor hurtigt gik det før man tog til Holland?*

MOGENS: Det ligger så tæt på hinanden, det er indenfor det samme år at mange af dem de kommer. Det er imellem 1993 og 2004 den her internationalisering for alvor sker.

*LARS: Hvordan er organisationsstrukturen i dag?*

MOGENS: Der er seks medarbejdere i Litauen, i Ukraine er der cirka 300, de har mulighed for at fordoble kapaciteten ved at tage godkendte lønsystuer ind. Så har vi 32 på kontoret i Istanbul, og cirka 340 ansat på Kanikas i Tyrkiet der ligger på silkevejen. Så er der 5 i Bangladesh.

*TOBIAS: Hvordan er forholdet mellem danske og udenlandske kunder?*

MOGENS: Vores markedsandel er lille. Men i vores portefølje udgør danske kunder under 10 procent af det samlede antal kunder. Vi har måske fem eller seks kunder i Danmark. Vi omsætter måske 15 til 20 mio. til BESTSELLER, så har vi nogle der ligger på en, to eller tre millioner.

MOGENS: En stor del af den her udvikling har nok været tilfældig. Man har forsøgt at opsøge heldet, men der ligger ikke noget strategisk forarbejde forud for den udvikling man har været igennem. Det er på jysk krejler maner. Det er på snusfornuft. Vi er den der torpedo, der sejler mellem de store ubåde, og så kan vi nogle ting som nogle sætter pris på, og vi tillægger så værdi. Derfor kan vi få lidt højere pris på det man kan kalde ludermarkedet, og så er det egentlig bare at sælge, vi skal have fjernet fokus fra prisen og til nogle af de ting der ligger ved siden af. De skal kunne se at de spare penge på deres egen organisation ved at handle med UTG. Det kræver at man forstår at kunden forstår deres egen forretning, men det er ikke altid tilfældet fordi det er nogle unge piger der bare er sat i verden til at købe ind uden egentlig at se det i en større sammenhæng.

MOGENS: Vi tog den nemme løsning, kørte syd for grænsen, så var vi der. Vi er kommet over den hurdle, men det er der bare mange der ikke kommer. Der er mange der får nogle knubs, som så gør at de siger, nej vi koncentrere os om hjemmemarkedet. Ellers kan man blive underleverandør til nogle der kører til udlandet. Man skal ikke undervurdere det at eksportere, og det at være i udlandet. Det er bare bøvlet. Lovgivningen er ekstremt kompliceret. Så kan man glemme alt det EU pis dér. Det er fis i en hornlygte. Ja der er nogle ting, hvordan tomater og agurker skal se ud, men rent forretningsmæssigt, der hænger det bare ikke sammen. Der er for mange særregler der gør at varerne ikke bare bevæger sig frit rundt. Du får simpelthen ikke en æske tændstikker ind i Polen, hvis den ikke står på et stykke papir. De er nede i detaljer, hvor man siger hold nu kæft. Vi har været ude for at vi ikke kan få noget over grænser forde der er 300, 400 eller 500 gram forskel, så kan lastbilen simpelthen ikke komme igennem. Det er sindssygt bureaukratisk.

MOGENS: Ukraine er også forbudt for børn. Jeg ved godt Ukraine ikke er EU, men efter de kom i krig med russerne, så har man jo forsøgt at sige nu laver man nogle lempelige vilkår og ting og sager. Men det fungerer ikke i praksis. Derfor kan jeg godt forstå, hvis nogle er bange og slår sig, det kan være rigtig dyrt at slå sig. Man har først fået knubsene i UTG, de tæsk fik vi i Tyrkiet. Det er jo i bund og grund fordi man ikke har været inde i lovgivningen. Reglerne i Tyrkiet ændres tit. Man har en forventning til lovlydighed osv. hvis man går til en statsautoriseret revisor, dernede der bliver de autoriseret til at udfører givne opgaver på vegne af regeringen. De ved godt at sorte penge har vi ikke, vi bruger ikke bestikkelse, vi følger reglerne, så da jeg var dernede for et års tid siden, der var alt det her med de Syriske flygtninge, hvor mange stopper i Tyrkiet. De bliver ansat på systuerne som ulovlig illegal arbejdskraft. Til trods for det, så er der mange der benytter sig af det og underbetaler ad helvede til. Han siger så det gør vores kollegaer dernede, revisoren siger det er sådan det er. Vi sidder og snakker og han siger han vidste godt det gjorde vi ikke, men hvis nu, så skulle han nok hjælpe med at få papirerne i orden. Det er jo svært at forberede sig på. Der skal man sidde i det, man kan ikke læse det i nogle bøger. Jeg synes ikke det er fair at sige man ikke har været forberedt, men nogle af de her ting kan være svære at forberede sig på, man kan sige bagefter hvorfor undersøgte vi ikke det og det. Jeg er bare kommet dertil at der er ikke noget der overrasker længere. Du kan sidde med dem, de kan sidde at lyve, men de fortrækker ikke en mine.

*LARS: Så jeres erfaringer og netværk er vigtigt i Tyrkiet?*

MOGENS: Ja, det er der noget der tyder på.

*LARS: Hvad er Renes rolle i virksomheden i dag?*

MOGENS: Han er direktør og har 35 procent af aktierne. Han er sådan lidt over det hele. Det er ikke en ejer ledet virksomhed fordi kapitalfonden har aktiemajoriteten og egentlig kan bestemme hvad der skal ske, men en stor del af bygget op om hans erfaringer og det netværk han har. Det arbejder vi på, at gøre virksomheden mindre personafhængig. Så den ikke bliver sårbar ved at nogle stopper. Men procedurer og rutiner er indarbejder, så folk ved hvad de skal lave. Kapitalfonden kom på banen i 2007 eller 2008. Det var jo ligesom den der udgør fundamentet til man kan købe Kanikas og derved produktionen i Tyrkiet. Det giver et økonomisk fundament, der gør man kan øge indsatsen på eksport.

*LARS: Din egen rolle i virksomheden?*

MOGENS: Jeg har ansvaret for økonomi og IT. Rene og jeg vi udgør ledelsesteamet, det er ikke fordi der er så mange at lede her. Jeg har de primære kontakter til fabrikken i Kanikas, og så er der en økonomi afdeling i Ukraine som står for bogføring og jeg får noget rapportering fra dem. Så jeg rejser primært til Kanikas i Tyrkiet, fordi det er der vi har haft udfordringer og knap så meget i Ukraine.

## Appendix 8 – Transcription of interview with GardinLis

*Appendix 8 presents the transcription of the interview (in Danish) with GardinLis. In addition an audio file with the recorded interview are attached as a digital appendix file.*

* Lis Bilde (Informant – Founder and CEO)
* Brian Sørensen (Informant – Project Development)
* Tobias Nørgaard (Interviewer)
* Lars Marco Andersen (Interviewer)

##### Transcription

*Efter en kort indledning får vi sat rekorder på og Lis indleder:*

LIS: Det er jo ikke vores største, og det kan jeg også huske jeg sagde, det er jo ikke vores største del, at vi arbejder med det. Men vi har prøvet lidt forskelligt og har også haft lidt forskelligt undersøgelser indenfor det. Vi har forsøgt os med Norge, og det har absolut ikke været så nemt. Vi havde ellers en rimelig nem tilgang til det, fordi jeg havde en bekendt, der var ansat deroppe, som egentlige skaffede os nogle jobs på et hotel, hvor de skulle have nogle nye gardiner. Og vi fik også ordren, endda et par stykker på hotellet, men inden vi nogensinde blev færdige med papirarbejdet blev vi enige om, at det var nok ikke Norge vi skulle prøve, fordi det var alt for voldsomt papirmæssigt, og det er fordi de ikke er i EU, det er jo simpelthen, det er altså ikke det nemmeste. Efterfølgende havde vi møder med ambassaden i Norge, og var på messe i Norge. Det kunne faktisk været blevet et rigtig stort marked for os, men vi mistede gejsten fordi det var så omfangsrigt omkring problematikken omkring papirgangen. Og det har vi også hørt andre tale om, at det er der den store hurtle ligger. Hvis man skal være væk fra den… og vores viden var heller ikke stor nok i forhold til hvordan er det man sælger til udlandet. Efterfølgende vil jeg nok råde andre til at henvende sig til et af de firmaer herhjemme i Danmark, der laver alt det papirarbejde, og lade dem stå for alle momspapirer og told og hvad der ellers må være. Det tror jeg ville have været en længere fremgangsmåde (får bekræftelse af Brian, der fortsætter).

BRIAN: Jo, vi var ikke klædt ordentlig på i forhold til specielt omkring moms. Det der med at have en momsrepræsentant.

LIS: og så fik jeg sagt ja. Vi blev egentlig rådet til af ambassaden at finde en norsk advokat, så vi kunne få arbejdstilladelse deroppe, og det fik vi igennem. Men det vrimlede ind med regninger fra den norske advokat. Vi vidste ikke hvad vi havde sagt ja til. Jeg tror heldigvis ikke vi har lavet noget evaluering på det, vi har solgt deroppe, for jeg tror ikke vi har tjent penge på det.

BRIAN: Man kan sige, det er sådan nogle lærepenge, så vi ved hvad vi skal gøre næste gang. Altså, at være mere forberedte og have nogle dedikerede ressourcer til det, og fokus ikke mindst (Lis bekræfter).

LIS: Norge var sandsynligvis et godt nok marked, men vi rendt til surt i papirarbejdet.

Vi havde så faktisk kort tid før eller efter, gang i et væksthus, som gav os en sparring om hvordan vi bliver klar til at eksportere – eksportpakken hedder det. Eksportforberedelse af Danmarks eksportråd.

BRIAN: det var inden det med Norge. Lige inden du (Lis red.) møder hende fra Norge.

*Tobias forsøger at bekræfte at det er for at LÆRE. (Lis bekræfter ved et ja)*

BRIAN: For at lære om eksport. Og for at drøfte hvilke markeder og hvordan kunne markedet se ud. Og afdække nogle ting om koncepter, produkter og konkurrenter og den slags. Sådan en miniforberedelse til at komme i gang. Og så fik vi så de der eksportpakker. Inden vi kom i gang med det, var der nogle tilfældige møder, hvor nogle havde brug for nogle solafskærmninger i Oslo, og så var der den her messe. Så vi gik nok bare i gang for at se hvor langt kan det bære.

*LARS: kom der noget ud af den forberedelse med rådet?*

BRIAN: (Tøvende) Vi fik drøftet nogle ting igennem. Vi fik lavet en handlingsplan på hvordan vi kommer i gang rent praktisk med at møde nogle potentielle kunder på erhvervsområdet i Norge, så vi bevilliget en eksportpakke, som vi IKKE udnyttede, fordi så kom messen og hende der fra Bristol hotel forbi imellem, og så tog vi det ligesom derfra. Hvis vi nu havde haft lidt mere styr på de formelle ting omkring papirgange og momsrepræsentant, og vi havde lidt flere fokuserede ressourcer på det, så havde vi faktisk en fantastisk indgang til Bristol hotellet fordi det er en stor hotelkæde, ikke bare i Norge, men i dele af Europa. Det er de der Thon hoteller. Det er sådan en stor kæde, med meget stor berømt rigmand i spidsen, ham der Olaf Thon. Jeg går da og tænker på en gang imellem, at det kunne måske have blevet til meget. Men vores fokus og forberedelse var nok bare ikke god nok, og så var der nogle interne kompetencer som vi ikke lige helt havde styr på i virkeligheden.

*TOBIAS: Er i ikke i Norge i dag så – i gør ikke mere deroppe?*

LIS: Nej det er vi faktisk ikke. Vi har gjort det, at for et par år siden, vi havde et strategimøde, hvor vi skal finde ud af, hvad er det egentlig vi skal arbejde med. Vi havde jo mange ting i gang, og lige netop den der Norge, blev lige slettet fra listen. Så vi sagde faktisk at den blev gemt, men ikke glemt. Vi havde gang i så mange andre ting, der var nødvendige for at komme videre. Så vi har lagt det lidt på hylden. Derfor har vi absolut stadigvæk været fristet af eksport og har faktisk lige i øjeblikket talt Tyskland, og har også været til møde med nogle fra Hanover, som kunne være interesseret i os. De kom faktisk her til Danmark med en stak penge til at få nogle danske virksomheder til at slå sig ned nede i Hanover.

Brian supplerer: Vi har egentlig en mere eller mindre.. jeg ved ikke om de stadig er sat af, det er de måske ikke mere, men var det 10.00 euro fra en erhvervsfremmende organisation i Hanover, til at undersøge muligheden for et eller andet set-up.

*TOBIAS: Så jeres beslutning om Tyskland bunder lidt i det, eller var det noget i selv bestemte?*

LIS: Nej, ja, både og. Det var nok egentlig fordi jeg på et tidspunkt var kommet til at sige, at nu var det så svært at komme til Norge, med papirgange og man skulle have færgen til at.. og man skulle derop og montere og man skulle have en masse ting til at passe. Hvor at en af mine sælgere og montører, der bor nede i Fredericia, sagde: hvorfor tager du ikke Tyskland, der vil jeg gerne køre ned. Det er lige ned over grænsen, og så er du faktisk ude af landet. Og så tænkte jeg, det har han da ret i, det var måske lidt nemmere. Og vi kunne jo sige, vores eksport, hvis vi skulle prøve det af, vi havde jo rigeligt at gøre med Flensborg eller Hamborg hvis det kommer dertil.

BRIAN: Det indre marked har da en betydning, fri bevægelighed betyder noget i forhold til Norge. Selvom Norge forsøger at være et EU-land, så har det alligevel en betydning.

*TOBIAS: Så det med, at det var lige ved siden af Danmark, havde en eller anden form for betydning?*

LIS: Ja, sådan havde jeg en føling. Jeg ved godt, det er ikke det, der betyder noget, men alligevel havde jeg en følelse hvor jeg tænkte, det kunne vi nok overskue, det er lidt tættere på.

BRIAN: Der står også i den her (henviser til folder) at du (Lis red) er klar til at springe i bussen.

*TOBIAS: Så der lå også noget med risiko og ressourcer, at man forsøger sig lidt frem i Tyskland?*

LIS: Ja, det var nok sådan jeg tænkte i princippet. Og så efterfølgende har vi været til et møde med den der Hanoverting. Og jeg har også nogle bekendte, der sælger til Tyskland i dag. De sælger senge eksempelvis og hotelværelser, som de laver, hvor man tænker at jeg måske havde en sparring og indgangsvinkel, hvis man skulle have lyst til det. Og hvis man skulle lave shopløsninger i Tyskland, så kunne man måske komme ind, der hvor de har deres senge til at stå. Det var sådan det jeg tænkte kunne være det næste.

*LARS: Så det er noget, der stadig er aktuelt nu?*

LIS: Det er stadigvæk på tegnebrættet, det er ikke noget vi hverken har sagt ja til, men den står sådan og blinker.

*TOBIAS: Så det er 2017 i er startet på det?*

LIS: Nej, det var sidste år vi startede på det, og det var også sidste år vi var til møde med det der Hanover, i efteråret.

BRIAN: Men jeg tror først der kommer til at ske noget såfremt i 2018 på noget evt. eksport

LIS: Der er ingen tvivl om, at når jeg nu tænker på min virksomhed, så er alle rådgivere jeg taler med, det kan være økonomiske rådgivere, det kan være nogle strateginogen osv. De siger, at hvis man skal have en virksomhed i dag, som man kan sige også er noget værd, så skal man faktisk have lidt eksport, sådan at de ting man sælger også kan sælges ude over landets grænser.

*LARS: Så alle aktiviteter er samlet i Danmark som det er lige pt.?*

BRIAN: (overvejende) Ja, og så alligevel har vi mange internationale forbindelser.

LIS: Vi handler så, og køber faktisk en del hjem fra udlandet.

BRIAN: Vi får også produceret noget i Polen.

LIS: Ja, vi får produceret nogle gardiner i Polen.

*LARS: Hvor lang tid har det stået på?*

LIS: Jamen, det har kun været i år (2017). Fordi det er en systue. Det er kun lønarbejde vi køber der. Vi sender selv produkter ned til dem, og så syer de det. Det er rent lønarbejde vi får lavet der. Så har vi selvfølgelig nogle leverandører, hvor vi handler i udlandet. Vi har en polsk leverandør med noget solafskærmning vi køber, vi køber lidt tekstil også, lidt måtter og lignende hos Claus Vogt. Vi køber solafskærmning og markiser i Tyskland og Belgien, og vi køber parasoller – har du hørt vi har fået den store ordre. Så vi køber parasoller hjem fra Schweiz.

BRIAN: Der var også kort noget nede omkring Spanien, men det er der vist ikke mere. Og så med Claus Vogt kunne der komme noget egentlig produktion op at stå i forhold til det med Svanemærket og det. Og der er faktisk mange muligheder for at sætte noget produktion op i Polen. Deres interne strukturfondsmidler. Ham Claus er jo, det er en dansk producent i Statin, det er jo bare lige ned forbi grænsen og så til venstre. 6-7 timer i bil, så er du i Polen. Når man ser polske virksomheder, så er de top nutch (udtryk for at de er topmoderne). Fuldstændig teknologisk oppe i gear, og der er rent og ordentlige arbejdsforhold, det er ret vigtigt.

LIS: Så har vi faktisk også, det er ved at være en gammel sag, på et tidspunkt været igennem et Danida-projekt, hvor vi skulle prøve at se om vi kunne finde et, hedder det, joint venture, med en Vietnamesisk virksomhed. Og vi var faktisk rigtig langt i projektet. Det var jo en virksomhed de så og os skulle lave sammen, hvor så de skulle væve gardinstoffet nede i Vietnam, og vi skulle se transportere det her op.

*TOBIAS: Hvornår var det?*

LIS: 5 år siden tror jeg (2012, red) at vi startede. Og vi var endda så langt, at vi fik lavet et navn. Vi skulle hedde LanLis. De hed Lan. Vi havde fået lavet logo og det hele.

BRIAN: Vi havde faktisk også fået de maskiner, som skulle sendes til Vietnam.

LIS: Ja, og så stødte vi ind i problemerne.

BRIAN: Vi havde faktisk skridtet af, hvor mange containere der skulle bruges til de her maskiner. MEN… en ting er at det der joint venture... de var jo primært interesserede i at producere jeg ved ikke hvor mange hundrede tusinde meter gardinstof pr. År. Det var jo voldsomme mængder, det var nok lige voldsomt nok for os at gabe over.

LIS: Det der var problematikken i det var to ting. Volumen, som du (Brian, red) også nævner. Og jeg er ikke så godt lidt i Danmark af mine kolleger. Jeg breder mig jo over hele Danmark. Det vil sige, at den gardinforretning, der ligger i Roskilde kan jo ikke lide GardinLis fra Randers, fordi hun ligger og kører derovre med gardinbussen. Så meningen var jo, at hvis jeg skulle aftage så mange mængder dernede, så skulle jeg kunne afsætte dem til nogle af mine kolleger, der også skulle bruge det samme, eller til Norge, eller hvad vi nu snakkede om dengang. Det blev for voldsomt. Jeg turde simpelthen ikke. Og så samtidig, så stødte jeg ind i nogle skrækhistorier, der var et flagfirma i Aalborg, der faktisk fik lavet flag dernede, og det stof man fik lavet flag i. Og det stof man laver flag i, er egentlig sådan noget polyester stof, som vi også skulle have lavet i gardinerne. Og det bliver efterbehandlet dernede. Det er noget med man farver dem med et farvemateriale og mønster, og så skal det efterhandlet, de bliver egentlig vasket bagefter, og så skal de jo tørre. Og hvis ikke man får det tørret ordentligt, så kommer de ind i de der containere. Og der jo stor luftfugtighed i Vietnam. Så når de kommer herhjem, er det hele muggent. Og hvis skyld er det så? Så det blev for stor en mundfuld. Så vi trak følehornene til os.

*TOBIAS: Var der for stor risiko i det?*

LIS: Ja, jeg turde ikke være alene om det. Og så er det egentlig blevet screenlagt mere eller mindre.

BRIAN: Der var selvfølgelig også lige, maskiner og produktionsudstyr… det synes de måske ikke lige var.

LIS: nej lige nøjagtigt, de maskiner vi havde fundet, var de (Vietnameserne, red) alligevel blevet sådan, at de var for gamle at få ind i Vietnam. Jeg havde faktisk en med, der har et væveri i Vejle. Han var faktisk klar til at tage derned, fordi der skal en tovholder derned, en dansk tovholder. Det er nødvendigt. De ville slet ikke have maskinerne dernede.

*TOBIAS: Så der var noget teknologiske der ikke var helt på plads?*

LIS: Ja, hvis jeg skulle have haft dem ind i Vietnam, så var det sådan under bordet med en eller anden jeg lige kendt, der kunne få dem ind. Så det ville blive sådan noget lusket noget.

*TOBIAS: Så de lande langt væk var lidt for stor en mundfuld?*

LIS: Ja det var for stor en mundfuld, det turde jeg simpelthen ikke.

*LARS: Nu snakker vi meget om hvad der er sket inden for de sidste 5 år, siden 2012 med Danida i Vietnam osv. Men vi er også lidt interesserede i hvordan GardinLis er kommet så langt fra etableringen i 1984. Hvilken udvikling der har været her internt i virksomheden, hvis vi skal prøve at skitsere det i nogle perioder eller nogle vigtige hændelser, det kunne være hvad der har været essentielt, det kan være hvad der har været af positivt og negative oplevelser undervejs i udviklingen.*

LIS: Jamen der er jo ingen tvivl om at vi er, i lige netop den branche jeg har bevæget mig ind i, er faktisk lige speciel synes jeg. Hvis du tænker på branchen igennem de åringer der har været, så er det en branche, der har været kendt for, at det er manden og konen der starter en virksomhed op, og så har man 2-3 ansatte i butikken og så en montør ude af huset. Sådan har det egentlig været. Det har været sådan noget familie – mand-og-kone firma i mange år. Og det har mit jo også været. Jeg har også haft en 7-8 ansatte, indtil jeg så fik en kunne der (henviser til et sted), og vi udviklede os lidt og vi fik bussen. Og i 2007 inden krisen kom, havde vi faktisk en god omsætning. Vi omsatte for 14 millioner og kunne lave en million på bundlinjen, og var et sted ude i Volde, hvor vi ikke kunne blive ved med at være i lokaler. Og så kom jeg i en Platogruppe, hvor det var Væksthus Midtjylland der var tovholder på den der Platogruppe, hvor de fandt 10 selvstændige damer, som ville være med i et forløb, til at finde ud af, hvad det er, der skal til for at udvikle sådan nogle virksomheder som vores. Og det var første gang jeg stødte på noget der hedder forretningsplan, swot-analyse og alle mulige fine ting. Og det var nok sådan det jeg synes satte gang i at vi ville noget mere.

BRIAN: Var det kun privatkunder op til 2007?

LIS: Ikke kun.

BRIAN: men 95%?

LIS: ja det tror jeg det var rigtig meget. Og så blev vi så enige om, at vi blev nødt til at finde et sted at være. Det var lidt specielt, for på det tidspunkt har jeg haft en købmandsbutik i 10 år, hvor jeg havde solgt sukker og mel. Men det var i huset, hvor vi havde gardinerne ovenpå og købmandsforretningen nedenunder. Og købmandsbutikken gav underskud, det var rigtig svært. Men så havde jeg pludselig en, der ville købe købmandsbutikken. Så tænkte jeg, så var tiden inde til vi skulle prøve noget andet. Så jeg solgte købmandsbutikken og så skulle jeg finde et sted at være med gardinerne. Det blev så her (i Randers, red). Så kom krisen jo faktisk, da vi lige var flyttet herud. Og jeg vil da også sige, at vi havde nogle træls år, fordi omsætningen, den var ikke faldende, men den var standby i de år. Og jeg fik taget swaplån og schweizerfranc og alle mulige spændende ting. Så jeg vil sige, det var faktisk nogle hårde år. Men samtidig var det rigtig spændende, fordi jeg var kommet i den der Platogruppe. Og den var med til at finde ud af, at der var nogle ting, når man drev virksomhed, hvis man skulle udvikle sig, mere end at afvikle sig, så var jeg nok nødt til at arbejde på det. Men, jeg er jo sælgeren. Hvis jeg skal skrive noget, der er mere end to linjer eller læse noget der er mere end to linjer har jeg allerede opgivet inden jeg er kommet igennem den ene. Og en af de ting, vi stødte på i udviklingsplanen sammen med væksthuset, var faktisk at der var forskellige ting man kunne søge om hjælp til. ”Genvej til ny viden” tror jeg faktisk programmet hed. Og jeg tror faktisk det var igennem vækstfonden der så nævner de programmer man kan få.

BRIAN: i 2011 eller sådan noget.

LIS: ja, og der søger jeg egentlig, men det bliver ikke rigtig til noget. Jeg kan ikke huske hvad der skete.

BRIAN: Det var fordi, helt kort, at i ville bruge det til at innovere på noget markedsføring. Men så tog man det ud som et punkt, at det kunne man ikke bruge programmet til. Og så gik det lidt i stå, for hvad skulle man så bruge det til…

LIS: Nej, lige nøjagtigt. Og der gik det så lidt i stå. Meningen med den der ”genvej til ny viden” var selvfølgelig at få noget ny viden til de ting, jeg nu skulle have hjælp til. Det, der så sker samme tid, er at jeg bliver inviteret med til Shanghai på en udviklingstur for Randers erhvervs- og udviklingsråd, og på den tur er Brian faktisk med for Randers erhverv. Der møder vi (Brian og Lis) så hinanden. Jeg ved ikke hvordan jeg kommer til at vise dig de her ting, men på en eller anden måde ser du det der ”hvis ikke man udvikler sig, så afvikler man”.

BRIAN: Du havde lavet sådan en innovationsplan, på en 6-8 sider. Jeg har den hængende endnu faktisk.

LIS: Så sker der det, at jeg kan godt se, at det her det er ikke mig. Det der med at skulle søge og sætte ting i system og få skrevet det og få lavet afviklinger og rapport og alt muligt andet. Men så er der en fra det her projekt, der siger til mig, hvorfor jeg ikke søger sådan en videnpilot. Og så kommer Brian faktisk, efter han er blevet fyret hos Randers erhverv og banker på min dør, og kommer faktisk og siger det samme, at jeg kunne få sådan en videnpilot projekt hvor man jo i 12 måneder for noget tilskud til lønnen for at få sat tingene i gang. Så sker der faktisk det, at Brian bliver ansat i den der videnpilot, hvor man får tilskud, og så får vi søgt ”Genvej til ny viden” igen, og det er en af de første møder Brian og jeg havde, der tror jeg, jeg ved ikke hvor mange gule lapper på en væg. Jeg tænkte, det var da slet ikke lige… puha.

BRIAN: Jeg kan huske at Sanne også var med. Og hun siger, ”hvem er du (Brian) egentlig? Er du ansat hos os? Det var jeg så heller ikke på det tidspunkt.

*LARS: hvornår var det?*

LIS: Det var i 2012.

BRIAN: Ja, det var i løbet af maj-måned 2012.

LIS: Ja, og Brian er så blevet hængende. Og jeg er også nødt til at sige, at Brian har været en stor del af, at vi har kunne udvikle os som vi har gjort, fordi de ting Brian har budt ind med og kan, ville jeg aldrig nogensinde selv have fået skrevet ned på et stykke papir. Og lige i øjeblikket, det kan jeg vel godt sige Brian, er vi blevet nomineret til årets akademikerpris, fordi at det i vores branche er meget unormalt at man har akademikere. Man bliver uddannet som kontorting eller butiksting, så står man i butikken. Og dem der kører ud er måske håndværkere på en eller anden måde. Det er ikke normalt man har akademikere i min branche.

BRIAN: (henviser til folderen han sidder med) Grunden til, at de der er streget over, er at det var der vi snakkede om at vi kunne skaffe nogle midler for at virkeliggøre de har ting. Nogle uddannelsesmidler og eksportmidler og sådan nogle ting. Der er også nogle teknologimidler, hvis man skulle udvikle systuen.

*TOBIAS: Så da du (Brian) kommer ind, kommer du med noget international erfaring?*

LIS: Ja. Og nu efterfølgende har vi næsten bevæget os endnu mere på den anden side. Vi tænker grønt og har lavet grøn strategi, cirkulær økonomi. Nu begynder vi at bevæge os ind på nogle områder, der er utroligt spændende og krævende. Men jeg også nødt til at sige, at det er nok også dem, der får til os komme på landkortet, fordi vi er første tænkende med nogle af de her ting. Og ved at vi bevæger os på de her ting, det kan være både eksport og det kan være det grønne, gør jo også at jeg får udbredt kendskabet til GardinLis til rigtig mange områder, som så forhåbentlig skal give nogle kunder hen ad vejen.

*TOBIAS: Så det at være etableret solidt på hjemmemarkedet har en betydning?*

LIS: Ja. Vi har så udviklet os med kunderne. Som Brian nævnte i 2007-8 stykker, tror jeg mest vi havde private kunder. I dag har vi halv erhverv+institutioner og halv privat. Det har bevæget sig til den anden side.

BRIAN: Det var også der var krisen rammer, at skulle flytte her ud med betydeligt større faste omkostninger, og så er der en krise hvor boligmarkedet går i stå. Men stadigvæk bliver der fra regeringens side holdt under offentlige byggerier, og det er her du (Lis) får nogle erhvervskunder, ikk?.

LIS: Jo.

BRIAN: Og kommer ind på det område. Og selvfølgelig er der også nogle lærepenge i det her med, at der er større risici. Det er større projekter. Hvis man hænger hundrede udvendige screens op, og de ikke passer kan man næsten gå konkurs på en enkelt ordre. Så der har været nogle ting. Igen, nogle kompetencer.

LIS: Ja netop. Jeg vil sige, at de år her har været en rigtig spændende rejse som slet ikke er slut endnu, men det er jo nok først nu, hvor jeg synes vi er klar til at tjene nogle penge på det. For selvfølgelig har det kostet penge alt det, vi har været igennem. Og det er jo, det koster penge at vækste med de ting vi sætter i gang. Men det koster også penge fordi du skal bruge nye medarbejdere. De nye medarbejdere skal først læres op, og hvis ikke vi er gode nok til at få dem lært op fra starten af, så sker der fejl, og så har der hele tiden været nogle ting. Men jeg synes da, jeg har da aldrig været så meget klar som jeg er nu.

*LARS: Så det er de sidste 10 år ca. fra 2007 at alt det her begynder, med erhvervskunder og det ikke bare er private kunder.*

LIS: Ja.

BRIAN: Og også kommuneordrer, dem har vi også fået nogle stykker af, der har været med til at få omsætningen op, som så betyder nogle bedre indkøbsaftaler og sådan noget. Så vi tjener selvfølgelig også lidt på det, altså hele det offentlig marked.

*TOBIAS: Så det offentlige har også haft stor betydning?*

BRIAN: Ja det har det da.

LIS: Om ikke andet har det haft betydningen for volumen i indkøbet. Fordi vi er blevet so store en aftager hos vores fabrikker og grossister. Det kan godt være vi tjener mindre på kommuneaftalerne, men de aftaler gør, at vi køber billigere ind, og så tjener vi ekstra på dem, der ikke er kommuneaftaler.

BRIAN: Det har også betydet, at dem, der er andre der gerne vil lege med os. De tidligere Botex forretninger, der gerne vil ind og indkøbe hos os i stedet for, på en mere fleksibel måde, der ikke er så omkostningstungt, for de kan se vi har noget volumen. Og så deres volumen oveni, giver så samlet endnu mere volumen.

*TOBIAS: 2012, er det Norge, der er i gang der? (Henviser til folder på bordet)*

LIS: Ja.

*LARS: Lis, din baggrund eller årsagen til du starter den her forretning. Hvad er det ligesom der får dig til at beslutte, at nu er det gardiner?*

LIS: Det er fordi, jeg er jo så gammel, at den gang jeg gik i skole, der hed det realeksamen, den tog jeg i 1974-5. Så tog jeg et år til Bornholm, hvor jeg var på et hotel, hvor jeg var i receptionen. Så kom jeg hjem derfra i 1977, og bliver enig med mig selv om, gad hvide hvad jeg skulle lave. Så tænkte jeg, at jeg nok skulle på et salgskontor, og så søgte jeg en masse jobs på salgskontorer. Men jeg havde jo ingen uddannelse, så jeg fik det ene afslag efter det andet Men så var jeg så heldig, at en af de ansøgninger jeg havde sendt, der bliver jeg kaldt til samtale, hos dem, der dengang hed Kirs. Og der bliver jeg ansat på deres salgskontor. Og Kirses kunder var gardinforretninger rundt omkring. Og der var jo så et år. Og så søgte konkurrenten Faber en salgsassistent, og det følte jeg var et lidt mere spændende firma end Kirs. Så søgte jeg ud til dem, og var der de næste 7 år næsten. Hvor at vores kunder var gardinforretninger, hvor jeg sad og snakkede med dem hver dag i telefonen. Og så kunne du ikke rigtig komme videre hos Faber, for deres hovedafdeling lå på Fyn. Og jeg er sådan lidt jordnær, så jeg kunne ikke se at jeg skulle flytte nogle steder hen, så jeg synes ikke jeg kunne komme videre. Så havde jeg faktisk forsøgt at få børn i en del år. Jeg var blevet 27, og alle mine veninder var begyndt at få børn, men vi fik ingen. Så blev jeg enig med mig selv om, at hvis ikke vi skulle have børn, og jeg ikke kunne udvikle mig mere ved Faber, så ville jeg prøve noget andet. Så tænkte jeg, at jeg nok skulle være selvstændig. Og det gjorde jeg så der i 84 (1984). Og et år efter fik jeg min første søn. Og så fik jeg så 4 i alt efterfølgende. Så det var nok det, der skulle til. Jeg skulle nok være selvstændig for at få børn. Så jeg startede op der i 84 med at være selvstændig gardinforretning, hvor jeg faktisk havde sådan et lille lokale – det var også der vi kørte ud fra, klippede stof og gjorde det hele klar.

*TOBIAS: I 2008 flytter i så til større lokaler herude.*

LIS: Ja, det var på grund af pladsmangel. Og så også fordi vi havde lokaler ude i en lille by der hedder Voldum mellem Aarhus og Randers, langt ude på landet, hvor jeg faktisk kunne have bygget rigtig billigt og bygget langt større lokaler. Men jeg havde faktisk et andet problem. Det var svært at få ansatte på vores systue. For det var mange gange damen i huset, og så skulle man have to biler for at komme til Voldum, der var ingen offentlige transportmidler. Så det var faktisk rigtig svært at komme ud til os. Og samtidig, da jeg skulle finde ud af hvad jeg ville, hvis jeg skulle låne penge til det, så kunne jeg kun låne 60% belåning hvis det var i Voldum, og jeg kunne låne næsten 100% hvis jeg byggede herinde i Randers.

BRIAN: Fordi der var større risiko ved at have an grund i Voldum.

LIS: Ja. Og så blev jeg så enig med mig selv om, at så var tiden nok også til, at jeg skulle flytte til byen.

*TOBIAS: Og i 2008 modtaget i Børsens Gazellepris – hvad er, der har gjort, at kunne modtage den pris?*

LIS: Jo mindre virksomhed du er, jo nemmere er det at få prisen. Altså, sådan er det jo. Det er jo en fordobling af sin omsætning.

BRIAN: Der er nogen der kan klare den vanvittige opgave at få den en 2-3 gange i træk. Og så stopper det så.

LIS: Det er jo en fordobling af omsætning og det er en fordobling af bundlinjen, og der er andre kriterier, der også er gældende. Jo mere omsætning du laver, jo sværere bliver det at få prisen.

*TOBIAS: Hvad var det for nogle faktorer der gjorde, at I kunne få prisen?*

LIS: Vi var vækstet rigtig meget. 2007 og 2008 var jo nogle gode år hvor vi selvom vi kun omsat for 14 millioner og lavede en million på bundlinjen. Nu omsætter vi for det dobbelt, og har svært ved at lave en halv million. Det er jo igen, at der er der ikke noget unormalt i, siger de kloge mennesker omkring mig. Lige nu har jeg faktisk en træls størrelse virksomhed, siger dem der er store. De siger jeg er for stor til at være lille og for lille til at være stor. Den der mellem 30 og 35 millioner. De siger, du er jo egentlig en stor virksomhed, men alligevel er du lille.

*TOBIAS: Det, i snakker om i 2007 med at i får aftaler med institutioner osv. Har det måske påvirket årsagen til, at i får en pris i 2008?*

LIS: Nej, det var nu ikke. Nej, det var det faktisk ikke. Det er først efter vi er kommet herud (Randers, red), at vi er begyndt at få de aftaler med institutioner, og 2008 var der hvor vi flyttede herud den 22 december 2008. Så det har været almindelig vækst, også med at vi besluttede at vi blev nødt til at flytte i nogle større lokaler, noget mere hensigtsmæssigt end vi har været vant til.

BRIAN: Har der været en fordobling af omsætning der fra 2007-2008.

LIS: Nej, det er over 3 år. Så fra 2005-2008. Kriterierne er en fordobling (af omsætningen, red) inden for de sidste tre år.

*LARS: Sådan i forhold til jeres produktionsfaciliteter, maskiner og hvad i ellers benytter, hvornår udvider man ligesom faciliteterne første gang? Jeg er klar over, at det nok sker gradvist som i vokser og vækster, men er der noget der er vigtigt for, at i kan blive ved med at vækste? Finder du nogle gode aftaler, og hvordan i forhold til at få maskiner hjem, der kan hjælpe jer i produktionen, er der så nogle helt bestemte tidspunkter, hvor der sker noget på den front.*

LIS: Ikke det, der har været igennem. Noget vi også har arbejdet med, og vi har været med i et program, der hedder internationale forretningsmodeller, som egentlig var lidt op på om vi kunne lave noget optimering af vores systue, lidt robottisering på en eller anden måde, som vi har været lidt igennem. Og vi har også haft en robotmand ude, der skulle prøve at se om vi kunne gøre noget på vores systue. Det skulle jo ikke være fordi vi skulle nedlægge systuen og have robotter, det skulle være sådan at vi kunne gøre tingene nemmere, så vi kunne tage endnu mere sytøj ind.

Der er ingen tvivl om, at alle systuer i Danmark er blevet flyttet ud, der er nogle få tilbage stadigvæk, men hvis man kunne gøre noget på systuen, som gjorde, at vi kunne have nogle processer, der gik hurtigere, så kunne vi også bibeholde dem, fordi dem nede i Polen syer ikke hurtigere end vi gør her, det er ren og skær lønningerne der er forskellen. Så der er ingen tvivl om, at vi kunne sagtens arbejde på, skulle sætte en højere overlægger og søger nogle EU-midler, og få lavet en systue der dur. Men det er bare ikke noget vi selv er dygtige nok til at finde ud af selve processerne. Jeg kan ikke gå ned og sige, at hvis en robot nu kan gøre sådan med armen så dur den. Der er vi jo nødt til at hente viden ude fra.

BRIAN: nej nej, men det kunne nemlig være at man kunne, for der er sådan en bevægelse mod flere europæiske virksomheder, der tager produktionen hjem fra Kina, så måske i første omgang placerer det i Polen igen. Ligesom der var en bevægelse der hed Danmark-Polen og så længere ude til vesten. Den er sådan lidt på vej tilbage igen. Så den der bevægelse kunne måske være med til at skaffe flere danske arbejdspladser inden for at sy nogle ting, altså systuer. Men så kræver det man at man automatiserer helt vildt. Mange danske virksomheder har automatiseret deres processer, og troet at alle skulle fyres, men i virkeligheden har de ansat nogle flere til at passe de har maskiner. Så automatiseringen er bare nødvendigt, som kan redde meget af vores erhvervsliv i Danmark i det hele taget. Men som vi ligesom siger, at sætte baren højt. Hvad er det så for en teknologi man kunne forestille sig. Og der er noget, der er på vej, hvor man ser nærmest robotter, der kan sy en skjorte, selvom det er ekstremt svært at sy en skjorte. Der skal være hænder på den. Hvis man fik en robot til det, ville det tage 14 år, inden den var blevet færdig. Så der er noget teknologi, der er på vej, som kan håndtere nogle stoffer, som er svære at håndtere.

LIS: Der er ingen tvivl om, at vores er jo også lidt anderledes. Vi laver jo ikke 1000 stykker af den samme størrelse af det samme produkt. Vi laver måske 5 af dem, 7 af dem og 3 af dem. Så det er meget individuelle opgaver vi har. Så vi kan jo ikke bare sige, at der nu sidder en robot og kun syer ærmer på, eksempelvis, på 500 skjorter, sådan er vores jo ikke, det er individuelle opgaver.

*LARS: så alt det foregår sådan set manuelt, på nuværende tidspunkt, med hjælp fra maskiner. Der er manuel omstilling?*

LIS: ja.

*TOBIAS:* *Hvordan i forhold til jeres konkurrenter, har i kendskab til, om de har været ude på internationale markeder? Har branchen generelt været global?*

LIS: Det ved jeg ikke om de har. Der er jo selvfølgelig nogen inden for vores branche, Kvadrat eksempelvis, som er vores grossist, men som også sælger meget i udlandet. Fischer international har også gjort lidt.

BRIAN: Fischer har gjort noget i Norge på erhvervsområdet altså erhvervsprojekter. Og også i Tyskland faktisk.

*TOBIAS: Med success?*

LIS: Af det jeg har kendskab til, har de været tidligere fremme end jeg har på erhvervsdelen, så de har nogle rigtige gode arkitektrelationer, som tegner nogle projekter i enten Tyskland eller Norge, som de leverer produkter til. Vi har i øvrigt også lige sendt en ordre til Grønland. Det er til os selv jo, det er vores eget land.

BRIAN: Det er måske lidt minieksport.

*LARS: Alt det her eksport, som vi snakker om, der måske er aktuelt lige nu mere end nogensinde, kommer det ud af, at man kommer til et punkt i Danmark, hvor man siger, at går nogenlunde herhjemme og vi er klar til at udvide aktiviteterne, og bruge nogle flere ressourcer og midler på at ekspandere, eller er det mere en reaktiv beslutning at i er nødt til snart at gøre noget, for at få den værdi, som er målsætningen? Eller hvad er tankerne bag, at man måske ikke målrettet går efter at eksporter nu, eller at det i hvert fald har en højere betydning end nogensinde?*

LIS: Altså min tanke, er at alting bliver større og større. Man opkøber hinanden. Jeg tror den der start jeg fortalte jer om, hvordan gardinforretningen var startet førhen, hvor det var mand og kone. Jeg tror løbet er kørt for dem. Det samme tror jeg det er eksempelvis i Tyskland, der gør det samme. Jeg tror mere på sådan en shopløsning, hvor man for eksempel har nogen, der styrer 5-6 butikker nede i Tyskland, og så er det en fast, der er hovedleverandør eller står for de afdelinger. Jeg tror ikke på, der er penge i at have en gardinforretning mere på det lille setup. Jeg tror mere det bliver sådan nogle shopper. Ellers som vi nu har gjort købt Corneliussen i Vodskov og fået hans område og telefonnumre. Det samme har vi gjort ved opkøb af lidt små virksomheder. Vi er gået sammen med nogle af dem, der gerne vil lege med os, men som er for lille. Det kunne være den var noget værd hvis den samarbejdede med Gardinlis, som var over landet i forvejen.

BRIAN: Det var det, der var en sikker strategi på det tidspunkt. At lave et samarbejde. Os, der skulle købe dem, eller dem, der skulle købe os, for at stå stærkere.

*LARS: Nu nævner du nogle eksempler på det, kan du prøve at sætte nogle tidshorisonter på hvornår i har lavet nogle opkøb, der har haft en betydning for omsætningen.*

LIS: Altså, vi har jo. Vi ved ikke om det har virket. Men nu snakkede Susanne, der sidder nede i kundeservice, at hun kunne godt se, at vi jo ikke har haft kunder nord på, men så købte vi Corneliussen Vodskov, vi købte hans telefonnr. Hans varelager. Det siger Susanne, at kunderne i Aalborg, der er rigtig mange fra Vodskov. Det vil sige, at det har virket. Der kommer stadig nogle kunder, og vi har gjort lidt arbejde i at fortælle at vi var der.

BRIAN: Arved er også et opkøb.

LIS: Arved er i princippet også. Det er en der bor oppe i Møldrup. Vi har egentlig syet for ham i alt den tid. Men her for en 5-6 år siden, kommer han under vores vinger.

BRIAN: Botex i Hobro er jo også.

LIS: Ja, det er en butik vi har købt i Hobro. Det er en butik jeg har købt sammen med min søster. Så den kører for sig selv. Det var sidste år i maj. Corneliussen var en 3 år siden.

BRIAN: Hvad med Svendborg?

LIS: Ja i Svendborg. Der købte vi faktisk bare bilen og telefonnumre. Noget der hedder Boligtrend i Svenborg. Og det er det, vi har døbt butikken i Hobro også.

*TOBIAS: Netværket har så haft en betydning? Det at man kunne udvide sine kontakter rundt omkring i landet?*

LIS: Ja.

BRIAN: Der er jo også Aalborg med Vita. Det er jo så også en selvstændig enhed, hvor Vita har 50% og Lis eger den anden 50%. Det er sådan set afdelingen i Aalborg.

LIS: Ja, det startede vi så her første februar (2017, red).

BRIAN: så er der selvfølgelig det strategisk eventyr med idemøbler for 2 år siden.

LIS: Det var faktisk sådan noget shopløsning vi satte ind i deres butikker, og så skulle de henvise til os, og det får vi så en fee for.

*TOBIAS: hvordan fik i den aftale i hus?*

LIS: Det var fordi jeg havde lavet en aftale med Tæppeland, og så gik Tæppeland konkurs. Og jeg synes faktisk det var rigtig mange gode leads vi fik fra Tæppeland, som var i hele Danmark. Så pludselig kunne jeg få kunder på Sjælland og Fyn, bare ved at få henvisninger fra de der. Og så ringede jeg selv til idemøbler for at spørge om det var en interesse for dem. Og da jeg ringede fortalte de, at der på deres to-do liste stod gardiner, som de skulle vende om det var noget for dem. Så vi laver en aftale med dem, hvor vi har sådan noget shop ude i deres butikker. Og det har selvfølgelig gjort at vi er blevet landsdækkende på privatmarkedet.

*TOBIAS: Så hjemmemarkedet har haft stor betydning for jer i det hele taget?*

Lis. Ja. Nu er jeg nok en pige, der har mange bolde i luften og synes alting er spændende. Så jeg vil ikke sige, at jeg altid har haft det fokus at vi skal have klaret ét først før vi gør noget andet. Det glemmer jeg nok, når det bliver spændende nok. Men jeg vil også sige, at selvom også vi har fokus på det, med det grønne, Svanemærke, internationalt, det arbejder vi stadig på sideløbende.

BRIAN: jeg tror det er vigtigt at have styr på sin hjemmefront, sit hjemmemarked, og have den skruet ordentlig sammen. Vi skal også helst lande en 8-10% af omsætningen på bundlinjen, så er der ligesom nogle midler at afsætte. Det koster en million at komme til Tyskland, så må vi afsætte det. Både til løn, nogle etableringsomkostninger, og hvad der nu måtte være i sådan et budget. Ellers mister vi fokus på det. Og hvis man ikke har fokus på det, så sker der ikke noget.

LIS: Jeg tror også vi er blevet så kloge, at lad os nu sige at vi vil, ligesom også da vi sagde, at nu skal vi have vores Sjællandsafdeling til at fungere, så ansætter man en derovre, som er daglig leder, en der kan tage den opgave. Jeg tror på, at hvis det er vi virkelig beslutter at vi skal til Tyskland, så tror jeg også man er nødt til at ansætte en til at være tovholder på det, som har kendskab til det tyske marked, og ved hvordan..

BRIAN: Ja, en som måske også er uddannet inden for international handel.

LIS: Kender i en der hedder Morten Lund?

*LARS OG TOBIAS: Ja*

LIS:Ham har vi haft noget sparring med.

*TOBIAS: Hvornår har i brugt ham?*

LIS: Jamen det var faktisk da vi startede på det grønne også, leasingmodellen.

BRIAN: Var det ikke i forbindelse med ”Genvej til ny viden”?

LIS: Jo. Vi havde ham inde til noget rådgivning på vores projekter. ”Genvej til ny viden” er det et krav, man skal arbejde med forskningsbaseret viden. Og i og med han indgår som en forsker forretningsmodeller, så var han inde over der.

*TOBIAS: Kunne han komme med noget brugbart?*

LIS: vi ved det faktisk ikke. Og så alligevel kom han med nogle ting, hvor vi godt kunne mærke at han kom med nogle gode ideer.

BRIAN: der kom nogle gode input fra ham.

LIS: Det eneste jeg er nødt til at sige, set i bakspejlet, hvis ikke vi fik noget ud af ham i det der ”genvej til ny viden”, så er han faktisk en person, som jeg synes er rigtig rar til at tænke på de ting han arbejder med. Jeg bliver stadigvæk ringet op af folk der siger ”Morten Lund har sagt at vi skal ringe til dig”.

BRIAN: så der har været en effekt efterfølgende.

*TOBIAS: Så han er en del af netværket?*

BRIAN & LIS: Ja, han er rimelig vigtig. Han er god til at sige ”skal vi ikke lige tage et møde, for du har et eller andet du kan bidrage med”.

LIS: Ja, han har været en del af det hele….

LIS: Jeg er for øvrigt blevet sponsor i AaB (fodboldklubben).

*LARS: Du er allerede repræsenteret i Randers, ikk?*

LIS: Jo. For netværkets skyld.

BRIAN: Også i Brøndby. AGF netværk også.

*LARS: hvor længe har du praktiseret de her erhvervsnetværk?*

LIS: Jeg har været sponsor i RandersFC i 10 år. Og så vil jeg da sige, at de andre netværk har været inden for de sidste 5-6 år, jeg har praktiseret det. Og jeg flytter sådan lidt rundt, for jeg har også været sponsor i Silkeborg (fodboldklubben, red). Og da det så var udløbet, fik jeg i AGF (fodboldklubben) i stedet for, og vi har faktisk været i Fc Nordsjælland, og da det udløb, ventede jeg et år, så nu har vi så fået i Brøndby.

BRIAN: Der har også været håndbold i KIF Kjolding København.

LIS: Ja, KIF har vi også været sponsor. Og i Bakken Bears, i basketball. Og det er jo for at prøve at få så meget forskelligt netværk som overhovedet muligt. Jeg har lige kaldt til sponsormøde. For jeg kan jo ikke deltage i dem alle sammen. På Sjælland har jeg en anden til at deltage.

BRIAN: Ja, og de skal også have at vide hvad vi vil have ud af det. Vi har også Tivoli-netværket, med diverse fribilletter, vi kunne bruge til potentielle kunder. Og AaB, er jo fordi vi har fået den afdeling oppe sammen med Vita, som vi har startet ude på mineralvej, har vi lokaler. Og der har vi meldt os ind i AaB netværket, og BNI netværket også.

*LARS: Hvad bliver de her erhvervsnetværk brugt til? Er det udelukkende i forhold til kunder eller kan i også få noget sparring derigennem?*

LIS: netværket er rigtig, rigtig godt synes jeg. Men du skal være der, og du skal være på. Så får du selvfølgelig nogle forskellige ting sammen med netværket. Du får en stak billetter og noget andet. Det har vi ikke været for gode til at udnytte til nogle kunder osv. Men vi skal have et møde om, hvad det er vi gør ved det. Og så håber jeg på, det kan give noget også. Fx nu AGF netværket. Det er et rigtig godt netværk. Klubben og os har lige ompolstret 300 stole derud til, og vi har også leveret en kæmpe ordre til Brøndby. Jeg tror på det sponsorat jeg ligger der, det får jeg tjent hjem på at klubben skal have et eller andet, og så kan man sige, så er penge ved det. Og så skal man gerne have bearbejdet netværket.

BRIAN: hvor mange sidder der i Brøndbynetværket?

LIS: Der er jo fire grupper.

BRIAN: hvor mange møder Karin for eksempel når hun er afsted?

LIS: jeg tror de er en 20-25 stykker hver gang.

BRIAN: Altså, hvis vi nu vil have fat i Carlsberg eller Mærsk, så er der sandsynligvis nogen i det netværk, der kender nogle indgange, der så kan bearbejde dem, til at vi kun få et møde. Så netværkets netværk er virkelig noget værd.

*TOBIAS: Kunne man forestille sig, at man benyttede lidt samme model i udlandet?*

LIS: Det kunne da godt ske. Det er sjovt du lige nævner det. Jeg kender en der hedder Claus på Sjælland, han har samlet ind til kræftramte børn og gjort en stor indsats der. Så han er rigtig kendt i både cykelverdenen og håndboldverdenen og sportsverdenen generelt. Men han er tovholder på den danske et eller andet i Flensborg Handewitt. Så der tænkte jeg, at hvis vi skulle til Flensborg, så var det måske Claus vi skulle igennem, og høre ham hvordan man kommer til at starte op dernede. Det kunne være der var en afdanket håndboldspiller, der ikke kunne få tiden til at gå, der tænker at han skal ud i erhvervslivet, når han ikke kan spille håndbold.

BRIAN: Ja, Hans Lindberg fra HSV kunne måske ikke være så dumt. Han er jo en profil og kendt i forvejen.

*TOBIAS: Er Norge ovre nu?*

BRIAN & LIS: Ja, der bliver ikke brugt nogle ressourcer på det.

BRIAN: Der ligger nogle kontakter, der kan genoplives. Både på messe.

LIS: Han har faktisk lige skrevet til os om vi skal på messe igen. Og der kan jeg faktisk godt mærke, der var jeg jo oppe samen med Mette fra kundeservice. Det var uvidenhed fra os, selvfølgelig fordi det var første gang. Men set lidt i bakspejlet, der kunne jeg godt mærke, vi kunne have fået enormt mange aftaler.

*TOBIAS: så der mangler lidt ressourcer og viden om det norske marked.*

LIS & BRIAN: ja.

*LARS: hvos vi lige skal runde strukturen i virksomheden i dag – er i så spredt ud over hele Danmark efterhånden i forskellige enheder, eller er det mere sælgere der kører rundt og har deres daglige gang geografisk set.*

LIS: Ja, vi har hovedsædet i Randers. Og så har vi et Københavnersted, og vi har et Odensested og så har vi et Aalborgsted. Nu sætter jeg lige den ned under Randers, for den (Aalborg, red) ejer jeg kun 50% af den i Aalborg. Så jeg er i princippet København, Randers og Odense, som steder vi kører ud fra.

*LARS: Hvis vi skal prøve at sætte nogle tal på, er det så nyligt det er kommet i stand?*

LIS: Det her er faktisk 1/2/2017 med Odense og Aalborg og København er vist halvandet år vi har haft det, 2 år her til sommer. 1/8 2015.

*LARS: Så mangler vi sådan set bare at få afdækket din rolle i dag, hvordan er den i virksomheden?*

LIS: Vi er ved at lave organisationsplanen om. Der er ingen tvivl om, at jeg jo stadigvæk er lidt tovholder på salg og økonomi, men jeg synes også jeg har fået uddelegeret nogle ting, til Sjællandsafdelingen og Odense, så de er lidt selvkørende, men stadigvæk så er det selvfølgelig mig de kontakter hvis der er noget. Vores salgsorganisation er blevet delt op sådan at alle dem der sælger erhverv henvender sig til Kasper med indkøb og erhverv. Økonomifunktionen kører jo også af sig selv. Dog, fordi vi har vækstet som vi har, så er vi hele tiden i likviditetsmangel. Og det er jeg selv inde over, det vil jeg gerne selv være med til.

*LARS: Og Brian, hvad er din rolle i dag?*

BRIAN: Jeg har jo sørget for, at alle de her midler er kommet ind i virksomheden, de her par millioner eller 2,5 i erhvervsdrivende midler. Og så er jeg med til at drive de projekter som så ikke influerer på en helt masse ting. Så jeg er nok projekt- og udviklingskoordinator, og er Lis’ højre og venstre hånd og nogle gange højre ben. Men det er en rolle vi skal have spidset mere til. Lis vil gerne have fundet de rigtige folk til de områder. For Lis’ styrke er jo først og fremmest at være ude at repræsentere virksomheden og skaffe netværk og skaffe kunder og skabe relationer og den slags, så det vil være en fordel for virksomheden hvis den kunne komme ud og være mere repræsenteret på konferencer og alt muligt.

LIS: Her for nyligt blev vi inviteret over til Kramo, der har lavet et nyt sted herovre. De holdt her den 15-16 maj et åbent hus, men hvor deres leverandører måtte komme og stå med en stand. Og så kom der mange af deres kunder, og så kunne vi så få lov at vise hvad vi kunne. Jeg havde jo Kasper og Rene til at stå der, det var to af vores. Faktisk vores salgschef fra erhverv og Rene, som også har med lidt erhverv men også private at gøre, de stod derovre fra vores stand. Og så var der vel 5-6 andre stande udover os. De (Kasper og Rene) startede faktisk med at ligge ud med at de var lidt skuffede over der ikke var kommet nogle gæster derovre. Der havde været ca. 100 gæster derovre i løbet af dagen, og der var ikke rigtig nogen der havde fået noget ud af de stande de havde stået med. Men jeg var så nødt til at fortælle dem, at jeg var kørt derover lige til middag, bare for at se det. Og jeg var derovre i en time, og kom derfra med 2 aftaler, og jeg var den eneste der overhovedet havde fået en aftale, selvom de andre havde stået der hele dagen. Så jeg føler selv det fungerer bedst med mig. Jeg har også nogle super søde mennesker der kan, men jeg brænder bare for det.

*TOBIAS: Nu arbejder jeg jo som studiemedhjælper hos AndersenConsult (rådgivningsfirma i internationalisering) – kan de bruges til noget?*

LIS: Jeg var jo faktisk oppe til det møde, der blev holdt her, det var et super godt møde. Der fik jeg faktisk også en ordre med hjem.

BRIAN: Så det koster omsætning hver gang Lis sidder her.

LIS: Men det var jo Lars (direktør for AndersenConsult, red) jeg var med i Vietnam, det var ham der var tovholder.

## Appendix 9 – Transcription of interview with Rodtnes

*Appendix 9 presents the transcription of the interview (in Danish) with Rodtnes. In addition an audio file with the recorded interview are attached as a digital appendix file.*

* Mette Rodtnes (Informant – Founder and Creative Director)
* Tobias Nørgaard (Interviewer)
* Lars Marco Andersen (Interviewer)

##### Transcription

*LARS: Vi skriver speciale i internationaliseringsprocesser, så det omhandler eksport og internationale aktiviteter. Specifikt undersøger vi tekstil- læder og beklædningsindustrien i Danmark. Vi forsøger at kortlægge i forhold til et tidsperspektiv, fra hvad der ligger bag etableringen og til i dag. Herunder hvor hurtigt man internationalisere sig. Det vi gerne vil vide noget mere om, er i forhold til din situation. Hvilke hændelser og overvejelser der har været i forhold til internationale aktiviteter.*

METTE: For at fortælle historien om min virksomhed. Så har det været en bumpy road. Det var ikke sådan jeg startede med at sige ”Nu laver jeg et taskebrand”. Jeg lavede bare en taske først, jeg er arkitekt jo, og har arbejdet som arkitekt i mange år. Jeg havde også eget arkitekt bureau. Det var egentlig bare for sjov jeg lavede den. Det var sådan en klassisk iværksætter historie med at jeg ledte efter en taske. Så synes jeg faktisk de var mega grimme, jeg er sådan lidt kritisk omkring hvad jeg gider at gå med, og jeg skulle have en taske hvor jeg kunne have en MacBook 15” i, sådan en rimelig stor en. Det kunne jeg ikke finde, det var mega grimt det man kunne få.

METTE: Så gik det op for mig, når jeg snakkede med veninder, at det var rimelig udbredt. Det var svært at finde en pæn taske lap top taske, enten er det meget business artigt, eller ingeniør nylon. Så tænkte jeg det kunne jeg da lave, det kunne jeg da godt lave. Så var det bare lidt i sjov jeg sad og tegnede på det, og min daværende mand han er meget iværksætter. Sådan iværksætter ind til benet, kommer af en iværksætter familie og sådan. Han sagde ”få den da lavet, få den da lavet” du ved ”lav en webshop og sælg den der”. Det var så det jeg gjorde til at starte med.

METTE: Alle mine veninder havde det sådan lidt, hvis du laver den så køber vi den. Så til at starte med – det var så ret mirakuløst viser det sig siden – at jeg fandt en producent. Ej, jeg var igennem nogle stykker, hvor det var enten for dyrt eller for dårligt. Men jeg fandt en producent som jeg fik til at lave 75 tasker. 25 i tre forskellige farver. Og så lavede jeg en webshop med de tre tasker på, og så var det ligesom det. Så fortsatte jeg bare med mine arkitektur projekter, og så havde jeg den her ene taske.

*LARS: Hvor var de produceret henne?*

METTE: I Tyrkiet. Jeg har så fundet ud af senere at det var rent held, at det lykkedes mig at finde nogle til at starte med, der kunne lave noget der var i orden og sådan noget. Også til en rimelig pris. Men altså det gjorde jeg, og så fik jeg den hjem. Jeg havde den stående i kælderen og så når der kom ordre ind på webshoppen, så sendte jeg den bare af sted. Det var totalt for sjov, og det var ikke noget jeg skulle leve af eller noget.

METTE: Så fik jeg henvendelse fra forhandlere, der spurgte om de måtte forhandle den der taske ikke. Og det var jo fint nok, jeg var bare smigret. Så skulle jeg til at finde ud af hvordan fanden gør man det, sådan prismæssigt, de skal jo også tjene. Så begyndte jeg at sætte mig ind i det der med at kalkulere priser ud til retail og sådan noget. Så gik der måske cirka en sæson, og så ringede de og sagde ”hvornår kommer den næste kollektion?”. Så var jeg bare sådan lidt, det havde jeg ikke forestillet mig. De var bare sådan, den sælger jo godt, og kan du ikke lave noget mere, folk efterspørger ligesom, hvad der ellers var fra Rodtnes. Men der var jo ikke andet.

METTE: Så havde jeg ligesom fået blod på tanden. Og syntes det var sjovt, og den der nye verden der åbnede sig. Så jeg lavede flere ting, og de kunne også godt sælge. Så det var sådan en lillebitte snebold der bare begyndte at rulle ligeså stille ikke. På det tidspunkt der boede vi i Schweiz, og da vi så flyttede hjem i 2013, der var det blevet sådan at, fra jeg havde siddet lidt med mine arkitekt projekter om dagen, og havde lavet de her tasker om aftenen for sjov. Så var det nu omvendt. Jeg sad faktisk med to fuldtids jobs. Så jeg var nød til at vælge, og så blev det taskerne.

*LARS: Hvornår var det?*

METTE: Det var i 2013. Så blev det det, og jeg gik 100 procent ind i det og sagde ”okay nu skal jeg få det her til at flyve, ikke”. Så det er lidt som jeg sagde, det var ikke sådan jeg tog et helt bevidst skridt fra det ene til det andet. Det var bare ligesom det voksede bare, og så var det pludselig der jeg var.

METTE: Men så kom der selvfølgelig nogle overvejelser. Okay, nu var det så min levevej ikke, og hvordan skal jeg så afsætte de her ting, apropos det i laver. Danmark er jo et lille land, og det er ret svært at sælge tasker i Danmark. Så jeg vidste jo ret hurtigt, at jeg var nød til også at kigge udenfor Danmark ikke. Det gjorde jeg så først ved at gå på messer. Dels i Danmark og tog til Paris og New York og sådan nogle steder, for at møde nogle udenlandske kunder. Og der var jeg heldig nogle gange i Paris, at der kom nogle Japanske kunder på. Men fandt så hurtigt ud af, at altså, man er nød til at være tæt på sine kunder, man skal være i tæt dialog med dem for at sælge. Altså de kommer ikke bare af sig selv. Det gjorde de så af sig selv, men når du så vil sælge mere, er du nød til at være tæt på dem ikke. Og det kunne jeg ikke være, fordi jeg sad her, og de sad i Japan. Så fiser det ligesom ret hurtigt ud.

METTE: Så jeg fandt ret hurtigt ud af at hvis jeg skal være på et udenlandsk marked, så skal jeg have en agent eller en sælger der kan være tæt på kunderne. Der kan kontakte dem, og tage ud til dem, og vise dem de nye ting, og hele tiden være der i deres bevidsthed ikke. Så ændrede vi sådan set strategien ikke, det er jo fantastisk i øjeblikket, så tænker man ”wow, fed stor ordre fra en stor japansk kunde.” men hvis der ikke sker mere, så kan det være lige meget. Og det fiser ud, hvis man ikke er tæt på dem, og i kontakt med dem. Så fiser det ud. Så vi fandt ud af, at det giver ikke nogen mening at satse på udenlandske markeder, med mindre man er repræsenteret på udenlandske markeder.

METTE: Nu er vi sådan lidt, nu gør vi sådan set ikke noget med hensyn til et nyt marked, med mindre vi er repræsenteret der med en sælger. Som kan lave alt det, hvad skal vi sige, indledende salgsarbejde og opsøgende salgsarbejde og alle de der ting som kræves i forhold til at være der. I forhold til at være der i indkøbernes bevidsthed.

*LARS: Det er så salgsagenter i bruger?*

METTE: Ja, det er. Og det er jo det der med. Jeg havde det sådan lidt, jeg ved jeg laver nogle lækre ting, så folk køber dem vel bare helt af sig selv. Men det gør de jo ikke, der er jo mange lækre ting ude i verden, altså det er jo virkelig, det er et blodrødt hav vi svømmer i i modebranchen. Altså vi er virkelig mange om buddet, så det er ikke nok at lave gode ting. Det er simpelthen ikke nok at lave lækre ting. Det måtte jeg jo sande, der skal skubbes, der skal skubbes. Så nu gør vi reelt ikke noget i udlandet, før vi er repræsenteret på et marked.

*LARS: Hvordan foregår den proces når i udvælger marked?*

METTE: Jamen det er også pisse svært, det med agenter. De er også en broget samling af sjove typer. Altså der bliver jo ikke gået på agent universitetet. Så det er sådan alle mulige mærkelige mennesker, du kan jo bare sige du er agent, så er du det. Det er jo bare mennesker med alle mulige mærkelig baggrunde. Der har vi også lært på den hårde måde, at fordi der er en der siger at vedkommende er agent og gerne vil sælge din taske, så er der på ingen måde sikkerhed for at vedkommende kan. Det er en branche med sindssygt meget varmt luft. Alle folk syntes alting er fantastisk og alle folk kan alting. Men det kan de jo ikke. Der er jo ikke noget der er lyserødt overhovedet.

METTE: Vi er blevet sådan ret gode til det. Når jeg siger ”vi” så er det fordi min eks mand og jeg er partnere, i virksomheden, så han er min forretningspartner. Vi er blevet kritiske i forhold til at screene de der agenter. En ting er at de jo er tilstedeværende overfor kunderne, men vi skal også være tilstede overfor dem. Og så skal de være, de skal have et enormt drive, og det har de ikke altid. Sådan nogle agenter vil helst have de brands der sælger sig selv. Jo nemmere jo bedre. Og når man er et nyt brand i et marked, så kræver det meget. Det er jo nemt at sælge Mulberry tasker, men når man kommer med noget der er fuldstændig ukendt, så skal der ligges er stort stykke arbejde i det. Og det har vi også måtte sande med de agenter vi har.

METTE: Det kræver enormt meget af agenterne. Der er det specielle ved tasker til kvinder. Der er meget fokus på mærket. Der er mange kvinder der kan gå i en T-shirt fra Zara og et par bukser fra H&M. Men tasken den skal hedde Mulberry eller Iv Saint Laurent, eller noget andet ikke. Så der er et eller andet med tasker, de vil gerne have noget der er meget kendt og dyrt, eller også så skal det være billigt. Det der med at ligge i det mellem segment hvor jeg ligger, altså mine tasker ligger omkring 4000 kr. Men hvis man giver 2-3000 ekstra så kan man få en kendt taske.

METTE: Altså, 4000 kr. er også mange penge, det er det jo. Der er jo mange kvinder der tænker ”jeg giver 4000 kr. for en taske, men der er ikke nogle der kender den”. Der er det sådan lidt det her med, jeg tænker meget på, jeg kigger på at lave noget til mænd. Det er som om det er nogle andre faktorer der spiller ind. Mænd de kigger på kvalitet og funktionalitet. Det er jo nogle af de ting jeg har enormt meget fokus på. Jeg har jo baggrund som arkitekt, sådan noget med tingene skal fungere og virke, er jo sådan noget jeg er meget optaget af. Men for rigtig mange kvinder, der er de måske lidt ligeglade med både funktionalitet og kvalitet, bare det hedder det rigtige. Det er en udfordring.

METTE: Altså i Danmark der er der mange der begynder at kende brandet. Så der går det sådan set okay. Men så snart jeg kommer ind på et nyt udenlandsk marked, så er det jo helt forfra. Helt forfra. Der har der altså ikke vores visninger i blade, eller en eller anden Christiane Schaumburg-Müller, der går med den. Der er der virkelig helt fra starten. Og det er pisse hårdt, det er skide svært for de der agenter, fordi de står der med noget som ingen ved hvad er.

*TOBIAS: Screener du selv agenter?*

METTE: Ja, det gør jeg. Men vi har måtte sande, selvom agenterne er enormt begejstrede for tingene. De har det sådan lidt ”wow, hvor lækker og super pænt”, så er det svært. Det er rigtig svært udenfor Danmark. Det er det der med at selvom det er enormt pænt og lækkert , så er det ikke sikkert det kan sælge fordi det ikke hedder noget. Så de kan faktisk blive lidt overrasket over, hvor svært det er at sælge tingene i butikkerne. Det er den der mangel på kendt hed, at det er et problem for os. Det er helt klart et problem for os ude i verden.

*LARS: Så produktets kvalitet og den unikke del af det, er ikke nok i sig selv?*

METTE: Nej, det er det ikke. Så skulle det være væsentligt billigere. Hvis det nu kostede det halve, så kunne det være. Sådan de tænker ”wow, hvor lækker, og prøv lige se hvor billigt. Gud sikke meget man får for pengene”. Men det er bare ikke tilfældet, jeg kan ikke lave sådan nogle ting her billigere, end det er nu. Det kan ikke lade sig gøre. Så det er sådan lidt, der har vi, der står vi i nogle grundlæggende strategiske overvejelser lige nu, i forhold til, skal vi arbejde på at blive meget kendte, eller skal vi gøre noget andet. Skal vi lave noget til mænd eller skal vi lave noget i andre kvaliteter, som bliver meget billigere, eller hvad skal vi gøre.

METTE: Der sker også det at retail ændre sig helt vildt i de her år. De små butikker lukker jo på stribe, det gør de i hele verden, men især i Europa og i USA. Altså skiftet mod online handel går så stærkt. Jeg læste en artikel, at man ligesom kan se fra sidste efterår til nu, at nu går udviklingen i retningen af e-handel. Det går ekstremt hurtigt nu, bare på det sidste halve år kan man se at det har flyttet sig helt vildt meget. Altså hvor mange penge der bliver lagt i butikkerne, og hvor meget der bliver lagt på nettet. Vi kan også mærke det. De små butikker, alle de små kunder, der er almindelige tøjbutikker, som har alle mulige ting, de har det meget svært. Helt vildt. Så det er jo også en del af vores strategiske overvejelser, så skal vi også satse mere på vores egen webshop.

METTE: Altså vi har en webshop, hvor vi sælger udmærket på. Til hele verden. Altså, så kunne det være vi skulle fokusere mere på den. Vi har også en bedre avance på de ting vi sælger online. Nu ved jeg ikke om i ved hvordan hele prisstrukturen er. Altså den måde man udregner priserne på det er jo at jeg har en landed pris, som er prisen på produktet når det ligger på mit lager. Det vil sige det indeholder produktionspriser, fragt og told, de der forskellige ting. Måske noget hvis jeg skal, jeg har en sourcing agent, som også skal have nogle procenter. Så ganger jeg den pris med 2 f.eks. ud til mine forhandlere, og så ganger de den med mellem 2,5 til 3 ud til slutkunden. Så der sker ret meget. Altså jeg ganger med 2 som er minimum jeg kan gøre, for at tingene hænger sammen for mig. Men ude i butikken, der vil de gerne gange med 3. Det vil sige, hvis jeg sælger en taske til 1000 kr, så ligger den til 3000 kr. i butikken. Men det betyder jo også at hvis jeg sælger en taske til 3000 kr. på min hjemmeside, så er det jo rigtig godt for mig. Min landed pris på den er kun 500 kr. Derfor er hele det skifte i hvordan køber folk ting, det er noget vi følger rigtig meget med i.

METTE: Lige nu der er vi egentlig sådan, at vores strategiske overvejelser, også i forhold til udlandet, om vi er interesseret i de der salgsagenter. Som jo arbejder meget med alle de der små kunder, for vi tror faktisk ikke på de små butikker, det er ikke der fremtiden er. Fremtiden er online, vores egen online, men også andre store online platforme.

*LARS: Har i andre online nu?*

METTE: Nej, det har vi ikke. Men det er der vi fokusere hen af. Komme ind i nogle af de rigtig store. Måske Zalando eller Boozt og sådan nogle steder. Altså vi er ved Magasin, som også er godt. Altså de der store kunder, som er ekstremt professionelle og som kan flytte noget, altså Magasin har en kæmpe stor online butik, hvor folk ligger mange penge.

METTE: Så vi står midt i en masse strategiske overvejelser. Det der med at lave dyre tasker som vi gerne vil sælge til små lækre butikker rundt omkring, det kan vi ikke leve af. Det kan vi faktisk ikke. Så lige nu der er det sådan at jeg ikke tager på messe i denne her sæson. Det er fordi, der står man og venter på de der små indkøbere de kommer forbi, og køber 3 tasker og 2 punge. Det kan vi ikke. Så nu prøver vi at komme i dialog med store kunder, så må vi simpelthen tage møder med dem, og sætte møder op.

*TOBIAS: Så salgsagenter i udlandet kunne og være være målrettet større spiller fremadrettet?*

METTE: Ja, altså de agenter der han kontakter til de store kunder, de er ekstremt eftertragtet. Fordi det er jo dem vi alle sammen gerne vil ind hos. Der er vi tilbage til det der, der er masser af agenter. Det er bare ikke ret mange man kan bruge til noget. Altså min eks mand er jo min partner, men han er med på et strategisk niveau i virkeligheden. Har også fokus på online og sådan nogle ting. Det er ligesom hans domæne. Jeg har brug for at ansætte en som kan være en slags salgschef for mig, en der ligesom er ude og forsøge at banke døren ind hos nogle af de store kunder også i udlandet. Men der er det jo økonomi i firmaet, og hvordan får man lige sådan en tung profil der kan gøre noget. Men jeg er ikke lige der hvor jeg kan gøre sådan noget pt. Men det har jeg brug for.

*TOBIAS: Hvad med på marketing delen, gør du noget selv der?*

METTE: Altså jeg har tilknyttet et pr-bureau, altså vi kører selv sociale medier, og så har vi et bureau på til at lave online marketing. Altså Ad Words, Facebook Ads og sådan nogle ting. Så sådan noget gør vi, men vi er lige startet på det. Vi kan ikke se om det giver så meget endnu. Men derudover har vi et pr-bureau, hun har billeder til at ligge i billedbank, som bliver trukket fra til magasiner, sådan noget som dameblade og tager det med på pressedage to gange om året, hvor det er både presse og sådan nogle influensers, der kommer og kigger på tingene. Hvor hun ser om hun kan få nogle til at gå med det. F.eks. sådan nogle som Christiane Schaumburg-Müller som går med mine ting. Shirley osv.

*LARS: Så det betaler i faktisk ikke for direkte?*

METTE: Nej det gør vi faktisk ikke nej. De bruger bare tingene. De store kendte influensers skal jo have mange penge. Så og så mange Instagram posts koster 100000 kr. og sådan noget, der har jeg ikke været. Det er også noget med, hvor giver det mening at bruge penge. Men ja, det der med udlandet, det har været en virkelig, det har været svært. Fordi det der med, i Danmark startede jeg tilbage i 2013, og jeg har været heldig med at få noget omtale, nogle blade og nogle aviser der har skrevet noget om os.

METTE: Så jeg har fået noget medieomtale, hvilket har hjulpet mig i gang i starten. Og så er det jo nemmere for mig, der var jeg også selv ude ved kunderne og i butikkerne. Men som vi talte om før, så snart det er i udlandet, så ved folk bare ikke en skid om hvad det er. Så står der en agent med et eller andet dansk taskebrand. Hvorfor skulle de købe det, det er jo super lækkert, men det er der jo mange ting der er. Og der er et eller andet med tasker, som jeg nævnte før, som gør det ekstra svært for os. Det er det. Man kan ikke bare blive et kendt og eksklusivt taskebrand, og det er det man har brug for at være. Men det er jo ikke bare noget du beslutter dig for at blive.

*TOBIAS: Nu nævner du din eks mand, hvad har han lavet tidligere?*

METTE: Altså, han er handelshøjskole uddannet og er selvstændig selv. Har et firma i IT-branchen, som laver noget software. Det er en helt anden branche, men han har bare en business vinkel på tingene som jeg ikke har i samme grad. Jeg kommer med en formgivningsbaggrund og har den kreative vinkel på tingene, hvor han hr mere forretningsvinklen på det. Så på den måde er vi et godt par.

*TOBIAS: Har han internationale erfaringer?*

METTE: Ja det er også internationalt. Men det er bare nogle helt andre mekanismer der er på spil. Modebranchen er bare, altså det handler ikke kun om hvad du har brug for, der er en hel masse psykologi og følelser i det. Hvor, du kan jo godt have et produkt som det han sælger, det er et han kan gå ud og præsentere, og så kan folk sige ”det kan vi få gavn af her og nu, vi har brug for det, fordi det løser nogle problemer i vores virksomhed”. Det gør mine tasker også, de løser også, men det er bare ikke nok. Det er ikke det der er afgørende for om folk køber det. Det er nogle helt andre psykologiske mekanismer der er på spil, som er mega svære at håndtere. Det er jo noget af det der er fustrende i den her branche, at det er sådan noget man er oppe i mod.

METTE: Nu er jeg faktisk gået i gang med at lave… Altså det er læder, det er eksklusivt, det er halv pebret. Men jeg er faktisk i gang med at udvikle nogle nye linjer i andre materialer, som kommer til at ligge i et andet prisleje. Det er affødt af at vi kan se hvor svært det er at sælge de her ting. Jeg har stadig meget fokus på designet og hele branding oplevelsen skal stadig repræsentere det jeg står for. Det er ikke sådan jeg pludselig laver noget crap, det skal stadig være i orden. Hele den æstetiske oplevelse skal stadig være stram og cool, altså alt det jeg er. Men det kommer bare til at være nogle ting der bliver solgt til en anden pris, og så bliver det ikke læder.

*LARS: Foregår produktionen igennem en sourcing agent, eller er det direkte?*

METTE: Jeg har faktisk to producenter. Jeg har en i Tyrkiet og en i Hong Kong. Den primære årsag til jeg har to, det er at det er ekstremt følsomt kun at have 1 producent. Dels, kan de lukke, så står man uden nogen. Dels, så har de enormt meget magt i forhold til priser og sådan noget. Så når jeg har to, så kan jeg ligesom spørge hvad de kan lave den for, så det er godt for mig at kunne spille dem ud mod hinanden, sådan forhandlingsmæssigt. Og så har jeg bare nogle forskellige muligheder. Tyrkiet er tæt på, jeg kan hurtigt få tingene herop, jeg kan få produceret ret hurtigt. Det er en lille fabrik. De er meget agile i forhold til at lave tingene hurtigt og få dem herom, jeg er i direkte kontakt med dem. I Hong Kong, det er meget mere.. Altså de syer tasker for Prada og sådan noget, det er en meget cool fabrik. Men det fungere også på nogle andre måder, de har større minimumsordre, de kan ikke agere så hurtigt, og jeg er ikke særlig vigtig hos dem. Altså jeg er en lillebitte prut ude hos dem. Men de kan nogle andre ting, de har nogle andre teknikker og nogle andre maskiner, altså det er meget tjekket derude. Der arbejder jeg med en sourcing agent, det er hun min kontakt til producenten.

*LARS: Hvornår er de etableret de to aftaler, eller kontakter?*

METTE: Tyrkiet har jeg arbejdet sammen med 1 producent i Tyrkiet, hvor jeg så er skiftet til en anden. Men jeg skiftede til en ny i 2014. Jeg startede i 2012 og skiftede i 2014.

*LARS: Hvad så med Hong Kong?*

METTE: Det er så for et år siden. Men med Hong Kong, var det også fordi hele den politiske situation i Tyrkiet gjorde jeg blev lidt nervøs for kun at have produktion der. Der følte jeg at jeg var nød til at have noget andet også. Det er stadigvæk ikke til at vide hvad det ender med derude. Med ham Erdogan.

*TOBIAS: Det var lidt ustabilt?*

METTE: Ja altså, jeg er ikke tryg ved kun at have Tyrkiet.

*LARS: Sådan noget som webshoppen, hvornår blev den etableret?*

METTE: Det var det første jeg gjorde, med den der ene taske. Der var bare tre billeder, samme taske, tre forskellige farver. Så ja, det var fra starten og shipping world wide fra starten. Jeg havde egentlig ikke forstillet mig jeg skulle andet. Jeg var ikke ude i jeg skulle ud til forhandlerne, det var sådan set forhandlerne der kom til mig.

*LARS: Hvornår var første gang du tager til udlandet på messe?*

METTE: Det var i Paris. Hvor jeg fik japanske kunder på. Det var i 2015. Der blev jeg jo fyr og flamme, da jeg opdagede det. Det var bare sådan lidt ”wow, jeg skal bare på nogle flere messer”. Det var vildt. Men jeg fandt jo så ud af efterfølgende at jeg havde været mega heldig, den der første gang, fordi det var nogle store japanske kunder der kom der. Det var bare virkelig virkelig heldigt. Sidenhen har det så ikke været så nemt på de der messer. Det er som om at den der messe verden har ændret sig. Messerne har det også svært nu, det er som om der bliver købt ind på andre måder. Det er ikke kun på messer, det er på alle mulige andre måder. Brands har deres egne showroom, og gør andre ting for at komme i kontakt med de store indkøbere og sådan noget. Så det har ligesom ændret sig en del.

METTE: Nu er jeg blevet sådan lidt, at jeg tror ikke så meget på messerne mere. Det gør jeg faktisk ikke. Jeg tror det er nogle andre måder man skal i dialog med de store indkøbere.

*TOBIAS: Så Japan i 2015 var første salg til udlandet?*

METTE: Ja det var det. Der er så to af dem der har købt igen, den ene har købt to gange siden, men nu har jeg ikke solgt til nogle af de japanske kunder, det sidste år. Og det er jo så fordi jeg har ikke nogle derude. Der er ingen kundepleje derude, overhovedet. Så kommer der jo andre ting, og nye brands og alle mulige ting. Så den fes ud. Hvis jeg havde været derude, havde været repræsenteret derude, så kunne det jo være. Fordi der var faktisk, der er et eller andet med at japanerne kunne godt lide mine ting. Men der sker bare ikke noget af sig selv. Det har jeg måske bare troet, men det gør det ikke. Det gør det simpelthen ikke. Så det var jeg nød til at opgive at forfølge. Det giver heller ikke nogen mening at stå på en messe og sælge til en kunde en gang eller to gange, altså det koster 50000 kr. at tage på messe, mindst. Hvis ikke der kommer mere ud af det, end one night stand, altså enkeltstående salg, så er det meningsløst.

*LARS: Så du starter op på fuld tid i 2013, og så er det i 2015 at første udenlandske kunde kommer i hus?*

METTE: Ja, det er det.

*LARS: Hvad så med England, Tyskland og Norge?*

METTE: Altså det er meget sjovt, fordi England, der har jeg nogle kunder ovre. Der er jeg faktisk ikke repræsenteret ovre, men der har jeg nogle kunder som køber ind hver sæson. Den ene er en butik, der har tre butikker i London, og så er der to lidt mindre butikker der også køber ind hver sæson. Men dem gør jeg faktisk ikke noget i forhold til, de køber bare, og ligger ordre, og det kører sådan lidt af sig selv. Men jeg har ikke gjort mere, i forhold til at få flere kunder på i England. Norge, det var fordi vi fik nogle norske kunder på messe i København. Det gik fint, så på et eller andet tidspunkt fik vi en norsk agent på, og det kørte ikke så godt med hende. Men så opdagede jeg at der var en anden norsk agent, der havde været inde og like en helt masse ting på min Instagram profil. Og så stalkede jeg lidt hende, for at se hvad er det nu for en. Nogle gange kan man godt tænke ”hov, hvad var nu det”, fordi hun havde liket flere forskellige ting. Så gik jeg ind og tjekkede, og så så jeg det så ret cool ud, hendes agentur. Hun havde nogle ret fine, blandt andet Munde, som er et dansk mærke, og Enamel som er danske smykker og så har hun American Vintage, som også er et lækkert brand.

METTE: Med sådan nogle agenter, der er det en fordel, hvis der er en sammenhæng imellem brands, så man ligesom kan sælge alle brands ind til den samme butik. Sådan hun ikke skal ud og sælge det ene brand til nogle forhandlere, og det andet brand til nogle helt andre typer forhandlere. Så hun ligesom kan sælge alt ind, til den hun allerede har. Der tænkte jeg at det kunne man godt forestille sig at hun kunne med mine ting, sammen med de ting hun allerede havde. Så jeg kontaktede hende, og sagde at hendes agentur så spændende ud, om hun kunne tænke sig at få tasker med ind. Det kunne hun godt, så jeg opsagde kontrakten med den daværende agent, og så startede jeg op med hende her. Det har været rigtig godt faktisk. Hun har solgt ind til rigtig mange kunder. Men, der er så sket det at kunderne siger de har svært ved at sælge tasken ude i butikken. Det er det der med at agenten og butikkerne, de er jo sådan ret sikre på at de kigger på noget og så siger de, ”det er fanme lækkert det her”, det er cool og det er pænt, og vi kan lide det. Men de kunder der kommer ind i butikken, så er vi tilbage ved det med psykologien. De er usikre, de er ofte usikre på, hvad er lækkert, hvad er cool. Hvis ikke de kender mærket, og hvis ikke de har set det der med, jamen hun går med den der Iv Saint Laurent taske, så er de ikke sikker på om det er cool. De er simpelthen så usikre på deres egen dom over tingene, at de har brug for at der er nogle der har sagt til dem, det er lækkert.

METTE: Med tasker der er det en kæmpe udfordring. Både agenter og butikken siger, hvad fanden er der i vejen, og hvorfor køber folk det ikke. Det har vi analyseret meget på, og vi er kommet frem til at det er det der er vores udfordring. Det er simpelthen at det ikke er kendt nok, og det har man brug for at være med tasker. Så lige nu står vi med en udfordring i Norge, at det er svært at sælge i butikken. Det samme gør sig gældende i Tyskland. Så nu er vi sådan lidt, hvad gør vi på det der udenlandske marked. Fordi, det er ikke nok at have lækre ting, og igen agenten kan være begejstret, indkøberene kan være begejstrede. Men der er ingen sikkerhed for at det bliver solgt i butikken.

METTE: Nu har jeg lige sendt en masse tasker op til en TV serie der skal laves i Norge. De er i gang med at lave sådan en advokat serie. Jeg snakkede med agenten, hun sagde med de skuespillere, så bliver det kæmpe stort. Det er sådan nogle kendte Mads Mikkelsen kendte typer, bare i Norge. De kommer til at bruge mine tasker i serien, til alle i serien. Så det håber vi lidt at der kan komme noget ud af, fordi det er sådan noget vi har brug for, i forhold til at få noget opmærksomhed, og blive kendte.

METTE: Vi har simpelthen ikke budget til at pumpe en helt masse i PR. Man kunne jo godt sige okay, så begynder vi at annoncere massivt i blade og sådan nogle ting. Det kan vi faktisk ikke, vi kan ikke engang gøre det i Danmark. Du kan lynhurtigt, der skal altså kæmpestore PR budgetter til, at sparke et lille hul. Det er helt ekstremt, sådan en helside annonce i et blad, den koster 50000 kr. Det kigger folk i og så er det smidt ud ugen efter, når det nye blad kommer. Men det er sådan noget der skal til i udlandet. Det er at gøre noget for at komme ind på nethinden hos folk. Den synes vi er svær. Det er lidt sådan, skal vi bare begynde at lave tasker der koster 500 kr. som folk kan købe og smide væk. Det har jeg det dårligt med.

*TOBIAS: Så du vil gerne lave noget luksuriøst?*

METTE: Det jeg gerne vil, det tager måske 20 år. Det er et langt træk. Jeg har det også sådan lidt nu, at jeg har ikke tid til at vente på det. Jeg vil gerne sælge nogle flere tasker. Jeg arbejder sindssygt meget, livet som iværksætter, det er jo ekstremt utaknemmeligt. Det er faktisk først nu jeg kan begynde at udbetale løn til mig selv. Jeg har investeret 4 år af min tid, i det her, uden løn. Så nu har jeg det sådan, jeg skal altså have noget mere omsætning. Så må det betyde jeg skal måske lave noget til mænd, jeg tror ikke de er lige så dumme som kvinder, hvad det angår.

*TOBIAS: Hvad med blogs og brand ambassadører?*

METTE: Ja, agenten i Norge og agenten i Tyskland har vi snakket med om de ikke kan finde ud af hvem vi skal have fat i. Hvis de kan få fat i nogle, eller foreslå nogle. Men så er det igen det der agent noget, de har måske 5 brands i deres agentur, og de er jo ikke 100% fokus på mig. Altså, Munde og American Vintage, sælger meget mere end jeg gør. Så de får jo hendes opmærksomhed mere end jeg gør. Jeg vil super gerne sende tasker op til bloggere i Norge, men jeg ved ikke hvordan jeg skal finde dem. Så jeg har snakket med agenten om det, men hun er ikke proaktiv nok til at gøre noget. Altså agenterne de plukker helst de lavest hængende frugter, så er vi tilbage ved at jeg skal have et PR bureau deroppe. Det koster penge.

*LARS: Hvad var rækkefølgen for landene?*

METTE: Altså med agenterne, der var det først Norge og så Tyskland. I forhold til overhovedet at sælge til udlandet, der var det jo så Japan først, så England, og så Norge og Tyskland.

*TOBIAS: Var det indenfor samme periode?*

METTE: Ja, det har det været i 2015-2016. Som jeg sagde, så har vi ikke gjort så meget for at skubbe på andre nye markeder. På grund af det her med tilstedeværelsen i markedet, det giver ikke mening når vi ikke er der.

*TOBIAS: Hvorfor valgte du lige England?*

METTE: Det gjorde jeg egentlig ikke, de valgte mig.

*TOBIAS: Hvad så med Norge og Tyskland?*

METTE: Norge der kom der nogle butikker på af sig selv på messer, og så kunne vi se at det gik meget godt. Så tænkte vi, det er jo også et marked der ligner det danske på mange måder. Så for os, der var det et oplagt første udenlandsk marked at gå ind på. Derfor så gik vi i gang med at starte med en agent der. Tyskland, det var fordi, på et tidspunkt for halvandet år siden, der hyrede vi en konsulent, som skulle hjælpe os med at snakke strategi og formulere en strategi for hvad vi skal gøre fremover. Hun skulle blandt andet hjælpe os med at få nogle agenter på. Hun fik så agenten i Tyskland på, så det var igennem en konsulent, der fik agenten tilknyttet.

*TOBIAS: Så det var ressourcer udefra, der hjalp til med at etablere kontakt til Tyskland?*

METTE: Ja. Som sagt, det er ikke nogen nem opgave at finde de rigtige agenter, det er det ikke. Der er jo også bureauer man kan hyre. F.eks. Anthony Dell, som er sådan en mange bruger til at finde agenter til brands. Jeg har ikke kastet mig ud i at bruge ham endnu, jeg ved ikke helt, fordi en agent er ikke bare en agent, det skal være det rigtige.

*LARS: Så flyttede i herover fornylig?*

METTE: Ja, jeg har haft kontor derhjemme i noget tid, og så flyttede jeg til det der hedder Head Start Fashion, som er en selvejende fond, men det startede med at være et initiativ, i region Midtjylland for at støtte. Så det er sådan lidt mode hub i Midtjylland. Så lavede de det her Head Start Fashion, for at støtte branchen. De lavede uddannelsestilbud og kurser og arrangementer. Også netværksaktiviteter imellem de forskellige virksomheder i modebranchen. De lavede et kontorfællesskab nede på havnen, i deres kontor dernede, og der flyttede jeg ned. Jeg havde også brug for sparring, altså at snakke med andre der laver det samme, og hvordan de gør. Hvordan fandt de f.eks. en agent i Sverige og sådan nogle ting. Der flyttede jeg ned, men så viste det sig at jeg var den dernede, som havde langt mest erfaring, så der var ikke så meget sparring for mig. Da Betinna og Malene spurgte om jeg havde lyst til at flytte herud, så sprang jeg til.

METTE: De er længere fremme end mig, der er god sparring, og så har jeg mere plads til mine ting og sådan noget.

*LARS: Det betyder nu kan du fokusere på at udvikle forretningen?*

METTE: Ja, og som i kan høre så er der mange overvejelser over hvilken vej, vi skal gå. Hvilken vej vil vi gå. Jeg sidder nu og venter på at få nye materialer hjem, så det er jeg lidt spændt på. Det er jo noget med, hvis jeg gør det, skal jeg så lave et sub brand, eller kan jeg sælge det ved siden af mine læder ting, og kan jeg have en taske til 800 kr. til at stå ved siden af en der koster 4000 kr. Der er rigtig meget overvejelse i, hvordan jeg gør det smartest, så det ene ikke smadre det ene og omvendt.

METTE: Der er blandt andet et amerikansk tøj mærke der hedder Everlane, som simpelthen er gået ud og helt åbent melder ud, med sådan noget de kalder transparent pricing. Konceptet er at de ikke sælger til retail, det vil sige det mark up på 3 ud til butikken kan de skære fra. Det vil sige ting der i butikken vil koste 3000 kr. det sælger de kun online til 1000 kr. Fordi så har de kun lagt deres egen mark up på. Det vil sige man kan få nogle ting i super lækker kvalitet, super meget billigere, end hvis man skulle ud og købe det i en butik. Det er de meget åbne omkring. Hele deres forretningsmodel, også branding. Derfor kan de sælge til en helt anden pris. Det er sådan noget vi også overvejer.

METTE: Men i forhold til tasker, der er der også et eller andet psykologi i at, du har betalt 4000 kr. for en taske, så er den også fed. Hvis den kun koster 1000 kr. så er den ikke så fed. Det kan være den samme taske, den er bare ikke så lækker, hvis den kun koster 1000 kr. Igen er vi tilbage til det med psykologien i det, som er mega svær at greje. Vi overvejer også om det er sådan noget vi skal gøre, om vi skal lave luksus tasker, efter en Everlane model. Det er luksus tasker, de koster bare det halve i forhold til butikken. Luksus tasker de er bare per definition dyre.

*TOBIAS: Kan der ligge noget i det med om man kan mærke og føle tasken i butikken?*

METTE: Ja, det kan der helt klart. Vi laver også en masse billeder, men jo mere lækre billederne er, jo mere skeptisk bliver de for om de er fake, og snyd. I forhold til markedsføringsdelen, snakker vi også om at lave forskellige og andre typer af billeder og film. For at vise tingene på den rette måde.

METTE: Vi kunne godt tænke os at satse mere på vores online, men det er afhængig af at vi er nogle steder fysisk. For det er tit at folk har set noget i en butik og så ender de med at købe den på nettet, ugen efter, eller sådan noget. Det ved jeg også fra mig selv, det kan godt være jeg har set et par Adidas sko et sted, og så køber jeg den bare på Adidas på nettet.

*TOBIAS: Hvordan er andele af salg fordelt på markederne i dag?*

METTE: Jeg vil sige, sådan roughly, så har vi nok en tredjedel på udlandet. Nu skal jeg tænke mig om. Vi omsatte for 3 mio. sidste år. Det var nok halvdelen til udlandet, og så 500000 kr. online og resten til danske butikker.

*LARS: Online er det så primært danske kunder?*

METTE: Nej, det er også udenlands. Også til f.eks. USA, vi sender jævnligt noget til USA. Jeg ved sgu ikke hvordan de finder os, men det gør vi. Alle mulige steder, altså mærkelige steder. Falklandsøerne, Asien. Altså det er underligt, man må jo poppe op rundt omkring. Sådan noget som, det er meget sjovt, men der var en der fortalte hun havde læst, altså der er jo blogs om de mest utrolige ting. Der er også taske blogs. Hvor damer der går op i tasker, de læser, og der var en der fortalte mig at hun havde læst noget. Der var nogle der havde skrevet noget, på sådan en eller anden kæmpestor taskeblog, i sådan et kommentarfelt, og jeg tror faktisk at nogle af de salg vi har til USA, det er pga. sådan noget, at nogle har skrevet noget nogen steder. Det der jo er rigtig fedt ved sådan noget, det er at når du googler Rodtnes, så kommer de der tråde op inde på sådan nogle blogs. De kommer jo op i feedet, så de kan blive ved med at leve, hvis folk har skrevet på et eller andet tidspunkt i en tråd, at det er super lækkert. Så kan det blive ved med at poppe op, og det er jo meget godt. Det er også noget vi prøver på.

METTE: Lige nu der overvejer jeg lidt, hvordan vi kan få noget omtale. Der kommer en kollektion ud nu her i samarbejde med et arkitektfirma. Jeg har fået lov til at bruge tre af Friis & Munde’s gamle villaer. Tilbage fra 50’erne, i en kollektion, hvor jeg laver en lille lås, som er en lille arkitekturmodel. Projektet har for mig handlet om at lave noget, som jeg kan få nogle til at skrive om. Noget med noget content i. Den kommer til september. Der kan godt være nogle arkitektur blogs, som kunne synes det var sjovt at skrive om sådan nogle projekter. Der sidder jeg og ser på hvem vi skal have fat i. Online omtale er mere interessant end blade, fordi bladene forsvinder. Det er også igen, f.eks. der er nogle design blogs man godt kunne forestille sig vil skrive om det her. Så det håber jeg meget kan give noget mere udenlandssalg til udlandet.

*TOBIAS: Jeg tænkte på i forhold til Japan, hvor du siger du ikke lige får fulgt op, har det haft nogen betydning i forhold til at du nu siger nu venter vi med nye markeder?*

METTE: Ja, altså. Den der erkendelse af, at det ikke kører af sig selv, det er ikke nemt. Der skal meget mere til end vi egentlig var klar over. Det har gjort at vi, ja, jeg gider ikke stå til en messe i Paris, og sælge til en kunde i et eller andet land, hvis jeg alligevel ikke kan følge op på det, og sælge igen, og få flere kunder på i det land. Så giver det simpelthen ikke nogen mening. Så ja, den der erkendelse af at der skal meget til, for at komme ind på et nyt marked. Det har gjort at enten så skal vi gøre det ordentligt, eller også så skal vi lade være. Jeg er færdig med at stå på messer for at få enkelt salg i Belgien og et enkelt salg i Frankrig, det er helt meningsløst.

*TOBIAS: Så der skal nogle flere strategiske overvejelser til fremover?*

METTE: Ja, det skal der. Så skal der, hvis vi skal indgå nye partnerskaber med agenter, så skal vi være ekstremt fokuserede på at det er det rigtige makkerskab vi går ind i. Fordi, det er en meget broget skare, de der agenter.

*TOBIAS: Vil det være den foretrukne fremgangsmåde at bruge igen, hvis det var?*

METTE: Ja. Fordi alternativet er at have en salgschef selv, der ligesom kan være derude og score nogle store. Men den ligger ude i fremtiden for mit vedkommende, så ja, det er agenterne der er realistisk for mig.

*LARS: Men nu har du også selv alle hattene på?*

METTE: Ja, det har jeg jo. Det betyder jo at jeg er min egen begrænsning. For jeg har kun et vist antal timer i døgnet. Så der er grænser for hvor mange ting jeg kan sparke i gang. Jeg sidder jo også og er dybt nede i produktudvikling, og produktion, og sådan nogle ting. Så tingene sker ikke så hurtigt, fordi det kun er mig. Det er den der med, at det kunne være fedt hvis der skete noget mere, men det kan jeg ikke før ejg får noget mere omsætning, men jeg kan ikke få mere omsætning. Så det er hønen og ægget.

METTE: Vi har også været i dialog med en potentiel investor, det gik så ikke. Vi var ikke interesseret nogle af os parter, viste det sig, de var forkerte for os. Deres fokus var et andet end vores. Det der med at få en investor ind, som kunne skyde nogle penge i virksomheden, som jeg kunne bruge til at ansætte nogle for, det er også noget vi snakker meget om. Fordi, hvis det skal gå hurtigere end det gør nu, så har vi brug for nogle midler, til at kunne ansætte nogle for. Det er den der som iværksætter, med at stå hvor man har fået bygget tingene op til et vist niveau, hvordan tager man så det næste skridt, til at blive lidt større.

METTE: Jeg har jo altid likviditetsudfordringer, på den måde, at der er mange af de store kunder. Faktisk alle store kunder, de arbejder kun med consignment, det vil sige kommission. De køber ikke ind, jeg skal bare ligge tingene ud i butikken, der er ingen lagerbinding overhovedet, den skal jeg tage. Det vil sige jeg er nød til at købe ind til lager. Jeg startede med at være ordreproducerende, jeg gik ud og solgte, og så fik jeg det i produktion jeg har fået ordre på. Plus en lille smule, til min egen webshop, men det kan jeg ikke mere. Fordi hvis jeg vil have de store kunder, også hvis jeg vil have sådan nogle som Boozt og Zalando, og store udenlandske, så er det kun consignment. Det vil sige at jeg skal have et lager, for at kunne sende ud til dem. Det vil sige, jeg har en helvedes masse penge, liggende ude på mit lager. Jeg har en stor likviditetsudfordring, det har alle små spillere i denne her branche. Vi står i den her situation at alt skal være consignment, det er svært at håndtere.

*LARS: Nu er det lidt tilfældigt med de udenlandske markeder du er repræsenteret på, men det har ingen betydning om det er et stort marked eller et lille marked?*

METTE: Man kan sige, altså f.eks. i EU der er det jo nemt nok, men så snart vi kommer uden for Danmark, så er det jo sådan noget med der kommer told på. Der er det også nogle andre priser, jeg betaler jo told når de kommer ind i EU fra Tyrkiet og Hong Kong. Men hvis jeg sender til USA, så kommer der jo også told i USA. Så snart du kommer udenfor EU, så sker der noget med priserne, der gør dem endnu dyrere. I virkeligheden så giver det mest mening at fokusere på EU, det er også det vi gør nu. Vi fik meget blod på tanden med de Japanske kunder, nu er det bare der ud af og nu indtager vi verden. Men vi er blevet klogere siden, og fundet ud af det er svært. Der skal ret meget til. Nu har vi faktisk overhovedet ikke fokus uden for EU. Vi kigger på Sverige, vi gerne vil have en agent i. Så kigger vi også på Holland, der er lig med Danmark, vi har også været i dialog med en agent i Englang. Men ikke lykkedes at komme i land med hende. F.eks. den agent derovre, skal have 15% af det vi sælger, men nogle er begyndt at sige de skal have 1000 Pund om måneden, lige meget om hvad hun har solgt. Det kan jeg ikke arbejde med. Når jeg ved hvor langsomt det går, og hvor store udgifterne er når vi er udenfor Danmark, så kan jeg se det ikke kommer til at hænge sammen. Der kommer til at gå lang tid, før det hænger sammen.

METTE: Ligenu er vi ved Magasin, hvor det går rigtig godt. Lige nu er vores fokus faktisk at få nogle flere store kunder på i Danmark, altså Salling, Naya er vi lidt i dialog med. Nogle af de store spillere på det danske marked. Også fordi hvis vi skal til at producere i andre materialer, så er det større minimumsordre for mit vedkommende, så får jeg en stor lagerbinding, så jeg har brug for at have nogle der kan flytte nogle ting af i deres mange butikker. Så tænker vi lidt at hvis vi har tre store kunder på i Danmark, vi har også Illums Bolighus i øvrigt, men hvis vi har en række store kunder på i Danmark og vi er gode til at håndtere det. Hele den her consignment model og sådan noget, så bliver det måske også lettere at komme i dialog med nogle af de store udenlandske kunder. Hvis vi kan sige vi har Magasin, Naya, Salling og Illums Bolighus, så kan det være at Boozt vil sige, okay, det har de styr på. Altså der er en helt masse ting administrativt, som de forventer man har helt styr på. Hvis vi kan dokumentere vi har det i Danmark, så tror vi på det også bliver lettere, at lave nogle aftaler med nogle andre store udenlandske department stores og webshops.

*TOBIAS: Det med at have solidt fundament herhjemme, for pludselig betydning igen efter man har forsøgt sig udenlands?*

METTE: Ja, helt sikkert. Det har virkelig været en erfaring, det giver mening for os at blive dygtige og stærke på vores hjemmemarked. Så vil vi også bedre kunne håndtere udenlandske markeder, især hvis det er store kunder vi vil have fat i, hvilket det er. Som sagt de små butikker er simpelthen for svært nu, de har det ekstremt svært. Det der med at have tre små butikker i Berlin, de køber jo ingenting ind.

*TOBIAS: Hvorfor tror du generelt i branchen det kan være svært at bryde døren til internationale markeder?*

METTE: Altså alle lande har jo lokale brands. I Danmark har vi jo en masse lækre tøj brands, taske brands og sko brands. Det er klart vi har fokus fra danske kunder, de interessere sig for os, fordi det er nemt at handle med os og vi kan lave ting der passer til det danske marked, fordi vi kender det danske marked. Så vi kender den danske mentalitet og kultur. Ting der er designet i Danmark passer som regel til den danske køber. Men så snart vi kommer til udlandet, så er vi i konkurrence med alle de lokale brands derude. Så når vi kommer til Holland, så kigger de nok på mine ting, når de har kigget på alle de hollandske taske brands, så er man ikke i fokus på samme måde som overfor de danske kunder. De har ikke samme interesse i dig. Hvis, de kigger på udenlandske brands, så kigger de typisk på kendte udenlandske brands. Hvis en butik i Holland tager et udenlandsk brand ind, så er det fordi det er et brand de kender. Hvis de tager noget ukendt ind, så er det typisk hollandsk. Så du er simpelthen i konkurrence med alle de små udenlandske brands. Det er det der gør det svært, de kigger først på dig, når de har kigget på alle de små brands de allerede selv har.

*TOBIAS: Hvad tror du der skal til for at nedbryde den barriere?*

METTE: Enten så skal man være meget kendt, eller meget specielt. Det skal virkelig være nyt som ingen har set før, som er ultra cool, og helt anderledes. Nogle gange så kommer der jo noget nyt, som bare brager igennem. Det er jo typisk fordi, de har gjort noget helt specielt, enten fordi det er et helt specielt produkt, så man tænker ”what, det er virkelig specielt, det er virkelig nyt” og det er cool. Eller, de har formået at alliere sig med en eller anden, som Kendal Jenner, som har gået ned ad gaden med det. Det kan jeg jo se på mine døtre på 17, ligemeget hvad Kendal Jenner gør, så er det per definition fedt. Så det er en af de to ting. Enten har de fået opmærksomhed, ved at blive set på en ekstremt stærk influenser, eller også har de lavet noget, som er helt vildt nyt og interessant.

METTE: Der er jo ikke noget af det jeg laver der er helt vildt nyt og interessant. Det er jo lækre ting, og sådan noget folk bruger mest, men det er satme ikke earth shattering nyheder. Det er det nød til at være, ellers er det vist et eller andet sted hvor man bare er nød til at eje det. Ellers skal man være eksklusiv, så skal du hedde Iv Saint Laurent. Det er de tre ting der skal til for at slå igennem på et udenlandsk marked, og jeg har ingen af delene.

*LARS: Bruger du netværk nu, ligesom det nede på havnen?*

METTE: Nej altså, det er sådan lidt det eneste. Det er jo fordi, det der med at have en form for sparring, med nogle der lavet noget lignende og står med lignende udfordringer, det er enormt fedt. Vi har lige siddet her til morgen og snakket, fordi vi er relativt ny-sammenflyttet herinde, så hvordan vi kan koordinere vores sparring, hvordan vi får mest muligt ud af hinanden, fordi det er meget værd. Det har jeg oplevet. Men også fra mig fordi jeg kommer fra en anden branche, for jeg kommer fra noget helt andet, så jeg skulle lære alting fra bunden.

*LARS: Var det udelukkende danske opgaver du havde som arkitekt?*

METTE: Nej, det var det ikke. Men der er ingen sammenhæng mellem de to brancher. Som i overhovedet ikke. Det eneste der er et overlap i, det er design processen for mit vedkommende. Alt andet er anderledes. Også fordi, som arkitekt der kommer der en kunde til mig, en bygherre, som skal have tegnet et hus, og så gør jeg det. Men her er det jo omvendt. Jeg sætter mig og laver nogle ting, og så bagefter skal jeg finde kunder. Det er jo noget af det jeg synes er fedt. Der står jo ikke en kunde som har alle mulige ting de vil, alle mulige irriterende holdninger. Den kreative del syntes jeg jo er enormt fed. Men når jeg så står med det, skal det også afsættes. Så det er en helt anderledes salgsproces.

*TOBIAS: Nu er fokus på hjemmemarked, hvad er målet så fremadrettet?*

METTE: Det er som sagt at få nogle flere store danske kunder. Jeg er ved at forsøge at sætte nogle møder op med nogle af de store danske kunder. Når det køre så vil vi se om vi kan snakke med de udenlandske, f.eks. nogle department stores i Norge. Også webshops, store webshops, men vi har valgt at sige vi venter lidt. Vi har også stort fokus på vores egen webshop, og så mere PR i virkeligheden. Sådan noget med alle de mange penge vi har brugt på messer, dem smider vi i PR nu. Bedre billeder, f.eks. influenser, der flytter vi ressourcer fra messer til marketing materiale. Vi skal have mange flere billeder ud, f.eks. til sociale medier, Facebook Annoncer og sådan nogle ting, der skal billeder på. Det har vi meget fokus på nu, billeder, det har vi ikke haft før. Vi har hele tiden haft den der med, produkterne er så lækre at de må sælge sig selv, men det gør de ikke.

METTE: Jeg kan jo konstatere at 75% af de tasker jeg sælger er sorte. Men det ser bare enormt kedeligt ud på nettet, på billeder. Folk klikker ikke på sorte tasker. Det ser død sygt ud. Det snakker vi meget om, jeg har lige sat gang i en hel ekspres produktion af nogle knald røde tasker, jeg har simpelthen brug for noget rødt. Det er ikke fordi jeg tror jeg kommer til at sælge mange røde tasker, men de kommer garanteret til at fungere online. Så er jeg ved at planlægge photoshoot med en pige også, fordi jeg tror de bliver gode.

*TOBIAS: Nu nævnte du Norge som det land du vil til først?*

METTE: Ja, vi havde jo allerede norsk interesse fra butikker som også kom igen, og vi solgte også til Norge fra webshoppen, så vi kunne mærke at der var en interesse. Der var nogle ligheder mellem Norge og Danmark kulturelt og sådan, så vi tænkte hvis folk kan lide det i Danmark kan de nok også i Norge. Vi kunne se at dansk mode er populært i Norge, og så har de jo mange penge. Så på den måde, har de penge til at købe ting. De har flere penge end mange andre markeder i Europa.

METTE: Ja altså, vi har jo faktisk haft succes med at komme til udlandet, men vi har også oplevet tilbageskridt. Vi har oplevet at der er nogle udfordringer, som vi faktisk ikke helt har fundet ud af hvordan vi skal håndtere endnu. Det der med indkøberne tror på det, agenterne tror på det, men når det ligger i butikken, hvorfor er der så ingen der køber det. Så en ting er at komme til udlandet, men så også at kunne håndtere at blive der. Hvordan trænger man ordentligt igennem, den har vi ikke drejet endnu. Som sagt nu har vi ligesom trukket os indad igen, og sagt, vi skal være stærke i Danmark inden vi udvider igen.

## Appendix 10 – Transcription of interview with Cold Flood Prevention

*Appendix 10 presents the transcription of the interview (in Danish) with Rodtnes. In addition an audio file with the recorded interview are attached as a digital appendix file.*

* Michael Cold (Informant – Partner and CEO)
* Tobias Nørgaard (Interviewer)
* Lars Marco Andersen (Interviewer)

##### Transcription

MICHAEL: ­Jamen jeg har haft det der oppe, der ligger på Pastelvej. Jeg startede som selvstændig da jeg var 22, så har jeg snart haft firmaet i 25 år (Cold Sejl, red). I 13 (2013, red) ringer der en københavner, altså en god københavner kan man sige. De kunne ikke finde ud af det. Der var en der havde opfundet noget. Der er mange, der er dygtige i hovedet, men de kan bare lave en skitse. Og så har de prøvet på at patentere det, men det kunne de ikke få til at virke. Og så lejede jeg med dem fra 2013 til 2014, og så i starten af 14 (2014) havde vi sådan set lavet det her færdigt. Det er den der står herude (henviser til produktionshallen, hvor et testprodukt står opbevaret, red). Jeg så startede det hele. De var jo helt oppe at køre. Vi kunne jo sælge hundredevis at kilometer, og så er det altid sådan at så bliver man selv lidt revet med. Så sagde de til mig, i kender Lars Andersen (direktør hos Andersen Consult, red) som i har snakket med. Så siger Lars vi skal ansøge markedsmodningsfonden om de ting.

Vi har noget i gang i Vietnam nu, men når man handler med det offentlige, og så i udlandet, og så i Østen, hold kæft det tager lang tid. Det er udfordringen ved at gøre det. Men så var vi i Ho Chi Minh city i 2015 i oktober eller var det november, hvor vi lavede en stor demonstration. Vi satte en op, der var 120 gange 60 meter. Så lavede vi sådan en firkant, for at bevise at vi kunne holde vandet ude. Hvis vi laver en firkant rundt omkring bordet, så var der sådan en scene og de holdt taler og bla bla bla. Og der havde vi EKF (Danmarks eksportkredit) med inde i det. De skulle jo købe flere hundrede kilometer. Den ene ordre var på nogen og 180 millioner, det var sindssygt. Så vi har været i Købehavn med EKF, og vi havde Jyske Bank med, og det hele var klar. Så går det altid i stå med sådan nogle ting. Nå, så siger, vi har så solgt noget, det kommer lige bagefter. Så siger Lars Andersen så til mig, ham har jeg kendt siden 2005, for jeg har et bette firma i Bangladesh også, så det hjalp han mig med at få Danida-tilskud til dengang. Og så… jeg er sådan en der hopper på alt, eller nej det gør jeg ikke, for nogle gange får du en over fingrene. Men jeg siger aldrig nej hvis der kommer nogle nye ting. Og alle de mennesker, som jeg har vist det her, uanset om det er min oldemor på 90, der er aldrig nogensinde nogen der har sagt at det her dur ikke. Jamen så fik jeg markedsmodningsfonden, som den eneste nordjyske virksomhed i 2016. Der fik jeg 1,5 millioner, og så skulle vi så finde en samarbejdspartner. Og det blev noget der hed Jepsen og Jessen, det har vi ude i Indonesien. Det er jo et stort, stort gammelt dansk firma, der ligger nede i Aabenraa, nede i Sønderjylland. Det er så det, vi er i gang med nu. Vi skal teste det her vi laver hjemme til Europa kan holde derude.

Så har vi slås hjemme i Danmark, og vores konkurrenter, det har man jo set i fjernsynet, jamen det holder jo ikke, og så er det alt for dyrt at sætte op og tage ned. De er lidt billigere end vi er, men hvis du tager udgifterne med, hvis du skal sætte det op og lastbiler, så er vi bedre og billigere. Der er vi så lige ved at lave en aftale med Falck, at Falck gerne vil have salget i Kongeriget Danmark. Falck vil gerne have salget i Danmark og Færøerne og Grønland. Hvad skal jeg mere fortælle?

Vi har været i Vietnam, vi har været på Filippinerne.

*TOBIAS: hvornår startede i, i Vietnam?*

MICHAEL: Vietnam startede vi der i 2015, i 2014 startede vi sådan set med det, men Lars var sådan set også helt klar. Han kunne godt se, hallo. Han er jo ude i Asien, han havde jo et netværk og det er det vigtigste. Det er simpelthen netværket, for ellers kommer du ingen vegne. Og så fik vi det sat i gang derude.

Lige nu er vi ved at skal klappe en ordre sammen oppe i Hanoi. Der er der en militærlufthavn, der oversvømmer hele tiden. Der har Lars lige været ude. Og den store ordre på 200 kilometer er udsat lidt. Men de arbejder stadig på det. Det er svært når det er sådan noget, især når man er en lille virksomhed.

Så har vi været på Sri Lanka. Der får vi en ordre på halvanden kilometer, den får vi her i august. Det har vi fået at vide. Den skal ud i licitation i august, og vi skal levere inden nytår. Og det er noget verdensbanken har givet penge til. Parlamentet ligger ligesom her. Hvis det her er en sø (markerer med et papir på bordet), så ligger parlamentet her ude midt i, det er rigtig, rigtig flot. Det ligger ude midt i Colombo. Det er noget japanerne har givet dem. Og så er der sådan en lang vej ind her. Så det bliver oversvømmet når det er. Det har det gjort to gange, hvor de har brugt rigtig mange millioner dollars på at renovere det igen. Så skal vi sætte vores op hele vejen rundt af den type som står herude.

Så har vi været på Filippinerne, der har de jo også meget interesseret i det. Og vi har været i Thailand. Og hver gang vi er lige ved at være der, så bliver det stoppet, for så er der ingen, der har penge. Beredskaberne hjemme i Danmark har heller ingen penge. Men nu kommer det hele. Nu kommer det hele på en gang. Jeg har gang i Norge, vi er ved at skulle sende 400 m til Norge, så det skal sendes her i næste uge.

*TOBIAS: Er det bevist fokus at i kører udlandet eller er det fordi i synes det er for småt herhjemme?*

MICHAEL: Nej, men det er fordi det er svært. Udlandet var på grund af Lars. Fordi de (udlandet) havde store problemer. Det regner mere derude end her. Og så fordi jeg selv har et firma i Bangladesh. Jeg kender lidt til Asien. Hjemme i Danmark har vi nogle problemer med, at der ikke er nogen der kan tage bestemmelse til noget. Fordi vi var nede at bevise igen i år, her i januar, det var januar 2017, nede i Sønderballe Strand, der stod de med sandsakke. Der kom vi med 100 meter og redede deres sommerhuse, det gjorde vi af egen fri vilje. Så de vil købe af os, men nu har de ingen penge. Nu har Falck fundet ud af, at hvis de går ind og tager salget, så kan de nemmere sælge det. Enten kan de lease det ud, eller så kan de sælge det fordi det er Falck. Det er jo klart når der kommer sådan et firmanavn her… (henviser til, at de er et lille firma, red) Det koster godt 2000 kr. Meteren. Hvis nu Sønderjyllands amt skal købe for over 2 millioner, jamen så er vi jo et nystartet firma. Vi har jo sådan set ikke rigtigt haft noget salg. Det er klart, det kigger de også på.

*TOBIAS: Hvad med Bangladesh, hvornår startede du din forretning derude?*

MICHAEL: 2005. Der startede det hele. Vi byggede den nye bygning i 2008.

*TOBIAS: er det i forbindelse med Cold Sejl?*

MICHAEL: ja det hed det den gang. Nu er det lavet om til Cold A/S, for det har altid været privatejet. Jeg fik jo 4,6 millioner i tilskud til at starte det op derude. Jeg havde en mand derude i 3 år. Og så frem og tilbage.

*TOBIAS: Så i havde noget erfaring fra de lande?*

MICHAEL: Ja, jeg har været meget derude.

*LARS: Det var så sejl i lavede der?*

MICHAEL: ja, og så lavede vi nogle hoppeborge. Og så fik vi en ordre på 4000 presenninger til en trailer. Det er sådan nogle store ting. Men så kom krisen jo dengang, og så skete det jo ikke rigtig. Så det er der jeg har fordelene, nu kan i se bagefter. Når man skal lave, lad os nu sige vi har en ide om, at vi skal sælge 5 kilometer inden nytårsaften, så har jeg sagt, at i mit budget har jeg budgetteret med kun de 2,5 kilometer, men nordmændene, nu har han fået 400 meter, han vil gerne rydde vores lager. Vi har ca. 1,2 kilometer vi kan sende. De har jo problemer hvis i ligger mærke til det i Norge, på grund af alt det smeltet is. Det kommer jo først nu deroppe. Så det regner jeg med at nå. Det næste problem man så har, hvis du kommer og siger du gerne vil købe 5 kilometer. Det er 5000 meter, det tager fandme lang tid at lave.

*TOBIAS: Laver i det alt sammen herude (Skibsbyvej i Hjørring, red)?*

MICHAEL: Ja, og så skærer vi derhjemme på Pastelvej (Hirtshals, red), der har vi sådan en kæmpe maskine vi skærer det hele på. Vi bruger ikke sakse mere, det er computere der ordner det. Men så producerer vi det herude.

*TOBIAS: Er det også maskiner?*

MICHAEL: Ja, det er sådan nogle til at svejse med.

*LARS: hvor lang tid har i været herude?*

MICHAEL: Det er er 2 år her til oktober. Det har jeg brugt et helt år på at gøre klar og sådan noget. Og så fik jeg det her, hvad hedder det. Jeg fik 200.000 kr. Af det der Lag-gruppen, det fik jeg til at. Vi havde brugt mange penge på at bygge de borde og købe maskiner, så det fik jeg i tilskud. Så det beviser også, de troede også på det jeg lavede.

*TOBIAS: Så det har en eller anden værdi for jer?*

MICHAEL: Ja og markedsmodningsfonden. Ud af hvis nu der var 2000 ansøgninger, så var der ansøgninger for 300.000 millioner. Og til sidst gav de så kun 42,5 millioner ud, og jeg fik så 1,5 millioner. Det synes jeg også det var fedt. Og som den eneste i Nordjylland. Så det kan man også sige, det var fedt. Jeg havde ikke regnet med at få det. Da jeg gik i skole, der gad jeg ikke gå i skole. Men da vi var inde i København, sad der sådan et par stykker som jer, skide søde og flinke mennesker. Den ene sad så inde i hjørnet og jeg skulle så fremlægge det her, og det blev optaget, altså det var helt vildt. Men der havde jeg så Lars med ovre, fordi han havde hjulpet med det hele, så han kendte også lidt til det, det med at lave ansøgningen og sådan noget. Så det var fint. Først kom jeg igennem til en telefonisk screening, og så var der kun 500 tilbage. Og så kom vi til København en gang, og så var vi færdige. Jeg fik topkarakterer i det hele, at måden at lave det på.

*TOBIAS: Hvad baserer man det på?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det gjorde man ved nyhedsværdien i det, den var i top, og så var det noget med, at det var nordjyske arbejdspladser, og så fik jeg på grund af produktet, den måde vi havde lavet det på, og det sidste jeg fik for, var at jeg havde fundet en stor dansk virksomhed, de kendte. Jepsen og Jessen hed de, det er meget stort. Altså, det er ikke lige så stort som Mærsk, men det er et rigtig stort gammeldags handelsfirma. Så det var fandme fedt.

*LARS: Hvilken funktion har de for dig nu?*

MICHAEL: De hjælper med at finde områder, derude hvor vi skal teste det. Vi vil gerne teste det (produktet, red) nogle forskellige steder. Brandvæsnet har brug for det, men det tager lang tid, for produktet er så nyt endnu at der er ikke nogen der kender det. I har godt nok set de der pølser, men vores modeller, den her, 2 mand kan sætte det op ikke. Den vejer 90 kilo sådan en, når den står derude uden vand i. Det kan man godt løfte. Så siger man fire derude, men vi kan godt løfte den 2 mand. Den der er den vi kommer til at sælge flest af (henviser til model II i brochuren foran os, red). Den vi skal lave ud til Hanoi, det er faktisk den type der (henviser til model III i brochuren foran. Model III er lidt længere end model II, red). De vejer 26 tons, når de fylder vand. Og den der (henviser til model II, red) vejer 12 tons. Der kommer ikke ret meget vand ind under. Der kommer ingenting ind. Eller der kommer så lidt, så man skal jo skrive det. Men det var så det, der gik galt ude i Vietnam da vi lavede den demonstration ude i Ho Chi Minh, det var, at de vietnamesere, der havde hjulpet os med det, havde sagt til de øverste folk, at det var 100% tæt, men det kan det ikke være. Det viste vi også, men det kunne de ikke forstå, at det stod heri. Der havde vi lidt døj med det. Og så blev det også slået for stort op, fordi de er jo lidt derude… De er fandme så korrupte, de er ikke til at arbejde med. Så det holder vi os helt fra, det må de selv finde ud af hvordan de gør det. Men det er jo det, man er oppe imod i sær i de lande.

*LARS: Men det er dem, der er i fokus nu så, det er der, der er potentiale?*

MICHAEL: Jamen jeg regner med vi har lavet en aftale med Falck, den skal skrives under i morgen inden jeg skal flyve på torsdag. De får salget fra nu af og så til nytårsaften. Så revurderer vi igen, om de kan gøre noget. Og det kan de. De kommer ikke her for sjov skyld, de øverste herre med slips på. De kan sælge dem. Så det kommer. Mit budget kommer langt over. Ulempen er jo, at hvis vi får den ordre på de 800 meter her i løbet af en tre måneder, så får vi 1,5 kilometer til Sri Lanka, og så kommer der noget af det andet, og så kommer der det her hjemme i Danmark. Så får jeg et positivt problem. Det er alle mine slags udfordringer. Om så det er lille eller store, hvordan kan du gøre det? Du kan ikke bare ligesom Georg gå hen til Onkel Anders i Anders And og få nogle millioner. Det er ikke så nemt. Jeg kunne sagtens sælge noget af det her, og så få nogle investorer med i det, der kunne sidde nede for enden af bordet og ingen ting lave. Men det gider jeg ikke. Jeg vil fortsætte. Det har kostet alt for mange penge hvis du spørger min bank, men der skal ikke ret meget til så…

*TOBIAS: Producerer i på kundeløsninger eller har i standardløsninger?*

MICHAEL: det er kun 10 meter sektioner, det er standarden. Vi er ved at sælge nogle andre ting, den ene var 18 meter og den anden var 7 meter, så gør vi også på specialmål. Det er derfor jeg har lavet så meget til lageret, men jeg har jo for alt for mange penge til at stå herude. Men nu skal vi så heldigvis til at sælge noget her. Så det er sådan nogle 10 meter sektioner, der kommer i sådan en enkelt, du lige kan løfte 4 mand.

*TOBIAS: Og så sætter du dem sammen inde i det hul her?*

MICHAEL: du kører den næste ind til den næste, og så trykker den her på, så der kommer ikke rigtig noget ind under. Og den her vejer 12.000 kilo på 10 meter. De kan sådan lige sættes sammen.

Og alle folk kan jo lave det. Vores modeller er jo sådan at uanset hvem du er på kloden kan du finde ud af at sætte det op. Udbuddet på Sri Lanka, der kommer til at blive lavet lige præcis efter vores, det har vi fået besked på. De vil gerne købe vores. Men når det er staten, så kan man ikke gå ind og sige… det må man ikke. Så bliver det sådan noget med, at hvem er korrupt og sådan. Men det er de ikke derude på den måde. Så i august kommer der et udbud, vi skal byde på. Der skal vi byde på, at der kommer nogle sektioner der vejer 90 kilo uden vand. Sjovt nok, det er dem vi har. Og de skal være nemme at sætte op. Og 2-4 kan gøre det. Vores konkurrenter med de store pølser har været der, men de kan ikke køre omkring det parlament.

*TOBIAS: Så der er andre der laver det her?*

MICHAEL: Ja, men ikke i sådan nogle sektioner, det er det vi har patenteret. Det er modulopbygningen. Der er nogle der laver sådan nogle store pølser, som du så i fjernsynet der til nytår. Og der er vores også en fordel, vi kan bare skifte en ud igen, og hele lortet vælter ikke fordi der kommer vand ud her (peger på den ene ende af en modulopbygning).

*TOBIAS: Hvornår havde i det første salg til udlandet?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det første lille salg havde vi op til Hanoi her for ikke så lang tid siden. Så det har faktisk gået halvandet år med det.

*TOBIAS: Siden i startede?*

MICHAEL: Ja. Det er først nu her vi solgt for… Vi har sådan set ikke… vi har solgt noget i Danmark og så har vi solgt noget ovre i Ringkøbing, og så har vi solgt noget over, dem der borer i den store tunnel ovre i København, de har sådan en kæmpe boremaskine, der står der oppe foran. Ellers er vi ikke rigtig kommet af med noget. Så det har også været vores udfordring.

*TOBIAS: hvad har været svært? Er det fordi de ikke har pengene derude eller hvad?*

MICHAEL: Det er noget med, at det er et nyt produkt du kommer og viser nogen, jeg tror det er mere det. Jeg kan jo ikke forstå at hvis man har… Nu har vi så bevist det der med de der nede i kælderen i Hanoi (henviser til en demonstration i Hanoi, red), som du har set, og i Norge også. Men det tager jo lang tid. Men det begynder at komme nu. Normændene har haft lige så mange problemer med at kældrene bliver oversvømmet oppe i Oslo. Så det kommer. Men når det er sådan en ny ting, det er udfordringen. Og så fordi vi ikke har haft et ordentligt salgs… Hvis vi nu havde haft 5 millioner til at sælge for, så havde vi også solgt noget ude i Østen. Så havde vi fløjet derud hele tiden.

*LARS: er det bedst hvis i selv kommer derud?*

MICHAEL: Lars var der ude sidste gang. Han siger også, at jeg helt skal med hver gang. Sri Lanka ordren er 3 millioner danske kroner. Så de vil jo gerne se at ham der den store stygge ulv han sidder nede for enden. Jeg behøver sgu ikke sige noget. Men bare det man er med, og så kan svare på nogle ting, det er sådan set det vigtigste. Og det er jo også et stort beløb, for en kilometer er 1,5 millioner, så det er jo klart. Eller 2,5 millioner. Så det er jo klart, det er mange penge.

*TOBIAS: Så det er den store udfordring derude?*

MICHAEL: Ja, det er det. Men så har vi også prøvet noget i Australien. Men man er også nødt til at sige, at nu tager vi ikke flere lande. Og der er stadig ikke nogen der har sagt endnu, at det her det dur ikke. Og det er det jeg synes er mest positivt ved det.

*LARS: Så der er ikke nogen begrænsninger egentlig som sådan?*

MICHAEL: Nej, det er der sådan set ikke. Hvis nu jeg havde haft 2 millioner kr., så havde jeg fortsat med at producere herude hele tiden, for så kunne jeg altid, hvis der er nogen der ringer, så kan de få det nu. Men sådan er det mange gange. Man kan sagtens også godt finde nogen. Jeg har sådan set også fundet nogen der gerne vil være med til at ligge pengene ud, men så vil de så også have så stor en del af kagen, at så tænker man også, jamen, det er jo det, det handler om – hvornår skal man stoppe.

Hvad er det i er ude i, hvad er det i søger?

*TOBIAS: Det er lidt ala det, vi er inde på her, altså hvornår man ligesom startede sin virksomhed, hvornår man etablerede sit første salg til udlandet og hvad der ligesom gjorde, at man kunne gøre det. Havde man noget netværk derude man kunne trække på eller…*

MICHAEL: Ja, det er jo Lars’ netværk, og det er jo fordi Lars kender til de forskellige lande. Hvis ikke du kender ham, så kan du godt… altså det er netværket, det er alting jo. Et godt eksempel er ham nordmanden, han har et firma der hedder Securi Nord. Han sad nede på færgen ved Fjordline, og var kommet for tidligt derned. I uge 42 var jeg i 24 Nordjyske, og i medierne med, at jeg havde fået det der tilskud fra markedsmodningsfonden. Ugen efter var det i Hirtshalsavisen om onsdagen, der var sådan en hel side som det her, hvor de fortæller om jeg har fået det. Der sad han dernede fordi han var kommet for tidligt, og så kiggede han op i… så tog han en Hirtshalsavis. Så sad han og kiggede og fik øje på mig på midtersiden. Så kan man sige, hvad er tilfældighederne. Det er mange gange både tilfældigheder og netværk. Nu har han købt for en million kroner, der skal sendes. Så det kan du godt se, det er ufatteligt. Men det er også fordi de ikke kender til det, fordi vi ikke havde markedsført det godt nok. Det er vores store problem – markedsføringen.

*LARS: Er det fordi det er for dyrt?*

MICHAEL: Det er lige præcis det samme. Vi er to om firmaet nu. I starten ejede jeg ingenting. Så skulle jeg have penge for det jeg producerede og så det jeg lavede ind til vi opfandt den. Så kunne vi ikke rigtig finde ud af det. Så fik jeg 10% af firmaet frem for at få pengene. Så fik jeg 20% frem for at få pengene. Vi var så 3, hvor den ene smuttede fordi han ikke ville være med mere. Nu har jeg 50% af Cold Flood. Men jeg har alle produktionsrettighederne på hele kloden i mit eget Cold A/S. Så Allan som er nr. 2, han er sådan en Georg Gearløs, han er fuldstændig umulig. Han kan ikke holde sig nede på jorden. Han tror at vi lige pludselig kan sælge 10 kilometer til lufthavnen og pis og lort. Han har salget i Danmark, og det har vi ikke gjort noget ved.

*LARS: Hvad er hans tidligere erfaring?*

MICHAEL: Jamen Georg Gearløs. Jamen det ved jeg ikke. Jeg ved ikke hvem der har lavet ham. Han er meget speciel. Det har selvfølgelig også været min udfordring at have ham med. Men han holder sig lidt mere på sidelinjen nu. Han er ved at opfinde noget med noget til at fange olie med, noget olieflydespærring og sådan noget. Nu er han på Færøerne.

Så Falck de bedte om, at det var mig de skulle holde møde med, og mig der skulle lave kontrakten. Jeg kan se den kom her til morgen. Så jeg skal nok ind og skrive på den her i morgen. Så skal jeg ikke tænke på Danmark. Det bedste for mig er når der kommer sådan en brochure her (henviser til egen brochure), så står der her, Falcks logo. Det åbner også dørene ude i Asien. Det mangler jeg også. Hvem har du solgt til? Beredskabet. Jamen hvem er det? Må vi set det. Man skal altid lige komme med en lille historie. Uden at lyve. Men det er udfordringen. Det gælder alle der vil til at på eksport. Hvis ikke du tager derud, hvis ikke du møder dine kunder, hvis ikke du gider bruge energi på det, så kan du godt glemme det.

*TOBIAS: Har det været fokus fra starten af, at i vil gå ud på internationale markeder?*

MICHAEL: jamen det var der vi så de største muligheder til at starte med. Og så fik jeg også lov af dem jeg havde firmaet sammen med, at jeg ville have Asien sammen med Lars (Lars fra Andersen Consult, red), fordi jeg kendte Lars, og han kunne godt se det her (potentialet i produktet, red) Men du skal derud. Uanset om du sælger fiskeredskaber eller du sælger maskiner til et eller andet, så skal du derud. Dem vi er i netværk med, altså hvis ikke de gør noget, så sælger de ingenting. Så det er meget, meget vigtigt. Men det er jo også dyrt. Det tager lang tid. Sådan en uge. Jeg har været med til at flyve her fra. Dengang de var rigtig på de højeste med de der. Så fløj jeg om mandagen, så lande jeg i Ho Chi Minh om tirsdagen og så fløj jeg hjem igen onsdag aften. Det gør jeg aldrig mere, det er fandme jetlag frem og tilbage. Jeg nåede fandme ikke engang. Det var fuldstændig sindssygt. Det skal i hvert fald tage en uge.

*LARS: hvordan sådan globalt set. Du nævnte dem de store pølser, er det de største konkurrenter som ikke helt kan det samme som jer, eller hvordan er konkurrencen?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det er noget der hedder Nonflood. Men de kan ikke det samme som vi kan. De skal bruge kraner og lastbiler til at sætte det op. Hvis du læser i den her kan du også se hvordan altså, der står også heri, at sandsække ikke bliver brugt i Danmark fordi vi er så langt fremme, men det gør det faktisk i Norge. Og der står jo lige præcis heri hvordan vores… Du kan selv se, hvis du køber vores, så når du bruger det mere end en gang, så har du tjent pengene hjem. Selv i Indonesien i Jakarta hvor vi har stået og fortalt om det, det troede de ikke på. Når vi så fandt udgifterne på det i Indonesien hvad en sandsæk koster, og hvad det koster med sand, lastbil og så deres timeløn, så når de har brugt vores to gange, så har de tjent pengene hjem. Og hvis du passer på, så kan de holde i 10 år. Og du kan reparere dem, ligesom du kan lappe en bil. Så det er jo ingen problem. Så det gør man ikke herhjemme. De gider ikke bruge sandsække længere. Så de er nødt til at finde på noget nyt. Men det gør man derude (bruger sandsække). Den her brochure har været lang tid under vejs. Så fik jeg ansat Matilde ude fra universitetet af også.

*TOBIAS: Hvad har hun af rolle i dag?*

MICHAEL: Hun står for alt det her med markedsføring. I dag er de 5 mand ude ved Jagersoldaterne. En af dem også i netværket som er jagersoldat, eller har været det. Der har vi fået lov at komme ind på deres flyveplads. Så skal de stille 100 meter op i dag, hvor de optager hvor lang tid det tager at fylde en op med vand, og hvordan man gør det. Og så kobler vi resten sammen. Så fylder vi bare luft i, for det kan de ikke se. Det er vi mangler for at kunne sælge det ude i Vietnam, så de kan se det vi siger, er rigtigt. Så når den film er færdig og alle de ting, så er det her ved at være i orden. Det her har hun lavet helt fra bunden af. Det er jeg meget, meget godt tilfreds med, det er blevet pænt. Selv med den her med rundt i verden og vise materialerne, så er det lige godt, så er de meget interesseret, det er også imponerende. Når de ser den her, så bliver de endnu mere vilde. For her kan de læse. Så materiale, og så tage derud. Så vi skulle gerne så langt i august måned at vi skal til Sri Lanka. Det har de i hvert fald sagt, at vi skal komme derud. Det vil vi, når de sender udbud ud, så vil vi jo være derude. Og så har de sådan set aftalt, at… det står jo ikke på skrift nogle steder, det kan man jo ikke, men jeg går ud fra de skal have 1,5 kilometer.

*LARS: Så det er på 3 år alt det her det er sket ca.?*

MICHAEL: Ja, det er fra 2014 og så op til nu, ja.

*TOBIAS: Og det var i 2012 i startede?*

MICHAEL: Ja, jeg mødte dem første gang i efteråret 2012, og så begyndte vi at lege med det i 2013. Det gjorde vi helt hemmeligt, for det måtte vi ikke vise til nogen, med de patenter og sådan. Og så en af mine ansatte, han boede ude i noget der hedder Toldestrup, her imellem Brønderslev og Hjørring. Han havde en garage. Og så testede vi og fyldte vand i, og vi testede det igen osv. Og det er total unikt, det er det. Det er ikke fordi jeg er med til det, men det virker bare.

*LARS: Det var de københavnere der havde fundet på det?*

MICHAEL: Ja, men det kunne ikke holde. De havde brugt et svensk firma, og et andet dansk firma, og jeg tror også de havde leget med nogle tyskere. De kunne ikke få det til at holde. Så måtte de komme til Nordjylland. De giver aldrig op. Det er klart, det tager lang tid. Men det holder bare. Jeg har så selv stået for det her. Jeg har selv ansat Matilde for at skubbe lidt på det her firma, for det er lige præcis det her der mangler (henviser til salgsmaterialet, red). Og det er blevet godt.

*TOBIAS: Hvis alle de her udenlandske projekter lykkes, hvordan tror du så fordelingen bliver af dit salg?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det er helt klart derude. Altså, det vil blive... nu nordmændene, de har jo penge deroppe. Stavanger kommune har lige sat penge af siger de. Jeg skulle have været deroppe i næste uge, men det kan jeg ikke når jeg skal derud. Han siger de har sat penge af til godt 20 kilometer, i deres kommune. Så du kan godt se, jeg siger ikke jeg skal have det hele. Kan jeg bare få 25% eller bare halvdelen. Og det er kun en kommune, og de har pengene. De har ikke gjort det samme som i Danmark. De har stadig 468 kommuner tror jeg. I Danmark har vi kun 90 tilbage.

*TOBIAS: Så der er stort potentiale deroppe?*

MICHAEL: Ja, men jeg håber da Asien de bliver det, fordi det er også et dejligt sted at komme. De er nogle skide fine mennesker næsten uanset hvor du er henne. Men altså, Indonesien… Men det tager lang tid. Jamen kan vi nu vise at vi får den ordre til Vietnam, de der type III, den koster jo… Ja den ordre er også 3 millioner bare for de 800 meter fordi den er så dyr. Så hvis man nu kunne få den her i løbet af, efter sommerferien, og så få den anden også. Og så sælge lidt til Falck, for det har vi sådan set i den kontrakt, der står at de skal købe noget inden nytår, og så nordmændene. Jamen kan jeg så bare sælge for 10 millioner kroner inden nytårsaften, så skal jeg ikke sige mere. For så har jeg nok døj med det her, altså på den positive måde. Og fordelene ved det her er, at det er ufaglært, det er lige noget for dem. Det kan alle finde ud af at lave.

*LARS: Så det er ikke så kompliceret? Bare det når i har rettighederne til det så er det bare at fyre den af?*

MICHAEL: nej nej, det er slet ikke kompliceret. Det kan alle finde ud af. Det er også det, der er en fordel ved at jeg kan se den produktionsmasse… vi kan godt sige, at nu kommer i fra Vietnam, og så siger i til mig, at i vil købe 200 kilometer, det er mange penge. Hvis vi køber det, så skal du flytte produktionen herud. Så laver vi sådan, sådan og sådan. Det turde jeg nok, for jeg ved, at det kan alle finde ud af. Så der bestemmer jeg også selv. Det er det, der er fordelen i det. Det skal jeg ikke spørge Allan efter, for jeg har rettighederne til at producere det.

*LARS: Så der er ikke så stor risiko og du er rimelig fleksibel på det punkt?*

MICHAEL: Ja. Det er klart vi kommer… På et tidspunkt så kommer kineserne jo også med. Det ved vi de gør. Det kan også være de er begyndt at lave sådan nogle der ligner. Men de gider ikke købe af kineserne. De hader kineserne, de vil ikke købe af dem. Vietnameseren vil ikke købe noget fra Kina. Og det vil de ikke. De ved vores er kvalitet. Det tror jeg mange danske virksomheder, når de er ude i verden… det har vi jo ry for, at det er vi gode til. Altså det vi laver, det er bare i orden.

*LARS: Der er ikke risiko for at de tror det er for dyrt når det kommer fra Danmark?*

MICHAEL: (overvejende) Nej, jo, det kan da godt ske at de synes det er dyrt. Men når vi så kan bevise overfor dem, at hvis de bruger det mere end en gang eller to gange, så er det ikke. Så begynder de også at finde ud af, hvad er for dyrt så. Det er altid prisen. Det kan godt ske, at nu vi siger… Det er ikke noget ved at få en masse og så bare flytte arbejdspladserne ud af Danmark. Alle dem der… de kommer jo tilbage igen. Ikke fordi vi skal sammenligne os med dem, men da jeg var derude i 2005, der flyttede de alle sammen til Kina og lavede tøj. Mascot, de er så kommet fra Kina til Polen og er nu kommet til Bangladesh, for Bangladesh er det sidste sted nu. Men Bangladesh, fra jeg startede derude til nu, der er lønnen steget med det dobbelte. Så nu kommer de hjem til Europa igen. Du ser også dynelarsen. Hvis du skal have nogle nye havemøbler, så skal du ikke vente et halvt år på at de kommer, så det kommer igen, fordi timelønnen derude stiger også.

*TOBIAS: Så i vil blive ved med at producere her?*

MICHAEL: Ja det vil vi da, indtil du kommer og siger du gerne vil købe 200 kilometer, så vil jeg da flytte, for det vil jeg tjene penge på. Det vil jeg ikke være bange for, også fordi jeg prøver at være derude. Men altså, tålmodighed, tålmodighed, tålmodighed. Jeg har været i Bangladesh i tre uger. Jeg så containeren stod her, men vi kunne ikke få den åbnet på grund af noget told. Så vi tog bare hjem igen, og kom tilbage igen, og så fik vi den fri. Det er også det, man er oppe imod sådan nogle steder.

Hvad kan jeg ellers sige? Der er mange der har prøvet sådan noget som mig. De er rendt skrigende væk for lang tid siden. Det havde man. Så det er spændende.

*TOBIAS: Hvordan valgte i Hanoi til at starte med, nu siger du, det var jeres første salg?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det var gennem Lars Andersen. Preben Hjortlund, som bor oppe i Dybvad, det er ham der har hjulpet med det. Han har været i Hanoi, han er den dansker, der har været i Vietnam længst. Han hjalp med det. Og det er så dem, der hjælper med at sælge det nu.

*TOBIAS: Er det noget med, at du er med i et netværk inde hos Andersen Consult? Kan du bruge det til noget i forbindelse med alt det her med sparring?*

MICHAEL: Ja det kan du. Hvis ikke du er det, så… du hjælper jo hinanden, du kommer til at kende hinanden… ja det gør man. Det er du simpelthen nødt til. Det er klart, hvis der er flere i netværket der laver det samme er man ikke så åben. Men nogle af dem, jeg er i netværk med, eller nogen af dem der er på Sjælland, de har virkelig pengene. De har været efter mig to gange, om ikke de skal være med i det her. Du hjælper hinanden. Hvordan gør du? Og mødes og snakker om det, og hvordan går det osv. Altså netværk er jo det vigtigste, ellers så kommer du ikke videre med det her.

*LARS: Så det er ligesom for at springe nogle led over, så får du den indirekte gennem et netværk i stedet for selv at tage ud og opsøge?*

MICHAEL: Det kan du jo ikke, for hvor skal du søge hen? Hvem skal du snakke med? Du kan i hvert fald hurtigt ligge 500.000 kr. På bordet. Du kan godt kontakte ambassaden, altså vores ambassader rundt omkring. Ja, det eneste det går ud i for dem er, at skal skynde sig at sælge nogle kuponer, så de har solgt en timeløn for 50.000, det er det første de spørger om. Det er jeg modstander af, at det er sådan de gør det. De skulle jo hjælpe alle os, der sørger for, at der kommer lidt skat til Danmark. Det er i hvert fald nogle af de store udfordringer. Men netværket, det er vigtigt.

Jeg var med i det fra starten af, men så var jeg ude af det noget tid, for der synes jeg ikke lige jeg havde tid til. Det var dengang der var krise, så der synes jeg, at jeg hellere måtte koncentrere mig om det andet. Men så kunne jeg godt se at jeg skulle være med i det igen. For nogle af dem snakker man meget bedre med end andre. Så det er i hvert fald vigtigt at man er med i det.

*LARS: Hvor mange er i nu?*

MICHAEL: Vi er 20. Herhjemme.

*TOBIAS: I Flood Prevention?*

MICHAEL: nej, der har vi ikke nogen ansatte. Jeg producerer ved Cold A/S, det er mig der sørger for det. Vi er bare to ansatte her. Matilde er også hjemme i det andet firma. Det er for at holde udgifterne nede i det her. Og så også fordi jeg fik det tilskud. Der var jo også noget deri til markedsføring og der var nogle ting også og sådan noget, og test osv. Og det var noget af det, der kom ud af det. Ja, hvornår startede hun, jeg havde hende i praktik og så blev hun fastansat nu her. Det kan jeg ikke huske. Hun har nok været her i 9 måneder snart. Det er ikke til at finde ud af, tiden går så stærkt.

*TOBIAS: Hvis vi lige skal prøve, så var starten i 2012 og Hanoi salget var i?*

MICHAEL: Det kom sidste år. Og nu kommer der noget igen. Der går ikke ret lang tid. Selvom jeg havde demonstration ude i, den brugte jeg en kvart million på det. Selvom det, så fik jeg ikke noget ud af det. Fordi så var der borgermestervalg, og der var valg. Og i Ho Chi Minh city bor der 12 millioner. Det er mere end der bor i Danmark og Norge til sammen. Så var der valg, så dem vi havde snakket med forsvandt alle sammen. Det var fandme ærgerligt. Hvis vi havde kommet i gang 3 måneder inden, så havde vi fået ordren. Så det var ikke sjovt.

*LARS: hvad så med det der patent, hvornår gik det igennem?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det er først nu. Når man søger om patent, så går der et helt år inden du hører noget efter om der er nogen der har noget at sige om det. Så undersøge de, om der er nogen der har lavet noget magen til. Nu er det gået hjem nu her. Vi har beskyttet det i Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesien, Australien, Singapore. Vi har ikke beskyttet det på Sri Lanka, fordi det gider vi ikke. Filippinerne. Og så har vi faktisk også gjort det i USA.

*TOBIAS: Hvorfor ikke Sri Lanka*

MICHAEL: Der var vi kommet i gang, så det tog vi ikke det med, for det tænkte vi ikke lige på. Lige pludselig var der sådan en tur vi kunne komme på alle sammen i netværket, og det er så der vi kommer tættest på en ordre. Tilfældigheder.

*TOBIAS: Overholder de, de patenter derude?*

MICHAEL: Vi har ikke mødt nogen endnu, der har lavet det. Men det vil vi opdage på et tidspunkt måske. Der vil det jo også være en fordel hvis man fik så meget succes med det. Lad os nu tage Vietnam, hvis man laver en produktion derude, så er det nemmere at holde øje med. Men de er da fuldstændige ligeglade med alt. Det må man sige. Du er nødt til at sælge det på, at du kommer fra Danmark, og det du laver det er i orden. Og det gælder alting. Der er jo en grund til. De ved jo godt der er en grund til. Men de er sgu specielle.

*TOBIAS: Hvad med Cold Sejl og dens egne forretning?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det går meget godt. Når i kører på motorvejen kan i se de der grå bobler og de grønne i møder lidt længere henne inden i kommer til Brønderslev, inde til højre når i kører hjem ad. Det laver vi en masse overdækning til, det er sådan nogle gylletanke, det lavet vi meget af – biogas. Så har vi den anden side, alt det vi laver til skolerne. Der laver vi madrasser. A-Sport nede i Skive, alt det de har, det laver vi næsten det hele af med skum i. Der ligger noget nede i Skanderborg. Vi laver noget for et sportsfirma, det kender i også. Så har vi lidt vi sender til. Vi har nogle kunder i Japan. Det er jo det samme hele tiden.

*LARS: Er det de samme materialer i bruger?*

MICHAEL: Ja, knowhow fra de her ting, er det samme vi bruger her (i Cold Flood, red), bare det her (Cold Food produkter, red) er lavet i specielt UV, fordi det skal bruges ude i Asien.

*TOBIAS: hvornår startede Cold Sejl*

MICHAEL: Det gjorde det i 1992.

*TOBIAS: Og der sælger i også til udlandet?*

MICHAEL: Ja det gør vi. Og jeg har været på Borneo at arbejde ude i junglen. Jeg har været inde i selve Malaysia, i Kuala Lumpur, og være nogle steder og lavet noget. Vi har fået en ordre til noget der hedder Kalemantra, der ligger på den Indonesiske del af Borneo helt ude midt i Junglen. Der skal også laves sådan noget Biogas noget. Så det er sådan set spændende nok. Vi laver alt muligt specialopgaver og noget.

*LARS: I Hirtshals ligger?*

MICHAEL: Lige bagved transportcentret ligger Pastelvej.

*LARS: Der er så også produktion eller hvad?*

MICHAEL: Ja, der har jeg 2500m2 og så kontorbygninger og det hele, hvor vi producerer og skærer ud. Det her kører vi bare herud og laver herude.

*LARS: er der en grund til det?*

MICHAEL: Ja, for vi har ikke plads til det. Og så fordi jeg kun giver 16.000 kr. Om måneden i husleje. Det er billigt for 1600m2. Det er ikke dyrt. Og så fordi det skal skilles op. Vi skal ikke ret meget længere hen så bliver det skilt op i et selskab for sig selv, fordi så har du det hele her for sig selv. Og det er også nemmere. For på et eller andet tidspunkt skal jeg have nogen med til det. Altså, så kan man sige, det er nemmere at få nogen med ind, som kan hjælpe mig med det. Jeg kan jo ikke være alle steder. Det kan du jo ikke styre. Lige nu hopper jeg rundt til mange ting.

*LARS: hvad med der ude i Bangladesh, der bruger du ingen sourcing agenter eller noget?*

MICHAEL: Nej der sender vi alle materialerne her hjemme fra, når vi salv laver en ordre på et eller andet, så sender vi her fra. Og så sender vi det derud. Tager det ud af containeren.

*LARS: Det sender i så derud?*

MICHAEL: ja, så producerer vi derude og så sender vi det hjem igen.

*LARS: Det kan godt betale sig så?*

MICHAEL: Ja det kunne det i hvert fald den gang. Det kan det da også stadigvæk, men så skal du have mængder på. Noget af det, som vi kan se her bagefter, som vi skal bruge, vil vi have syet derude. Jeg har sendt materialerne derud. Lige så snart jeg ved, så siger jeg go til det. Fordi det er noget sy-arbejde, og det er de gode til i Bangladesh. Vi har de samme maskiner til at svejse på derude, de ligner hinanden derude, som det gør derhjemme. Så det er den samme teknologi. Og jeg har haft nogen til træning heroppe og sådan noget. Dem der står for det derude.

*LARS: Hvor lang tid har det stået på derude?*

MICHAEL: Det startede i 2005, så det vil jeg bruge nu. Det skal jeg til at bruge rigtigt nu. Jeg venter lige lidt med at sætte det i gang. For når jeg først sætter det i gang skal det op at køre helt vildt, så de hele tiden har noget. Så jeg skal lige se hvordan det går.

*LARS: Så der ejer i også selv faciliteterne?*

MICHAEL: Ja, jeg har sådan et joint venture derude der hedder Cold Play School products Ltd., det ligger der ude ved Chittagong inde i sådan en zone der hedder IPZ, det er sådan en toldfri zone. Der sender vi altid varerne ind. Det er nemmere at sende ind og ud. Dengang før hen, der var vi udenfor, så var det ikke til at finde ud af. Så hvis du bestiller 1000 ting, af et eller andet der skal sys, så sender vi det bare derud, så får vi det syet og så hjem igen.

*LARS: Så har du en partner derude som står for det?*

MICHAEL: Ja, de har 5000 ansatte, det er et kæmpe firma. Det var nogen jeg mødte dengang. De har en fabrik med 5000 ansatte, der ligger i sådan nogle blokke. De syer tøj blandt andet for Mascot og H&M. Og så har de syet militærtøj. Så de har jo teknologien i at sy. Så får vi sådan nogle subcontractor, fordi hvis jeg ikke sender arbejde derud, så bestiller de måske 40.000 lommer til et par arbejdsbukser, og så laver de 40.000 lommer. Så vores produktion kører altid i 0. Så det er en fordel at jeg ikke skal sende penge derud hele tiden, hvis ikke lige jeg kan finde noget arbejde. Så dem kommer jeg til at bruge her nu.

*LARS: Sådan grundlæggende kan man sige at Flood trækker på mange af ressourcerne og den viden man allerede har fra Sejl.*

MICHAEL: Jaja, det er klart min viden, og mit netværk er lige præcis det hele. Det er derfra det kommer.

*LARS: Så det har været vigtigt at du har haft den erfaring?*

MICHAEL: Ja, nu bliver jeg snart 47, så jeg har været i gang i snart 25 år, så man lærer jo også noget. I hvert fald af sine fejl, det er ikke altid man bliver rigere af det, men man lærer mange ting gennem så mange år. Jeg er i hvert fald sådan en type, jeg gider ikke sidde stille. De kan sgu styre alt det papirarbejde derhjemme. Selvfølgelig skal jeg hjælpe med nogle ting. Matilda har bare fået besked på, at hun bare selv skal finde ud af det hele. Jeg brokker mig ikke. Eller jo, det gør jeg. Men hun har fået hendes ansvar, og det tror jeg også hun er glad for. Hun har selv fået lov til at lave det hele. Og det ser også skide godt ud. Altså fordelen ved det, er jo at jeg har et produkt, der er 100% unikt, det skal bare virke. Det næste er så at jeg har været heldig at jeg har fået de tilskud. Det er jo 1,6 millioner. Og ud af det er der jo rejser frem og tilbage. Og så fik jeg nogle penge til materialerne. Så den type vi skal bruge derude er også den her, så nu ved vi hvordan vi skal lave det nye. Den type vi skal til at lave nu, vi forhåbentligt kan sælge oppe i Hanoi i løbet af nogle måneder. Det har vi lært af det der ude. Det har jo virkelig hjulpet meget at vi har fået det tilskud. Og jeg fik de der 200.000 eller var det 187.000 det endte med har jo også gjort, at fra vi startede her, nu siger vi fra den første oktober, så har jeg så betalt næsten 400.000 i husleje og forsikringer på de 2 år, og så har jeg brugt en masse penge på at bygge de borde og til købe de maskiner til 300.000 stykket. Og jeg har lavet den anden hal klar. Så det er klart, de 200.000 jeg fik fra det, betyder også meget. Der er jo sådan en som Lars Andersen, han er jo god til sådan nogle ting. Der er jo mange konsulenter, men nu kendte jeg ham fra tidligere. Så det er klart, han har også været en del af det. Men markedsmodningsfonden hjalp han selvfølgelig med, men ikke officielt. Altså, de vidste godt derovre, at det ikke var mig, der havde skrevet den, men det har hjulpet. Det var, der lige fik det sidste op. Det er dyrt hver gang men er afsted derude. Man siger man er væk i en uge eller 10 dage. Så flyver du frem og tilbage, så er der hoteller, så er du ude at spise sammen med nogen. 50.000 har du jo brændt af. Så hvis du tager afsted en gang om måneden. Det bliver hurtigt mange penge. Det har jeg så fået tilskud til. Så det er ikke, selvfølgelig skal jeg ud at kigge, jeg skal ud at snakke med dem, så når jeg har sat dem af nede i bunden af Indonesien, så skal jeg lige flyve op til Jakarta og snakke med Jepsen og Jessen, og hvordan det går med det hele. Og så kan jeg så flyve tilbage igen, så det er fint nok.

*TOBIAS: hvad var det jeres forhold til Jepsen og Jessen var?*

MICHAEL: Dem fandt vi inde i Bangkok. Fordi de har hovedsæde, af hele Asien, der ligger hovedsædet inde i Bangkok. En ældre mand. Og så havde vi snakket med dem om det. Og de kunne godt tænke sig. Og så blev vi enige om, at det ikke skulle være Thailand, men det skulle heller ikke være Vietnam, for der var vi ude. Det skulle være Indonesien, fordi Vietnam den screener de jo. EKF for eksempel screener den 0. Vi kan få EKF tilskud hvis det er den øverste mand. Enten er det præsidenten eller erhvervsministeren, der skriver under på EKF. Der er Vietnam bare screenet fuldstændig 0 på deres liste. Så der er Indonesien bedre. Og så at det er et dansk firma. Et stort firma som laver en masse for olieindustrien, sælger maskiner, vandingsanlæg til golfbaner i hele Asien. De laver så mange ting. Så de kender jo hvem man skal kontakte. Det kan jeg jo ikke. Hvor skal jeg kontakte nogen henne? Det er derfor det blev Indonesien.

*TOBIAS: Hvordan kom i, i kontakt med Jepsen og Jessen?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det gjorde jeg også gennem Lars’ netværk. Det er jo tilfældigheder mange gange. Stig som var norsk konsul, som boede i Thailand. Ham har vi snakket med nogle gange. Det er en Lars har kendt eller kender. Så ham er jeg også kommet til at kende. Så han har hjulpet her, skal du ikke lige se det her og sådan. Når det har regnet så meget i Thailand at alle de der restauranter inde midt i Bangkok, der kommer vandt ind af dørene, så begynder folk at kigge på det. Så det er sådan det er. Hvis der er nogle steder vi kan søge, så gør vi det. Det er jo selvfølgelig klart, for det er dyrt at lege med det her. Så den danske regering, det gør de også i Norge, Sverige, Tyskland de hjælper også deres firmaer, det er meget vigtigt. Men jeg mener at man skal, jeg mener det skal gå stærkt. Der skal ikke gå 5 år eller 10 år, man er bare nødt til at presse på.

*TOBIAS: Jepsen og Jesssen hvad laver de for jer?*

MICHAEL: Vi er samarbejdspartnere. De finder de testområder. Vi var helt nede i bunden af Suabaya og så kørte vi i en bus i 8 timer inde midt i en landsby på 100.000, der har problemer med vandet. Og en ung man der blev borgmester ville gerne prøve det. Så de finder de områder. Og når vi så lige kommer i gang vil de gerne være med til at sælge det. Og så får de selvfølgelig en bid af det.

*TOBIAS: hvornår kom i til at snakke med dem?*

MICHAEL: Det har vi nok gjort i… Lars mødt dem… Lars holdt tale i Indonesien for dronningen, de var derude, hele erhverv der skulle han sige et eller andet. Ham der, der hedder Michael også, fra Jepsen og Jessen. En dansker der bor derude der er chef for Indonesien. Igen tilfældigheder. Det her, det var lige netop noget af det han godt kunne tænke sig at sælge noget af.

*TOBIAS: Var det sidste år?*

MICHAEL: Det var i 2016. Fordi vi lavede ansøgningen allerede i starten af 2016 der havde vi en aftale med dem, så det har nok heddet 2015/2016.

*TOBIAS: Så målet er at få banket noget mere op ude i Bangladesh?*

MICHAEL: Altså målet er at lave så meget hjemme i Hirtshals eller Hjørring, og så bruge min produktionsvirksomhed derude til at hjælpe os. Det er vi nødt til.

*LARS: Der er ved at være gang i forretningen så?*

MICHAEL: ja, det går frem af nu. Vi skulle til at starte op, så nu er der så sommerferier, så går det lidt i stå.

*TOBIAS: Hvad er målet for næste ar så?*

MICHAEL: Det er vel, hvis man nu er nordjyde så er man stille og rolig, så synes jeg de 25 kilometer. Hvis vi kan det, så er det jo… det er målet. I år har vi det mål, der hedder det, men det ved jeg ikke om vi når. Men det er så også lige godt. Men det tror jeg vi gør med de ting vi har gang i. Altså, vi har jo på skrift, at de vil sætte det på udbud i august, og de har fået pengene af verdensbanken til at købe det her for. Hvorfor skulle de så kyle os i vandet til sidst? Men nu må vi se. Falck laver heller ikke kontrakt med os hvis ikke de vil købe noget. For de ved de har fået penge nogle steder. Der er jo heller ikke dumme, og de har kanon resultat igen. Og så Norge. Man kan sige, jeg tror jeg siger 15 kilometer når jeg skal lave mit budget, men 25 kilometer, tror jeg ikke rækker. Men det er bedre sådan, så kan de ikke komme og sige noget bagefter. Prøv at tænk hvor mange m2 det er. Det er mange m2 man bruger, så det er klart, det er også interessant for producenterne i Tyskland, at vi bruger så meget dug. Vi bruger ca. 100 m2 pr. Stk. med det udenpå og det indeni.

*TOBIAS: Hvor får i det fra?*

Micahel: Tyskland. Så kan du godt se, hvis du skal lave, og det er kun den ene type. Ar, det kan godt være det er 125m2. Så bruger vi jo 125.000m2 ved 10 kilometer, så det er også mange ting. Så det er klart, det kommer jo.

*LARS: hvor stor en risiko har du forbundet med det, hvis du ikke får den aftale som du regner med?*

MICHAEL: Jamen det er selvfølgelig de penge jeg har. Men nu ved jeg at de 400 meter. Jeg ved jeg kan sælge de 1,2 kilometer. Så kan man så sige, så har jeg, jeg kan bare give mig til at lave noget andet. Men det er klart, hvis ikke jeg kunne sælge noget… jeg lukker ikke på grund af det. Men så skal jeg ikke have det her ude mere. Det er jo så billigt, at du næsten ikke engang kan have containerplads til den pris. Jeg kan slet ikke se nogen risiko. Altså en blåstempling er, at Falck kontakter os og Falck kommer med et oplæg. Så siger vi, det er vi ikke meget for. Vi vil have noget, vi vil vide hvor meget du vil købe. Altså, så tager de ikke herop. Og kommer herop og kigger og bliver enige i den måde vi vil lave det på, har de sådan set skrevet i kontrakten. Så dem tror jeg på. Ham i Sønderjylland har sagt at han gerne vil købe en kilometer dernede i det område. Men han har ingen penge, men det er de ved at finde· Han sagde den ene af Falck-mændene, at de havde fundet dem. Men Sønderjyllands beredskab vil hellere købe dem af Falck end de vil købe dem af mig. Og jeg vil også hellere sælge dem til Falck, for jeg får det samme for det, som jeg skal have for det. Men det er meget bedre vi sælger til Falck. Jeg tror det er meget bedre for mig selv. Så skal jeg ikke sende en eller anden rundt og sælge det her i Danmark.

*TOBIAS: Og du får det samme for det?*

MICHAEL: Ja, jeg får det jeg skal have. Og jeg sparer en halv million til en sælger, der skal tage rundt. Det koster jo, inden du er fremme og tilbage. Så derfor er det en fordel, og så få stemplet på min brochure. Det er sådan set det, jeg går og venter på.

*TOBIAS: Så det har alligevel en betydning at man kan få noget fra hjemmemarkedet?*

MICHAEL: Ja, en blåstempling, helt klart.

*LARS: Det bliver spændende at se hvad der kommer til at ske den næste periode. I første omgang er det allerede i næste uge eller hvad? Eller er det bare nogle nye potentielle kunder?*

MICHAEL: Nordmanden har vi et problem med deroppe nu. Jeg mener han har solgt til an fabrik der ligger et eller andet sted mellem Stavanger og Oslo, men jeg er ikke helt klar over det. Det er jeg også ligeglad med. Bare det han har købt de 400 meter, og så bare det med, at han skal bruge nogle flere. Jamen kan jeg så sælge for 500 meter mens jeg er væk, så ville det være fint. Så efter sommerferien så kører vi op igen. Og så kører vi også op i folk. Jeg har en 5-6 stykker, der har været her, der godt vil have arbejde. Så når vi først starter op igen, så stopper vi ikke igen. Det er der ulempen er. Jeg har bare brugt dem til noget andet derhjemme, for vi har så travlt derhjemme. Og så har jeg taget lidt med herud af nogle andre slags. Men når vi nu starter op næste gang, så klør vi på. Så fortsætter vi, fordi så kan salget hjælpe med, at jeg har råd til at bygge et varelager op. Men i hvert fald, så kan du gøre det på de to måder. Du kan få finde nogle der gider at tage med dig, men hvis du selv er med derude, det er en fordel. At give det til en konsulent, der sidder der og forhandler om priser… nej, og det også det der med, at hvis ikke du har det der markedsføring og salg i orden, så er det ikke for godt. Nu har vi den film og det hun får lavet, så alt hvad der kommer der, kommer på, og så skal vi ud at fortælle. Så kan jeg sende Matilde til Norge. Jeg behøver ikke tage med til Norge. Så lade hende tage op og hjælpe nordmændene og sådan noget. Der er også Tyskland, der ligger på den anden side af vejen. Du kan ikke blive ved med… du bliver nødt til at sige, nu stopper vi. Fordi hvad så hvis alle sammen vil have 500 meter.

*TOBIAS: Så fokus er i første omgang Asien?*

MICHAEL: Ja, og så det jeg har gang i herhjemme.

## Appendix 11 – Transcription of interview with Fantini of Denmark

*Appendix 11 presents the transcription of the interview (in Danish) with Fantini of Denmark. In addition an audio file with the recorded interview are attached as a digital appendix file.*

* Søren Fantini (Informant – Founder and CEO)
* Tobias Nørgaard (Interviewer)
* Lars Marco Andersen (Interviewer)

##### Transcription

*LARS: Vi er fra Aalborg Universitet, og skriver speciale i internationaliseringsprocesser i forhold til tekstil branchen. Det er i forhold til hurtig internationalisering og gradvis internationalisering. Det vi undersøger er de kritiske hændelser, både i forbindelse med opstartsfasen, men også i forbindelse med videre internationalisering. Det i har gjort, afprøvet allerede, som vi gerne vil samle i et tidslinje perspektiv. Herunder fra før opstarten og til i dag. Så hvem er dig og din partner, hvorfor etablerede i virksomheden, og frem til i dag.*

SØREN: Jeg startede op alene i december 2014, og det var sådan jeg lige havde fået ideen, og ville så etablere et CVR nummer så tidligt som muligt, så vi allerede vil se ud som om vi vil se ud som om vi allerede var et år ældre end vi i virkeligheden var. Fordi, så brugte jeg det første år på at udvikle produkter og finde ud af alt det med teknologien. Hvordan det skulle virke, og jeg har ingen erfaring inden for tøj, fordi jeg kun har forretningsbaggrund, så det skulle jeg også lige komme ind på. Jeg lavede en masse fejl, som kostede mange penge og tog meget tid.

*LARS: Hvilke fejl f.eks.?*

SØREN: Det kan være f.eks. med produktion, hvordan man finder de bedste at arbejde sammen med. Hvornår er en aftale en aftale, og det med at stole på dem. Det kan være rigtig svært, især når det er i udlandet og man ikke lige har mulighed for at stop by. I starten fik vi også lavet vores tekstiler i Kina, og så var det også nogle gigantiske kvantiteter. Som ny så tænkte jeg, at jeg har det bedste produkt i verden, det skal nok blive solgt i de kvantiteter – men sådan var det slet ikke. Der skulle meget mere til. Så jeg brugte en masse penge på det, og så er vi blevet røvrendt på grund af det med kvantiteter, og de blev ved med at spørge om flere og flere penge, og på et tidspunkt kunne man ikke presse citronen mere.

SØREN: Så det blev sådan det første år, og så fik vi lavet en kickstarter kampagne, hvor vi fik ramt 135% af vores mål, som var på 100000 kr. Jeg havde troet at vi vil komme meget højere op, end de 135000 kr. men sådan blev det jo, det er stadigvæk en del penge, men det var ikke nok til at vi kunne klare de kvantiteter. Men siden da kom Kristian ind, han købte 20% af virksomheden, fordi der var simpelthen brug for penge i forretningen, og så er vi blevet rigtig gode makkere og har også kigget på nogle andre forretninger sammen. Så har vi nu også kigget på produktionen, hvor vi nu producere i Italien, så vi har nogle kvantiteter som er meget mere overskuelige. Nu skal vi kun producere 100 stk. tøj pr. gang, hvor før det var 2500 stk. Så kan vi nemlig også være mere fleksibel med vores kollektioner, komme med flere farver og så videre.

*TOBIAS: Hvad har ham Kristian af baggrund?*

SØREN: Han er iværksætter med stort I, hvor han stiftede sin første virksomhed som 18 årige, og har gjort det siden. Men han er 35 i dag, så hygger vi os, men vi tjener ingen penge endnu, men det er altid en fornøjelse at komme på kontoret om morgenen.

*TOBIAS: Hvad har han lavet af iværksætteri inden?*

SØREN: Jamen, han har f.eks. noget der hedder Funballs, som er nogle oppustelige kugler man kan hoppe ind i og gå på vand. Der er også det der hedder Bumble, som er en helkugle, som er så stor som en halv krop, hvor man kan spille fodbold i.

*TOBIAS: Er det noget han sælger herhjemme, eller er det også internationalt?*

SØREN: Han har det i hele verden.

*TOBIAS: Hvornår bliver han en del af Fantini?*

SØREN: Det var i år, i januar, der skete rigtig meget i år. Vi fik også kigget på hvem vi er, og hvad vi vil. Fordi, det er også det med fokus, som var en fejl jeg lavede, og blev ved med at lave, fordi jeg tænkte at det kunne ikke være rigtigt, men det er det. Fordi vi har så mange muligheder med vores produkt, at vi kan lave alt slags tøj, vi kan lave suits, vi kan lave bukser, polo som vi laver, skjorter osv. Men, så har vi ingen identitet og heller ikke noget fokus. Det tror jeg er vigtigt at fokusere på et område, og så må vi se i fremtiden hvad det er. Men nu har vi lagt fokus på polo’er, på at lave verdens bedste polo, og så har vi lidt accessories ved siden af. Men det er mere livsstilen med at lave hverdagen uden bekymring, hvor man ikke skal tænke på at blive snavset eller våd hele tiden.

SØREN: Vi kører sådan en ny kampagne der hedder ’Life Happens’, fordi nemlig, når man spilder et glas rødvin på sig selv, eller i byen spilder en drink, så er det bare sådan ’nå, nu skal jeg hjem’, det er ikke så fedt. Der var engang to der begyndte at slås ude i byen, fordi den ene havde skubbet den andens arm, så han fik sin drink på sig selv. Så gik jeg bare hen til dem med nogle visitkort.

*TOBIAS: Hvor kommer den der med at i har lyst til at lave produkter der er anderledes, har i selv fundet på det?*

SØREN: Ja, altså det var en ide jeg fik. Fordi jeg spiller golf, jeg er sejler og har sejlet til DM. Jamen, jeg elsker at lave mad, jeg drikker en helvedes masse vin, måske for meget engang imellem, men så spilder jeg også rigtig meget på mig selv. Og så har jeg bare altid haft den der interesse for tøj og kvalitet, og jeg syntes ikke jeg kunne finde noget ude i verden der kunne passe. Hvor man både havde noget tøj der så godt ud, men også havde en funktionalitet, hvor man bare ikke skulle tænke på det. Hvor man hele tiden er on the go. Om dagen er man på kontor, om aftenen er man ude og drikke med vennerne og lave mad, der var også en gang jeg byggede min egen motorcykel. Hvorfor skulle jeg skifte tøj til det? Det var bare, jeg bliver i det samme tøj hele dagen, og så tager vi det af om aftenen, i stedet for at bruge tid på det, og det var der det hele startede. Fordi, der var nogle flere der syntes hvordan jeg gider gøre det, ’jeg skifter jo bare tøj’. Jamen, det er jo pisse irriterende. Men der var nogle der kunne forstå det, og så begyndte jeg bare derfra.

*LARS: Hvornår var det at du begyndte?*

SØREN: Faktisk, kom jeg forbi teknologien, fordi den har vi ikke selv fundet på. Vi samarbejder med nogen, men jeg kom forbi teknologien på min Facebook-wall. Hvor jeg tænkte det er det vi skal have. Det er en teknologi, som er blevet anvendt i køkkenverdenen. Hvor det var nogle kokke der brugte det til deres køkkentøj, så har min mor arbejdet for RMS, og har også arbejdet indenfor Hugo Boss og nogle forskellige, indenfor tøj også. Nok også der interessen kommer fra, men så fik jeg designere fra RMS, Chanel og Dior til at kigge på det. Jamen, så lavede vi verdens bedste tøj.

*LARS: Nu nævner du den her teknologi, hvornår er det at du støder på den, og hvordan indledes processen?*

SØREN: Det var i september / oktober 2014, hvor jeg begyndte at lave lidt markedsundersøgelse, om der var andre der lavede det. Også hvordan jeg kunne få det til at fungere, så fik jeg nogle møder med de forskellige virksomheder, der laver noget lignende teknologi, og nu er jeg selv opvokset i Schweiz, så der var en i Schweiz som jeg kørte hen til, og et møde der skulle vare en time blev til 3,5 og så fik vi underskrevet en kontrakt, der. Hvor vi så kan benytte os af deres teknologi.

SØREN: Det har så været en lang start derefter, selvfølgelig skulle vi udvikle kollektion og alt det, det er rimelig svært hele tiden at være klar til den nye sæson, og hvornår starter sæsonen. Den starter faktisk et halvt år før sæsonen er startet, så måtte vi vente til næste år. Så har det også været det der med, jamen vi kan det hele, vi skal have to kollektioner om året. Men, jeg tænkte ikke rigtig på hvor fanden pengene skal komme fra. Så lige nu laver vi 1 kollektion om året. Vi laver sommer kollektion, og så har vi fundet ud af at vi kan sælge tøj hele året rundt, fordi i vores sommer er det selvfølgelig sommer. I vores vinter er det sommer i Caribien, og det er sommer i Australien osv. så kan man sælge det der. Så det er også det vi fokusere på, så vi har 1 kollektion, vi har verdens bedste polo, siger vi selv. Så sælger vi det bare derud af, og prøver at lave nogle aftaler, nogle co-laps, med nogle forskellige virksomheder.

*LARS: Så teknologien får du indblik i i 2014, det er så også her du finder producent, men er selv den der finder producent osv.?*

SØREN: Ja, jeg tog selv fat i det hele, det var lidt et one man show, hvor jeg trak i nogle bekendtskaber. Det der er meget vigtigt i iværksætteri, det er jo kontakter. Sådan at man, når man er alene, kan trække dem ind, og få hjælp til at designe det tøj, og så det med produktionen, ’hvad har du af erfaring’, og så benytte det. Nogle gange har jeg benyttet nogle som ikke var de rigtige mennesker, og nogle gange har det bare hjulpet pisse meget. Men man skal prøve sig af i hvert fald.

*TOBIAS: Så der ligger lidt lærepenge i det?*

SØREN: Ja, eller mange. Jeg er en meget fattig mand.

*LARS: Hvor lang var processen fra du begyndte med ideen, til du satte en produktion i gang i Kina?*

SØREN: Der gik et år cirka. Jamen, lige for at få det hele til at falde på plads, og snakke med banken også. Og få dem til at forstå ideen med det, fordi man får en helvedes masse nej også, også når man prøver at finde kunder. Retailers osv. så får man også en masse nej, når man ikke er mere kendt end vi er. Så den proces den har været at hele tiden prøve at finde en ny producent, nogle der kan gøre det mere effektivt og så videre. Hvor måske i starten, så skulle vi have haft nogle der kunne gøre det, i stedet for at kigge på effektivitet, kigge på at komme ud med produktet og få det testet osv. Altså, teknologien var blevet testet, men målene var ikke blevet testet, og så havde vi heller ikke snakket med så mange mennesker. Der var selvfølgelig en masse mennesker, der havde sagt til mig, at det lyder som en rigtig god ide osv., det kunne de godt bruge. Men, var der nok af det. Så fandt jeg ud af faktisk, at der var ikke så mange der forstod teknologien. Og det er rigtig svært at komme ud med så stort et budskab. Også fordi, folk hører ikke så meget efter, altså du har 10 sekunder, hvis man er heldig. Og det er lidt svært at få det hele igennem på 10 sekunder. Der er meget med branding, indenfor tøj, med de priser især. For vi bruger en kvalitet nu, som sagt, det er made in Italy, og vi bruger også noget organisk bomuld. Så vi tikker sådan set alle bokse. Men hvordan får folk det at vide, er det igennem sociale medier, og hvor mange penge skal man bruge på det. Det er nogle tanker jeg ikke havde gjort i starten. For jeg tænkte at det er umuligt at folk ikke kan se, at de har brug for det her, men det kan de ikke.

SØREN: Det er måske lidt hårdt at sige, men man skal tænke på at mennesker er skide dumme, og så skal man gøre det så simpelt som muligt, så man virkelig får budskabet ud. Det er i hvert fald en erfaring jeg har taget med mig.

*TOBIAS: Hvad endte du så med at gøre, bruger du meget sociale medier i dag?*

SØREN: Ja, rimelig meget. Især sådan noget Instagram, hvor vi nu får omkring 100 følgere om ugen. Det er jo en god ting, men det har taget lang tid. Mere eller mindre hele 2016 havde vi de samme følgere, det samme antal. Så her i januar har vi fået nogle nye nogle, til at kigge på det, og nu har vi tredoblet af hvad vi havde den gang, og nu går det bare stærkt. Af den grund, har vi ikke været rigtig gode til at bruge det som salgskanal, men bare sådan for at blive hørt, for at få brandet ud. Så er jeg også blevet kontaktet af sådan nogle som Monaco Yacht Club, som gerne vil have tøjet nu. I morges snakkede jeg også med nogle fra Rungsted Golfklub, som også var interesseret. Så er der også det i Caribien i Saint Bath Yacht Club, der også er interesseret. I morgen skal jeg til London fordi der på onsdag er et event, hvor jeg skal være vært to 250 mennesker. Så folk har hørt om os, og så bliver vi mere og mere kendt. Det er den vej, vi bliver nød til at gøre tingene på.

*TOBIAS: Var det ansættelser af nye medarbejdere der gjorde i ligesom fik sparket gang i internet kampagnerne?*   
  
SØREN: Ikke helt ansættelser faktisk, det var praktikanter. Nogle er dygtigere end andre. Vi var blevet bedre til at strukturere, jeg var også blevet bedre til at strukturere min tid. Hele sidste år skulle jeg lige lære hvordan man egentlig leder. Så det er også det man skal lære ud over det andet, fordi man kommer jo så grøn som man kan være. Og så skal man som 25 årige have 3-4 medarbejdere, der bruger sin tid på det uden at få løn. Så det er også sådan ’hvordan beholder jeg deres drive og det hele’, og sidste år der var der ingenting der virkede. Det var sådan lidt Death Valley for mig, alle de aftaler vi havde fået kontakt til og det hele, det skete bare ikke rigtig. Der var en investor også, som trak sig i sidste øjeblik. I mit personlige liv, der var min kæreste gået, hun kunne ikke holde til jeg var på kontoret hele tiden. Så alt gik ikke for mig. Men det er jo det med Death Valley, som man kalder det indenfor entreprenørskab, og så kommer man op igen.

*TOBIAS: Så du er ikke bange for at tage risiko?*

SØREN: Altså man er selvfølgelig bange for det, men hvis man kan se lys på den anden ende af tunellen, så er det bare det. Ellers er jeg naiv, det kan godt være.

*LARS: Kan man sige teknologien har haft rigtig stor betydning for det overhovedet har kunne lade sig gøre?*

SØREN: Det var vores USP, hvor det var lidt mere end bare tøj. Så er det også alt det med den historie, og den personlige historie jeg havde med at jeg ikke kunne finde noget tøj. Det var faktisk det der gjorde at vi havde en grund til at eksistere. Derfor skulle vi bare skubbe det ud.

*LARS: Nu nævner du Yacht Clubs og Golf, er det som retailer eller til medlemmerne, og er det igennem dine egne kontakter du har fået kontakt til dem?*

SØREN: Det er igennem nogle af mine kontakter, og det er både retailers og til medlemmer. Faktisk ved Monaco Yacht Club, der havde jeg to eller tre, der havde kontakt til Yacht Klubben. De var uafhængige de tre, så fik jeg dem til at gå hen til Monaco Yacht Club, og spørge til vores tøj. Sådan ’nå, men har i ikke det?’ og ’det er sgu da pisse fedt’ osv., så havde jeg bare skubbet til dem. Til sidst så var det bare sådan, efter tredje gang, så tænkte de nok ’jamen, hvem fanden er de egentlig?’. Altså, hvis der er tre der har kontaktet os og spurgt os på en måned om vi ikke har dem, hvorfor har vi så ikke. Så blev jeg kontaktet af dem, og nu venter jeg så, de er i gang med at se nogle kollektioner lige nu, fordi så laver vi en speciel kollektion, kun til dem, fordi de ikke vil have noget som andre borgerlige kan have adgang til. Så vi laver en speciel kollektion til dem, altså vi har vores egen designer nu, så nu arbejder vi ikke så meget med de modebrands, det var mere til at kickstarte det, men hun er rigtig dygtig. Så har vi den mulighed at lave en skræddersyet kollektion, til de Yacht Clubs, så det skubber også vores produkter. I starten er det ikke så meget for at tjene penge, men det er mest for at få brandet ud, og navn osv. Fordi, så bliver tøjet set i den rigtige kontekst, og så kan vi reklamere for at være officiel sponsor til Monaco Yacht Club, fordi der kun er Mads og Brooks Brothers, der har fået lov til det indtil videre. Så det er rimelig stort for os små folk. Det er jo dejligt.

*TOBIAS: Det skal ligesom være med til at kickstarte salget endnu mere?*

SØREN: Lige præcis. Jamen altså fordi, der er mange der syntes vores tøj er dyrt. Det er meget sjovt fordi i Schweiz, der syntes de det er for billigt. I Danmark, der syntes de det er for dyrt. Den forståelse for kvalitet, har vi ikke mødt så meget i Danmark. Mange af dem man møder, der er toppen af kvalitet Ralph Lauren, hvor vi personligt ikke syntes det er en skid værd. Det er branding, det har de så været fantastiske til, det skal de så selvfølgelig have. Men så har vi fundet ud af igennem nogle af vores producenter, selvfølgelig lidt off the record, men at der hvor de laver Ralph Lauren poloer, inden de får logo på, er der en procentdel der går til sådan noget som SELECTED og så får de bare deres logo. De bliver solgt til 200 til 300 kr., for præcis den samme polo. Så er det også bare sådan lidt, nå jamen så er det en polo til 200 til 300 kr. i stedet for, hvor vores konkurrenter, der bruger samme kvalitet som os. De sælger deres poloer fra 1500 kr. til 3600 kr. Jeg har set poloer til 28000 kr. stk. så der er meget langt derefter igen.

*TOBIAS: Hvad ligger i på prismæssigt?*

SØREN: En ganske almindelig kortærmet polo ligger på 900 kr. Altså, vi er lidt op ad Ralph Lauren priserne, men vi har ikke noget branding endnu.

*LARS: Nu nævner du Kickstarter, var det det første?*

SØREN: Det var en måde for at få det første salg, få proof of concept, proof of business, sådan hele linjen. Bagefter så troede jeg det vil være lidt nemmere, det var det selvfølgelig også, men ikke så meget som jeg troede. Når jeg kom ud i forretningen for at sige ’vi nåede mere end vores mål’, at folk gerne vil have det her. Men det var åbenbart ikke nok til de fleste af dem, fordi de er meget påpasselige med hvem de tager ind. Det er også en hård branche for retailers. Men, jo, det var det første salg og de første kunder, og de får nogle ekstra rabatkoder, især her i starten, så de kan få købt nogle flere produkter osv. Så kan vi også spørge dem, det er vores første database kan man sige, hvor vi kan hører dem, hvad de syntes om tøjet. Hvor har vi fucket op henne, og så må man være ærlig, når man har en kickstarter, så ved de man er ny og grøn. Så føler de faktisk også at de er en del af det, når man spørger dem, ’nå men hvad syntes i?’, og så føler de at de er en del af brandet. Faktisk har det giver en god bagdel, om at de snakker til deres venner om at de hjælper til, og så er der nye kunder der kommer ind.

*LARS: Hvornår kørte i den kampagne?*

SØREN: Det var i november/december 2015, så for halvandet år siden.

*TOBIAS: Hvad var beslutningen bag at starte en Kickstarter?*

SØREN: For at få nogle pre-orders, fordi vi havde de store minimums kvantiteter som vi skulle bestille. Så vi kunne ikke bare sælge 10 stk. her og 10 stk. der. Fordi, så vil der ikke være nok, og det kunne være vi skulle vente 1 år, måske 2 år, før vi vil have nok. Jamen så var det også det at få brand navnet ud, folk hører om det, og få de første kunder. Der er den der regel der hedder 80/20, hvor man skal sørge for 20% af kunderne er de bedste, som faktisk sørger for 80% af omsætningen. Så kunne man have dem til at starte med, og så kunne de begynde at snakke med deres venner om det, og så videre. Så løb vi til gengæld i nogle problemer, med at blive forsinket, men det er så det de også skriver sig på med Kickstarter. Ved nogle andre har jeg hørt at de ikke har fået produkter osv. så jeg skubber i hvert fald til de får produkterne, det er meget vigtigt, især når virksomheden har mit efternavn på jo.

*LARS: Var det spredt over hele verden så?*

SØREN: Ja, det blev spredt på alle kontinenter på den måned der, så det var rimelig godt. Det var så med poloer, og faktisk i næste uge, der laver vi en Indiegogo kampagne, med bukser, shorts og nederdel. Fordi, vi har faktisk haft dem i det sidste års tid, men vi får ikke rigtig noget salg i det. Så spørger vi mennesker, ’hvorfor køber i det ikke?’, ’nå, har i sådan nogle, jeg troede kun i lavede poloer’. Det er jo så også vores hoved produkt, så vi prøver, vi har filmet nogle nye videoer med fokus på underdelene, så håber vi på at få noget salg i det. Vi har produkterne, så der er leveringsgaranti på det. Nu er det faktisk bare et salgstrick på nuværende tidspunkt, både så vi kommer ud, men også så vi får nogle penge i kassen. Jeg ved ikke om det bliver på Kickstarter på denne omgang, vi kører i hvert fald på Indiegogo, fordi på Kickstarter står vores priser i danske kroner, og så kan det se lidt stort ud, hvis man er fra USA og gerne vil købe noget. Hvorimod med Indiegogo, der er alle priser i dollars, og så har vi faktisk set at de fleste får mere på Indiegogo, med samme produkt. Så nu er det bare for at teste det, og så må vi se om det bringer noget. Vi vil kun ligge vores mål på 10000 dollars, eller kun og kun, det er selvfølgelig penge. Men der hvor vi står, så er det selvfølgelig også en del gode penge at have, til at fyrer det af i hverdagen.

SØREN: Nu er vi i gang med at snakke med et agentur i England, til netop at skubbe produktet ud i England. De har også selv taget kontakt til os, så det er jo dejligt.

*TOBIAS: Målet er så at komme ud i butikker rundt omkring, og ikke kun have online salg?*

SØREN: Ja, vores online salg det er ikke, altså det kører, men det er ikke fantastisk. Vi tænker på det kan være noget marketing osv., men vi er kommet til den konklusion at det er fordi folk ikke kender produktet. Derfor er de lidt bange for at købe det, fordi de ikke kender til størrelserne, og så er der teknologien og alt det. Så de tænker ’så skal jeg bruge de penge, på et mærke jeg ikke kender’, så det er sådan lidt, hvad skal man gøre. Men derfor vil vi så komme ud til næste år, kommer ud i nogle forretninger, og så komme ud i Yacht klubber også, der er et stort fokus vi satser på. Så folk hører om os, og så kommer tilbage på webshoppen.

*LARS: Nu snakker vi om webshoppen, den er på engelsk, har den altid været det og hvornår blev den etableret?*

SØREN: Det har altid været en engelsk webshop. Den blev etableret i februar 2016. Det kan jeg huske, fordi vi havde vores første modeshow i Skotland ved St. Andrews, lige udenfor golfbanen, hvor vi blev inviteret. Der kom 1000 mennesker til det, jeg kendte en fra bestyrelsen derfra, som sagde vi skulle da være med. Så der var vi med, jeg kom bare med noget tøj og drak en masse Champagne, som jeg er pisse god til, det er en af mine kernekompetencer. Så der fik jeg præsenteret tøjet efter vi havde lavet Kickstarter kampagnen, men desværre har det ikke virket så godt fordi vi var forsinket med produktionen og alt det. Men jo, så var der 1000 mennesker der havde hørt om det i hvert fald.

*LARS: Hvad så med webshoppen nu, hvor meget salg er til Danmark og Internationalt?*

SØREN: Det er internationale kunder, der er selvfølgelig også en del i Danmark, men det er faktisk mere venner og familie i Danmark. Altså der er også nogle vi ikke kender i Danmark, men ikke det helt store. Salget på hjemmesiden er heller ikke helt fantastisk, det er meget op og ned, også i forhold til når vi laver events osv.

*LARS: Men kan du inddele det og sige hvor stor andel der går til udlandet?*

SØREN: Jeg har noget, hvor Kickstarter også er med, det har jeg regnet ud, hvor jeg også tog kampagnen med. Der var faktisk mindre end 10% fra Danmark, der var rigtig mange fra Schweiz.

*TOBIAS: Har det været vigtigt at det ikke bare var Danske kunder?*

SØREN: Ja, det har det faktisk, også fordi forståelsen fra kunderne, og hvor mange penge man er villig til at give for det og så videre. Jeg havde læst om Range, som prøvede at starte i Danmark, hvor der ikke var nogle der vil købe deres tøj, så tog de til Holland og det blev et hit der. Året efter kom de til Danmark, og selvfølgelig vil de have det, fordi andre vil have det. Men åbenbart indenfor modebranchen, så er danskerne ikke de første der træder til, de er mere fåret i stedet for ulven. Det er også derfor i forhold til de priser og den kvalitet vi har, at der er bedre forståelse i udlandet. Faktisk i Schweiz, hvor vi solgte poloer til 1400 kr. stk. og de solgte godt.

*TOBIAS: Hvad så fremadrettet, hvad er målet med alt det internationale?*

SØREN: Jamen i første omgang så vil det være en god ting at komme ud i hele Europa, og det kommer til at tage nogle år. Når jeg siger hele Europa, så er det nok ikke det hele, men de største lande. Hele Skandinavien, Frankrig, Schweiz, Tyskland, England, Spanien, Italien, Belgien, Luxemburg og Holland. Men ikke så meget mere øst på end det. Så vil vi så fokusere, om det bliver Asien eller USA, det må vi så se, der er nogle forskellige der har kontaktet os fra USA, der kunne være interesseret, men der har ikke været nogle konkrete aftaler endnu med det. Men så tror jeg også vi skal have agentur til at sørge for det i første omgang, det tror jeg ikke vi ivl have kompetencer til, at sørge for så stort et land, når vi ikke kender til det osv. så kan det risikere i at vi mister vores første skud, fordi vi ikke har været gode nok til det. Derfor er det måske bedre at få et agentur på, der kender til markedet og har nogle kontakter dertil. Selvfølgelig tjener vi ikke så meget på det, men måske kommer vi ud til 10 gange så mange mennesker, og så tjener vi faktisk mere af den grund, selvom vi ikke tjener så meget pr. stk. Det er faktisk en fejl jeg også har lavet med tiden, at man tænker for meget på ’nå men det er mine penge, vi skal tjene så meget som muligt på det’, hvorimod de penge man får tilbage, hvis man giver nogle samarbejdspartnere lidt mere, så er de også villige til at arbejde lidt mere for det. Så kommer kunderne tilbage.

*LARS: På hjemmesiden står i er Bluesign certificeret?*

SØREN: Ja, det er noget med produktionen, der selvfølgelig har meget med miljø at gøre. Bomuld forurener rigtig meget, fordi man bruger en helvedes masse vand til det. Men når man er Bluesign approved, så betyder det faktisk at vi bruget 1/6 af hvad man ellers bruger. Det er en rigtig stor besparelse for produktionen, men rigtig meget for miljøet.

*LARS: Er det din eller fabrikkens certificering?*

SØREN: Det er fabrikkens certificering.

*LARS: Hvornår flyttede i herover?*

SØREN: Det var i december 2014, hvor jeg startede i noget der hedder iværksætter piloten, i fem uger. Så skulle man mødes en gang om ugen under opstarten. Hvor jeg blev optaget her i marts 2015, frem til nu.

*LARS: Hvornår får du de første ansatte?*

SØREN: Det regner vi med her i september, det kommer an på hvordan sommeren kommer til at gå. Om vi får aftaler med Yacht Clubs som vi ser på. Der er mange if’s i alt det. Vi skal have nogle få ansatte, men det er også dejligt at se der er så mange der gerne vil arbejde med os, bare fordi de syntes det er et fedt produkt, så det vil vi udnytte så meget vi kan. Selv Jobcenter kontakter os, om vi ikke vil tage nogle af deres, fordi alle dem der har arbejdet hos os i praktik, efter 3 måneder så har de fundet et betalende arbejde. 100% af dem. Selv Jobcenter har aldrig set lignende statistikker.

*LARS: Hvornår fik i den første praktikant?*

SØREN: Det var lige ingen Kickstarteren. Der var to der startede med marketing og for at få det hele til at køre der, og så kørte det meget 3 måneder ad gangen, hvor vi havde nogle der kom ind, og så blev udskiftet derefter.

*TOBIAS: Hvornår vendte det med Instagram?*

SØREN: I januar i år

*TOBIAS: Og kickstarter hvornår var det?*

SØREN: Et år før

*LARS: De her praktikanter, hvad har de betydet for jer i forretningens udvikling?*

SØREN: Jamen de har betydet rigtig meget for mig, også personligt. Som iværksætter har man jo alle kasketterne, som man skal tage på, og så tager det en masse vægt fra skuldrene. Selvfølgelig er der nogle der putter lidt ekstra vægt på skuldrene, end man havde tidligere, fordi nogle er bedre end andre og de er lidt mere selvstændige. Så det er selvfølgelig også vigtigt at have nogle gode nogle, til at kigge på det. Men ja, tidsbesparelse og marketing. Jeg er ikke god til sådan noget, eller det er ikke min kernekompetence, så hvis man kan have nogle som er rigtig gode til noget, så er det selvfølgelig et meget bedre job der bliver udført.

*LARS: I og med i startede op her i et Væksthus, har det så også haft betydning for dig og forretningen?*

SØREN: Det kommer an på hvornår, måske har jeg nogle gange ikke taget fuld brug af det. Nogle gange har jeg tænkt på om det passer hvad de siger. Jeg havde måske en forkert attitude omkring det. Sådan lidt ’jeg ved bedre’ agtigt. Det gjorde jeg så slet ikke, men sådan kan det gå. Men altså, både ja og nej, der var nogle der kom med nogle ideer som jeg er glad for vi ikke traf den beslutning. Nogle kom med ideen at skære helt ned på kvalitet og sælge til 400 kr., det vil jeg slet ikke være med til, det er ikke det brand vi vil lave. Det er kvalitetstøj, som jeg gerne vil lave først og fremmest. Det er også der hvor jeg fik ideen, så det syntes jeg ikke vi skulle ændre på. Jamen så var der nogle andre der sagde vi skulle gå hen til dem og dem, altså der er også mange muligheder der. Nogle gange er det godt at have nogle, jeg tror der vi fik det bedste spark var af dem der stiller de hårde spørgsmål, de spørgsmål der gør ondt. Hvor man tænker ’hvorfor ved jeg ikke det’, ’hvorfor har vi ikke tænkte på det’, og jeg følte mig en del dum, nogle gange. Men det giver jo god mening, hvor det var sådan, hvorfor jeg ikke havde tænkt på det før. Nogle gange så er det også for sent, fordi så har man brugt pengene på noget andet, det tager tid. For det meste positivt med at have nogle mennesker til at rådgive dig.

*LARS: Kan man sige uanset om det kunne bruges eller ej, så har det udfordret dig?*

SØREN: Lige præcis, altså hvad mig angår, så har det været noget af det bedste. Fordi, hvis der er noget hvor jeg føler at jeg ikke har lavet mit arbejde ordentligt, så begynder jeg at skubbe det hele ud, nu skal det bare være helt i orden.

*TOBIAS: Hvad skal der til for at nå jeres mål i hele Europa?*

SØREN: Det vil være at lave nogle Co-labs med golf klubber og yacht klubber. Så man får brand navnet ud. I dag fik jeg også en e-mail fra nogle i Sverige som vil lave en ny shop, og så kunne de godt tænke sig at have os med. Jamen, så har de hørt om os, fordi når man kommer ud med tøjer i nogle forretninger, så er det første de spørger om ikke hvor godt tøjer er eller hvor meget det koster, det er faktisk hvor man ellers bliver solgt. Hvis man kommer som helt ny og siger de er de første, der er så heldige, så vil de ikke være med. Fordi, de vil ikke være den hvide kanin der skal prøve det af.

*TOBIAS: Så den første aftale er vigtig?*

SØREN: Ja, det er også den sværeste.

*TOBIAS: Hvad var den første aftale med retailers?*

SØREN: Det var en webshop, som også sælger mere mindre kendt tøj her i Danmark. Men vi har ikke det store retail, faktisk i år har vi fokuseret på andre. Vi vil fokusere på brandet og vores co-labs, og så til næste år så håber jeg lidt at vi kan sige vi bliver solgt på Monaco Yacht Club, så tænker jeg de ikke kan sige nej, men jeg har taget fejl før.

*LARS: Så det første land der er i tankerne, er det så England?*

SØREN: Faktisk var det ikke helt planen, fordi vi vil fokusere på Frankrig først. Så Skandinavien efterfølgende. Men den aftale i England vi står overfor, det vil være sådan de vil sørge for det. Vi har ikke tid til at sørge for det, selvfølgelig skal de have noget tøj, så vi kommer også til at have travlt med det. Men til gengæld skal vi ikke gå hen og banke på døren til alle og enhver, de har allerede et netværk derude, der var snak om at komme ind i Harrots, så jeg håber den går igennem. Så kan vi fokusere på Frankrig og Skandinavien, mens de sælger os i England. Så har de selvfølgelig fået en større procentdel, jeg sagde til dem de skal tage noget mere ansvar for det, men så får de også større udbytte. Men de skal sørge for det, for vi har ikke tid til det. Vi har ikke underskrevet endnu, for det kommer også til at koste nogle penge, og det skal vi finde ud af om vi har råd til i det lange løb, fordi det kan hurtigt vende sig.

*TOBIAS: Hvorfor lige Frankrig så?*

SØREN: Jamen, det er faktisk mest Sydfrankrig, ved Middelhavet. Der var meget det med Monaco, og så stilen også, vi har jo stilen fra Rivieraen, hvor det passer rigtig godt både til kunderne og i farverne. Så der er sådan at udleve drømmen dernede, og så er der mange fra England og Tyskland der tager til Rivieraen for at komme på ferie, og så har de måske set Fantini, og så kommer de hjem og spørger i forretninger, og så ringer forretningerne til os.

*LARS: Hvad så med Skandinavien, hvorfor er det interessant?*

SØREN: Fordi det er vores hjemmemarked og det er tæt på. Finland måske ikke så meget interessant lige nu, men Sverige og Norge kunne være store potentialer, og jeg siger ikke vi skal være ud over det hele. Men bare nogle få steder, fordi der er meget vigtigt at komme ind de rigtige steder, så vi ikke er i alle og enhver forretning. Ligesom Ralph Lauren i Kaufmann, hvor der er to poloer for en pris. Vi vil ikke blive solgt på discount priser, fordi først og fremmest kommer vi med nogle kollektioner der bliver, og vi fokusere på poloen, som vi skal have i flere og flere farver. Men hvis de kommer på rabat, så tænker folk at de venter til den kommer på rabat, og så dræber man sig selv. Så jeg vil hellere købe produkterne tilbage, og sælge til nogle andre, nu vi har nogle farver som vi vil blive ved med at have. Det kan være der kommer enkelte farver, der kun er sæsonmæssigt, men det må vi se til den tid.

*LARS: Din partner hvilken rolle har han?*

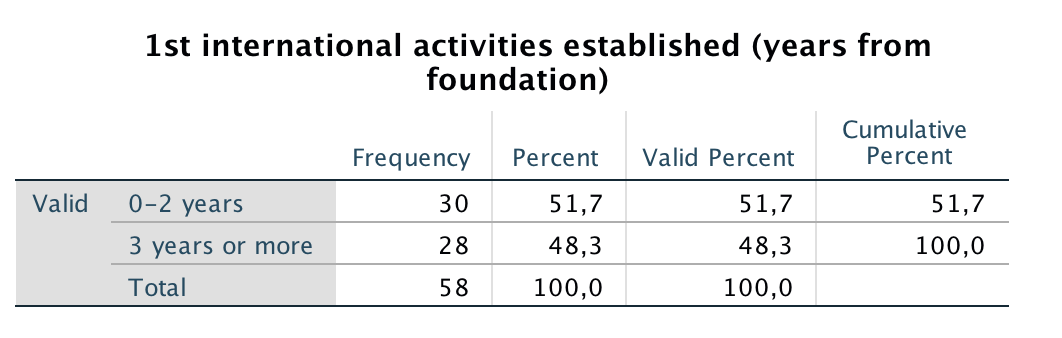
SØREN: Han er investor, han fokusere mere på de andre virksomheder som vi har sammen. Så jeg har tid til at fokusere på Fantini, og det gør jeg også. Han er til gengæld en god sparring at have. Det er altid godt at have en at snakke med om det.

*LARS: Hvad er det for nogle andre virksomheder du er med i?*

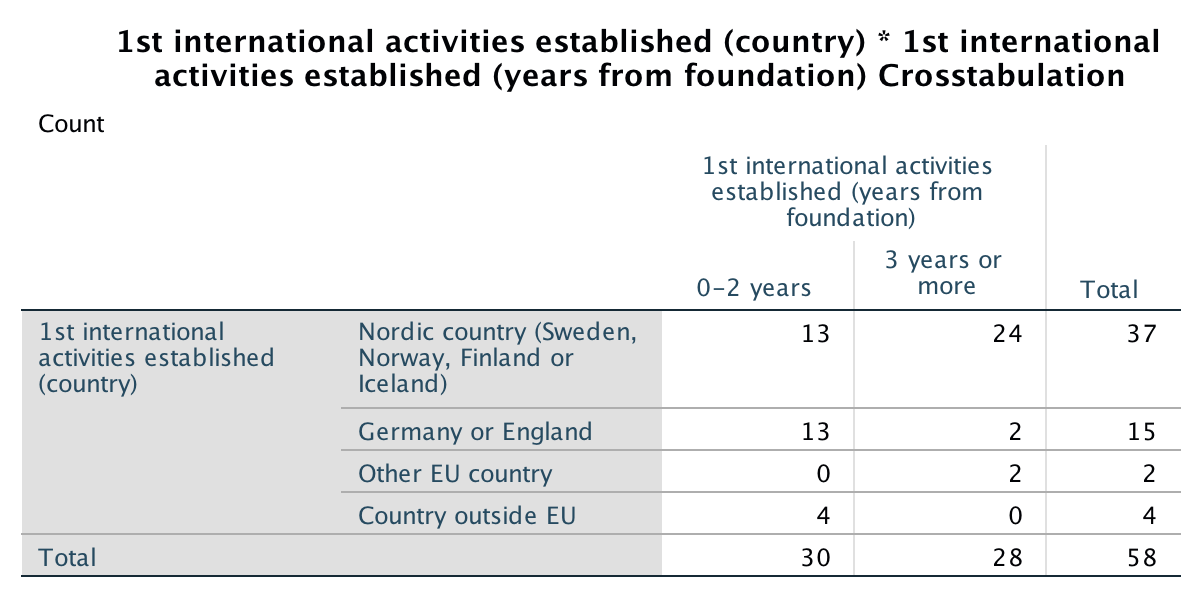
SØREN: Jeg har fire, der er jo Fantini, så er der noget der hedder Sleep Tight 24/7, som er et alternativ til nakkepuden, bare bedre for nakken, nem at transportere og billigere. Så har vi en import virksomhed, hvor vi importere og sælger nogle luftfiltre det virker med kold plasma, som udsletter 99,9% af alle bakterier. Den sidste har vi givet nogle procenter til en anden en, det er en webshop der sælger sexlegetøj, men jeg har ikke lavet det store i det.

## Appendix 12 – Descriptive frequencies

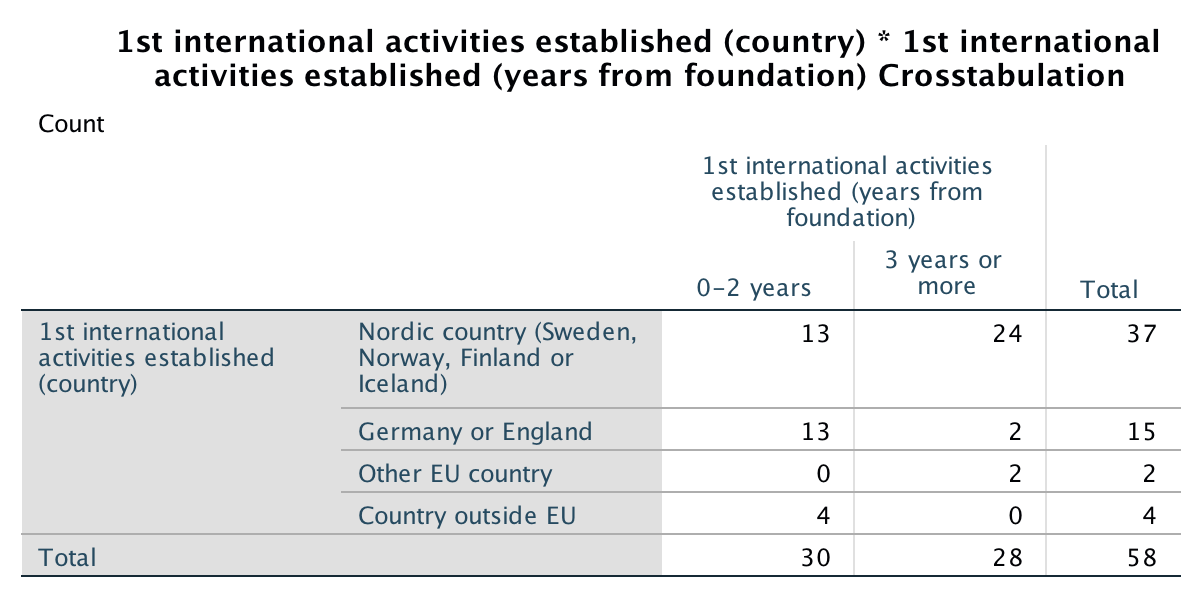
##### Time to first internationalization

****

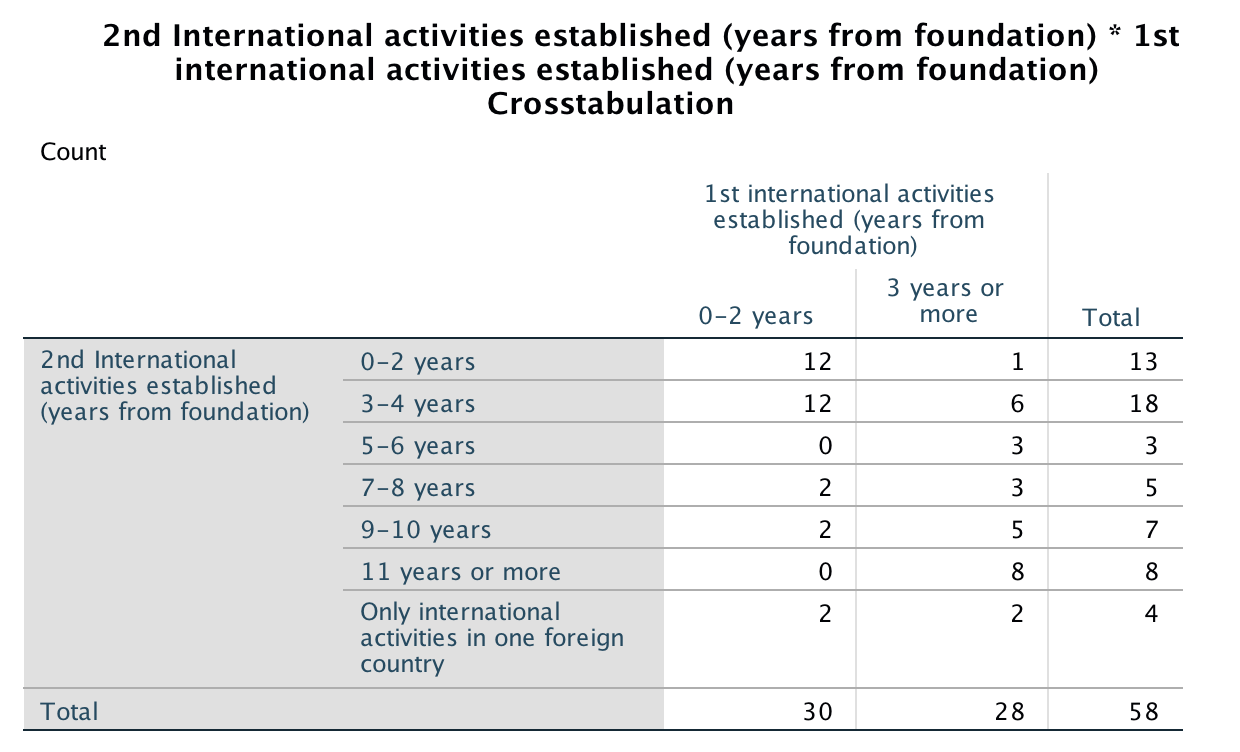
##### Age distribution among the groups

****

##### First international market

****

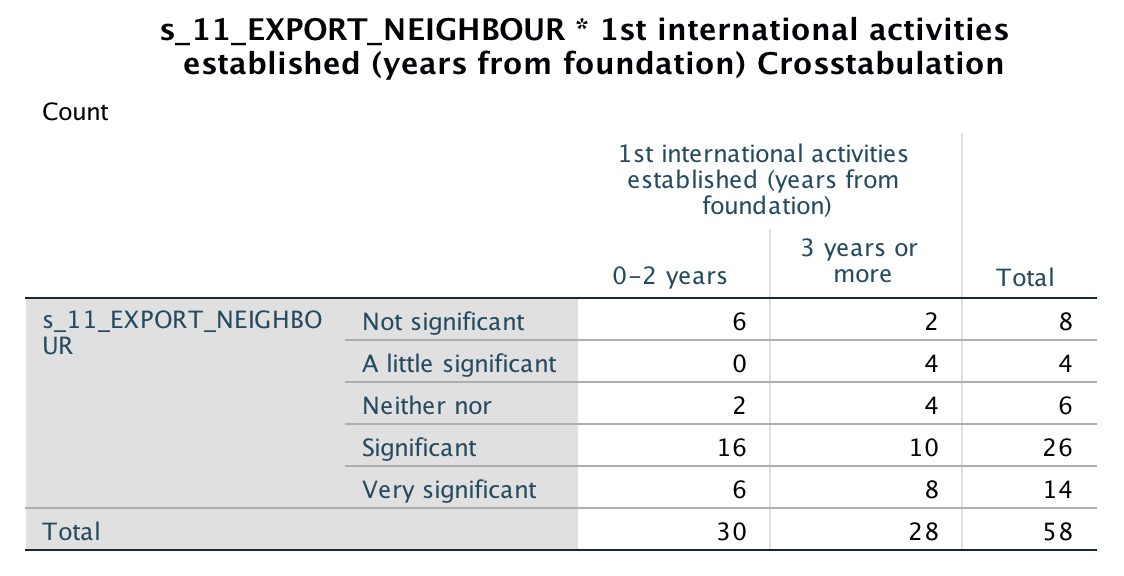
##### Time for second international market

****

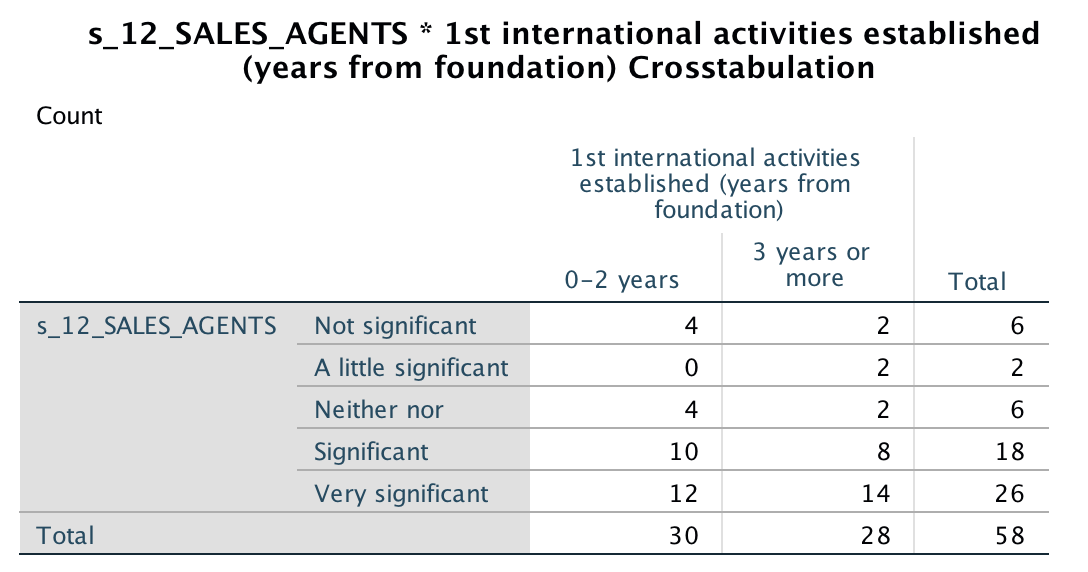
##### Choice of second international market

****

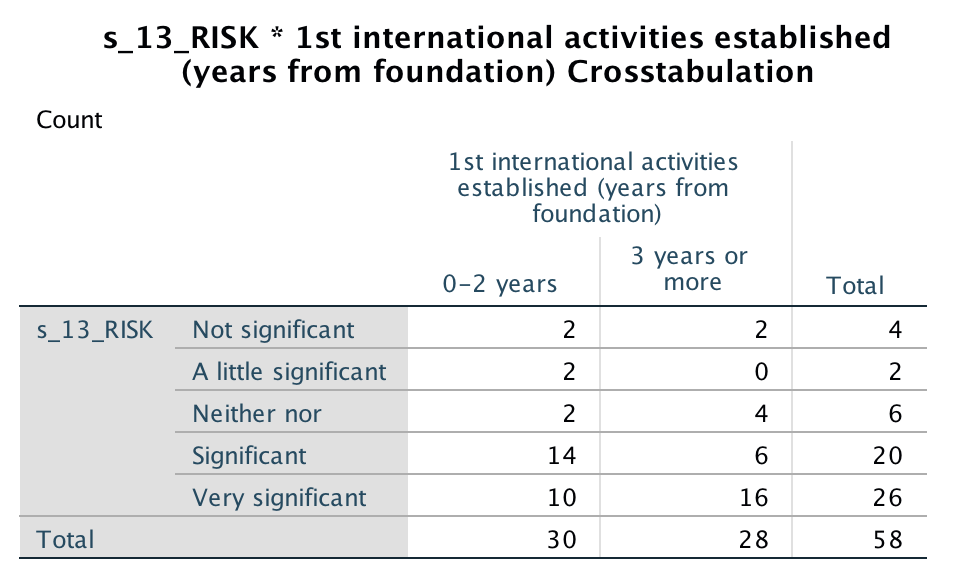
##### Crosstabulation between s\_11 and year of 1st international activity

****

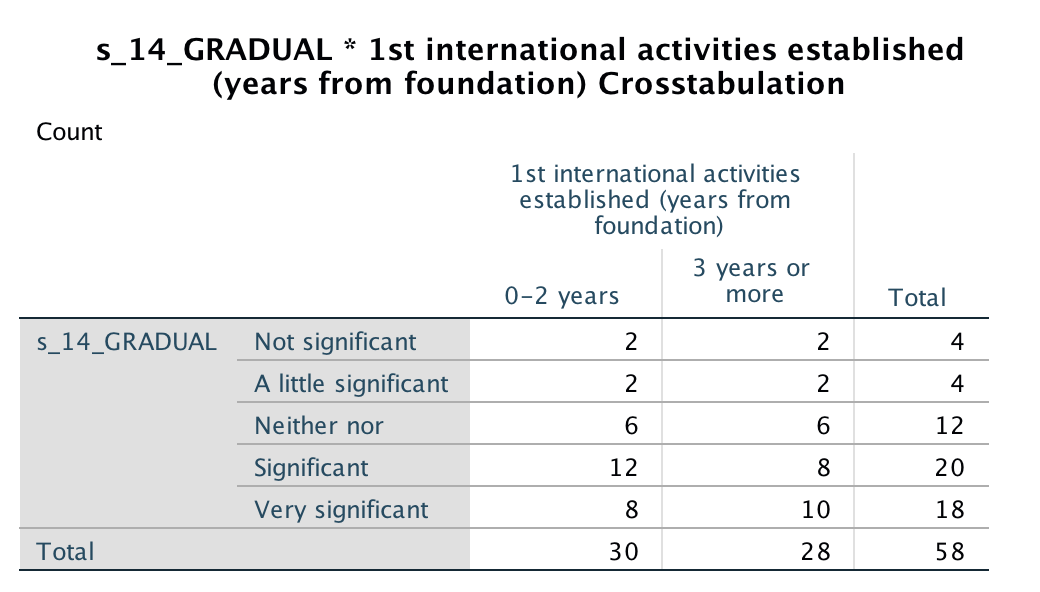
##### Crosstabulation between s\_12 and year of 1st international activity

****

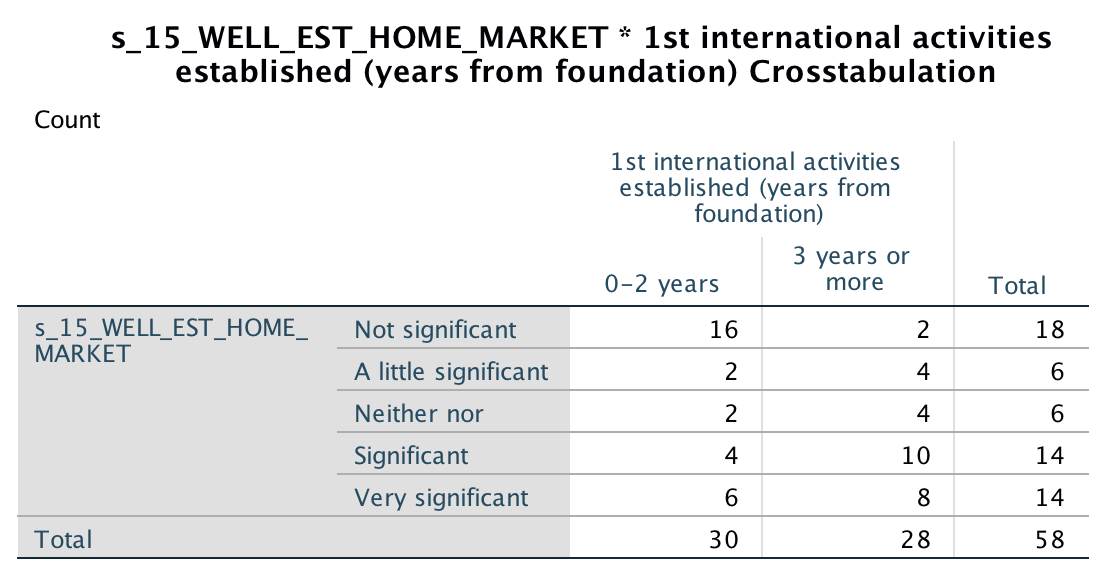
##### Crosstabulation between s\_13 and year of 1st international activity

****

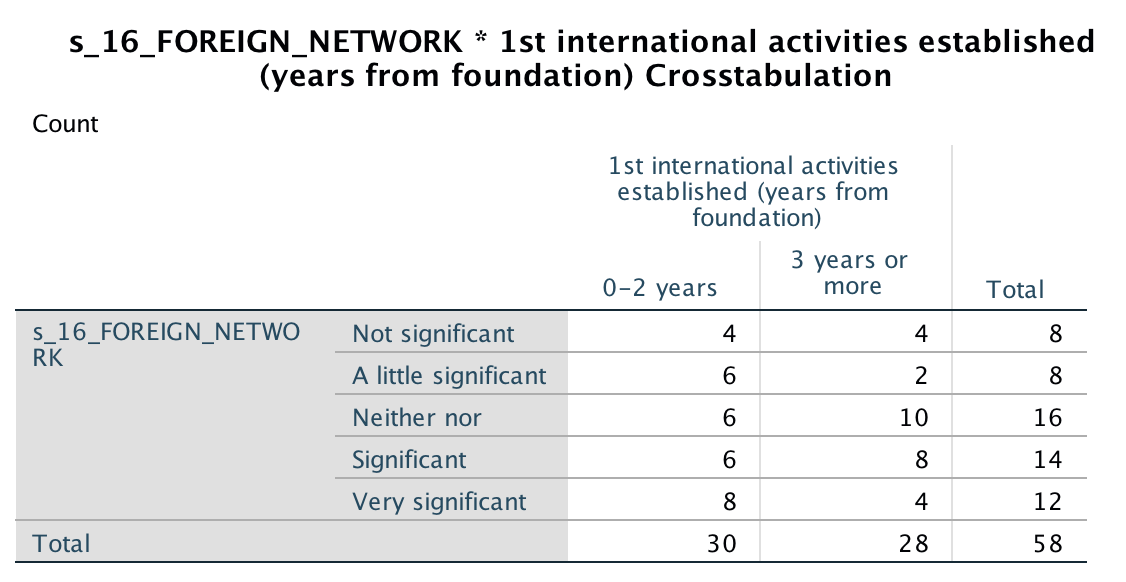
##### Crosstabulation between s\_14 and year of 1st international activity

****

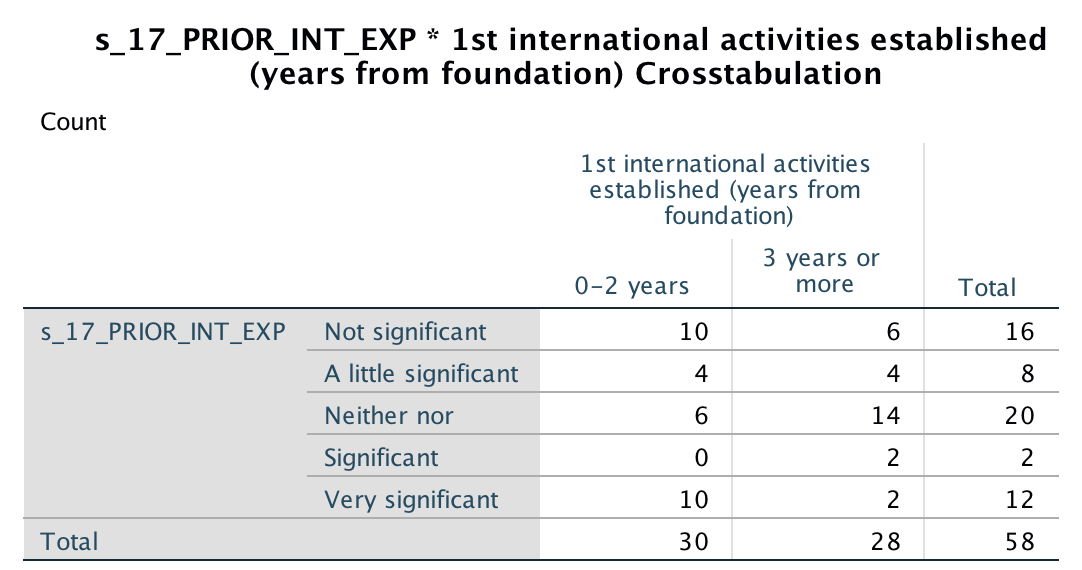
##### Crosstabulation between s\_15 and year of 1st international activity

****

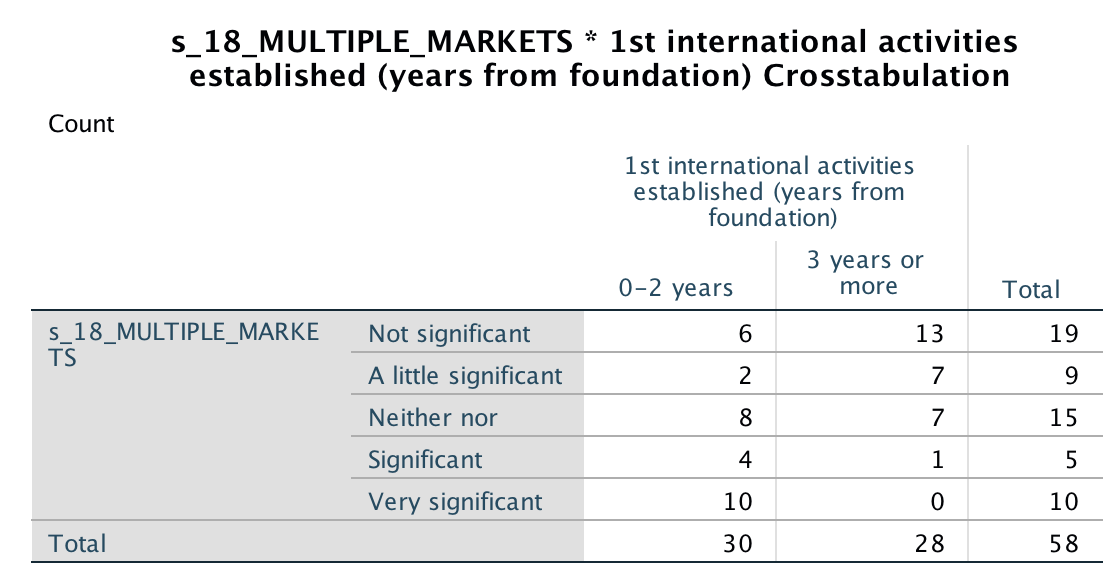
##### Crosstabulation between s\_16 and year of 1st international activity

****

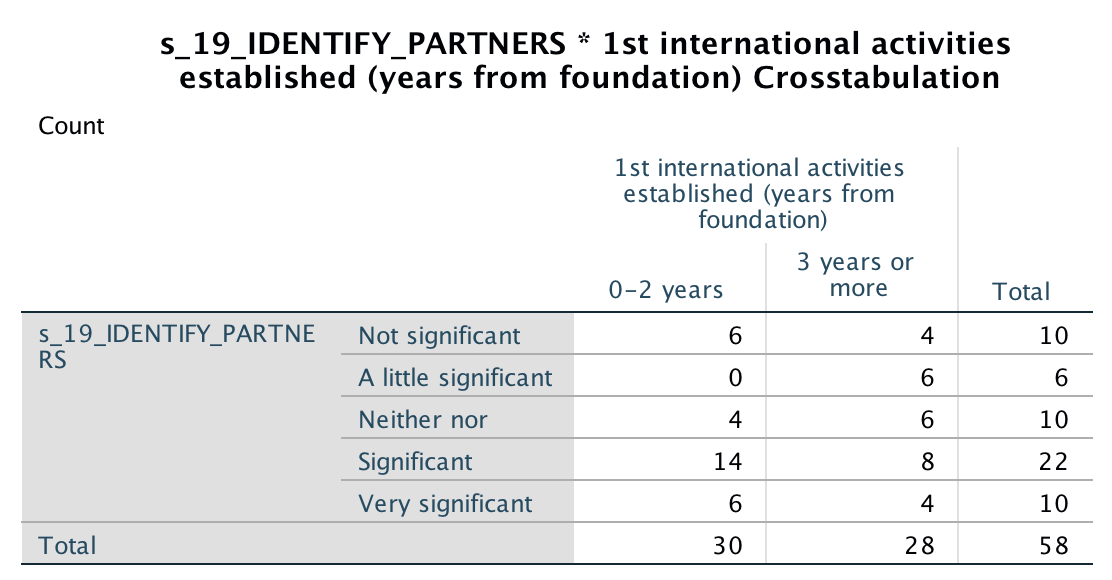
##### Crosstabulation between s\_17 and year of 1st international activity

****

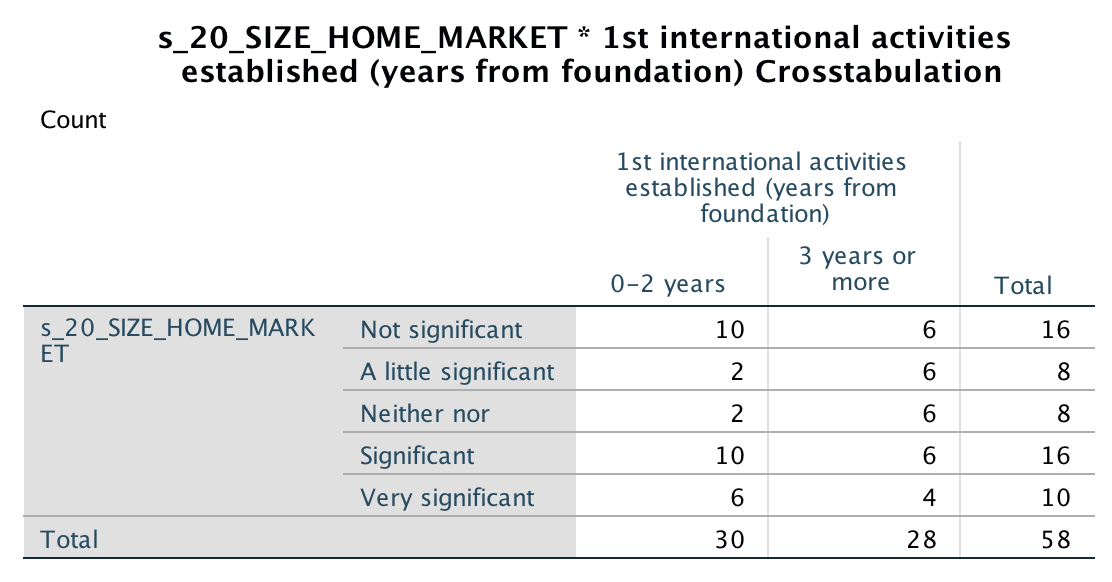
##### Crosstabulation between s\_18 and year of 1st international activity

****

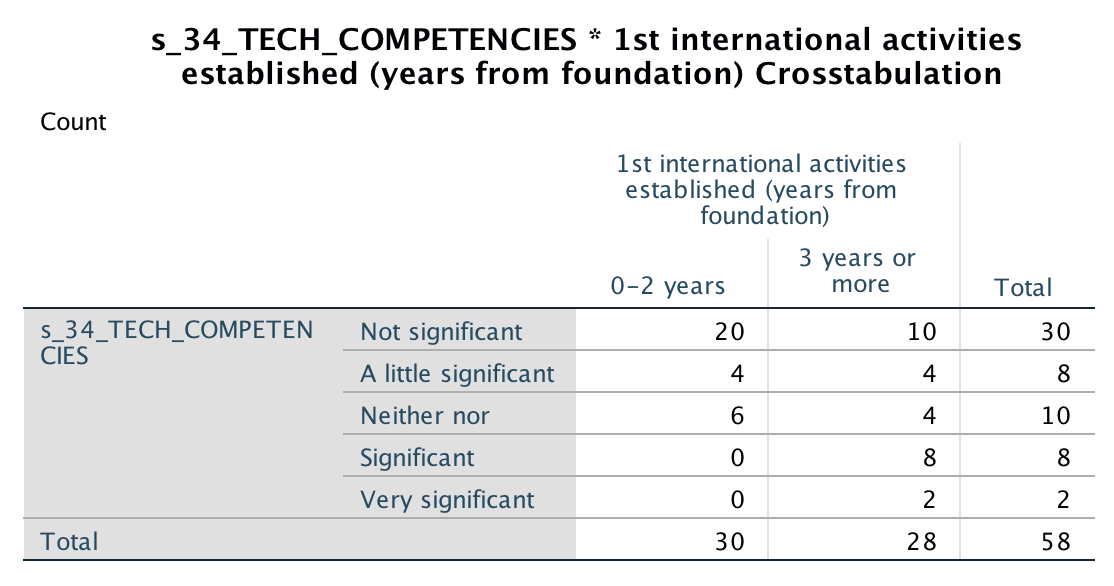
##### Crosstabulation between s\_19 and year of 1st international activity

****

##### Crosstabulation between s\_20 and year of 1st international activity

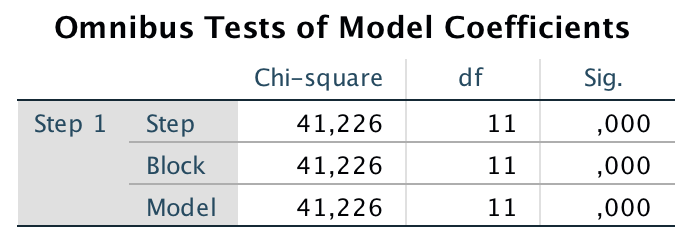
****

##### Crosstabulation between s\_34 and year of 1st international activity

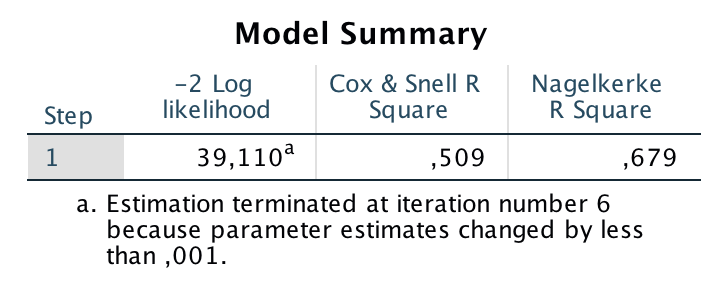
****

## Appendix 13 – Multiple logistic regression outputs

##### Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients



##### Model summary



##### Classification Tablea

