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BRANDING AT A CORPORATE MANAGEMENT LEVEL

Karin Tollin*

Abstract

According to the contemporary marketing literature, brand management (BM) is a process that top managers ought to be highly involved with. However, little is known about, the empirical meaning of the BM concept at this decision level. In the paper, this gap is addressed by findings from an explorative analysis of the issues, decisions and other management processes that top managers in the Scandinavian FMCG industry and business-to-business industry for food ingredients and seasonings are engaged with and relate to the task of managing a corporate brand and/or product brands. The analysis supports the view that BM is a top management task. Additionally, by giving rise to a typology of BM logics, the analysis shows that BM at a corporate management level is not a generic concept, although managing integration and knowledge represented two key dimensions of the concept. Furthermore, the analysis notifies the dominant logic concept with regard to BM and that product brand management (PBM) on a corporate level is approaching a strategic, visionary and multifunctional management process.

Key words: brand management, corporate management, strategy, management logics.

Introduction

At the end of the nineties, the dominating and traditional organizational form of marketing was questioned and it was proposed that brand management (BM) should be undertaken by "a residual of senior-level personnel" that will "increasingly work in cross-functional teams, organized around categories and/or processes" (Berthon et al., 1999, p. 60). Leading writers of BM textbooks came to agree with this view (see e.g. Kapferer (1997, 2001, 2004), Aaker and Joachimstahler (2000), Chernatony (2001), LePla and Parker (2002), Baskin and Earls (2002), Keller (2003) and Riezebos (2003)). These writers call for a manager that is "strategic and visionary, rather than tactical and reactive" (Aaker and Joachimstahler, 2000, p. 7). In the corporate brand management (CBM) literature, the above aspect, among others, is discussed in relation to what characterizes CBM, or what distinguishes it from product brand management (PBM). Balmer and Gray's (2003) discussion of CBM centres round this topic. One of their points is that "corporate brands are fundamentally different from product brands in terms of disciplinary scope and management" (Op. cit., p. 976). The inspiration for the paper is to be found in the propositions above. Additional inspiration comes from the fact that the empirical meaning of the PBM concept, among those accountable for its implementation and performance, has not yet been researched in marketing. This gap has rather recently been notified by writers of BM textbooks and it has been argued that existing frameworks of PBM do not capture the complexity of the process (Staglino and O'Malley, 2002; Dann, 2002; Gordon, 2002). Researchers in the CBM field also agree with this. As for example do Knox and Brickerton (2003) state: "Despite a growing consensus about the benefits of corporate brand management, there remains considerable uncertainty over what this means in terms of management practices and the study of this phenomenon" (Op. cit., p. 998). Additionally have marketing researchers brought attention to the fact that research about top management practices is generally lagging behind, see e.g. Ottesen and Grønhaug (2002). They state that "Relatively little is known about how managers make sense of and use new theoretical concepts" (Op. cit., p. 1210).

Thus, the purpose of the paper is to discuss the meaning of the PBM concept in terms of issues, decisions and other management processes that top managers are involved with and relate to managing their company's product brands. As implied by the discussion above, behind the research is an interest in exploring if 'a move up the ladder of BM' has resulted in a visionary and strategic approach to branding and if the difference between CBM and PBM, as presented by Balmer

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(2001) and Balmer and Gray (2003), also exists in the business world, or if it has decreased due to changes in the organization of BM. Additionally, behind the research is an interest in exploring manager's conceptions of a concept in the management literature that continuously are 'supplied' with new or modified meanings.

Theoretical Perspective

One aspect that appears important to consider is that BM is a concept that continuously has been 'supplied' with new or modified meanings since the late nineties. The implication of this is my proposition that managers' conceptions of the BM concept are a product of their need to make sense, to create meaning and to act in a decision context that demands 'speed' and frequent invention and implementation of new branding principles and brand building procedures. To make sense of or, in Weick's (1995) terminology, to be engaged in sense making means: "to concept, filter, frame, create facticity, and render the subjective into something more tangible" (Op. cit., p. 14). This notion of how managers construct meaning has recently been acknowledged by marketing researchers. One of them is Wierenga (2002) who proposes that: "Mental models tend to be qualitative, subjective and incomplete. They may well be at variance with reality, yet they are very important for a decision-marker's day-to-day actions" (Op. cit., p. 358).

When the research object is managers' mental models it becomes important to let managers 'talk their walk'. However, I needed a structure to support and guide me in my interviews and for analysing and interpreting data. For that reason I looked for a perspective that could capture, whether prevalent or not, a mental model that expresses a visionary, strategic and multidisciplinary approach to BM. A second consideration relates to 'the strategic and dynamic quality' of the business world at a corporate management level. That is, it seems reasonable to propose that managers at this decision level continuously strive to combat phenomena that might have a negative impact on the financial value of their company brands via adaptive and/or proactive strategies of some sort. Finally, it was proposed that top managers not only express, but also form a sense making system, or a 'dominant logic', regarding the management of their company brands. The dominant logic concept entails that managers make use of schemas to carry out their tasks in situations that are more or less uncertain and ambiguous (Bettis and Wong, 2003). Thus, one might say that a BM logic is a tool "to categorize an event, assess its consequences, and consider appropriate actions (including doing nothing) and to do so rapidly and often efficiently" (Prahalad and Bettis, 2004, p. 76). My analysis of frameworks led me to use the principal ideas in Sanchez and Heene's 'competence view of the firm' (see Sanchez and Heene, 1996) as the overall framework. The consequences of letting Sanchez and Heene's 'competence view of the firm' act as overall support and guide in my conversations with top managers resulted in a focus on: brand strategy, brand assets, brand processes and management processes. Brand strategy covers issues such as brand identity and architecture, but also other strategic issues and decisions that concern a brand's future performance. The 'brand assets' dimension includes anything tangible (e.g. IT equipment, production plant facilities etc.) and intangible (e.g. knowledge, relationships, values etc.) that a FMCG company could use in brand building processes. The 'brand processes' dimension encompasses all of a firm's core and sub business processes that are more or less related to marketing. An inspirational and guiding source when dealing with this dimension was Srivastava et al.'s (1999, 2001) framework for linking marketing through a resource-based perspective to core business processes. Finally, 'management processes' were proposed to encompass various processes such as "gathering and interpreting data, deciding tasks and resource allocation, communicating decisions and information and designing information structures" (Sanchez and Heene, 1996, p. 41).

Research Methodology

The empirical method was semi-structured interviews with executives in 12 Scandinavian-based FMCG companies or subunits in the following industry sectors: food, beverage and chocolates/sweets and in 3 Scandinavian-based main suppliers of ingredients and seasonings to the food industry. In 13 of the cases, I interviewed both the manager of corporate marketing and of corporate product development, and in half of the cases I also had the opportunity to interview the general manager and other functional area managers (HRM, R&D, and/or Supply Chain Manage-

ment). The interviews followed a funnel-shaped structure and were centred on a small selection of topics. Thus, I started with broad questions such as: What is BM all about? And: What is a brand and what does it take build a brand? To penetrate these issues further, managers were asked to relate the history of their company's brand strategy in terms of what values and ideas have historically governed the management of their company's portfolio of brands. Furthermore, managers were asked to report any overall decisions, investments and activities that were underway in the nearest future and why. Subsequently, the interviews proceeded to brand strategy, brand assets, brand processes and management processes. That is, managers were asked to describe, discuss and motivate the chosen brand architecture and overall brand strategy. Additionally, they were asked to penetrate the following issue: What are the key processes and assets in brand building? In a second part of the interview, managers were asked to describe what issues and processes related to the company's brands they were involved with and why.

The methodological approach here is an explorative interpretive analysis. The goal of such an approach is to achieve conceptualisation. When sharing the view that such research is "a fundamental precept in marketing practice and theory development" (Slater and Olson, 2001), empirical analysis becomes focused on identifying aspects that distinguish the analysed subjects and dimensions that explicate the meaning of the identified differences. To identify aspects that differentiate managers' mental models of the BM concept and to subsequently identify dimensions that capture differences, all interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. Then each interview was carefully content-analysed following my general framework. Finally, I looked for words, expressions and themes that unified or distinguished the interviewed subjects and companies. In short, in my outline and execution of the analysis, I followed the grounded theory principles as described by Strauss (1987). Thus, the analysis followed an iterative process of deduction, induction, development of hypothesis and verification. In the appendix, an overall description is given of aspects related to the general framework that emerged as key differences between categories of BM approaches.

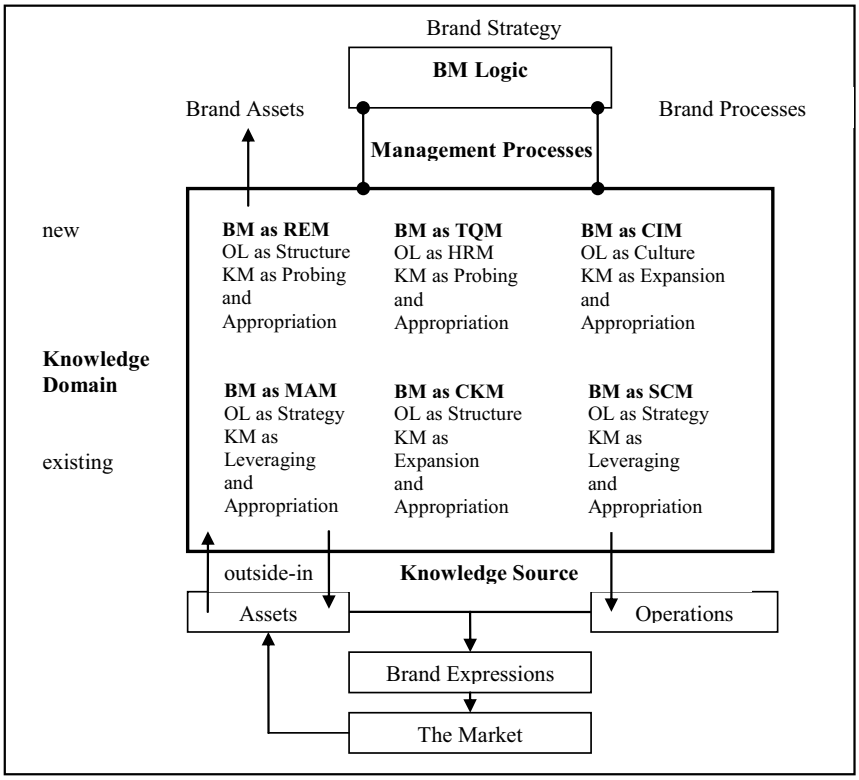

Fig. 1. Branding at a Corporate Management Level

Findings

On the basis of this study, we can conclude that product brand management (PBM) 'has moved up the ladder' within (a majority of) the major Scandinavian based FMCG companies (food, beverage and chocolates/sweets) and within three major suppliers of raw material and ingredients to the food industry. The study also shows that 'the move' has recently taken place and pre-empted a critical reflection of business strategy and organizational processes of change. Six different ways of making sense of the PBM concept were identified. In addition to this, it was found that top managers within the same company or business unit to a large extent agree on overall principles for BM. That is, the findings support the notion of a dominant BM logic at a company level. To highlight key characteristics of the six logics, they have been given the following names: Corporate Identity Management (CIM), Supply Chain Management (SCM), Total Quality Management (TQM), Marketing Management (MAM), Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) and Relationship Management (REM). In this section the six logics are presented. The aim of Figure 1 is to act as a structure and to point at defining features of the logics. The overall design of Figure 1 originates from Sanchez and Heene's (1996) as previously described. The knowledge domain concept in the figure stems from von Krogh et al. (2001) and expresses knowledge that is available and conceived as important in brand building processes. The knowledge source concept deals with managers' "preferences for developing knowledge internally versus seeking inspiration in ideas developed externally," (DiBella et al., 1996, p. 47).

Managers who are guided by a CIM logic perceive a need to change the present assumptions, values and working procedures related to their companies' brands because of a low or non-existent cooperation between production and marketing (PD inclusive), and a general learning orientation and knowledge domain impressed by a production-oriented culture. A couple of steps towards the lower end of the brand value chain have been taken, e.g. the appointment of a corporate level brand manager or a corporate marketing manager. However, a preoccupation with 'efficiency' is still conceived of as being a core feature of their company's value systems. The CIM logic is represented by two of the four largest brand owners in the Scandinavian bakery industry and by two of the four largest actors in the Scandinavian ice-cream market. The following type of answer was given when managers were asked to describe what it takes to build a brand?

> *If we are to build a strong brand, then we have to have some form of 'brand culture', values that we all believe in. That is a prerequisite. We do not have that today. That's what I am trying to change, to move branding a bit higher up in the organization. We have been working with a couple of values, functional values, so to speak for a couple of years. Now we have to proceed, we have to get hold of some emotional values that can be related to our products. On the whole, it is largely a question of putting things out there and of discussing and reflecting on them. (A corporate manager of marketing in the CIM category)*

The managers talked about implanting a 'brand culture' and used expressions such as 'all the way through', 'live it out fully', 'being thorough' etc. One important dimension of this process is to disseminate catchwords throughout the companies to encourage a discussion about what they would like to stand for as a company? Additionally, another distinctive feature of the CIM logic, as well as the SCM logic, is the attitude that consumer research has no value in brand innovation processes, except to test if a developed product, or communication concept, matches consumers' product values and/or cognitions about a brand. The reason for using an inside-out perspective as the starting point for brand building was a felt need to create 'a brand culture', as formulated in the quotation above. This reason was also mentioned when discussing important knowledge in brand building and how to acquire it. The following attitude was put forward: "You have got to have a high integrity. You have got to know what we stand for in plain terms" (one of the interviewed general managers' statements). Thus, besides being involved with creating 'a brand culture', the managers in the CIM category were also involved with: "… build[ing] up a new knowledge domain by transfer of knowledge from external sources", (von Krogh et al., p. 431). This transfer concerns knowledge about new and emerging packaging technologies, the functional food concept in relation to the market and the particular sector of the industry as well as knowledge about new and emerging methods for marketing communication.

The SCM category is represented by two main domestic manufacturers and brand owners in the processing industry for dairy or poultry products. Like in the CIM category, innovation projects have largely been initiated in the upside part of the value chain and conceived as a 'hands on' and experimental task of a small team. Although a change was underway, it was evident that consumer insight will not come to govern either line or brand extension projects. The change was a kind of stage-gate model that is worked out and agreed upon by the various managers involved in line and brand extension projects (PD, production, sales and marketing). At the time of the interviews, this process was only just starting. The first step included joint exercises for PD, marketing and production aimed at revealing what will affect the future market position of the company in various product segments. Despite the organisation of the learning process, the following attitude remained prevalent: "Our brand is built in the marketing department. It is about communicating what our company stands for, Swedish products, security etc." (one of the interviewed corporate PD managers' statements). The following quote regarding work organization in line and brand extension projects further supports this attitude: "It is the product managers in our marketing department who decide what we should test. Sometimes everyone is convinced, so we do not have to perform any tests" (one of the interviewed corporate marketing managers' statements). That is, the collection of end-user insight and the creation of a brand concept are conceived of as being tasks in the testing and refinement phase of line and brand extension projects. Other actors in the market channel, however, are very much integrated in innovation projects. Suppliers of packaging material and technology as well as the big retailing organizations are regarded as project members. The following type of answer was given when managers were asked what it will take to build a brand?

> *We have to deliver what our customers want. At the moment, we are running a big project and we got a new CEO last year, who I think will fix it. The difference compared with yesterday is that then it was only the marketing department who argued for a 'listen to the market' approach. Today, sales, our CAM organization, together with production run projects with our wholesales customers. (One of the interviewed marketing managers' statements in the SCM category)*

Within the TQM category, the model used to carry out a shift in strategy is 'learning by developing human resources' (OL as HRM). One of the cases in this category is a subunit to a global and well known manufacturer and brand owner in the convenience b-to-c food sector. The European head office and subunit follow an endorsement brand strategy and has in its brand portfolio a couple of well known brands that some years ago belonged to another multinational food company. The other case is a subunit of a main supplier of ingredients and seasonings to food manufactures in northern Europe. Managers in the TQM category stress the importance of a consensus around the meaning of a selection of values. One of the interviewed managers expressed this as follows: "The five values are very important. We work with them regularly. One cannot force the values down people's throats. They have to be cultivated. One has to learn to live them, to work in accordance with them" (one of the interviewed managers' statements). In addition to discussions about the values, educational activities and programmes at all levels are emphasised for the sake of institutionalising the following attitude: "During the nineties we were a production plant. Today, we want to be a food producer with a feeling and understanding for food and food quality" (cf. one of the interviewed supply chain management managers' statements). The naming of the category relates to this, but also to the perception underpinning much of the brand development processes executed in the last couple of years, namely the following:

> *It is important that we have a culinary competence in our PD department and among those who brief our development department. It is about having an ability, a talent, to cook. It's a knowledge you can't learn at university. It's not something you can just talk about. You have to live with food, cook food and try a lot of different food. The development manager that I recruited has a very different background compared with the ones employed at our head office in the US. He is a cook. His job is to increase the quality level of our products and to push innovation. We want to have a food culture that is reflected in our products. (One of the interviewed general managers' statements in the TQM category)*

The TQM and the CKM logics resemble one another with respect to 'knowledge source'. The middle position of the logics in Figure 1 relates to this and to the fact that managers in both categories emphasise the interplay between an internal and an external perspective. Within both categories, managers also stress the acquisition of consumer insight conditioned by a common language (such as policies and concepts related to marketing research). Additionally, within both categories, emphasis is given to common knowledge (such as brand values and stored 'stories' about brand development processes in the past) and to internal discussions as an important means of knowledge creation and innovation. The two categories are distinguished by the emphasis given in the TQM category to the infusion of new knowledge (via a probing strategy to develop the knowledge domain), to the creation of external knowledge networks, to tacit knowledge about food and cooking and to the development of values that everyone can relate to.

According to managers in the CKM category, there has been an eagerness to customize products to accommodate immediate requests from the retailing trade. The implication of this is that new flavours, new packaging formats and designs etc. have continuously been launched with the support of the signs (name, logo, advertising theme etc.) of the companies´ strong line of brands. The following attitude was expressed: "We have been trapped by the trade, by tactical activities, by line extensions. We have spent entirely too little time thinking about fundamentals; what consumers want" (One of the interviewed marketing managers' statement). As to the model and the organization of brand innovation processes, it was evident that marketing and PD are coming closer together, towards a model of integrated branding. The CKM logic is represented by two subunits that belong to two of the five largest food companies in northern Europe. Within the two subunits' brand portfolios are some of the most well known food brands in Scandinavia. A large part of these brands have been on the market for more than twenty years and in the past they were the names of individual food companies. Today these names act as umbrella brands for a number of sub-brands. When managers were asked what their key BM tasks are, the following type of answer was given:

> *I have spent a lot of time trying to change our organization. Today, we are no longer 'a potato team' and 'a convenience food team'; instead we are organized according to specific 'meal solutions'. This change relates to the fact that you will not get any innovative ideas just by thinking about potatoes, you have to think in a holistic fashion, you have to think about the needs related to a meal. We discuss and penetrate these issues a lot. This (the strategic discussion) is the most important thing in brand management. (One of the interviewed marketing managers' statements in the CKM category)*

The manager of PD from the same company as the quoted manager above stated the following: "We are now more certain about what our brands stand for, our categories, and our positioning. We take in more but we do it in a more structured way than a couple of years ago; back then we took in everything" (one of the interviewed PD managers' statement). This attitude in conjunction with the model in use (learning by developing structure) to implement a shift from customisation to innovation reflects according to my interpretation 'an expansion strategy': that is, a strategy that deals with "increasing the scope and depth of knowledge by refining what is known and by bringing in additional expertise relevant for knowledge creation" (von Krogh et al., 2001, p. 430). When deciding on what is relevant consumer insight in branding, the CKM logic is guided by a conviction regarding 'the relevant' level of analysis, as expressed in the quotation above. This is the reason for naming the logic 'consumer knowledge management'. When managers were asked about important BM processes, the following type of answer was given:

> *One key aspect is to be able to convert consumer analysis to creative solutions, concepts and products that have a value for the consumer. It's about creative competencies. Another key aspect concerns the development of good briefs to internal and external partners. It is the person responsible for the product that makes a brief and who sees to it that it is approved all the way up to the general manager. What we do with a brand is a strategic question. (One of the interviewed marketing managers' statements in the CKM category)*

The REM category is represented by two main suppliers in the European 'b-to-b' market for food ingredients. Managers in the REM category are also of the opinion that their companies have listened too closely in the past to their customers' requests and ideas regarding product innovations. This has resulted in sales growth but a deterioration of the ability to come up with new products. Each one of the subunits belongs to a producer cooperative conglomerate, with production sites and sales offices around the world and it was evident that the overriding strategy, growth through innovation, governs the issues and tasks that concern business unit managers and managers of marketing and PD. The REM logic differs from the CKM logic by the condition one relates to the creation of important customer insight for product innovation. According to the REM logic, it is knowledge among marketers (and sellers) about food technology in a broad sense, such as e.g. the composition of food products, the features and interplay of various food ingredients, food legislation etc. Furthermore, it should be noted that the models in use to implement a shift from customisation to innovation reflected the assets and processes that managers mentioned as prerequisites for brand building. In the REM category, it is a profound knowledge about food technology that represent a central conditions for marketers and product developers to establish cooperative learning relationships with client companies, but also with research institutions and with suppliers of food processing technology. The brand architecture of the two business units is a corporate umbrella brand strategy and the products are called by their generic function in food processing, for example: taste (including spices, herbs and aromas) and texture (starches, modified starches and fibres). The following type of answer was given when managers were asked what it will take to build a brand?

> *For our company, development and competencies in the development department are going to be very central in the future. Our strategy is to narrow product developers' field of knowledge, to make them focus on their specialist fields. Previously, our developers worked together with our clients a lot and, in principal, carried the whole portfolio of products when visiting them. In the nearest future, an additional doctoral student will be recruited. Without this strategy, this support, our specialists will end up developing products from knowledge that already exists in the market. (One of the interviewed marketing managers' statements in the REM category)*

In the MAM category, the main issue is to further develop the customisation paradigm as a means to develop conditions for line and eventually brand extensions. Among the three companies that through their managers represent the category are two business units that belong to a global FMCG company with some of the world's most well known food and candy brands in its brand portfolio. The third case is a global Scandinavian company in the beverage industry with some of the world's most well known brands. When managers in these companies talked about 'what it takes' to build brands, they emphasised processes and assets related to key-account and category management in the retailing trade besides product innovation. It is important to ensure that 'something continuously happens' in the categories within which the brands are regarded as category leaders by the trade. Below, I have reproduced the answer provided by a marketing manager to the question what are the key brand assets and processes?

> *We need to continuously come up with new types of x. To realize this, we have to think differently in our production. Thus, it is about having the courage to try out new things, i.e. taking risks, having flexibility in production and integrating various functions. (One of the interviewed marketing managers' statements in the MAM category)*

In the MAM category, BM is first and foremost about creating a plan for the way in which the company's brands will bring about an advantageous position in the retailing trade. The description of this process expressed a view of planning as linear, detail-oriented and fact-based. When asking managers to discuss the motive behind the design of the process, the following was typically stated: "The process ensures that I take care of the customers, the market and branding, and it ensures that our strategy is integrated into the plans for sales, PD, production etc. (one of the interviewed marketing managers' statements). In contrast to the CIM and the SCM logic, insight into end-user values and buying behaviour is emphasised in the MAM category. Two ways of describ-

ing this is shown below. The statements were given in reply to the following question: what are key assets in brand building processes?

> *The brand manager must make sure that the basic strategies are based on facts and not on feelings. One aspect to consider is that even if the brand manager is young and new in the organization, s/he will very quickly be assimilated into the business culture with its particular values and traditions. (One of the interviewed marketing manager's statements in the MAM category)*

Conclusion

The findings indicate that product innovation in terms of a continuous launch of line and/or brand extensions is a core BM issue for general and corporate managers of marketing in the food, beverage and chocolates/sweets industry. Furthermore, the findings indicate that line and/or brand extensions are approached from different learning orientations and that this has an impact on the meaning of BM. The reason is that branding presupposes different capabilities, growth drivers and assets in different strategic contexts. In Figure 2 the four identified models for realizing such a transformation are listed. The abbreviations 'OL as Strategy', 'OL as HRM' etc. have been inserted to highlight that the transformation processes described by the interviewed managers coincide with models of organizational learning (OL) found in the OL literature (Probst and Büchel (1997) and Grover and Davenport (2001)). OL is here defined as: "the process of change in individual and shared thought and action, which is affected by and embedded in the institutions of the organization" (Vera and Crossan, 2003, p. 123).

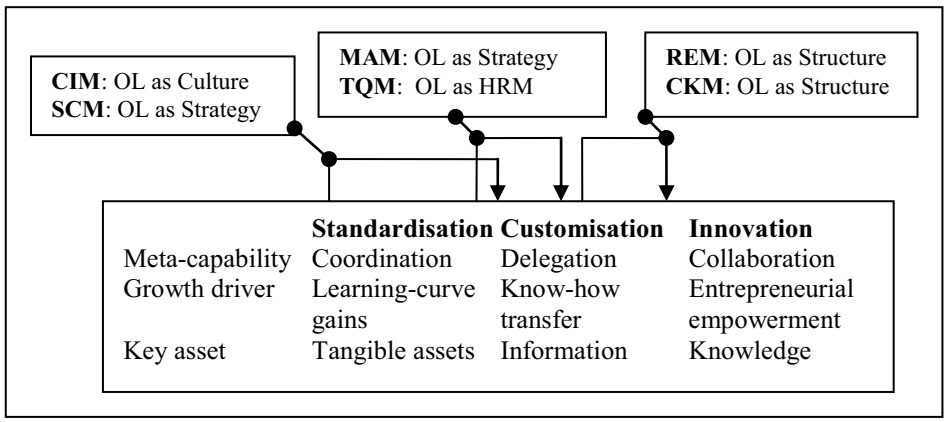

Fig. 2. Corporate Strategy and Brand Management Logics
(The description of the strategies originates from Miles et al. (2000))

Another common and related dimension of BM that emerged concerns the management of a company's or business unit's 'knowledge domain' to realize line and/or brand extensions. When considering the characteristics of the six logics' regarding the latter, my conclusion is that the MAM and SCM logics express an emphasis on 'knowledge transfer,' whereas the CIM, REM, TQM, and the CKM logics express a focus on 'knowledge creation' (an expansion or a probing strategy) (see Figure 1). What characterizes an expansion strategy is that it makes use of the existing knowledge domain, but combines it in new ways. Corporate managers of marketing in the CKM category stated that they had been busy with restructuring their organizations for the sake of establishing not just an increased collaboration between marketing and PD, but also a new perspective on consumer insight. And one of the TQM managers argued for a building up of a culinary competence, and thus implicitly for a sensory perspective on food and food consumption. In the terms of von Krogh et al., a corporate revolutionary agent had been appointed, a cook and former restaurant owner, "to build up a new knowledge domain from scratch" (von Krogh et al., 2001, p. 433). A probing strategy also prevailed in the REM category, albeit combined with an appropriation strategy. That is, the transfer of knowledge from research institutions and from client companies.

The aim of Figure 3 is to highlight the two findings discussed above. That is, that BM at a corporate management level means managing organisational learning processes to attain a common, an integrated, view regarding 'what it takes to build brands'. Additionally, that BM at a corporate management level means being involved with knowledge management (KM). When describing KM as a management process, the following is usually stressed: the management function that creates or locates knowledge manages the flow of knowledge within the organization and ensures that the knowledge is used effectively and efficiently for the long term benefit of the organization" (Darroch and McNaughton, 2002, p. 211).

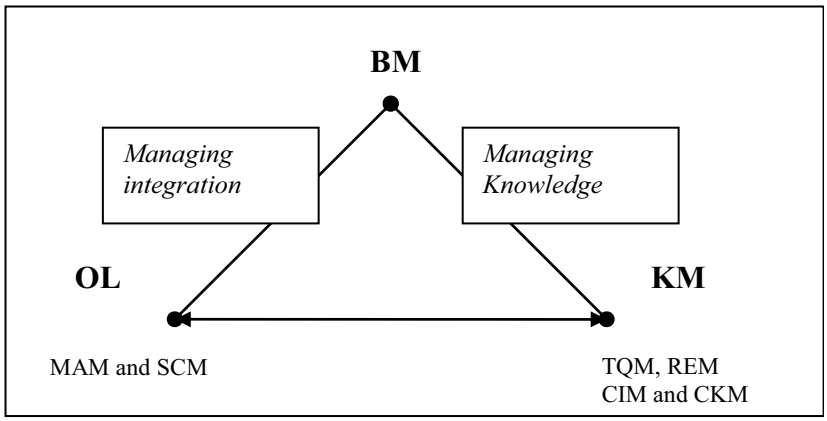

Fig. 3. BM as the Management of Integration and Knowledge

The reason for grouping the CIM, TQM, REM and CKM logic together in the right part of the figure relates to their emphasis put on knowledge creation to realize corporate strategy and implicitly to achieve the company or business units' BM goals. Thus, organizational integration is conceived as a means for knowledge generation. The purpose of the two-sided arrow in Figure 3 is to visualize this link between the two management processes. According to the MAM and SCM logics, however, a key project for general and/or corporate managers of marketing is to see to that the resident knowledge within the corporate marketing department, about ways to analyse market phenomena and about practices in brand innovation processes, is transferred within and outside the marketing department. According to my interpretation, knowledge generated about end-users' values and buying behaviour is within the MAM and the SCM category governed by the transformation process. The reason is that the former process presuppose knowledge that is: "systematic and easily communicated in the form of hard data or codified procedures" and that can: "be transmitted across individuals formally and easily" (Pan and Scarbrough, 1999, p. 362).

Managing integration processes related to brand building is a key issue in the CBM literature and as notified by van Riel and Balmer (1997), the corporate identity (CI) concept has since the early eighties acted as a paradigm in the development of frameworks and methods for analysing the impact of integrated communication on corporate reputation and organizational performance. From this follows that the CI concept rests on a number of premises that influence research in the field. One of the premises is 'to be concerned with reality'. A second premise is the following: "The corporate identity construct is based on the corporate personality, i.e. it is based on the values present within the organisation" (Balmer, 1997, p. 980). The identity concept is also the hub in PBM frameworks and the basic meaning of the concept coincides in principal with the above in that it is postulated that: "A brand identity statement implies a promise to customers and a commitment by the organization" (Aaker and Joachimstahler, 2002, p. 72). My motive of bringing up the identity concept is to notify its influence on research in the BM field. To the best of my knowledge, the issue that BM is sometimes carried out when the overall business model is being reconsidered has not yet been dealt with in the literature. The findings from this explorative analysis indicate the importance of research about the link between corporate strategy and BM, and of letting the OL and KM literature inspire and guide research about managing integration. My reason for stating this relates in particular to the reflection above of the MAM and the SCM logics. When discussing

the interface between OL and KM, Crossan and Bedrow (2003) note that: "firms develop new competencies while currently exploiting existing ones (Op. cit., p. 1088). They also remark that this reality, or tension, between exploration and exploitation, in the business world, is neglected in the OL literature.

In the literature that deals with CBM, the importance of having a holistic perspective is stressed. According to Knox and Brickerton (2003) "brand confirmation is reinforced throughout the organization by broadening the corporate brand managers' remit to include both changes in communications and the business processes engaged in value delivery" (Op. cit., p. 1010). A holistic perspective has also recently been advocated in discussions and frameworks about PBM. One example is the discussion by Brodie et al. (2002), who argue for the relevance of developing a broader view on the equity concept compared with existing views. A second contribution is provided by Doyle (2001). He presents a resource-based view of PBM that rests on the same notion as Brodie et al.'s (2002), namely that "Brand Management must be seen as an integrated part of the total management process rather than a specialist marketing activity" (Op. cit., p. 260). In my interpretation, the existence of a holistic perspective is a consequence of a company or sub unit's overall corporate strategy. That is, growth through quality development, line and/or brand extensions, or some other strategic orientations that presuppose a broad scope in processes and assets. Thus, on the basis of this explorative analysis, I cannot propose that 'BM's move up the ladder' has given rise to a holistic perspective in PBM. However, I am inclined to propose that the MAM, the TQM and the CKM logic express different phases in the development of a visionary, strategic and multidisciplinary perspective on product brand management (PBM). As regards to corporate brand management (CBM) it is evident that the CIM and the REM logic are expressions of a first step towards this perspective or brand strategy.

Discussion

In accordance with the analysis by Grundvåg Ottesen and Grønhaug (2003), my analysis has shown that the meaning that general managers and corporate level managers of marketing attach to the PBM concept is impressed by the context in which they are acting. Additionally, the analysis has shown that PBM presupposes an organizational embedded view of marketing at a corporate management level. However, when considering the demand on companies to adopt a value creation marketing logic, as discussed by Vargo and Lusch (2004), the question of further expanding the management scope becomes vital. According to my interpretation, knowledge areas emphasised by the CKM, the TQM and the REM logics, respectively, express values in use situations of importance from an end-user perspective, such as: the composition of a meal, the preparation or cooking of food, and the physical health and well-being emanating from the consumption of food products. This circumstance leads undoubtedly to the issue of combining BM logics, i.e. furthering developing the scope of PBM in some companies. Thus, according to my view the issue of combining BM logics, or expanding the scope and intensity of what kind of issues and knowledge that managers are paying attention to, appear as being a relevant topic for future research about BM. It should be noted that these are key topics for discussion in the strategy and management literature (Day and Schoemaker, 2004; Prahalad, 2004, Prahalad and Bettis, 2004). However, until now empirical research is lagging behind, and thus the discussions are in principal purely conceptual.

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APPENDIX

Table 1

A Typology of PBM Logics

BM Logic	BM as CIM	BM as SCM	BM as TQM	BM as CKM	BM as REM	BM as MAM
Brand Strategy brand architecture	sub brand strategy: corporate name combined with individual brands	sub brand strategy: corporate name combined with individual brands	sub brand strategy: umbrella brands with individual brands	sub brand strategy: umbrella brands with individual brands	corporate brand strategy	brand endorsement or sub brand strategy: corporate name combined with individual brands formulations and line extensions
brand strategy	line and brand extensions	line and brand extensions	line extensions (quality development)	line and brand extensions	radical new products	
Brand Assets relationships	internal + suppliers of services	suppliers of technology	suppliers of services	internal	internal + research institutions/networks	retailers + suppliers
knowledge know-what	food technology	food technology	consumer values	consumption styles	clients, technology	market facts
know-why	brand values	food technology	food technology: 'cooking'	BM constructs/tools	food technology	marketing strategy
know-how	PD process	PD process	marketing tools	food and packing technology	relationship building networking	marketing tools
know-who	design expertise	food and packing technology	packaging expertise	same as above	scientific expertise	com. expertise
Brand Processes	Communication and PDM	SCM, PDM and CRM (trade)	PDM, SCM and Communication	PDM and CRM	PDM and CRM	Communication, CRM (trade) and PDM
Mgt Processes OL Model KM Strategy	OL as Culture KM as Expansion and Appropriation (knowledge about communication and packaging)	OL as Strategy KM as Leveraging and Appropriation (knowledge about food and packaging technology)	OL as HRM KM as Probing and Appropriation (knowledge about communication and packaging)	OL as Structure KM as Expansion and Appropriation (knowledge about food technology)	OL as Structure KM as Probing and Appropriation (food science)	OL as Strategy KM as Leveraging and Appropriation (knowledge about communication)