



Journal of Product & Brand Management

The Nobel Prize: the identity of a corporate heritage brand
Mats Urde Stephen A Greyser

Article information:

To cite this document:

Mats Urde Stephen A Greyser , (2015), "The Nobel Prize: the identity of a corporate heritage brand", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 24 Iss 4 pp. 318 - 332

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-11-2014-0749>

Downloaded on: 19 July 2015, At: 13:26 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 74 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 26 times since 2015*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

Lorna Ruane, Elaine Wallace, (2015), "Brand tribalism and self-expressive brands: social influences and brand outcomes", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 24 Iss 4 pp. 333-348 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-07-2014-0656>

Alcina G. Ferreira, Filipe J. Coelho, (2015), "Product involvement, price perceptions, and brand loyalty", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 24 Iss 4 pp. 349-364 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2014-0623>

Ulla Hakala, Paula Sjöblom, Satu-Paivi Kantola, (2015), "Toponyms as carriers of heritage: implications for place branding", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 24 Iss 3 pp. 263-275 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-05-2014-0612>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by eabjpbm

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

The Nobel Prize: the identity of a corporate heritage brand

Mats Urde

Department of Business Administration, Lund University School of Economics and Management, Lund, Sweden, and

Stephen A. Greyser

Department of Marketing and Communication, Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to understand the identity of the Nobel Prize as a corporate heritage brand and its management challenges.

Design/methodology/approach – An in-depth case study analysed within a heritage brand model and a corporate brand identity framework.

Findings – The Nobel Prize is a corporate heritage brand – one whose value proposition is based on heritage – in this case “achievements for the benefit of mankind” (derived directly from Alfred Nobel’s will). It is also defined as a “networked brand”, one where four independent collaborating organisations around the (Nobel) hub create and sustain the Nobel Prize’s identity and reputation, acting as a “federated republic”.

Research limitations/implications – The new and combined application of the Heritage Quotient framework and the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix in the Heritage Brand Identity Process (HBIP) offers a structured approach to integrate the identity of a corporate heritage brand. In a networked situation, understanding the role of stewardship in collaborating organisations is essential: The network entities maintain their own identities and goals, but share common values of the network hub.

Practical implications – The integrated frameworks (HBIP) provides a platform for managing a corporate heritage brand.

Originality/value – This is the first field-based study of the Nobel Prize from a strategic brand management perspective.

Keywords Nobel Prize, Brand stewardship, Corporate brand identity, Corporate heritage brand, Heritage Brand Identity Process, Networked brand

Paper type Conceptual paper

An executive summary for managers and executive readers can be found at the end of this issue.

1. Introduction

The purpose of our study is to understand the identity of the Nobel Prize (Nobelpriset) as a corporate heritage brand and its management challenges. This is the first field-based study of the branding and identity of the Nobel Prize. The broader aim is to contribute to the theory and practice of the strategic management of corporate brands with a heritage. Thus, we have introduced the “Heritage Brand Identity Process”. This is intended to serve as a structured approach for managing such brands.

Understanding a corporate brand’s identity and heritage is relevant and concerns many organisations and institutions. We believe that all established brands have a history, which may vary in richness and length. Some brands have recognised the relevance of their history and have incorporated it as part of their identity even if only by the phrase “founded in [year]” as a component of its advertisements and website. Among these, some have found their history to be a salient part of their

identity and use it as a component of their defined brand heritage. For those, heritage helps answer defining questions related to identity such as: “Who are we? Where do we come from? What do we stand for? What do we ultimately promise our stakeholders?”

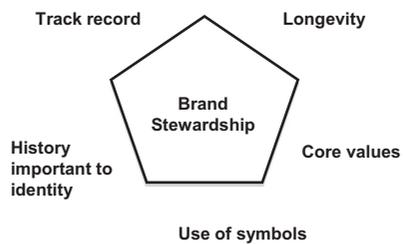
Many brands have a heritage, but only a few can be categorised as heritage brands. Brand heritage is a perspective on the past, present and future. It is an overarching concept that applies to all brand types and organisations; it is a distillation of an organisation’s heritage. Brand heritage is defined by Urde *et al.* (2007, p. 4) as “a dimension of a brand’s identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in an organisational belief that its history is important” (Figure 1). Our definition of a corporate heritage brand is based on Urde *et al.* (2007, p. 4) original and general definition: “A [corporate] heritage brand is one with a positioning and value proposition based on its heritage”. For clarity, here, we added “corporate” as a prefix to “heritage brand”. If our study concerned a product or service brand (which it does not), we could have substituted the prefix “product” or “service”. When evidence shows that a brand “measures up” on all five elements of heritage, it is considered to have a very high Heritage Quotient (HQ).

Related constructs to brand heritage are *retro branding* (for example, re-launching of historical brands; Brown *et al.*, 2003), *iconic branding* (culturally driven branding with high symbolic content; Holt, 2004), *nostalgic branding* (linking the past to the present; Davis, 1979), *monarchic branding* (for example, using its monarchy to symbolise nationhood for a country; Balmer *et al.*, 2006; Balmer, 2011b), and *history marketing* (the past as part of business history; Ooi, 2002). The

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available on Emerald Insight at: www.emeraldinsight.com/1061-0421.htm



Journal of Product & Brand Management
24/4 (2015) 318–332
© Emerald Group Publishing Limited [ISSN 1061-0421]
[DOI 10.1108/JPBM-11-2014-0749]

Figure 1 HQ framework: elements of heritage

Source: Urde *et al.* (2007)

concept of heritage brands as a distinct category emerged from analysis of monarchies as corporate brands, applied to corporate and organisational branding and revealing them as embracing three time frames – the past, the present and the future.

All organisations have identity, which may vary in richness and depth (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002; Knox and Bickerton, 2003; Burghausen and Balmer, 2014; Abratt and Kleyn, 2011). Many organisations have recognised the importance of their identity as an essential source for their brand development and communication. Corporate brand identity describes a “distillation of corporate identity” (Balmer, 2010, p. 186).

This study is about understanding heritage as part of a corporate brand’s identity. For the management of corporate brands with a heritage, the challenge is twofold. First, the organisation has to define, align and develop their brand’s identity, as is normal in general corporate brand management. Second, the organisation has to consider – if at all or to what extent – whether their heritage should be part of their corporate brand’s value proposition and positioning.

In the literature, there are corporate brand identity and brand heritage frameworks, but we have found no integrated frameworks for the management of corporate brands with a heritage. As a response to this theoretical gap, we apply and combine two existing frameworks in our structured case study analysis here.

The Nobel Prize is a unique case study to investigate the relationship between identity and heritage, and its managerial challenges. The identity of the Nobel Prize is based on the will of Alfred Nobel and represents a long history and an impressive heritage. In a real sense, almost everybody knows what the Nobel Prize is and what it means, but practically nobody knows how it comes about. The Nobel Prize is very much in the public eye and highly visible as a global entity. Everybody knows it is prestigious but very few know how it acquired its elevated position. Nobody, as far as we know, has written about the Nobel Prize from a strategic brand management perspective.

In this paper, we are incorporating existing concepts into a wider context as a way of looking at brand issues relevant to the Nobel Prize, including the management of identity and heritage. We also examine stewardship, defined by a member of a prize-awarding committee this way: “To guard the standing of the Nobel Prize”. A manager at the Nobel Foundation commented on a major challenge for stewardship in the organisation: “There are initiatives to ‘reach out’ with

the intent to [. . .] take the ideas of Alfred Nobel into modern times”. To us, this comment illustrates the tension between maintaining links to tradition and also being relevant to the present.

Here is our roadmap. First, we review the literature with focus on the management of brand heritage and brand identity. We describe in more detail a brand heritage model and a corporate brand identity framework that we will later apply. Second, we explain our methodology and clinical research related to the case study. Third, we provide an overview of the Nobel Prize for the reader to understand the history, the phenomenon as such and the organisations behind it and related to it. This is essential for the subsequent analysis and the finding that the Nobel Prize can be seen as a networked brand. Next, we analyse and uncover the heritage of the Nobel Prize. Then, we analyse the identity of the Nobel Prize with the help of themes that emerge from the case study. Following that, we define the specific identity of the Nobel Prize using a combination of a heritage brand framework and corporate identity framework described in the literature reviews. The analysis shows how heritage is an integral part of the Nobel Prize identity, thus supporting the finding that it is a corporate heritage brand. Finally, we conclude with key contributions as we see them, and discuss implications of our study.

2. Heritage and identity: a review of the literature

In the context of corporate brand management, there are two conceptual areas of particular relevance to the topic of this study, both theoretically and in practice: corporate brand heritage and corporate brand identity.

2.1 Managing corporate brand heritage

Brand heritage is an overarching concept and phenomenon that may be found in all brand types and structures (Aaker, 2004 for overview of brand portfolio strategy). Hence, brand heritage may be of relevance for product brands, service brands, place brands, country brands and, of course, corporate brands, or combinations thereof (Hakala *et al.*, 2011). For example, Burberry is a corporate heritage brand founded in 1856, whose portfolio today includes heritage product brands such as Burberry Prorsum couture – an exclusive fashion line positioned to appeal to very high-end customer segments. The Burberry heritage is used to support the authenticity of its entire collection (Alexander, 2009; Beverland, 2005, 2009, Gilmore and Pine, 2007). Heritage, authenticity and luxury are often combined in strategic brand management, with the business model of Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy as a prime illustration (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009). Heritage related to a brand or an organisation – unlocked or not – can be a strategic resource when activated and combined with other firm resources and may become a competitive advantage (see De Wit and Meyer, 2010 for an overview of resource-based strategy). Unlocking and harnessing the potentially hidden value of a brand’s heritage calls for special management competences including stewardship (de Chernatony *et al.*, 2009; Burghausen and Balmer, 2014). A key aspect of brand heritage – given that it is perceived to add value

for customer and non-customer stakeholders (Wiedmann *et al.*, 2011a,2011b) – is its resistance to imitation.

Urde *et al.* (2007) made a distinction between “a heritage brand” and “a brand with heritage” and emphasised that making heritage part of a brand’s value proposition ultimately is a strategic management decision. For example, SC Johnson and Company, well-known for its household products, calls itself “a family company” (Blombäck and Brunninge, 2009, 2013). This refers not only to their consumer products, but significantly to the family heritage of the privately owned firm.

Separately, the Swiss watch brand Patek Philippe is a heritage brand, as the company has chosen to emphasise its history – in the form of tradition – as a key component of its brand identity and positioning: “You never actually own a Patek Philippe. You merely look after it for the next generation”. Patek Philippe backs up this brand promise, for example, through dedicated care and restoration service of its watches (of any age) for owners (www.patek.com). In contrast, Urde *et al.* (2007) categorised TAG Heuer, another Swiss timepiece brand, as a brand *with* a heritage, but not a heritage brand. TAG Heuer’s positioning is in the present – for example, by Formula 1 sponsorship – although it makes reference to its history (“Swiss avant-garde since 1860”). Baum (2011) analysed Swiss watch industry communication and how differentiation may be achieved among brands by using heritage. In a different category, the cruise line Cunard draws significantly on its history of ocean-going elegance. However, according to Hudson (2011), although it is a brand with heritage, Cunard does not have a demonstrated presence of all (or most) elements of a heritage brand.

2.2 Managing corporate brand identity

The definition and alignment of corporate brand identity constitute formulation of strategic intent: How the organisation and its management wants the corporate brand to be perceived by internal and external stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz, 2008; Kapferer, 2012; Balmer, 2011b). The

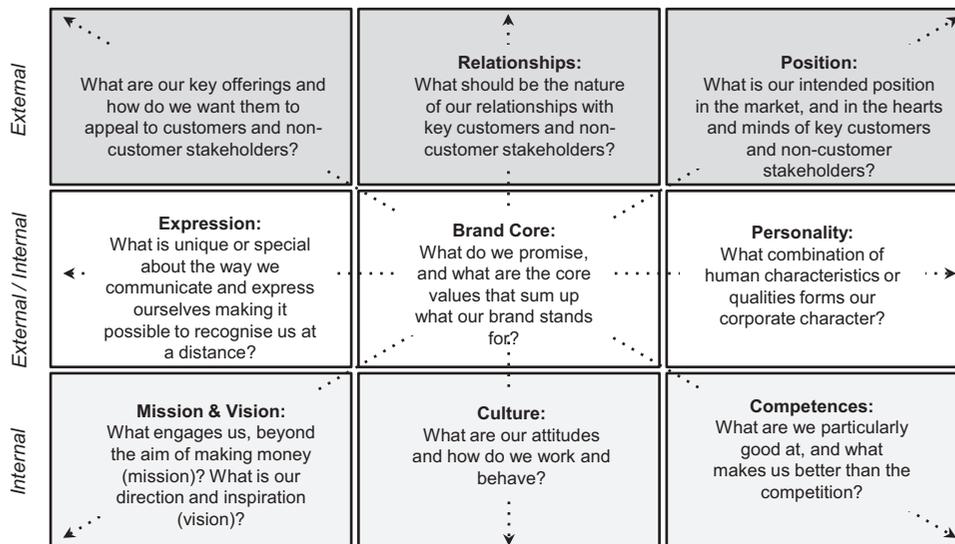
management of a (corporate) brand is essentially about managing its meaning (Park *et al.*, 1986). A vital source for brand meaning is the corporate identity (acknowledging that there are multiple identities; Balmer and Greyser, 2002; Gryd-Jones *et al.*, 2013), and this is distilled into corporate brand identities that in turn, when communicated and perceived by others, result in a corporate brand (Balmer, 2010) with an image and a reputation (Roper and Fill, 2012; de Chernatony and Harris, 2000).

A well-defined corporate brand identity is the bedrock of long-term brand management (Kapferer, 1991, 2012; Urde, 1994, 2003; Balmer and Greyser, 2006; Balmer *et al.*, 2013, Balmer, 1995, 2011b; Burmann *et al.*, 2009; de Chernatony, 2010). A serious practical management problem is the lack of a widely agreed framework that can define a corporate brand identity and also align its different elements so that they come together as an entity (Abratt and Kleyn, 2011). This dislocation between theory and practice is not only frustrating for those in charge of corporate brands but, worse, may derail the brand-building process and ultimately jeopardise the overall strategy (Aaker, 2004). As a response, the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) was introduced as “a tailored alternative to existing frameworks, which have often been designed for product brands, not corporate brands” (Urde, 2013, p. 742).

The CBIM structure integrates nine constituent “identity elements” derived from the literature into a 3 by 3 matrix (Figure 2). The arrows radiating from the centre symbolise the structural nature of all elements. The content of one element “echoes” that of the others, with the core as the “centre square” of the framework. In a coherent corporate brand identity, the core reflects all elements, and every element reflects the core (Urde, 2013).

The CBIM’s *internal* (sender) elements are described in terms of three characteristics of the organisation: its “mission and vision”, its “culture” and its “competences”. The *external* (receiver) component comprises “value proposition”,

Figure 2 The corporate brand identity matrix



Source: Urde (2013)

“relationships” and “position”. The matrix is completed by three elements that are both *internal and external*. “Personality” describes the corporate brand’s individual character, whereas “expression” defines the verbal and visual manifestations of the brand. The “brand core”, consisting of a brand promise and supporting core values, is at the heart of the corporate brand identity (Urde, 2013).

As part of our analysis of the Nobel Prize, we use the CBIM for its capacity to, “explore corporate brand identity internally and externally and by focusing on the brand core” (Urde, 2013, p. 742). As a management tool, the framework is designed to support all those working operationally or strategically with the corporate brand identity. Each of the nine key framework elements is described by a “guiding question”, the purpose of which is to initiate the discussion of a particular element in practice (Urde, 2013). These guiding questions will help us to define the key identity elements of the Nobel Prize. The HQ model’s five elements will also guide our analysis of the heritage of the Nobel Prize. Our exploration of both identity *and* heritage is, as far as we know, a new combined application of the CBIM and the HQ model.

3. Case study methodology

Our overall approach draws on two models from the literature: The HQ model and the CBIM. Our research is thus deductive when applying and analysing our case using existing theory, and inductive in our attempts to integrate and develop new concepts and theories based on our clinical field research – the Nobel Prize case. Further, we combine the two frameworks in an analytic sequence that we term “Heritage Brand Identity Process”. The structure of the analysis in our paper follows this process. We envision our conceptual contributions from this research primarily to be related to “delineating and integrating new perceptions” (MacInnis, 2011, p. 138) of the identity of a corporate heritage brand and its management challenges.

To develop and apply ideas beyond the current understanding, it is essential in the Nobel Prize case to gain access to the organisation itself (Gummesson, 2005), especially how its different component (network) entities think about the organisation and its work. To us, it is essential that the research results “fit” within the reality of the case organisation (and its embedded network organisations). Further, we think the research results should “work” – in the sense that the research results are understandable and potentially useful for those we have met in our field research and practitioners within the field (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Jaworski, 2011). A key aspect of clinical research is to move from the practical to the general (Barnes *et al.*, 1987; Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The case study used a multi-method approach to data gathering and analysis (Gummesson, 2005). The unit of analysis is the Nobel Prize network of multiple independent collaborating institutions; this implies a study of related institutions, organisations and stakeholders (Figure 2). We used open and semi-structured interviews, including the nine “guiding identity questions” from the CBIM (see Figure 2) and “heritage elements” from the HQ model (see Figure 1), document and archival studies and observation in the research process (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In total, we have conducted

over 20 interviews with 17 individuals (see Appendix). We have individually interviewed (1.5–2.5 hours) the four selection committee heads (in Stockholm and Oslo), the present and former directors of the Nobel Foundation, three Nobel laureates, the director of Nobel Media and the director of the Nobel Museum. The Nobel Foundation and the Nobel Museum have supplied us with relevant documents, for example, regarding the history of the Nobel Prize. Accreditation to the 2013 and 2014 Nobel award ceremony and the banquet in Stockholm afforded first-hand observation, which encompassed seeing the active roles of cooperating Nobel network organisations, noting the attendance of prior laureates (“the past strengthening the present”, in terms of heritage) and key sponsors, recognising the use of Nobel-related symbols, and experiencing the atmosphere of the ceremonies.

4. Understanding the Nobel Prize and its history

The historical background of the Nobel Prize is important for understanding its identity, especially because of the consistency of its structure and procedures and its value over time. More broadly, the history of awards relate to cultural value and prestige (English, 2005). The legacy of Alfred Nobel – the Nobel Prize – constitutes a landmark in this context (Sohlman, 1983; Feldman, 2012). *Oxford Dictionary* defines the Nobel Prize as “the world’s most prestigious award”.

Its extraordinary reputation is confirmed by Stanford President John Hennessy:

In the [Silicon] Valley, everyone talks about your IPO [Initial Public Offering to the stock market] [. . .] but in the sciences they talk about going to Stockholm [as Nobel laureates], and you go to Stockholm only if you make a fundamental breakthrough that really reshaped the field. That’s the kind of impact we really look for in our research (*Financial Times*, 3 February 2014).

Moreover, research universities with laureates often point to this as a mark of distinction, as do science-based research entities such as the prestigious Marine Biological Laboratory, USA. The Nobel Prize was possibly the first intellectual prize of its kind and was introduced at a time when the modern Olympics was established (1896). Michael Sohlman, former Director of the Nobel Foundation, described it to us as: “the Olympics of the intellect”.

4.1 The Alfred Nobel legacy and the will

In 1888, Alfred Nobel was astonished to read his own obituary, titled *The merchant of death is dead*, in a French newspaper. Because it was Alfred’s brother who had died, the obituary was eight years premature (Larsson, 2010). Nobel (1833–1896) was the inventor of Dynamite (a registered trademark) and held patents for many inventions; the first (1863) was for his “method of preparing gunpowder for both blasting and shooting”. Alfred Nobel was born in Sweden and also lived in France, Russia and Italy. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Uppsala University in Sweden (Fant, 1991). Nobel was a cosmopolite, spoke five languages and had not been a registered resident of any country since the age of nine; therefore, he was jokingly called “The richest vagabond in Europe” (Sohlman, 1983, p. 86).

When Nobel died in 1896, he left one of the largest fortunes of his century. “His handwritten will contained no more than an outline of his great visionary scheme for five prizes” (Sohlman, 1983, p. 1). A section of the will reads:

[. . .] constitute a fund, the interest on which shall be annually distributed in the form of prizes to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit to mankind (www.Nobelprize.org).

Those who are still entrusted to carry out the final wishes of Alfred Nobel describe the Will to us as “a strength and a ruler” and as “a constitution”. The Nobel Prize has been awarded since 1901 for “the benefit of mankind” to be continued eternally. This responsibility characterises the Nobel Prize and the people behind it.

4.2 The prestige of the Nobel Prize

The Nobel Prize is considered to mark the beginning of a modern age of awards (English, 2005). The custom of cultural awards can be traced back at least to the sixth century B.C., in Greece (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983). In the early Renaissance, the practice became common with the rise of royal and national academies, e.g. the French Academy founded in 1672. The Nobel Prize was a “catalyst for a process that had been gaining momentum for some time” (English, 2005, p. 53).

Based on the literature and our interviews, we see four main reasons that explain why the Nobel Prize has acquired its prestige and elevated position.

First, the Nobel Prize was one of the first international prizes to be established in a time when nationalism was strong. From a draft of the Nobel will:

[. . .] in awarding the prizes no consideration whatever shall be given to the nationality of the candidates, but that the most worthy shall receive the prize, whether [. . .] Scandinavian or not (Nobelprize.org).

The Nobel Prize has always cast a global shadow. The former Director of the Nobel Foundation said to us: “There is an ideology based on the values of the Enlightenment and its cosmopolitan nature”.

Second, the Nobel Prize gained immediate attention and media coverage, and stirred curiosity, debate and critique (Källstrand, 2012) [One issue cited was] “[. . .] the difficulties which might face the prize-giving bodies in accomplishing their task, [for example] that the work would interfere with their members’ main functions” (Sohlman, 1983, p. 84).

Third, is recognition of the absolute criteria and rigour in the processes to award the Nobel Prize. A member of a prize-awarding (scientific) committee commented succinctly to us: “The discovery. That’s it. We disregard other aspects”. The same person underlines the respect for the institutes and the Foundation’s work: “By and large it is the acceptance by the scientific communities of our work”. The member of one Nobel committee sums up its *modus operandi*: “We depend on nominations, then we evaluate, processes that may stretch over a 15–20 year period [. . .] time to judge the impact of a discovery”.

Finally, there is the iconic status rapidly gained by the Nobel Prize via its associations with extraordinary discoveries and individuals. “This is the prize awarded to Albert Einstein, the prizes that have changed our understanding of the world”, a Nobel committee member concluded.

4.3 The Nobel Prize: “A small federative republic”

To the world at large, the Nobel Prize is an annual series of awards for distinguished achievements. Upon close examination, however, the actual awards and the celebrations in Stockholm and Oslo are the visible manifestation of the processes of

interrelated institutions, organisations and individuals (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983; Fant, 1991; Feldman, 2012). What is reported in international media during the annual *Nobel Week* is in fact only the tip of an iceberg. Through a strategic brand management lens, we see the Nobel Prize as a networked corporate heritage brand, characterised by a Nobel official as: “A small federative republic” (Figure 3).

The Nobel Prize is the “hub” of the network and the core of its brand identity (centre; first circle). Four prize-awarding institutions (second circle), the Nobel Foundation (third circle), as well as the Nobel Museum, Nobel Peace Center and Nobel Media (fourth circle) make up the principal entities in the “federation”. The laureates represent an essential part of the network and are also stakeholders (outer circle). They all communicate the “Nobel Prize” directly or indirectly. The scientific communities, general public and media are examples of key stakeholder groups important for the network’s reputation. We have found in the course of our research that the concept of a “networked brand” is useful to understanding the *modus operandi* of the Nobel Prize. For an overview of the network theory, see Ford *et al.* (2011), Leek and Mason (2009), Ramos and Ford (2011).

To prepare the groundwork for our analysis, we briefly describe the Nobel Prize, starting with its hub.

4.3.1 The Nobel Prize

The Nobel Prize is a group of awards living together. The Will is a primary source of its identity, and the combination of awards and what they contribute to the network all help create its unique character. The former director of the Foundation explains the roles, relations and different audiences of the awards:

The Peace Prize is the best known and with the broadest audience, followed by the Prize in literature. The scientific prizes have more limited, but equally important, audiences. They strengthen each other. The Prize in Economic Sciences (added in 1968) is sometimes criticized, but when one reads international media, there are articles or references to the Nobel Prize or a laureate. The Nobel Prize is constantly present in international media.

4.3.2 The prize-awarding institutions

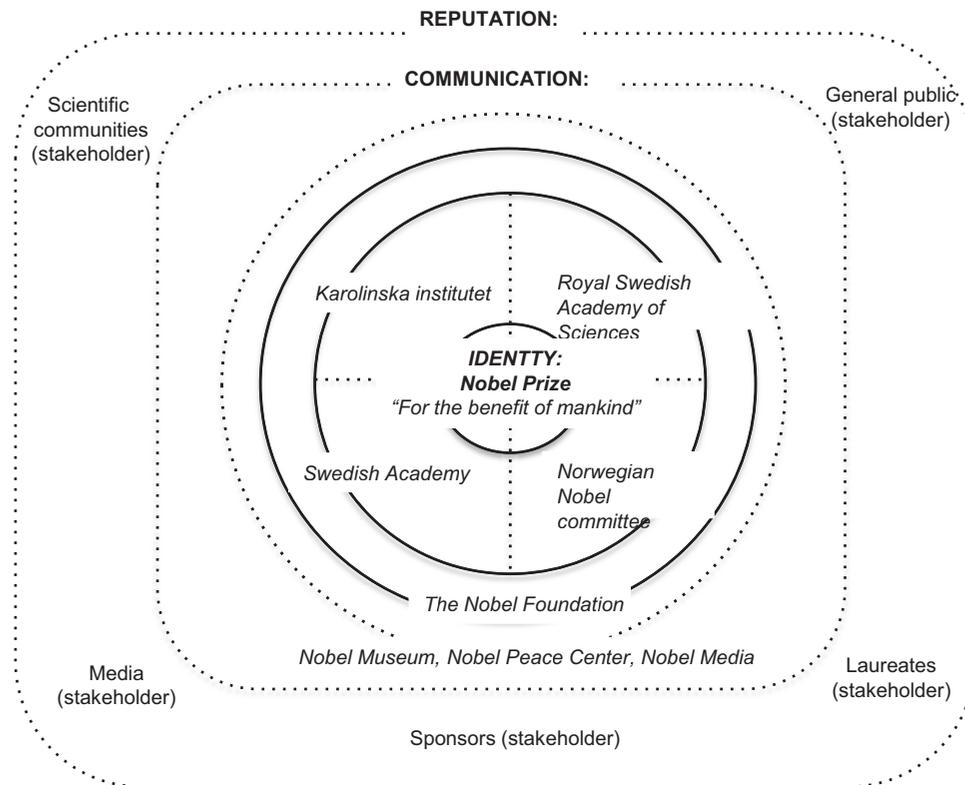
The prize-awarding institutions with their committees are the backbone of the Nobel Prize network (see Table I). These are (corporate organisational) brands with their own independent purposes (reflected in their mottos), identities, communications and reputations – and with their own history. The Alfred Nobel will and the Nobel Prize connect these institutions and provide them with a shared and common goal – to fulfil Nobel’s intentions entrusted to them.

The Karolinska Institutet was founded in 1810 by King Karl XIII, primarily to educate army field doctors. Its history is very much the history of Swedish medicine, and today, it is Sweden’s only purely medical university (www.ki.se). A senior manager comments on the importance of being part of the Nobel network:

Are we to fulfil our purpose “to improve human health”? [. . .] this demands that we can attract the brightest minds, the most promising young talents, funding and partners [. . .] To succeed in the international world of education and research would be impossible for us as a fairly small university in a small country, if we did not have a strong brand and had the capacity to protect and build it. Without our reputation and relation with the Nobel Prize, we would not have the same opportunity to fulfil this purpose.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (Kungliga vetenskapsakademien), founded in 1739 by Anders Celsius,

Figure 3 The Nobel Prize: a networked brand and its stakeholders



Source: Urde and Greyser (2014)

Table I The Nobel Prize: awarding institutions

Institute	Awards Nobel Prize for	Established	Motto
Karolinska Institutet	Physiology or Medicine	1810	"To improve human health through research and education"
Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences	Chemistry, Physics and Economic Sciences	1739	"To promote sciences and strengthen their influence in society"
Swedish Academy	Literature	1786	"For the 'purity, vigour and majesty' of the Swedish language"
Norwegian Nobel Committee	Peace Prize	1904 ^a	[None]

Notes: ^aFirst Peace Award in 1901; Norwegian Parliament later appointed committee for award

Carl von Linné and four fellow scientists, was inspired from the Enlightenment era of the time (Feldman, 2012). The Academy's committees award the Nobel Prizes in physics, chemistry and economic sciences. Among its purposes are to be a forum where researchers can meet across subject borders, to act as a voice of science and influence research policy priorities and to stimulate interest in mathematics and the natural sciences in schools. In 1968, Sweden's central bank established the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel with a donation to the Nobel Foundation on the Bank's 300th anniversary (nobelprize.org). The director of the Nobel Foundation told us there is "an almost 'holy' rule not to add new prizes".

King Gustav III founded the *Swedish Academy* in 1786 with inspiration from the French academies (English, 2005). The

Academy has 18 elected lifetime members who have awarded the Literature Prize since 1901. The Academy's purpose is to "further" the Swedish language and literature [note to the reader: literature in general].

The *Norwegian Nobel Committee* is elected by the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) and awards the Peace prize in Oslo. Henri Dunant (founder of the Red Cross) and Frédéric Passy (founder of Société française pour l'arbitrage entre les Nations) were the first two to receive this award in 1901 (Worek, 2010; Stenersen et al., 2014). Who does and who does not receive the Peace Prize is debated in international media. Examples of committee decisions followed by controversy were the awards to Henry Kissinger in 1973, Yassir Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres in 1994, Barack Obama in 2009 and the European Union in 2012 (Feldman, 2012).

4.3.3 The Nobel Foundation

Central tasks for the Foundation, established in 1900, are to manage Alfred Nobel's capital (approximately €300 million) and to safeguard the intellectual property rights associated with the Nobel Prize. The asset management is conducted "in such a manner that ensures a secure financial standing for the Nobel Prize in the long-term, as well as the independence of the prize-awarding institutions in their work of selecting Laureates" (The Nobel Foundation, 2012, p. 24). The Prize sum to a Laureate is about €1 million. The Nobel Foundation's trustees are elected by the Nobel Prize awarding institutions. The board consists of seven members with the institutions in the majority. The trustees in turn elect a chairman from their own members.

4.3.4 Nobel Museum, the Nobel Peace Center and Nobel Media
The Nobel Museum AB (Limited) in Stockholm defines as its mission to "safeguard the long-term position of the Nobel Prize [. . .] by providing information and conducting research related to the prize" (Nobel Foundation, 2012, p. 30). The head of the museum emphasised to us that it is "a museum of story telling. We ask the laureates to bring an artefact with a personal meaning to them". The Nobel Museum's travelling exposition has visited more than 20 countries.

The Nobel Peace Prize Center in Oslo presents the work of laureates related to war, peace and resolving conflicts. The director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute and member of Nobel committee commented:

Why is there an interest in the Nobel Peace Prize? First, we have been at it for a long time. Second, we are part of the Nobel family of awards. Third, our historical record is not perfect but is solid, surprisingly solid in fact. Four, the definition of peace has evolved and we embrace the entire world.

Nobel Media AB (Limited) develops and manages programs, productions and media rights of the Nobel Prize for digital and broadcast media including publishing and events. The company spreads knowledge about the Nobel Prize award achievements to a global audience (nobelprize.org). According to its CEO, Nobel Media is in "[. . .] an expansive phase; with an open attitude to the purpose of engaging and spreading knowledge. We (Nobel Media) develop and manage a heritage". In 2012, the Nobel Week Dialogue became a new addition to the Nobel Week in Stockholm. Nobel Media collaborates, for example, with BBC World News and CNN, and has sponsors such as Astra Zeneca (medicine), Ericsson (telecom) and DNB (Norwegian-based bank).

4.3.5 Laureates – special stakeholders

There is more than a century of Nobel Prize laureates representing an 800+ group of individuals and their discoveries and achievements. We consider laureates as both internal and external stakeholders. They are internal because they represent the Nobel Prize track record, and external because a laureate or a group of laureates can and do impact on the award's track record and reputation (Figure 2).

4.3.6 Other stakeholders

The Nobel Prize is about science and society in dialogue. Beyond the general public, it has multiple stakeholders. Some of these are educational systems (Lovell, 2006), educators, school children doing writing projects and those who represent other awards (Bersadschi et al., 2013). An editor at Nobel Media elegantly summed up for us the Nobel Prize

stakeholders: "The world-wide community of interested people".

5. The Nobel Prize: uncovering heritage

We now continue to examine the Nobel Prize via exploring its heritage (this section) and its identity (next section) before we undertake defining its specific brand identity.

In analysing brand heritage using the HQ model (Figure 1), it is clear to us that *core values* are in fact the most difficult element to discern because they are dominantly internal. In contrast, symbols are readily recognisable externally. We view the Nobel Prize medal as an explicit example of the *use of symbols*, while the core values are implicit. Specifically, we define the Nobel Prize *core values* as: "discovery", "excellence" and "engagement for higher ideals" (supporting the brand identity "For the benefit of mankind"), based on our analysis presented in Figure 4 later in this paper. The "Alfred Nobel legacy" illustrates how *history is important to the identity* of the Nobel Prize. The heritage element *longevity* is important but not decisive in itself as other awards were established before 1901 (English, 2005 for overview). The uniqueness of the Nobel Prize rather is related to its being one of the first truly international awards. Furthermore, the *track record*, that is, "demonstrated performance over time" (Urde et al., 2007, p. 9), of the Nobel Prize is impressively represented by more than 800 laureates (see *Nobel: A Century of Prize Winners*, Worek, 2010). This is of particular importance, as the annual awards continually relate the past to the present and build expectations for the future. Heritage brands are distinct in that they are about "history and history in the making" (Urde et al., 2007, p. 7) but not solely about history. As summarised in Table II, we find clear support that the Nobel Prize has a high HQ and therefore refer to it as a corporate heritage brand.

Stewardship (centre of HQ model) is a "mindset" among individuals that also may be a part of an organisation's culture. It encompasses nurturing and protecting a brand and its heritage. In relation to heritage, stewardship is characterised, for example, by executives' statements such as:

You are prepared to say "no" [to a proposed initiative] with reference to your company's heritage, reputation, and future [. . .] and also to say "yes" when appropriate.

Also, by statements such as "You treat what has been done before with respect" (Urde et al., 2007, p. 15). This responsibility clearly pertains to the Nobel Prize, as stated to us by a former director of the Foundation: "We are entrusted to steward and ensure quality of the Nobel Prize which is culturally significant for the world".

To conclude, we find support and confirmation of our view that Nobel Prize is a networked corporate heritage brand. Furthermore, the exploration of the Nobel Prize identity emerges as a necessary next step to understand better it as a corporate heritage brand.

6. The Nobel Prize: revealing identity

We see five themes related to identity emerging from the case study based on the interviews and research that we have conducted, and our analysis. The revealing of identity is a necessary step in our analysis to "distil" the Nobel Prize's specific corporate brand identity.

Figure 4 The corporate heritage brand identity of the Nobel Prize

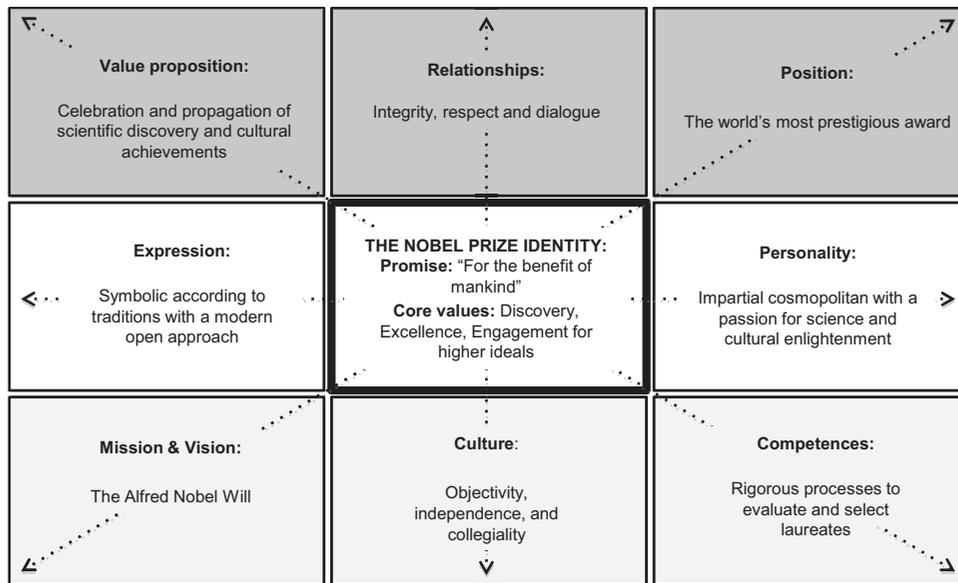


Table II Nobel prize as a corporate heritage brand

Heritage element	The Nobel Prize HQ
Use of symbols	The medal; the diploma; the ceremonies; the telephone call to the laureate, the waiting outside the Swedish Academy's door to hear the citation to the literature award; the banquet; the prize-awarding ceremony with the Monarch presenting the medal and diploma; the flowers brought from the city of San Remo, Italy; The Nobel Museum in Stockholm and the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo
History important to identity	The Alfred Nobel legacy; the Will; the history of the awards; the history of the prize-awarding institutions; the laureates' personal histories
Track record	The discoveries and their impact on science, culture and society; 800 + laureates with individual stories of discovery and achievements; the artefacts donated to the Nobel museum by the laureates; the award-giving institutions' citations; the speeches
Longevity	Since 1901; a very early international intellectual prize of its kind, established in a time of prevailing nationalism
Core values	Discovery, Excellence and Engagement to higher ideals (based on our case analysis), supporting "for the benefit of mankind"
Source:	Based on HQ model by Urde et al. (2007)

6.1 The Alfred Nobel will: bedrock of identity

The first theme concerns the identity of “the world’s most prestigious award” which rests upon the foundation of the will of Alfred Nobel. The will answers the questions “who and what are we (the Nobel Prize)”, and “where do we come from?” The core of the identity is the phrase “for the benefit of mankind”, the principal criterion for all the awards. A member of a scientific committee commented upon the overarching purpose of the Nobel Prize: “We bring an appreciation for science and discovery”. A laureate answered the same questions:

The Nobel Prize serves to identify for the public both the on-going pursuit of knowledge and also the importance of science for humanity [. . .] Science is after all the source for human progress. I think the Nobel Prize is almost the only example, certainly a very rare time, when attention is focused on this fundamental human activity.

The former director of the Foundation concurred with our description of the Will as the “bedrock of identity”.

Based on what we have learned, the Will has been and must be interpreted in practical ways. Even more challenging is how to stay true to the benefactor’s will (and

associated legal requirements) and at the same time to stay relevant in the eyes of the multiple stakeholders in a changing world. The director of the Norwegian Peace Prize Foundation explained to us:

The Will must be read with respect, but it is not a given that it is interpreted as in 1895 when it was written nor should it be. For example, according to the will, awards are to be given to the discovery of the past year. This is unrealistic and therefore was set aside. Also, for example, protecting the environment is today viewed as a basis for receiving the Peace Prize.

The Nobel Prize core identity is essential to the network of prize-awarding institutions. Though they have their own Nobel committees and mottos, their organisational (corporate brand) identities are associated with, and to various degrees dependent upon, the connection to the Nobel Prize. This is illustrated by the earlier comment from a manager at Karolinska Institutet who also told us: “The Nobel Prize is an essential part of the Karolinska Institutet corporate brand identity”.

Peter Englund, who presents the Nobel literature prize on behalf of the Swedish Academy, spoke to us about the Academy’s identity:

Svenska Akademin [Swedish Academy] undoubtedly has her own identity beyond the Nobel Prize. Internally we speak about the Academy using feminine gender since she is a creation of the 1700s. At that time, seeking attention was not considered a virtue, and the Swedish Academy is still in a way moving at her own pace. Without the Nobel Prize, her international prestige would fade away, but the work, for example with the Swedish Dictionary, would continue.

In conclusion, the importance of the Will in our view makes it a central component for understanding the heritage of the Nobel Prize. It is a bedrock of identity for the networked institutions and organisations that we describe as the Nobel Prize. They share a history and a reputation as a network, they face the annual review of respect as a network and they meet the future as a network.

6.2 The identity: a network with a hub

A second key theme is the highly distinctive network identity of the Nobel Prize – the federation described earlier. This too, is a key component of the Nobel Prize's heritage. We see the Nobel Prize's identity as being formed, shaped and defined by its network, with the Will as its core. The Will is internally often characterised as “the constitution of the federation”. The network is the source and embodiment of a culture (for example, values, principles, behaviour and working processes) and an approach to fulfil its common task and purpose (for example, to evaluate laureates, protect and maintain the standing of the Nobel Prize, respect the legal and moral obligations of the Will). The culture and approach connect and bind the network members together and influence how it operates.

However, each of the four partner institutions has developed its own process based on more than 100 years of experience. According to a member of a Nobel committee, “there has not been as much exchange as one would expect among the institutions”. The former director of the Foundation confirms the notion of “water-tight compartments” and underscores: “The Foundation cannot and must not direct the committees' work”, and then adds, “common topics and principles such as secrecy are discussed during [Foundation] meetings”.

A comment from our interview with the Swedish Academy's Peter Englund emphasises the notion of the Nobel Prize as a hub:

There are prizes for science, politics and art. We all lend credibility and “gloire” [glory/prestige] from each other in various fashions. The differences strengthen the Nobel Prize as a totality. There is respect for competences and we never interfere in the other committees' work.

The processes are essential and so is the mindset of the people involved. As a Nobel committee member told us:

The institutions' processes are decisive for the Nobel Prize reputation. We all know this is Sweden's and Norway's most important international symbol. All involved have a collective sentiment of responsibility to be part of a process that must stand for absolute secrecy and integrity under constant and intense media scrutiny. This is indeed demanding but also marvellous.

The network mindset is further illustrated by personal reflections on culture from another a Nobel committee member:

Objectivity, putting one's own agenda aside, never argue for a candidate, not be there to be an advocate for anything or anyone, “raise oneself to the level of the committee”, the acceptance of the fact that the Nobel Prize is more important than oneself.

In a similar spirit, Peter Englund explained to us the *modus operandi* of the Swedish Academy:

To make a process such as ours work well – to produce and select the best possible names – heterogeneity and differences in temperament, views and preferences in the committee are essential. Without this diversity the result would become more predictable, flat and not very interesting. The breadth and the tension are part of a successful work process. At times we have animated arguments but we always retain respect for each other.

Our interviews and analysis provide support and confirmation of our view that the Nobel Prize is a networked corporate heritage brand.

6.3 The Nobel Prize track record: identity affirmed over time

A third theme is the network's track record. The consistency of applied criteria and the acceptance of the laureates by their respective communities affirm and sustain the Nobel Prize's identity and reputation. This in turn establishes continued expectations.

The evaluation process of laureates is essential to the network's track record, described by a committee member as: “the institutions' ability, proven for a long period of time, to select the most worthy laureates and the most important discoveries with relatively few questionable decisions”.

A laureate's description of the committee work illustrates the respect committees have earned over time:

First of all, the award committees pay little attention to [the detail of] the nominations; they like to have this input so they know they are comprehensive in their coverage. They take it upon themselves to investigate the question; they do this with as much dedication as is possible. That means every single paper written by a potential laureate is read. This is an arduous process. They go incognito to conferences and listen and observe; they solicit reports from people they value, but they will of course ultimately act upon their own. They have the motto “A good prize one year will be a better one the next”. They feel no pressure, and would rather wait until they are absolutely sure. They can afford to wait, because it does not matter when a prize is given. There is a very stark difference between the Nobel Prize and other prize-awarding organisations. Nobel is the last word in recognition. This is why the prize is head and shoulders above the rest.

The same respect is expressed with humour by another laureate: “It's not some committee that meets via Skype once or twice a year and has a cursory discussion of their friends' research [. . .]”. On a more serious note, the laureate continues:

They [the committees] take their responsibility very seriously. And they have a record of being conservative in a good way; they wait till a discovery is firmly established. The Nobel Prize awards have stood the test of time. That is the kind of record that makes the prize so valuable and why its reputation means a lot.

The laureate shared with us a comprehensive insight into the Nobel Prize track record – what it is, how it works, and why it is essential to maintain credibility over time:

First they have a long record of good choices and very few clinkers [. . .] and it was first of its kind. Everything else is in some sense an imitation. There is the story of Alfred Nobel, a special and interesting person, and then there is the ceremonial aspect. The whole country is behind it, the royal family, and there is a grand ceremony and there is press coverage. After some time there can be inertia, but without the careful choices and hard work and a great record, the Nobel recognition would pass away.

To conclude, the identity of the Nobel Prize, the use of symbols and the laureates themselves all form part of its track record. Indeed, the laureates both generate and validate the track record. The evaluation processes are highly confidential and surrounded with the strictest secrecy. We find this to be an important aspect of the Nobel Prize and its track record. The director of the Nobel Museum told us: “Part of the

mystique is the selection process and the mystery that surrounds the Nobel Prize”.

6.4 A cluster of awards: source of identity, attention and debate

A fourth theme is based on the fact that the Nobel Prize is a “cluster of awards”. This generates both attention and debate that are important for understanding its *modus operandi* and identity. A tribute to the underlying strength of the Nobel Prize network structure and the quality of choices for laureates is that its reputation has stayed strong despite public controversy over some selections.

Debate occurs most frequently on the Peace and Literature awards. The reason, according to the director of the Norwegian Peace Prize committee, is: “Everybody can have a view on the Peace Prize award, many have a view on the Literature prize, but only a select few can have an informed opinion on the scientific awards”. Reflecting on the committee’s choices over time, he referred to a foreword, he wrote to a book about the Peace Prize:

Not all controversial decisions are successful. The Nobel Committee should not be controversial simply for the sake of creating controversy. Yet, the committee should never be afraid to be controversial if a decision underlines certain basic principles that the committee clearly supports.

A comment from the Secretary of the Swedish Academy echoes the idea that critique is expected and in fact is part of the Nobel Prize international cachet:

The day when there is no discussion about the awarding of the Nobel Prize in literature [means] it has become irrelevant. The prize rests on subjective criteria and is questioned – this is completely natural. The discussions become in a sense a measurement of the prize’s relevance.

To conclude, we think the sum is greater than its parts with respect to the Nobel Prize identity. What makes the Nobel Prize network so distinctive and effective is the single-minded commitment to a common goal and consistent processes used by all institutions in the network. This creates the cluster of Nobel awards that recognise achievements “for the benefit of mankind”.

6.5 Stewardship: managing the awards and managing the brand

The fifth theme concerns stewardship of the awards and the networked Nobel Prize brand: protecting and enhancing the Nobel Prize’s value, identity and reputation. The awards make the brand, but to us, managing the awards is not the same as managing the brand.

Managing the awards is related to the work of the prize-awarding institutions, according to the former director of the Foundation:

To elect the right persons to the committees is essential and so is the support of other national and international experts contributing to the committees’ work. Within this process there are nominations and peer-reviews, and this is known. This is a “movement” of a kind, of international scale and scope. This is to avoid myopia.

A member of a Nobel committee told us that he is watchful for any signs of “nobelism” within the network. This refers to a state of mind when someone is “carried away by the glory of the Nobel Prize”.

The absence of a traditional organisational hierarchy in the Nobel network does not imply the absence of clearly defined

processes. This observation finds support in a comment from the Swedish Academy’s Peter Englund:

There is a clear division of responsibilities. The Nobel Foundation takes care of the money. The prize-awarding committees have the task of selecting names for their respective prizes. The lack of hierarchy could have been devastating if the distribution of responsibilities was not as good as it in fact is. We know what to do and when to deliver it. After we have completed our task others will fulfil theirs.

Managing the brand concerns the identity, communication and the reputation of the network. An official with an overview of the networked institutions observes:

For the outside world the Nobel Prize is just one entity, but in reality it’s a rather complex sphere. The Foundation has the money, but there is a tension regarding who should set the direction. The institutions decide on the awards but for everything else there are different people at work. Representatives of the committees find themselves talking about and being asked about the Nobel Prize, and thereby represent the Nobel Prize in some sense. There are different opinions about who should say what, and who should represent what.

We think the heritage of the Nobel Prize is being leveraged by a landmark initiative from the Nobel Foundation in the planned new Visitor Center in Stockholm. During the 2013 Nobel Ceremony, the Chairman of the Nobel Foundation commented:

At the Nobel Center, the focus will be on the stories of the Nobel laureates. There are stories of brilliant discoveries, conviction and persistence. They are stories which prove that ideas can change the world (Nobel Prize, 2013).

7. Defining the brand identity of the Nobel Prize

In the sequence of our analysis, we now present our own interpretation and perspectives on the Nobel Prize’s identity as a corporate heritage brand (Figure 4). We are attempting to respond to the defining questions in the CBIM shown as Figure 2 earlier.

7.1 Key identity elements and how they are connected

We start with the brand core (promise and core values) because it has a pivotal role for the Nobel Prize network and the matrix. Four connections of the identity elements are outlined in the CBIM (Urde, 2013): Here, we describe them in detail and use them to illuminate the corporate brand identity of the Nobel Prize. We continue by analysing and commenting on what Urde (2013) terms the *strategy* and the *competition diagonals* and then on the *communication horizontal* and the *interaction vertical*. These connections are shown as dotted lines in Figure 4.

7.1.1 The brand core

What is the Nobel Prize promise, and what are its core values that sum up what the brand stands for? In our view, the brand *promise* is represented by the often-used phrase within the Nobel Prize network: “For the benefit of mankind” (see centre of model). As part of the Alfred Nobel will, this phrase encapsulates the overall covenant of the network. The brand core concept is defined as “an entity of core values supporting and leading to a promise” (Urde, 2013, p. 752). We characterise the *core values* that sum up what the Nobel Prize stands for as: “discovery”, “excellence” and “engagement for higher ideals”.

7.1.2 The strategy diagonal

Because the root of the Nobel Prize identity is based on the Alfred Nobel will; therefore, we define the Will itself to

represent the *mission and vision* (lower left) of the network. The engagement and inspiration found in the mission and vision is closely linked to the promise: “For the benefit of mankind”. In turn, we characterise the *position* (upper right) as “the world’s most prestigious award”.

7.1.3 The competition diagonal

The *competences* (lower right) of the Nobel Prize network are defined by us in the model as “rigorous processes to evaluate award candidates”. We acknowledge the importance of the four institutions’ unique processes that have been developed, sustained and reaffirmed for more than a century. These processes, as noted in the case study, are described as “water-tight compartments”. As in the construction of a ship, the function is to prevent the breakage of any compartment from endangering the ship’s stability and floatation. The implications of this in the Nobel Prize network are, for example, related to brand protection and safeguarding the reputation. The processes differ, but the rigour is a key shared trait. The “competences” element points and relates to the core of the framework, that is the promise. In turn, we sum up the *value proposition* (upper left) as “celebration and propagation of scientific discovery and cultural achievements”. The Nobel Prize with its multiple stakeholders needs to specify value propositions that resonate with stakeholder groups, for example, those that appeal to the scientific community and individual researchers.

7.1.4 The communication horizontal

We answer the question of what combination of human characteristics or qualities form the Nobel Prize’s corporate character with a description that reflects Alfred Nobel’s *personality*: An “impartial cosmopolitan with a passion for science and cultural enlightenment” (middle right). The personality of the Nobel Prize is reflected by the identity element *expression* (middle left): what is unique or special about the way the Nobel Prize network expresses itself, making it possible, so to speak, to recognize the Nobel Prize at a distance? We succinctly define “expression” as “symbolic according to traditions with a modern open approach”. The use of symbols – both physical and figurative – is essential in the communication of the Nobel Prize heritage (see Table II). At the same time, the more recent “reaching out” initiatives, including the (international) Nobel Week Dialogue and the active use of nobelprize.org explains our addition “with a modern open approach”.

7.1.5 The interaction vertical

The question “what are the institutional attitudes of the Nobel Prize network and how does it work and behave?” guide the identity element *culture* (bottom centre). We define the Nobel Prize network’s culture with three words: “objectivity”, “independence” and “collegiality”. Culture relates to and reflects the identity element *relationships* (top centre), according to the model. “What should be the nature of the organisations’ relationships with its key customer and non-customer stakeholders?” For the Nobel Prize network, we respond: “integrity”, “respect” and “dialogue”.

7.2 Stewardship of a corporate heritage brand

Stewardship for the Nobel Prize derives from both those in the network and its stakeholders, such as the laureates. These individuals may be seen as guardians of identity and serve as

custodians of reputation and heritage. The aggregated mindsets of the individuals in the network influence the organisational mindset. We emphasise that the laureates, elevated to world-recognised status, are custodians themselves. In earlier research on heritage brands, stewardship is characterised by a number of statements. Several of these we find to be particularly meaningful in relation to the Nobel Prize: “You know that the brand is ‘bigger’ than you are”, “you know that you are a link in a long chain” and “you would like to leave ‘an even stronger’ brand after you” (Urde *et al.*, 2007, p. 15). We see the Nobel Prize not only as a corporate heritage brand but also as a prime illustration of stewardship among heritage brands. At the same time, the Nobel Prize has functioned for over 100 years without a formal brand platform. We attribute this primarily to the strong identity-driven approach (with the Will as bedrock) and its culture of shared values. The management of the awards and the management of the brand are ingrained within the Nobel Prize mindset based on principles such as “never selling” and “absolute integrity”.

Modern times, with higher demands for openness and transparency, represent both a challenge and an opportunity for the Nobel Prize and its stewardship. The universal questions of communication apply to the Nobel network: “Whether to communicate?” “When to communicate?” and “What to communicate?” The Nobel Prize has its core identity – for the benefit of mankind – as the point of departure for decisions and behaviour. A laureate told us: “It is important to think about adapting to modern times; however, changing a very good thing is a very high risk [. . .] one must be conservative”.

8. Conclusion and implications

We conducted extensive field research to study and illuminate the Nobel Prize from a brand perspective, with the broader aim to contribute to the theory and practice of corporate brand management. More specifically, we applied the five elements of the heritage brand framework (HQ) to the Nobel Prize. We characterise it as a “high HQ” corporate heritage brand. Further, we identified and articulated its distinctive identity as a networked brand – an unexpected but essential insight that emerged from the case analysis. Based on the thematic analysis of the network’s (broader) identity, we distilled and defined the (specific) brand identity of Nobel Prize by applying the CBIM. We thus combined two existing models (heritage and identity) into an analytical structure that we call the “Heritage Brand Identity Process”. Moreover, we provided insights into the careful and mindful organisational stewardship intended to protect the meaning and core identity of the Nobel Prize. These are empirically founded insights drawn from the case, providing deeper understanding of stewardship.

Let us comment on our conclusions from the case study research and its theoretical and managerial implications.

8.1 The Nobel prize: a corporate heritage brand

Drawing from our analysis, we view the Nobel Prize as a corporate heritage brand with high HQ. More specifically, we call it a “corporate heritage brand with an identity and reputation formed and shared within a network of other

brands with heritage”. The four institutions that form the backbone of the Nobel Prize have many of the elements of heritage brands, but they do not use their heritage as the focus of their individual value propositions, as expressed in their mottos (Table I) and in interviews. However, in totality, they support the Nobel Prize as having high HQ as well as our characterisation of it as a corporate heritage brand (see Table II).

The delineating of a corporate heritage brand with “high HQ” has a more general applicability for theory and practice. The notion “high HQ” suggests that within the category of heritage brands, there are those that stand out. We believe the Nobel Prize may serve as “a point of reference” in this regard. Furthermore, the idea of a brand network is significant for understanding the Nobel Prize (“the federation”), and prospectively other corporate brands where identity (and heritage) is created through alliances (for example, joint ventures and co-branding).

8.2 “The Heritage Brand Identity Process”: insights from the Nobel Prize

After we explored the heritage of the Nobel Prize, we used the insights from the HQ analysis to strengthen the input to the CBIM. This represents new and integrated applications of the HQ and CBIM frameworks. By combining the HQ model’s five heritage elements and the CBIM’s nine guiding identity questions (Figure 4), a more comprehensive picture of the Nobel Prize brand emerged. In the course of applying the frameworks, we have explored and incorporated linkages among the identity and heritage components to show fundamental strategic relationships; in turn, these connect to and strengthen the brand core (“the centre square”).

We have developed and applied a structured analysis to be used in the management of corporate heritage brands, which we term the “Heritage Brand Identity Process”.

It can also be used to evaluate heritage strategically as part of a corporate brand’s identity. As shown in Figure 5, the sequence is:

- understanding the brand’s history and organisation;
- uncovering brand heritage within the HQ framework;
- revealing brand identity using thematic approaches such as the nine guiding questions from the CBIM; and
- defining and combining corporate brand identity and heritage with the CBIM framework.

The result of such a process is a platform that can guide the management of a corporate heritage brand.

8.3 Stewardship in a heritage brand network: lessons from the Nobel Prize

In managing the Nobel Prize, stewardship is not traditionally hierarchical even within a single organisation. Rather, it is conducted in a collegial fashion among the networked entities, based on a foundation of shared values. In our view, it is essential to recognise the importance of understanding the identity and heritage for both a brand in a particular network and the network as a whole.

Managing the network is not the same as managing *in* the network. From the perspective of practice, managing in the centre of the network (the hub) demands sensitivity to the fact that the collaborating entities have their own strategies, business plans and, of course, identities and heritage. On the other hand, managing in an individual network entity demands awareness of the entity’s own role for the networked brand (the hub) and sensitivity to the other collaborating entities, each of which is responsible for managing its own strategy, business plan and identity. Both viewpoints are important to understanding how a brand network works, or in our opinion, should work.

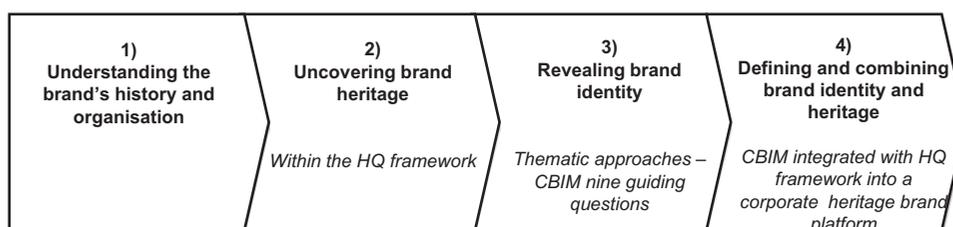
9. Limitations and further research

We were granted unusual access to a distinctive organisation, the Nobel Prize. We defined it as a corporate heritage brand with a high HQ; although based on solid empirical evidence, our assessment was not quantified. At the outset, we understood it to be one in-depth clinical study of a single organisation, the Nobel Prize. Over time, we came to see it as a network of organisations that form a single corporate heritage brand. That added dimension clearly expanded and enriched our research. Nonetheless, the principal limitation of any single-case research is simply that – even when the case is as rich as we consider this one to be.

In terms of further research, the notion of the Nobel Prize as a network raises interesting questions regarding identity, brand heritage and stewardship. In attempting to define the identity of the Nobel Prize, we combined two existing frameworks – on heritage and corporate brand identity – to develop the “Heritage Brand Identity Process”. This clearly suggests opportunities for further theoretical refinement and practical application of the HBIP, for example, by using it with other heritage brands.

Much remains by way of further research, especially examining and exploring some of our key ideas on integrating heritage, identity and stewardship beyond the Nobel Prize itself. We leave that for both ourselves and other researchers at another time.

Figure 5 The heritage brand identity process



Acknowledgment

The authors appreciate the cooperation of representatives of the Nobel Foundation and its several related institutions. The authors especially thank the present and former Executive Directors of the Nobel Foundation, Lars Heikensten and Michael Sohlman, and the Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, Geir Lundestad. The authors also thank Nobel laureates and committee heads with whom we spoke. The authors are also grateful to Annika Pontikis of the Nobel Foundation for facilitating our unusual research endeavour. The authors also appreciate the comments of two anonymous reviewers. This research received no financial support from the Nobel Foundation. In addition, Gustav Källstrand (Nobel Museum), Stuart Roper (Manchester Business School), Jens Hultman, Rita Rakauskaitė, and Carlotta Zorzi (all three Lund University), John Balmer (Brunel University) and Mario Burghausen (Essex University) provided meaningful insights. The authors also thank the Harvard Business School Division of Research for publishing a more comprehensive treatment of our research on the Nobel Prize, HBS Working Paper 15-010, 2014.

Note: Phrases in this paper related to “managing the brand” are ours, and not necessarily those of Nobel Prize representatives.

References

- Aaker, D.A. (2004), “Leveraging the corporate brand”, *California Management Review*, Vol. 46 No. 3, pp. 6-26.
- Abratt, R. and Kleyn, N. (2011), “Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: reconciliation and integration”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 46 Nos 7/8, pp. 1048-1063.
- Alexander, N. (2009), “Brand authentication: creating and maintaining brand auras”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 43 Nos 3/4, pp. 551-562.
- Balmer, J.M.T. (1995), “Corporate branding and connoisseurship”, *Journal of General Management*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 3368-3374.
- Balmer, J.M.T. (2010), “Explicating corporate brands and their management: reflections and directions from 1995”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 180-196.
- Balmer, J.M.T. (2011a), “Corporate heritage brands and the precepts of corporate heritage brand management: insights from the British Monarchy on the eve of the royal wedding of Prince William (April 2011) and Queen Elizabeth II’s diamond jubilee (1952–2012)”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 18 No. 8, pp. 517-544.
- Balmer, J.M.T. (2011b), “Corporate heritage identities, corporate heritage brands and the multiple heritage identities of the British Monarchy”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45 Nos 9/10, pp. 1380-1398.
- Balmer, J.M.T., Brexendorf, T.O. and Kernstock, J. (Eds) (2013), “Corporate brand management – a leadership perspective”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 20 No. 9, pp. 717-815.
- Balmer, J.M.T. and Greyser, S.A. (2002), “Multiple identities of the corporation”, *California Management Review*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 72-86.
- Balmer, J.M.T. and Greyser, S.A. (2006), “Corporate marketing integrating corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate communications, corporate image and corporate reputation”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 40 Nos 7/8, pp. 730-741.
- Barnes, L.B., Christensen, R.C. and Hansen, A.J. (1987), *Teaching and the Case Method: Text, Cases, and Readings*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.
- Baum, L. (2011), “The communication of heritage: how Swiss watch companies communicate their heritage on the web site”, Master thesis, School of Business Aarhus University, Aarhus.
- Bersadski, E., Rakauskaitė, R. and Zorzi, C. (2013), “The conceptualisation of award brands”, Report paper in Strategic Brand Management master course, Lund University School of Economics and Management, Lund.
- Beverland, M. (2005), “The ‘real thing’: branding authenticity in the luxury wine trade”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 59 No. 2, pp. 251-258.
- Beverland, M. (2009), *Building Brand Authenticity: 7 Habits of Iconic Brands*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Blombäck, A. and Brunninge, O. (2013), “The dual opening to brand heritage in family businesses”, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 327-346.
- Blombäck, A. and Brunninge, O. (2009), “Corporate identity manifested through historical references”, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 404-419.
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R.V. and Sherry, J.F. (2003), “Teaching old brands new tricks: retro branding and revival meaning”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67 No. 3, pp. 19-33.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2011), *Business Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Burghausen, M. and Balmer, J.M.T. (2014), “Corporate heritage identity management and the multi-modal implementation of corporate heritage identity”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67 No. 11, pp. 2311-2323.
- Burmman, C., Jost-Benz, M. and Riley, N. (2009), “Towards and identity-based brand equity model”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 3, pp. 390-397.
- Davis, F. (1979), *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, Free Press, New York, NY.
- de Chernatony (2010), *From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Amsterdam.
- de Chernatony, L. and Harris, F. (2000), “Developing corporate brands through considering internal and external stakeholders”, *Corporate Reputation Review*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 268-274.
- de Chernatony, L., Veloutsou, C., Christodoulides, G. and Cottam, S. (2009), “Special issue on advances in brand management”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 3, pp. 289-290.
- De Wit, B. and Meyer, R. (2010), *Strategy: Process, Content, Context*, South-Western Cengage Learning, Amsterdam.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989), “Building theories from case study research”, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 532-550.
- English, J.F. (2005), *The Economy of Prestige – Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value*, Harvard University Press, Boston, MA.
- Fant, K. (1991), *Alfred Nobel: A Biography*, Arcade Publishing, New York, NY.
- Feldman, B. (2012), *The Nobel Prize: A History of Genius, Controversy, and Prestige*, Arcade, New York, NY.

- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006), “Five misunderstandings about case-study research”, *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 219–245.
- Ford, D., Gadde, L.E., Hakansson, H. and Snehota, I. (2011), *Managing Business Relationships*, John Wiley, Chichester.
- Gilmore, J.H. and Pine, J.B. (2007), *Authenticity: Contending with the New Customer Sensibility*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.
- Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Aldine de Gruyter, Hawthorne, NY.
- Gryd-Jones, R., Helm, C. and Munk, J. (2013), “Exploring the impact of silos in achieving brand orientation”, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 29 Nos 9/10, pp. 1056–1078.
- Gummesson, E. (2005), “Qualitative research in marketing”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 39 Nos 3/4, pp. 309–327.
- Hakala, U., Lätti, S. and Sandberg, B. (2011), “Operationalising brand heritage and cultural heritage”, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 447–456.
- Hatch, M.J. and Schultz, M. (2008), *Taking Brand Initiative – How Companies can Align Strategy, Culture, and Identity through Corporate Branding*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Hobsbawn, E. and Ranger, T. (Eds) (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Holt, D.B. (2004), *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.
- Hudson, B. (2011), “Brand heritage and the renaissance of Cunard”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 45 Nos 9/10, pp. 1538–1556.
- Jaworski, B.J. (2011), “On managerial relevance”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 75 No. 4, pp. 211–224.
- Källstrand, G. (2012), *Medaljens Framsida: Nobelpriset i Pressen 1887–1911 (The Medal: The Nobel Prize in the Press 1897–1911)*, Carlsons bokförlag, Stockholm.
- Kapferer, J.N. (1991), *Les Marques, Capital de L’Entreprise*, Les Éditions D’Organisation, Paris.
- Kapferer, J.N. (2012), *Strategic Brand Management*, Kogan Page, London.
- Kapferer, J.N. and Bastien, V. (2009), *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page, London.
- Knox, S. and Bickerton, D. (2003), “The six conventions of corporate branding”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37 Nos 7/8, pp. 998–1016.
- Larsson, U. (2010), *Alfred Nobel: Networks of Innovation*, Science History Publications, Sagamore Beach, MA.
- Leek, S. and Mason, K. (2009), “Network pictures: building an holistic representation of a dyadic business-to-business relationship”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 38 No. 6, pp. 599–607.
- Lovell, J. (2006), *The Politics of Cultural Capital: China’s Quest for a Nobel Prize in Literature*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.
- MacInnis, D.J. (2011), “A framework for conceptual contributions in marketing”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 75 No. 4, pp. 136–154.
- Melewar, T.C. and Jenkins, J. (2002), “Defining the corporate identity construct”, *Corporate Reputation Review*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 76–90.
- Nobel Foundation (2012), *Annual Review*, The Nobel Foundation, Stockholm.
- Nobel Prize (2013), *Translation of the Speeches at the 2013 Nobel Prize Award Ceremony*, The Nobel Foundation, Stockholm.
- Ooi, C.S. (2002), “Persuasive histories: decentering, recentering and the emotional crafting of the past”, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 15 No. 6, pp. 622–634.
- Park, C.W., Jaworski, B.J. and MacInnis, D.J. (1986), “Strategic brand concept-image management”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 135–145.
- Ramos, C. and Ford, D. (2011), “Network pictures as a research device: developing a tool to capture actors’ perceptions in organizational network”, *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 447–464.
- Roper, S. and Fill, C. (2012), *Corporate Reputation: Brand and Communication*, Pearson, Harlow.
- Sohlman, R. (1983), *The Legacy of Alfred Nobel: The Story Behind the Nobel Prizes*, The Bodley Head, London.
- Stenersen, O., Libaek, I. and Sveen, A. (2014), *Nobel: The Grand History of the Peace Prize*, Whitman Publishing, New York, NY.
- Urde, M. (1994), “Brand orientation – a strategy for survival”, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 18–32.
- Urde, M. (2003), “Core value-based corporate brand building”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37 Nos. 7/8, pp. 1017–1040.
- Urde, M. (2013), “The corporate brand identity matrix”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 20 No. 9, pp. 742–761.
- Urde, M. and Greyser, S.A. (2014), “The Nobel Prize: a ‘heritage-based’ brand-oriented network”, Working Paper, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA.
- Urde, M., Greyser, S.A. and Balmer, J.M.T. (2007), “Corporate brands with a heritage”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 4–19.
- Wiedmann, K.P., Hennigs, N., Schmidt, S. and Wuestefeld, T. (2011a), “The importance of brand heritage as a key performance driver in marketing management”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 182–194.
- Wiedmann, K.P., Hennigs, N., Schmidt, S. and Wuestefeld, T. (2011b), “Drivers and outcomes of brand heritage: consumers’ perceptions of heritage brands in automotive industry”, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 205–220.
- Worek, M. (2010), *Nobel – A Century of Prize Winners*, Firefly Books, New York.

Further reading

- Balmer, J.M.T., Greyser, S.A. and Urde, M. (2006), “The crown as corporate brand: insights from monarchies”, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 14 Nos 1/2, pp. 137–161.
- Bartholomew, J.R. (2005), “One hundred years of the Nobel science prizes”, *The History of Science Society*, Vol. 96 No. 4, pp. 625–632.

- Higgins, E.T. (1987), "Self-discrepancy: a theory relating self and affect", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 94 No. 3, pp. 319-340.
- Kapferer, J.N. and Thoenig, J.C. (1989), *La Marque: Moteur de la Competitivite des Entreprises et de la Crossance de l'Economie*, McGraw-Hill, Paris.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990), *Basics of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.
- Yin, R.K. (1993), *Applications of Case Study Research*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

Appendix

Interviews September 2013 – January 2015

Amelin, Olov. Director, Nobel Museum, the Nobel Foundation. November 8, 2013: Stockholm.

Englund, Peter. Secretary Swedish Academy. June 2, 2014 et seq.

Deckeman, Maria. Communication and Brand Manager, Karolinska Institutet. February 11, 2014.

Heikensten, Lars. Executive Director of the Nobel Foundation. November 8, 2013 et seq: Stockholm.

Heldin, Carl-Henrik. Chairman of the Nobel Foundation. December 10, 2013: Stockholm.

Hansson, Göran K. Vice Chairman of the Nobel Foundation, Secretary of the Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine, Karolinska Institutet. November 8, 2013: Stockholm.

Fyrenius, Mattias. CEO, Nobel Media. October 4, 2013: Stockholm.

Kornberg, Roger. Laureate in chemistry in 2006, Stanford University. February 3, 2014.

Källstrand, Gustav. Researcher at the Nobel Museum. October 4, 2013 et seq: Stockholm.

Lundestad, Geir. Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute. February 6, 2014: Oslo.

Pontikis, Annika. Public Relations Manager, the Nobel Foundation. October 4, 2013 et seq: Stockholm.

Smith, Adam. Chief Scientific Officer and Editor-in-Chief, Nobel Media. October 4, 2013 et seq.

Sohlman, Michael. Former Director of the Nobel Foundation. February 10, 2014 et seq.

Normark, Staffan. Secretary General of the Royal Swedish Institute of Sciences. October 4, 2013: Stockholm.

McFadden, Daniel. Laureate in economic sciences in 2000. December 11, 2014: Stockholm.

Wilczek, Frank. Laureate in physics in 2004, MIT. March 21, 2014.

Zerne, Magdalena. Head of Communications Operations Ericsson, January 12, 2015.

About the authors

Mats Urde is Associate Professor of Brand Strategy at Lund University, Sweden. He is Head of Lund Brand Management Research Group and has contributed to leading journals with pioneering work related to brand orientation, brand core values and brand heritage. He has more than 20 years of international experience as strategic consultant on the management of brands. Mats Urde is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: mats.urde@fek.lu.se

Stephen A. Greyser is Richard P. Chapman Professor (Marketing/Communications) Emeritus, Harvard Business School. He is responsible for 17 books in marketing, advertising, etc., numerous journal articles, and some 300 published cases. He created Harvard's Corporate Communications and Business of Sports courses, and has career achievement awards in advertising, corporate communications and sports business. His specialty areas include reputation, identity, branding and corporate-level marketing.