A comparative study of Scandinavian football clubs describing how they build Brand Equity through merchandise
International Marketing Strategy
Master Thesis
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ABSTRACT

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Title: Is There More to Merchandise Than Making Money? A comparative study of Scandinavian football clubs describing how they build Brand Equity through merchandise.

Background and problem discussion: Merchandise is one part of the product that a football club offers. Kapferer’s (2008) Brand Identity Prism should be useful to map the relationship between product and Brand Equity. Merchandise attractiveness can affect consumers’ perception regarding the product quality of the whole club. As little have been written regarding how Scandinavian football clubs use their products to build their Brand Equity we saw a relevance of further searching in to this subject.

Research question: How do Scandinavian football clubs use merchandise to build the club Brand Equity?

Purpose: The purpose is to identify what differences and similarities Scandinavian football clubs have in their development of fan merchandise and presenting successful methods to build Brand Equity, in terms of the percental contribution to the club’s total turnover and the merchandise turnover contribution from each attending supporter.

Methodology: To study the subject thoroughly the study used in this thesis is qualitative. We have chosen to conduct a multiple case study with semi-structured interviews and content analysis of the physical artefacts, merchandise. Five Scandinavian football clubs took part in this research.

Findings: The Brand Equity component that the clubs are trying to affect the most through merchandise is brand association. Perceived quality and brand awareness are secondary focuses for the clubs to affect while brand loyalty couldn’t be seen in this thesis.

Keywords: Brand, Brand Association, Brand Awareness, Brand Equity, Brand Identity Prism, Culture, Merchandise, Perceived Quality, Personality, Physique, Relationship
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1. INTRODUCTION

We will introduce you to the subject that we researched in this chapter. You will be presented with our problem discussion and thereafter the research question.

1.1 BACKGROUND

“The broad trend in sports identification is away from the supporter model (with its hot, traditional identification with local clubs) and toward the more detached, cool, consumer-orientated identification of the flâneur” (Giulianotti, 2002, p. 25)

The operation of a professional football club demands a lot of costs, mainly from salaries. To cover these costs football clubs need income from match tickets, sponsors, TV-deals and also merchandise. Dolles & Söderman (2005, p.11) define merchandise as “goods held for resale but not manufactured by the football club”. According to AIK’s financial report (L1) their merchandise accounted for 15% of the total revenue 2009, an increase from the roughly 8% it contributed with the year before. The two domestic titles won in 2009 had a major part in this increase according to AIK. Today it seems like Scandinavian fans usually just wear merchandise from the club they support on match days, if even then. If you take a look at the average spectator on AIK’s home games, most of them wear regular, trendy clothes often accompanied with just a club scarf. It is rare to find Scandinavian arenas as filled with the home team’s colours and merchandise like in American and British sport events (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). If Scandinavian football clubs could get their supporters to buy the club’s merchandise for everyday use, it appears that they could have a potential increase of merchandise income of up to seven times the today’s figures. Scandinavian clubs may need to ask themselves if their current merchandise selection is optimal and what they can do to increase the Brand Equity through the merchandise.

Beech & Chadwick (2007) discuss how important the passionate fans are for the club to create the atmosphere and tension. If the spectators associate the club and its matches with these feelings they will keep coming back. Supporters’ perception of brand quality is mainly tied to team related issues like results and star players. Besides these factors, the appearance of the merchandise is a part of the total product that the club offers and should be a relevant factor for the building of Brand Equity as the supporters want the products they wear to reflect the person they like to be perceived as
(Kapferer, 2008). Giulianotti (2002) describe consumer fans to have a market-centred relationship to the club as they purchase more of the club’s products than the traditional spectators who have a longer, more local and popular cultural identification with the club. Dionisio et. al. (2008), however, defines spectators as just observing a sport and then forgetting about it, fans on the contrary are more intense and spend time on the sport or team every day through various activities. For the consistency of this paper we have chosen to name the more passionate followers as “fans” and the more laid back followers as “spectators”, “supporters” will be used to group all individuals with a positive feeling towards one club in particular. Dionisio et. al. (2008) also suggests that fandom is a relationship where a lot of value and emotional significance are derived from group membership. Richardson & O’Dwyer (2003) suggest that sport marketers target high self-monitors as high self-monitors find it important to adapt their behaviour to be a part of a group and receive social acceptance. Thus they are more prone to purchase fan merchandise than low self-monitors. The targeting of this segment should be done by promoting the social benefits like social inclusion and implied approval in the market communication.

1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION

According to Beech & Chadwick (2007, p. 187) “a brand consists of the name, logo, symbol and other marks associated with an organization, company or person that distinguish that entity from others in the same category”. Travis (2000) and Melin (2006) suggest that the purpose of branding is to create long lasting relationships with the customers. The added value that a brand name provides to a product is referred to as Brand Equity. There are four components to take into consideration when developing Brand Equity; perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Football fans have a strong emotional relationship to their club and are therefore very loyal (Dionisio et. al. 2008). We believe that supporters wearing the club’s merchandise will to some extent act as walking billboards for the club and will thus increase brand awareness. We also believe that there are many supporters who want to dress in fashionable clothes, both in and outside the arena. These supporters want more perceived quality from the club’s merchandise to consider purchasing the products. Perhaps the development of more fashionable merchandise can increase Brand Equity.
Merchandise is a part of the product that a football club offers; other parts include the success of the team and the atmosphere in the stadium. The different facets in Kapferer’s (2008) Brand Identity Prism can be used to show how the product contributes in the creation of the brand’s identity. Melin (2006) and Madhavaram et. al. (2005) argues that brand identity is closely linked to Brand Equity. Thus the Brand Identity Prism should be useful to map the relationship between product and Brand Equity. Therefore we assume that the Brand Identity Prism can be used to Shank (2005) claims that it is crucial to take consumers shift in lifestyles, trends, and tastes into consideration when developing new sport products. Product design is one way of creating a competitive advantage for sport teams. It can also affect consumers’ perception regarding the product quality. Furthermore, Shank (2005) discuss that the future of product design depends on changes in demand and market environment. We believe that it is important for Scandinavian football clubs to work with product design and pay attention to the ongoing changes in the market environment to keep up with fashion and trends for their merchandise if they want to increase sales to this segment of their supporters.

Teams from the Scandinavian leagues should have some competitive and fan base similarities due to their geographical and political environment (L2) and that they all have a maximum of one Champions League contender and three Europa League contenders per year at the moment (L3). Therefore to compare how Scandinavian top division clubs work with fan merchandise as a tool to build Brand Equity should be interesting to analyse.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

*How do Scandinavian football clubs use merchandise to build the club Brand Equity?*

1.4 PURPOSE

The purpose is to identify what differences and similarities Scandinavian football clubs have in their development of fan merchandise and to present successful methods to build Brand Equity, in terms of the percental contribution to the club’s total turnover and the merchandise turnover contribution from each attending supporter.
1.5 DELIMITATION

This study will only research the merchandise's role in building Brand Equity for the clubs and the clubs’ role in the Brand Identity Prism. Hence Reflection and Self-Image will not be studied.

1.6 KEY WORDS

Brand, Brand Association, Brand Awareness, Brand Equity, Brand Identity Prism, Culture, Merchandise, Perceived Quality, Personality, Physique, Relationship
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Here we present the theories that will be used and at the end we present our analysis model.

“How your customer feel about your brand isn’t a casual question. It is a crucial question”
(Travis, 2000, p. 9)

2.1 BRAND AND BRAND EQUITY

As stated in the problem discussion of the thesis, Beech & Chadwick (2007, p. 187) discuss that: “a brand consists of the name, logo, symbol and other marks associated with an organization, company or person that distinguish that entity from others in the same category”. According to Travis (2000) a product is not a brand, a brand is created in each person’s mind while a product is manufactured often in a factory or industry. Aaker (in Beech & Chadwick, 2007) discuss that the added value that a brand name contributes with to a product is referred to as Brand Equity. There are four components in the creation of Brand Equity; perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty. Perceived quality is based on the evaluation of the brand a consumer makes when considering between the product and other alternatives. Melin (2006) supports this as he argues that the brand can be used to spread information about products, quality, function, and price to consumers. According to Beech & Chadwick (2007) the perception of quality is high when the fans believe that their team will win the championship and when the atmosphere in the arena is high. Wann et. al. (1995) support this as they note that supporters tend to bask in reflected glory (BIRGing) when the team is successful and cut off reflected failure (CORFing) when the team performs badly, for example by talking about “we” when the team wins and “them” when they lose but also by wearing or not wearing the merchandise. However fans with high club identification will admit their association to the club even in bad times. Beech & Chadwick (2007) continue with the second component, brand awareness which focuses on if the consumer is able to recall the brand when it is mentioned. Brand awareness is meant to reduce other brands that fulfil the same needs and also make it easier for consumers when they are put in a situation where they have to choose between brands. It is important for the company to turn brand awareness into brand loyalty to strengthen the connection between the target consumers and the brand. This component is probably the easiest to control for a sports marketer, Beech & Chadwick (2007) claims. Promotional
campaigns are used to raise the brands awareness, whether it is on a regional, national or international level. The third component, brand associations, refers to the consumers’ feelings, emotions and ideas towards the brand. Beech & Chadwick (2007) divides brand association into three types; attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attributes focus on the brands characteristic, for example; logo, success, tradition etc. Vaid (2003) discuss the importance of a brands name. Position, logo and colours might change over time but only a few companies change their brand name. The right name should be reflected towards the benefits and identity of the brand. Logos, however, are the expression of the brand, which are meant to communicate and attract the target consumers. Benefits are the values consumers are looking for in the brand, for example; fan identification, peer group acceptance. Attitudes are the result of the consumers perception of the brands attributes and benefits, this is based on knowledge, importance and affect. According to Beech & Chadwick (2007) brand loyalty focuses on attracting and keeping consumers to make them loyal to the brand. Football fans have a strong emotional relationship to their club and are therefore very loyal (Dionisio et. al. 2008).

2.2 BRAND IDENTITY

Madhavaram et. al. (2005) and Melin (2006) argues that Brand Equity is partly built through brand identity. Melin (2006) argues that the brands identity is what gives the brand meaning, what it stands for, and what makes it unique. The brand identity can be changed and repositioned over time if the identity is for example vague and hazy. Kapferer (in Melin 2006) argues that there has to be a strong connection between the brand product and the consumer, to construct a strong identity for the brand. Therefore Kapferer (2008) has developed a model called the Brand Identity Prism containing six factors to create a core identity for the brand; Personality, Physique, Culture, Relationship, Reflection and Self-Image. Reflection refers to how consumers want to be perceived. As Travis (2000, p.17) puts it; “Brand affiliation, or rejection, tells the world who you are and who you want to be”. Self-Image focuses on making the identity coincide with consumers’ personal self-image Kapferer (in Melin 2006). Travis (2000) claim that the psychological value, i.e. the way that the brand makes you feel when you posses is very important for every luxury brand on the planet.
2.2.1 PERSONALITY

When developing brand identity one of the most important factors is the brand’s personality (Melin, 2006). According to Aaker in Melin (2006) there are several ways to give a brand its personality. It can be through giving an image of the user/target, or that the brand is presented in certain events. Chernatony and McDonald (in Ghodeswar, 2008) argue that successful brands should be identified with products, services, persons, or places, and give added value to them, to fulfil the consumers need. Another way is to emphasize the geographical origin of the brand, or using differentiated advertisement. The brand personality can also be developed through the usage of celebrities like artist or players, or in using symbols like for example McDonalds do. The benefit of using players is that supporters like to identify themselves with them. However risks occur as brand’s personality can be affected by the player’s personal life. Ghodeswar (2008) discuss that a brand’s personality as well as its reputation is one way for a company to differentiate itself from competitors. If consumers have understood and experience the brand identity it can result in developing trust in the brand.

Kwon & Armstrong (2002) suggests that fan merchandise have all characteristics of products that are usually bought impulsively as it is “small in size, easy to carry, light in weight, and easy to store. Sport team licensed merchandise is a shopping good, rather than a staple, and it is not an emergency item” (Kwon & Armstrong, 2002, p. 154). They also claim that “identification is one of the basic psychological orientations that determine the behaviours of human being” (Kwon & Armstrong, 2002, p. 154). They showed in the same study that identification with a sport team significantly affected the money spent on impulse purchases of that team’s merchandise.
2.2.2 PHYSIQUE

Physique is described as “the brand’s backbone and its tangible added value” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 182). It is made up of either salient objective features (which instantaneously appear in your mind when the brand is mentioned) or emerging ones. Kapferer (2008) describe Physique as the stem of a flower, without which the flower i.e. the brand dies. He also describes this as the usual method for branding; relying on certain brand attributes, benefits and key products. Kapferer (2008) and Travis (2000) both agree that physical appearance is important but not everything to a brand. Travis (2000) claims that the best way to attract new customers is by offering something different in the product category the brand exists. Quality, Travis continues, is very important too but is more something that the customers take for granted and that’s why you can’t get away with an inferior product more than once. Travis (2000) states Planet Hollywood as an example of a concept that failed due to an inferior core product, in their case the food. Never the less, Kapferer (2008) argues that the first step in brand development is the definition of its physical character. Questions like “What does it look like?” and “What does it do?” should be answered for example. The physical aspect also includes the brand’s flagship; the product that represent the brand’s qualities. An example of this would be Coca-Cola’s former use of a picture of their classic bottle on all cans.

2.2.3 CULTURE

Culture focuses on that the identity can be affected by the company’s values and principles (Melin 2006). Dahlén & Lange (2003) argue that unlike lifestyles, values are more deeply rooted and can be hard to change. They suggest that the brand could be filled with associations and values that appeal to the target customer. These values could be appurtenants, respect and pride. Kapferer (2008) argues that every product should originate from a culture and that culture is a link between the brand and the firm. He further argues that the product is more than just a representation of the culture, it is also communication. Melin (2006) argues that to be able to create a strong brand identity it is important to consider the brands name and origin. Kapferer (2008, p. 185) agrees as he suggests that countries of origin are a “great cultural reservoirs”.

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The Relationship part is meant to create a relationship between the brand and the consumer (Melin, 2006). Dionisio et. al. (2008) claim that supporters seek group affiliation to gain strength and a sense of identity from their group connection. An important part of group affiliation is rituals like watching games and collecting, hence consumption of certain brands becomes a part of the integration. Travis (2000) also argues that people can gain identity from choice of brands, just as they gain identities from cultures or jobs. However, it is important that the brand got a good reputation otherwise few wants to identify them self with it.

Dahlén & Lange (2003) explain another kind of relationship; where two brands co-operate in a brand alliance to reach a market that would be hard to attract for each of the brands by themselves. Happy Meal is named as a great example of a brand alliance where McDonald’s, Coca-Cola and several different kids’ entertainment co-operate to build a strong brand (Dahlén & Lange 2003). As in the case of Happy Meal it is important that the customers’ perceive the alliance as logical otherwise it will not be successful. Dahlén & Lange (2003) suggest that brand alliances are effective when weaker brands are connected to stronger, complementing brands for launches of new products.

2.3 PRODUCT

According to Melin (2006) it is important that products constantly are developed to keep the brand’s strength, attractiveness and the good quality reputation. Companies need to take the selection of package, colour combination, and logo into consideration when developing a product, because these attributes contribute to the brand’s visual identity. The relevance of package is fluctuating and is highly depended on what kind of a product that is offered. Consumers rate the package higher if a product is hard to predict and experience before it is purchase, like perfume and alcohol. Melin (2006) discuss that a products colour is something that can be easily copied by competitors. However, there are some colours that are closely associated with a specific brand in certain circumstances, like Coca-Cola’s red and white. When developing a brand visual identity, the most important attribute is the logo. A logo can be registered as a brand and is often used for more than one product. Furthermore, Melin (2006) discuss the two concepts product attribute and brand identity where he means that product attribute are meant to fulfil consumers need. However
something unique has to be created about a brand to add value for differentiation. It is more profitable for a product to have a large penetration of a small segment than a low share in all segments; “Ideally, the organization would like to have a product line that spans the total set of opportunities, but has little overlap and self-competition.” (Urban & Hauser, 1993, p. 96)

2.4 ANALYSIS MODEL

To study how merchandise affects club Brand Equity we have chosen to utilize the Brand Identity Prism. Using the four club controlled factors in the Brand Identity Prism, we cover the area on how product is designed to build the club brand. Self-Image and Reflection cannot be studied with the method chosen for this thesis since they portray the consumers’ part of this model. Based on the results generated we hope to find similarities and differences in merchandise development. Hence the model we will conduct the research with is displayed below and is a combination of the two models where the Brand Identity Prism will be used to cover the correlation of product and Brand Equity.

![Figure 2.2 The authors analysis model](image)

2.5 ASSUMPTIONS

Kwon & Armstrong (2002) showed that team identification increased the amount of money which fans spent on impulse purchases. As Beech & Chadwick (2007) claimed that star players had an important role in the supporters’ perception of the club Brand Equity. That led us to our first assumption:

**Star players are assumed to be used to increase the supporters’ identification with the merchandise. Clubs who use personalities are also assumed to have a higher merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium than those clubs who don’t use personalities.**
Melin (2006) discuss the importance of colour and logo when developing a brand’s visual identity. Kapferer (2008) argues that one flagship product is important to communicate the club’s qualities. The second assumption is:

**We assume that the clubs produce merchandise with the home colours and logo as the main promoters of perceived quality and that clubs who are consistent with connections to the flagship product will be more successful in terms of merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium.**

Melin (2006) argues that the club’s identity can be affected by its values and principles and Kapferer (2008) further argues that every product originates from the club’s culture. Both of them also point out the importance of geographical origin. The third assumption therefore is:

**We assume that the clubs’ values and local rooting play an important part in how the merchandise is produced and how they look as well as the success in terms of merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium.**

Dionisio et. al. (2008) suggests that supporters seek group affiliation to gain strength and a sense of identity with the group. Easily recognizable attributes of merchandise should be the home colour and the club logo. There are other groups than the club which a supporter belongs to, at the work place for example. Allowing the supporters to show their affiliation to the club without disturbing the other groups they might be a part of should result in improved Brand Equity. Hence our fourth and final assumption:

**It is assumed that the clubs have developed merchandise to accommodate group affiliation needs outside of the stadium from their supporters and that it is connected with the success in terms of merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium.**
3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we will present this study’s focus. Further on we present our sample and how the data collection was conducted. Finally we show how the information was used for our analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Bryman & Bell (2005) suggest that a qualitative research focus on words at data collection and analysis instead of quantifying, which is the case in a quantitative study. A further difference between qualitative and quantitative studies is that qualitative researches have inductive and theory generating viewpoint instead of theory testing. The research theoretical standpoint is also interpreting, i.e. searching for understanding of a social reality founded on how the participants interpret the reality.

How the merchandise is used to build brand on the Scandinavian market is not researched at all to our knowledge, therefore an exploring research is needed to better understand the phenomenon. Since the purpose of the study is to examine how Scandinavian clubs work with the merchandise to build Brand Equity, we believe that the best result will come through an interpreting study. Therefore we chose to conduct a qualitative case study.

According to Bryman & Bell (2005) a case study is suitable when you want answers to the questions “how” and “why”. At the same time the researcher has reasonable control over the situation that is studied. Most significant for the case study is that it contains a detailed and thorough research of one or more cases. A comparing case study has clear advantages and disadvantages compared to a one case study. Results from several cases are more convincing than form one. Hence the study in its whole will have better chances of being significant. However comparing studies tend to get more expensive, both economically and time-wise. For this study we believe that the advantages of several cases greatly overtakes a one case study as we want to reach conclusions that can be applicable for the entire Scandinavian market and we believe that the merchandise is treated differently from club to club. We hope that we can take advantage of the increased validity a comparing case study contributes with, in our conclusions.
3.2 SAMPLE

To reach the best possible representativeness for the researched population in this study we chose a total sample of all clubs in the top division of the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish in the 2010 and 2009/2010 season. Since we wanted to treat all clubs the same way we sent a standardized e-mail to the person in all clubs whom we thought would have the biggest knowledge and influence over merchandise. In the e-mails only the clubs’ names and language were changed. To the Swedish clubs the-mail was sent in Swedish, to the Danish clubs they were sent in English and to the Norwegian clubs in both languages. The only clubs that were not inquired for interest was those were we could not find an email-address on their websites. These clubs were; BK Häcken and Mjällby AIF from Allsvenskan and SønderjyskE from SAS Ligaen. The clubs were inquired March 31st 2010 and we decided to interview only the clubs who had responded not later than April 8th 2010. Due to time reasons and that we received a positive answer from a sufficient number of clubs we chose not to follow up negative answers and does without response with phone calls or other ways of contact. The different stages leading up to the interviews are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALLSVENSKAN</th>
<th>PROPOSAL</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
<th>PARTICIPATION</th>
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Is There More to Merchandise Than Making Money?

Bergqvist, Rasmus
Falck, Alexander

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Table 3.1 The authors table of stages in the acquirement of respondents

This sample should be representative for a bigger population than the three Scandinavian countries. Countries that are close culturally like the other Nordic countries may have many similarities. Also countries that are close regarding football interest and are close on the UEFA coefficient rank should have some similarities to the researched clubs and be able to gain some valuable information from this thesis. Also clubs in other sports that attract the same crowd may share some similarities, Ice hockey and Handball could be some of those sports.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Bryman & Bell (2005) claims that there are mainly two kinds of data, primary and secondary. Primary data is collected by the researcher himself. Secondary data however is collected by another researcher for another purpose. The advantages with secondary data are that they save time and money for the researcher, however it is a disadvantage that the researcher is not as familiar with the material and that he does not have influence on the quality of the data. Yin (2003) claim that a case study is usually a combination of two or more different data sources with various pros and cons; interviews, archival records, documentation, direct observations, participant-observations and
physical artefacts are the most common. Yin (2009) sees this opportunity to use several data sources as major strength of the case study as a research model.

We wanted as high level of standardization as possible in the interviews to increase comparability while not compromising with depth of the data. We figured that it could be confusing for the respondents to have a conversation with both of us at the same time, thus only one of us was chosen to conduct the interviews. Hence all interviews were conducted by Alexander Falck in a room chosen by the respondents at each clubs’ home stadium, while Rasmus Bergqvist took notes and noted gestures etc. To increase the level of empirical value in this paper we have used Yin’s (2009) first principle for data collection; use multiple sources of evidence. Therefore we have conducted both interviews and physical artefacts. The physical artefacts were researched by observing the clubs’ web shops. The data from the direct observations will be used to strengthen or falsify information gained from the interviews. Yin (2009) believes that the strengths of interviews are that they are focused on the topic of the study and can be very insightful. However the data will suffer if the questions are formed poorly and of potential reflexivity from the respondents, they give the interviewer the answers he thinks the interviewer wants to hear. Yin (2009) claim that physical artefacts are insightful into cultural behaviour and technical operations but suffer from selectivity and availability.

3.4 INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

Bryman & Bell (2005) explain three general interview forms; structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. In a semi-structured interview the interviewer has a question schedule with questions concerning a rather specific theme however the respondent has great liberty to answer with his or her own words. The order of the questions may vary between different interviews but usually the questions are asked in the same order and with the same words in every interview. Bryman (2002) also suggest that with semi-structured interviews the interviewer can ask additional questions to get deeper information in a subject. Structured interviews would have limited our possibilities to ask follow up questions to get deeper information and the results from unstructured interviews would have been too hard to compare in the short time that was given.

For this study we thought that it was important to allow unprepared information to be generated from the interviews which was made possible through the permission of follow up questions and
open answers. We also wanted to compare the cases to find similarities and differences between them. Therefore we chose the semi-structured interview as our interview structure.

3.4.1 QUESTION CONSTRUCTION

When we were to formulate the questions we first scanned the library and internet for theory to base our questions on. We wanted to see how merchandise (product) affected the Brand Equity. We thought that four of the parts presented in the Brand Identity Prism; Physique, Personality, Culture, and Relationship could help us describe the relationship between product and Brand Equity.

After we decided on the themes to be used in the study we started developing questions to cover our research area and purpose. The questions were not tested on a test group. Instead we consulted our tutor several times for feedback which led to some modifications of the questions. We wanted to construct questions that would show how the football clubs experienced and worked with these themes without being leading or too complicated. Bryman (2002) suggest that the focus of a qualitative interview is centred on how the interviewee perceives events and how he or she explains it. Therefore we included the question “Do you have any additional comments?” in the end of the interview. Since Yin (2003) criticizes "why" as follow up question because it puts the respondent in a defence position, we used his suggestion of “how” to get our interviewees to develop their answers. Below are our themes and motivations of the questions we asked to cover them.

3.4.1.1 BACKGROUND

To categorize the clubs by their different circumstances we used some background questions like “How much from your total revenue is generated through merchandise?” and “Describe what type of fans that accounts for the highest merchandise revenue?”

3.4.1.2 PERSONALITY

The following question was used to find out what types of persons and characters were used in merchandise and for what purpose: “What types of persons and characters are used in the merchandise and what feelings are they supposed to send out?”
3.4.1.3 PHYSIQUE

In this part we wanted to find out how the clubs works with the development of products’ attractiveness and how the appearance of the merchandise is used to build the brand. Questions like the following were used to cover this area: “How do you work with the team logo and colours in the merchandise?” and “For what types of merchandise do you compromise with the team logo and colours?”

3.4.1.4 CULTURE

This question was used to generate information about the importance of the club’s culture for the brand development through merchandise: “How are the club’s norms and values being portrayed in the fan merchandise and in the development of new products?”

3.4.1.5 RELATIONSHIP

The Relationship questions aims to investigate what attributes the clubs believe creates added relationship value and how they strengthen the brand. We asked the following questions: “What attributes besides the logo and colours makes your merchandise characteristic for your club?” and “What measures are taken to get the fans to wear your clothes in circumstances that are not associated with the club?”

3.4.1.6 FINISHING QUESTIONS

We wanted to give the clubs a chance to express themselves more freely so we could discover more unforeseen information. This was done through these two questions; “What can be improved with you merchandise?” and “Is there anything you would like to add?”

3.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PHYSICAL ARTEFACTS

Bryman (2002) argue that content analysis is a research technique that is supposed to give an unbiased and systematical description of the concrete content of a document or text through quantification of predetermined themes. Bryman (2002) also define “text” as a term that is used for written texts as well as several other phenomena like culture. Hence we draw the conclusion that physical artefacts are covered under the term text as well. Bryman (2002) claims that an unbiased outcome is much determined by the ability of the researcher to clearly describe how the analysis is
supposed to be conducted in the categorisation of the raw material so that personal values have as little impact as possible on the interpretation. Acting systematically aims for the rules to be used consequently. The intended outcome is that the result of the analysis will be the same regardless of who is conducting it. This would give the research a high level of credibility. In this content analysis we have searched for how clear our four themes from the Brand Identity Prism; Culture, Personality, Physique, and Relationship occur on the clubs’ web shops and their supporter products. The content analysis has been conducted systematically and with good faith.

3.6 RESEARCH QUALITY

Reliability: Bryman (2002) claim that reliable results are achieved when the researchers have followed existing rules while conducting the research and report the results to the persons who are a part of the population which have been studied to confirm that the researchers have interpreted the reality in a correct way.

We have sent the transcriptions from the interviews to the interviewees to confirm that the information was interpreted the correct way. That is an important factor for the reliability of a thesis which we have achieved.

Transmittability: According to Bryman (2002) the transmittability of a research determines how likely it is that the result of a study can be adopted on other markets or industries.

Primarily the neighbouring domestic markets like Ice hockey and Handball as well as similar football markets should be the primary step of transmittability for this thesis.

The possibility to confirm results: Bryman (2002) claim that it is important that the researcher have conducted the research with the knowledge that it is impossible to work completely unbiased but that he or she have worked in good faith. Corollary the researcher shall not have deliberately let personal values affect the execution or the conclusions.

We have during this thesis been working in good faith and we have not let our personal values guide the way under which this thesis was conducted.
Validity: Bryman and Bell (2005) defines validity as the level of which the indicators in a research actually measures what it is meant to measure. Convergent validity is gained by comparing the results from one method with another.

As we studied both interviews and physical artefacts to cover the same concepts we argue that this thesis have acquired convergent validity.
4. ANALYSIS

Here we start by presenting our perception of the empirical data from the interviews with Helsingborgs IF (HIF), Malmö FF (MFF), Trelleborgs FF (TFF), AGF Aarhus (AGF), and IK Start (Start). The interviews were conducted May 4th - May 6th at the clubs’ locations. Thereafter we will test our assumptions by analysing the components as presented in the model.

4.1 ANALYSIS ACCORDING TO THE MODEL COMPONENTS

4.1.1 BACKGROUND

4.1.1.1 HELSINGBORG'S IF

Share of total turnover accounted for from merchandise: “About 2-3 % of the total turnover” – Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010

Most profitable product: The home Jersey

Average attendance on home games: 10 000

Average merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium: 150 SEK

Average supporter: “The average supporter is a man between 25 – 35 years old”... “He has a middle income, worker, “a Svensson” (an average Joe). I think that is the average supporter.” – Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010

Main goal with merchandise: “Our main goal can be described in two ways. We want more supporters to use our products, it should be more red, more HIF on our products. We want it to be more legitimate to use our products everywhere, like in school, in town, everywhere. The other goal is to make more money by selling our merchandise.”... “I signed a contract with some new partners January 1st this year. Our goal is to double our turnover in two year.” – Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010
4.1.1.2 MALMÖ FF

Share of total turnover accounted for from merchandise: 7 million SEK out of 190 million SEK equals roughly 4 %.

Most profitable product: The home Jersey

Average attendance on home games: 15 000, “The total amount of supporters should be a couple of 100 000.” – Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010

Average merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium: 466 SEK

Average supporter: “...they are between 15-30 years old. It’s a man, if he works he has a middle income, if he is younger like around 15 then he is still in school and so on. It’s quite an average Joe.” – Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010

Purpose with merchandise: “The main goal, like everything else that is not related to football, it is to make a profit to get more money to the team.”... “Those who haven’t realized that are out drifting. We can’t have people employed in shops or in chanceries, if it doesn’t generate money to a better A-team.”... “It has to be the overall goal for everyone that is working here. It’s the only thing we should do, to get as good team as possible.” – Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010

4.1.1.3 TRELLEBORGS FF

Share of total turnover accounted for from merchandise: 250 000 SEK out of a grand total of nearly 30 million SEK resulting in a turnover share of just below 1 %.

Most profitable product: Scarves

Average attendance on home games: 3000

Average merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium: 83 SEK

Average supporter: “Besides True Blues, which is our supporter club with many young people, other supporters we have in the club are probably about 40+. ”... “It is a man. It is about 80-20., 80 % men and 20 % women.” – Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, May 4th 2010
Purpose with merchandise: “It is important to get our brand out through merchandise, but also that the ones that wear the merchandise support us as a club in the community. So that is also very important.” – Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, May 4th 2010

4.1.1.4 AGF AARHUS

Share of total turnover accounted for from merchandise: Total turnover of approximately 100 million Danish kroner and a merchandise turnover of 5 million DKK results in a share of 5%.

Most profitable product: “The shirt. The white home jersey, no doubt. I’d say about 80 percent, that’s one item.” – Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010

Average attendance on home games: 12,000, “we say between 70 and 100 thousand fans of AGF” – Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010

Average merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium: 416 DKK (546 SEK, 2010-05-26)

Average supporter: He is a man, around 95% is. He is between 19 and 39, that is between 60% of the fans. 7% is unemployed, 19% is students because Aarhus is a student city, 27% are what we call in Denmark “funktionær” (businessmen)... 7% craftsmen... 7% only (craftsmen). That is unusual, normal football clubs have higher rates of unemployed and craftsmen. That is due to we are in a student city. Every year there comes 27,000 new students here which gives us a special situation.” – Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010

Purpose with merchandise: “There’s not one main purpose. There is two main purposes. One is the branding and signal we are sending to our supporters and the other one is economics. I can’t say that one is more important than the other because they are so closely connected. But that are our two main purposes. The brand brings supporters to the stadium but of course the economics is important as well.”... “I have a business plan that should double the merchandise in three years.” – Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010

4.1.1.5 IK START

Share of total turnover accounted for from merchandise: “If we take the numbers from last year. Last season, 2009, it’s about 2% of around 100 million Norwegian kroner so that means it’s around 2 million kroner.” – Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010
Most profitable product: “If you just count the number of products sold I think it is scarves and flags but if you count in revenue it would be the jersey, the home jersey.” – Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010

Average attendance on home games: 8 400

Average merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium: 238 NOK (287 SEK, 2010-05-26)

Average supporter: “I think it’s most men, we think that we have maybe a bit difficulty on hitting the men between say age 20-25. We have a gap there. So the kids from 6 to 13 and also youth and then from age 30 to 60 maybe. Mostly men but we have a fair amount of women as well.”... “When it comes to geographic it is very much in the Kristiansand city. But we have also supporters from west, about an hour drive west. And also an hour drive east.” – Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010

Purpose with merchandise: “It’s of course to build a brand. So people can see that we are a club even on non-match days. It’s to... maybe I have to take this in Norwegian.”... “Det är att vara synlig i vardagen, to be there on every day to remind people that there is a game coming up or to keep reminding them that Start exists. And that we are going to play, even though we play bad sometimes, it’s always a new game. We want people to remember that we are here.” – Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010.

4.1.2 PERSONALITY

HIF, MFF, AGF and Start use their players in the marketing of their merchandise by wearing the clothes. This is being used because they what to make their merchandise a little bit “cooler” to wear. “It should also be accepted to have it, to be proud of using products with the badge on it” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010). MFF also use old players, for example they have developed a scarf in tribute to Bosse Larsson and they sell a book and a DVD about Zlatan Ibrahimovic. “What we want to convey is always pride over the club” (Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010). MFF however is the only club that have t-shirts for sale in their web-shop with connections to persons or characters in the club. There is one of their present day star offensive players, Wilton Figueiredo on a couple of kids t-shirts and a memorabilia t-shirt with the names of the players from MFF’s 1979 European cup final (L7). AGF’s web shop is not up and
running but during our visit in Aarhus we visited their physical shop and saw a palindrome t-shirt celebrating the return of the midfielder Martin Jørgensen after 13 years in the Italian Serie A.

AGF describes football players as some kind of idols so they use their players in the merchandise, mainly they push their three Danish national players. “All our players are supposed to signal health, physical awareness, politeness, they are supposed to be humble... that is very important to us” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5\textsuperscript{th} 2010). Start uses local stars in their merchandise because they want to have a local rooting. “We like to convey the emotion that we make it on our own“... ”Maybe Bolaños is our biggest star when it comes to football skills but we tend to use the local guys more because we want to have a local anchorage.” (Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6\textsuperscript{th} 2010). However Start see problems with this approach as they have focused too much on a specific player in the past and if he leaves all merchandise with his name would be almost worthless. Their biggest local star is for example now the captain of Vålerenga. “We see now that we have a big, big problem in selling those kind of products so we need to make our products more standardized” (Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6\textsuperscript{th} 2010). TFF do not use any persons or characters in their merchandise because players tend to switch clubs. Instead they profile their brand with associations that they want to be perceived with. “The club will remain, but players might leave. So it is hard to profile a player when he might leave next year” (Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, May 4\textsuperscript{th} 2010).

4.1.3 PHYSIQUE

In previous years HIF has followed fashion trends of merchandise and merchandise suppliers and not the regular fashion trends. “But we are now working with a new supplier who works with a different cycle. They are working with the regular fashion trends and we try to get the merchandise to follow the regular fashion trends” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4\textsuperscript{th} 2010). HIF is trying to use those kinds of things when they are working with fashion. But they still have a long way to go before getting there and they haven’t experienced any changes in their merchandise yet. Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, (May 4\textsuperscript{th} 2010) explains how HIF works with trends “For example there is fashion both in colours and details in the polo shirt. Sometimes it is fashion to have large badge on the back, or like now the fashion is to have some cool black and white text or photos, and also some t-shirts.”
Start have an agreement with Umbro who develops their merchandise, and Start have very little to say when it comes to design. “All our clothes are quality made and approved by Umbro” (Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010). TFF and AGF also have one supplier who delivers almost all of their merchandise. Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson (May 4th 2010) explains: “We got a company, Intersport, which we purchase our merchandise from. They are quite fashionable, I think”. Also AGF is using Intersport to produce their merchandise at the moment but that deal has come to an end. From the end of May 2010 they will produce their own clothes. “…because the guys who have the greatest interest in developing it is ourselves. Intersport is running two retail stores in Aarhus at the moment and for them it is of course only one leg of their business. But to us it is the only retail leg that we got” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010).

AGF doesn’t follow regular fashion trends at the moment, but they might do it in phase three. The first phase is on-field gear, scarves, and so on, and the second phase focuses towards the business segment. “But in phase three, and that’s in three to five years, we may go fashion” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010). MFF are also interested in developing products for businessmen. “I believe there are many that would use it on a weekday, if it doesn’t have MFF written all over it” (Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010).

AGF sell pullovers with an embroidered gothic logo with the same colour as the pullover. They are “discrete because we have sponsors who don’t want explicit exposure but they like to be discrete and that is what we call business” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010). However Head of Sales, Olav Lindebø (May 6th 2010) says: “When it comes to fashion trends I don’t think that fashionable clothes is the best way to sell supporter articles cause the average supporter, I think, would like to have something identical to the players”.

All the clubs are using their home colours in the basic selection. Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson (May 4th 2010) explains how they use their logo in merchandise: “It differs depending on the product. Some products can have a big logo like a kid t-shirt can have a big logo but on an adult polo shirt it might not look as nice”. If MFF is working with a light blue colour it is always their heavenly blue colour, and the badge can be put on white, black, grey, heavenly blue and pink as we saw in the web shop. HIF explains that a club often has one or two different colours to work with and the problems of only working with just a few colours. “We have red and blue, royal blue. They are not exactly the commercial colours in a regular clothing selection” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010). HIF also works with other colours like black and white. Most of Start’s
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merchandise is black and yellow. However Head of Communications Olav Lindebø (May 6th 2010) tells us: “But we have tried this year with the grey, hooded sweater and we find it interesting to see that it is selling pretty good”. They also use 1905 as well, which is the founding year of the club. Despite Start’s success with the grey hooded sweater and pants they are not considering making discrete clothes at the moment by Start, Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø (May 6th 2010) says: “We don’t think it’s a demand. We haven’t heard that people want to buy merchandise with Start that doesn’t necessarily look like Start merchandise”. In the web shops we could see that all four clubs with a functioning web shop were using black as a compliment colour. Second most popular was white which was used by all but Start. Pink was used by TFF and MFF on some products like pacifiers and caps but only MFF had grey clothes for sale in their web shop (L4, L5, L6, L7, L8).

MFF have an industrial design right on a special tartan pattern which will probably be used on dressier clothes in the future, like high quality shirts and skirts. For example Stenström’s is going to develop a MFF shirt with the pattern. “It’s going to be expensive but we got a good offer from Stenström’s. It’s going to be a good shirt, one of their best shirts; it is hard to get anything better in Sweden” (Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010). MFF are planning to use this pattern as a signal for their brand. When we visited their web shop on May 21st 2010 we saw a tie in that tartan pattern sold for 249 SEK (L7).

All clubs use their logo as an original and do not compromises with it they claim, only Start say that their logo (white and blue) can sometimes be seen in black and white. All clubs however have let the colours of their logos blend with the colour of certain products, mainly glassware but also on caps and polo shirts. In the AGF store you can see some of the business wear with altered logos like grey cardigans with “AGF” stitched on the chest in the same colour. HIF compromise very little with the logo and colours in their merchandise and when they do, it is only with a limited amount of products. MFF say that they do not compromise with the colours and logo at the moment. In the future they might develop a collection with other colours but at the moment they feel that “it wouldn’t be MFF clothes. It won’t feel like MFF. I think it’s hard to sell”... “But we work with Puma, in our store we sell Puma clothes. There are many colours in their collection but it’s not a MFF brand” (Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010).

Almost all of the clubs thinks that the look of the merchandise has a big effect on the club brand. TFF focuses on attracting a younger audience, and therefore tries to select products that appeal to
that target. Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, (May 4th 2010) states that: “I think that branding is very important when it comes to the range of souvenirs.”

It is not just important to make quality merchandise to build the brand according to MFF Head of Communications, Per Welinder (May 4th 2010) explains how certain products should be avoided: “If you like the club, you want to be proud of what the club put its badge on. I think it is important to have a well thought concept what the badge should be put on. For example, this is not wise (Per points on a door mat with the MFF logo on it)”. Because of the agreement Start have with Umbro, Start don’t have much influence over how the merchandise is affecting the club brand. Start thinks that Umbro’s products have good quality and they know what they get from them. Both MFF and Start thinks that the best way to affect the brand perception through merchandise is by having quality products. MFF’s deal with Puma allows them to work more freely with other merchandise suppliers than in the past. Head of Communications, Per Welinder (May 4th 2010) explains: “During the last years we have switched suppliers and got a wider selection of suppliers. Before it was more like a part of a business agreement, that one developed everything and in return we bought everything, then it looked thereafter. But that is history, now we have Puma as main supplier and they got good designers and good quality on their products. We can also work with others more freely based on what products we want to develop, which has generated a boost in the shop…. Especially in quality and also on the turnover.”

HIF are searching for some new additions to their merchandise besides the club badge and Helsingborgs IF that is supposed to make the viewer connect it with HIF but haven’t found any clear additions so far. On the web shop you can see a slogan occur on several products, Skånes Stolthet (The Pride of Scania). The designer they work with pointed out that it is very important to have different attributes to enhance the brand. HIF may work with the Helsingborg city’s nickname Sundets Pärla (The pearl of the strait) in the future, as well as the stadium name Olympia which is one of a decreasing number of stadiums in Sweden where the name is not sold to a company. To get their fans to return to the shop MFF focuses on a high velocity of merchandise turnover. Head of Communications, Per Welinder (May 5th 2010) explains that: “Even if you have purchased something and return a month later you will find new products. The velocity of the turnover is important, at least when it comes to scarves where we have a wide selection. We work in series, when the scarves are sold-out we buy in a new one.” MFF’s focus on news-value in the collection
can be seen in their web shop as they were the only club that have the offers on the start page of the web shop change each time you enter (L7). MFF focuses mainly on two different added attributes; their founding year, 1910, and “Skånelaget” which means they are the team of the whole region of Scania not just the city of Malmö. Both of these attributes can be seen on a few products. The Scania references comes in different shapes; the Scania Griffin, the shape of the region and the red and yellow Scania flag. The third Scania club, TFF, instead focuses on consistency. They believe in sending out one message with their badge and blue colour as they believe that you will only “create a mess if you profile “one club, one heart” one day, and then “we are 85-90 years old” the next day” (Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, May 4th 2010). Start and AGF, like TFF, do not mention any other visible product attributes that is supposed to be connected to their clubs.

4.1.4 CULTURE

Neither of the clubs believes that they are at the moment actively promoting their values in a successful way through their merchandise. Instead the values of each club are more of passive guidelines to what they won’t do. In Start for example, they feel safe with Umbro as their supplier so they know that their products are not produced from, for example, child labour and MFF describe the situation as they “don’t develop clothes that feel wrong”... ”we wouldn’t develop a burglar mask for example” (Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010). TFF and HIF regard themselves as being very active in promoting their values through marketing and Helsingborg show an interest in conveying those values also through merchandise and they think that in the long run it may add value to the whole club brand but confessed that they had not come very far with that yet. In AGF they don’t think their norms and values have much to do with the merchandise more than avoiding rival teams’ colours. Start have taken on a social responsibility through Start Life Support which have been received well by the sponsors. HIF discussed the problem to meet all the customers’ needs. The 40 years old dad, the sponsor CEO and the women and kids all have different needs. “We have looked at the selection of products and tried to adapt it after different targets”... “But it has also resulted in a wide selection of products and many of them don’t sell that much” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010). Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson (May 4th 2010) explain TFF’s core value “We believe that our organisation is for everyone”... “And we are thorough that everyone shall feel appurtenant towards the club.”
Many of the clubs think it is difficult to handle the demand from supporter that wants to dress fashionable, however, the answers differ. TFF means that the taste differs from person to person and it is impossible to satisfy all the targets. "One can’t get 50 different t-shirts, it is both practically and theoretically impossible" (Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, May 4th 2010). The clubs give different descriptions of fans that accounts for the highest merchandise revenue. AGF and Start both claim that it is their average supporter who generates the highest merchandise revenue. Quality is something they both repeated several times as something they wanted their merchandise to be connected with. “As you both know, we have like 25 t-shirts in our closets and there is just two or three that we like to use. And probably those are the ones of the best quality” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010). Start also note that their deal with Umbro limits them to design their own products. “Umbro makes everything so it's pretty much out of their catalogue. So we can change the colouring and some design but it’s pretty much straight out of their catalogue...” (Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010).

4.1.5 RELATIONSHIP

HIF and AGF, especially, show a big interest in getting their fans and sponsors to wear their merchandise on a daily basis. Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson (May 4th 2010) said “That is a challenge that we are going to work with a lot ahead.” and Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes (May 5th 2010) states that “...if we can get people to use AGF clothes on a daily basis that would be enormous”. Also MFF shows interest in developing casual wear and wants to raise their merchandise to a higher fashion level. They think that that will make more supporters wear their clothes outside the arena. Head of Communications, Per Welinder (May 4th 2010) says: “It’s to keep a good selection of nice-looking stuff. It can not only be match clothes, there has to be some polos and t-shirts and so on. The only thing that can be done is to develop nice-looking clothes.” AGF and MFF talk about shirts and business clothes as their primary products for everyday use, whereas TFF and Start focus on younger customers. Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson (May 4th 2010) explains that: “We could develop something if we find a new target that is big and has enough of potential to purchase a larger amount of a specific product.” An example of this would be the trucker cap that was popular some years ago. “...if we were about to purchase trucker-caps and the minimum quantity would be 300 and we might only sell 100 of them. We don’t have enough
customers to make special products and to follow that development” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson May 4th 2010).

The 80% of HIF’s selection which is doing well receives the most focus and at the moment HIF is trying to develop more clothes for businessmen like “black scarves with a discrete badge on” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010) instead of a “red t-shirt with a larger badge on” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010) which they are not interested in. Start believe that their “typical buyer wants to buy authentic things” (Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010), but they have a few products that are supposed to be used outside the arena. Besides kids products like school kits and bottles they have a few hats and the grey hooded sweater. TFF’s focus on growth from beneath has them asking questions like: “how does a modern t-shirt today look like for young people between the ages of 15-30 years old?” (Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, May 4th 2010). In the future AGF is looking to expand what they call the business-to-business assortment by making “polos with a discrete AGF logo in the same colours” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010) for example. Jørgen Noes is however doubtful that it will be a big part of the sales as he have seen the second largest merchandise seller in Denmark, Brøndby and they have only three or four items from that category according to AGF. “I don’t believe at the moment that it will be a big part of our assortment” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010).

Products are designed differently to attract new supporters throughout the clubs. However, there are doubts in this area. Vice President and Head of Sales Jørgen Noes (May 5th 2010) says:” I don’t think merchandise will attract new fans, I don’t believe that. But I’m not sure.” Both TFF and Start focuses on attracting supporters at a young age in their merchandise. “We want to get a growth from beneath and we are looking on what young people would wear. And to be thorough in selecting things that we know that young supporters purchase” (Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, May 4th 2010). Start have a “big line of children products like school supplies and wrapping paper and everything that a kid needs” (Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 5th 2010). MFF have their children club, called “miniblå” (mini blue) which they want to develop more products for. Start don’t have much merchandise that is directly developed for girls, and because of the agreement with Umbro they will probably not change that in the near future.
There are several factors that determine how the clubs’ sales differ from year to year. Both AGF and MFF sales are increasing. AGF are certain the sales are going to increasing over the years and know what they are going to focus on. “Distribution and target development are going to be the key focuses for us” (Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, May 5th 2010). AGF and Start were the two clubs who saw the success of the team as the single most important factor whereas HIF found it to have a little impact on the sales. HIF has been steady throughout the years and only showing small differences. “When we won the championship back at ’99 we sold more souvenirs, when we play games in the European cup or play more games it might also increase a little.” (Head of Sales, Christian Nilsson, May 4th 2010). Start also changes their jersey every third year which boosts the sales, mostly the first year. “Year one we sell a lot. Year two we sell a little less and in year three we sell less than in year two.” (Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, May 6th 2010). Both AGF and MFF have developed limited edition jerseys. “We printed all the names on it of the people that has represented the A-team throughout the years, 100 years. 652 names and the first home match were played without any advertisement” (Head of Communications, Per Welinder, May 4th 2010). All 700 jerseys were sold-out out during the release weekend. AGF makes 1000 limited edition away jerseys every year, and it is supposed to be a collective item. AGF and MFF have positive experiences from these kinds of limited edition jerseys and they aren’t ordering more of a shirt when it’s sold out. As Head of Communications, Per Welinder, (May 4th 2010) explains: “it’s more fun to sell out than to have in stock”.

4.2 TEST OF ASSUMPTIONS

4.2.1 ANALYSIS OF PERSONALITY ACCORDING TO THE MODEL

Star players are assumed to be used to increase the supporters’ identification with the merchandise. Clubs who use personalities are also assumed to have a higher merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium than those clubs who don’t use personalities.

All clubs but TFF seem to agree or partly agree with Beech & Chadwick’s (2007) claim that star players have an important role in the supporters’ perception of the club Brand Equity as they are using their players in their merchandise, however mostly in the marketing of it. This can be seen as a manifestation of perceived quality. Ghodeswar (2008) and Aaker (in Melin 2006) suggests that a
geographical identification can add value to the brand identity. Start are more consistent with Ghodeswar’s and Aaker’s ideas than Beech & Chadwick’s as they thought it was more important to associate the brand with the feeling that “we make it on our own” and a pride over being independent of foreign acquisitions by profiling their local stars rather than their greatest player when it comes to football skills, Bolaños. Pride over the club and a regional rooting is also a desired effect when using personalities by MFF and HIF. MFF’s use of Ibrahimovic, Larsson and the 1979 European Cup-final team work as carriers of that pride. We can see that the two clubs with the lowest average attendance, TFF and Start, were the most hesitant to use players in their merchandise as they risk losing them to bigger clubs in the league. That was the case with Start where one of their former local stars is now the captain of Vålerenga and the products connected to him are now very hard to sell.

Identification with the team was shown by Kwon & Armstrong (2002) to significantly affect the amount of money spent on impulse purchases. The use of personalities in AGF’s and MFF’s merchandise can be seen as a use of mainly brand association, and may be one of the reasons to why these clubs have a higher merchandise turnover per attending supporter.

4.4.2 ANALYSIS OF PHYSIQUE ACCORDING TO THE MODEL

We assume that the clubs produce merchandise with the home colours and logo as the main promoters of perceived quality and that clubs who are consistent with connections to the flagship product will be more successful in terms of merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium.

All clubs have a vast majority of their merchandise in their home jersey’s colour. They also render the highest revenues from their match associated products like jerseys and scarves. Thus the home jersey can be seen as the clubs’ product flagship as discussed in Kapferer (2008). Melin (2006) claim that the colour is a vital part of the brand’s visual identity and it is obvious that all the interviewed clubs want to be consistent with their home colours. All clubs also use other colours than their home colours. It appears that the home colour can in some occasions decrease the perceived quality, HIF explains that there are problems with just using one or two colours as they aren’t always trendy. MFF in turn noted that they though more people would wear their merchandise outside the arena if it didn’t scream MFF.
The clubs are consistent with the most important attribute according to Melin (2006), the logo which can be seen in some way on virtually all products from all clubs. This is a clear example of how the clubs use brand association. There are two opposite merchandise methods regarding attributes. TFF believes in consistency in the merchandise communication through the blue colour and logo. MFF and HIF, with the support from their designer, on the other hand are pursuing a wider selection with other attributes to connect to the club, like the founding year and Scania for example. MFF’s tartan pattern may very well become an attribute with which MFF’s supporter will connect the more fashionable selection with if they stick with the pattern on quality clothes and accessories. The latter group’s way of brand association through attributes seem to have been more successful (regarding merchandise turnover per attending supporter) and the two other clubs, AGF and Start are leaning towards this idea too.

HIF, MFF, AGF and Start believe that the merchandise fashion is partly separated from the regular fashion whereas TFF see no general difference. You can clearly see two paths. Those who are bound to deals to one single merchandise supplier tend to care less about regular fashion, while the clubs with more freedom in their merchandise development are focusing more on attracting supporters who want to dress fashionable into their shops with co operations with designers and luxury shirt manufacturers. Perhaps the relative success per average attendance by the latter group can be explained by Travis’ (2000) claim that the best way to attract new customers is by offering something different in the product category the brand exists.

Melin (2006) claims that it is important to constantly develop new products to maintain the brand’s strength, attractiveness and good reputation. Mainly MFF update their merchandise much more often than the other clubs which can be seen as another example of offering something different, they even update their offering on the start page of the web shop. TFF on the other hand still produce their “Allsvenskan 2007” scarf. MFF’s efforts have been a successful way to get the fans to return to their shops to check out what is new.
4.2.3 ANALYSIS OF CULTURE ACCORDING TO THE MODEL

We assume that the clubs’ values and local rooting play an important part in how the merchandise is produced and how they look as well as the success in terms of merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium.

Kapferer’s (2008) idea that every product originates from a culture can to some extent be seen as each club’s culture function as passive guidelines as to what they will not produce and what colours they won’t use. A geographical identity is incredibly valuable according to Melin (2006) and Kapferer (2008) and the culture can also be seen when it comes to regional and local rooting, where MFF and HIF both compete for the football fans of Scania with primarily the value pride in their merchandise. This geographical rooting is an example of brand association as it concerns the attribute tradition. TFF strongly believes that they are a club for everyone while the other clubs repeatedly mentioned that the quality in their products is essential for the Brand Equity. Being humble was stated as an important value in AGF while Start focused on their social responsibility with Start Life Support which has been well received by their sponsors. Travis (2000) partly contradicts the four clubs focus on quality as he argues that quality is just a prerequisite to maintain customers. Instead he argues that the offering of something new is more important to attract new customers.

Urban & Hauser’s (1993) idea that it is more profitable to have a large share of a small segment than a low share in many segments can be supported by AGF’s customer focus. AGF, who make the most money per fan at the stadium together with MFF, are focusing very much on products that attract their average supporter and as a result receive a very large share of their merchandise turnover from them through the jerseys. However among the other clubs there can be no clear conclusion regarding the effect of following Urban & Hauser’s (1993) advice. Start and TFF have similar approaches as AGF with small selections that are mainly focused towards match day clothing. As a result Start, like AGF, have the same average buyer and average supporter. The successful MFF and less successful HIF (regarding merchandise percentage of total turnover and merchandise turnover per attending supporter) have similar target and collection strategies as well as average consumer.
4.2.4 ANALYSIS OF RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO THE MODEL

It is assumed that the clubs have developed merchandise to accommodate group affiliation needs outside of the stadium from their supporters and that it is connected with the success in terms of merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium.

Supporters seek group affiliation as Dionisio (2008) remarked. This would be brand association as it belongs to the group benefits where you find peer group acceptance. If they show their affiliation to the club during week days among less football interested people it could work as marketing for the club as it would increase the brand awareness that Melin (2006) discuss. Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, (May 6th 2010) describes Start’s main purpose with their merchandise as creating brand awareness; “It’s of course to build a brand. So people can see that we are a club even on non-match days.” TFF want to attract teenage supporters and focuses their style towards them, while MFF and Start want to attract supporters at a younger age and have a big merchandise selection for kids’. The brand awareness that Melin (2006) is talking about is thus created in an early stage. HIF see the biggest potential in using their merchandise to attract new supporters.

To receive the brand awareness marketing effect from merchandise, product quality and design may be important. You may design a t-shirt with a big club badge on it and some fans buy it. Due to lacking quality or that they feel uncomfortable showing obvious affiliation in certain circumstances, a purchase alone doesn’t necessarily mean that the fans will wear it. Then the merchandise will get no exposure and the marketing value is lost. In Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, (May 5th 2010) words: “As you both know, we have like 25 t-shirts in our closets and there is just two or three that we like to use. And probably those are the ones of the best quality”. MFF showed the biggest interest in getting their merchandise outside the stadium and their tartan pattern will be used on their casual wear to signal association to MFF rather than the logo as they believe more supporters will wear that kind of product on a daily basis. Stenströms may be a stronger brand name regarding shirts and casual wear than MFF. Through their brand alliance they can reach a target group that neither of them could have pursued alone. MFF don’t have the same experience of producing high quality shirts as Stenströms but Stenströms can’t match the brand loyalty of MFF’s supporters. This is a typical example of how Dahlén & Lange (2003) describe that a stronger brand can help a weaker, complementing brand. Start are unable to make this brand alliance other than with Umbro thus they would have a hard time reaching the regular fashion even if they wanted to.
AGF was the other club that have a clear business approach for some of their collection with shirts and cardigans, which they target mainly to their sponsors and HIF was in a start up phase for more business wear. This approach by MFF, HIF and AGF may lead to sponsor who feel more affiliated towards the club.

The clubs design products that allow supporters to bask in the reflected glory, for example MFF’s 100 year anniversary jersey and TFF’s Allsvenskan 2007 scarf after their promotion. AGF and Start experience a growth in the sales of merchandise when the team is successful and performs well, thus the fans tend to be basking in the reflecting glory like Wann (1995) discussed. As Beech & Chadwick (2007) discuss the positive effects of brand association, which happen during BIRGing, and the positive effect it has on the Brand Equity.
5. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we present our conclusions from the analysis of our research. Here we present the answer to our research question. We start this chapter by reminding you of the research question.

As we argued in the background, there are other factors in a football club’s Brand Equity than merchandise and some factors like history and the atmosphere in the stadium may have more importance. Thus building Brand Equity solely through the merchandise ideas presented in this thesis may be very difficult. However we believe, with the results of this thesis in mind, that merchandise can have a significant effect on Brand Equity. Another limitation regarding our coverage of the Brand Identity Prism is that we couldn’t research the customer areas Self-Image and Reflection with the method chosen. We have interviewed five clubs out of a total population of 44 which accounts for a rather big share of 11%. The evaluation on the relative merchandise success is made through both to what percentage merchandise accounts for the total turnover and how much turnover each club could generate per match attending supporter. A relationship can be seen where the club with the least amount of supporters have significantly worse statistics and the two grandest clubs in terms of supporters had significantly better statistics. The relative importance of club size on these merchandise statistics can’t be disclosed in this thesis.

Research question: How do Scandinavian football clubs use merchandise to build the club Brand Equity?

Below follows the conclusion of this thesis:

- The Brand Equity component that the clubs are trying to affect the most through merchandise is brand association. Perceived quality and brand awareness are secondary focuses for the clubs to affect while brand loyalty couldn’t be seen in this thesis.
- Players are used to enhance brand association, however the fear of losing players and the resulting loss in merchandise value have limiting effect on the use of players in merchandise, mainly for clubs with low average attendance. Star players are not necessarily used in merchandise as regional pride may be more important to signal than success for
some clubs. Higher levels of personalities used in merchandise seem to have a positive effect on merchandise percentage of the total turnover.

- The logo and the home colours are used as the main promoters of perceived quality in each club’s merchandise. However those clubs who are the most prone to use other colours and attributes tend to be more profitable. Furthermore, the clubs who have a deal with their main supplier that allows them to initiate other brand alliances are more prone to pursue the regular fashion segments and are more profitable. It should also be noted that news-value in the merchandise seems to be important to get the supporters to return to the shop.

- All clubs to some degree see the club’s culture more as guidelines to what they would not do regarding merchandise rather than what they actually do. Brand association through culture is built through proclamation of local rooting and tradition. The results were inconclusive regarding the effect of focusing on one or several segments.

- Clubs who develop merchandise that is supposed to signal club affiliation outside the arena in a discrete way are approaching the business segment as a first step and those clubs have higher merchandise turnover per supporter in the stadium. Brand alliances can be used to reach segments in the fashion market that could be difficult to reach alone. Most clubs try to incite brand awareness at an early age through baby, kids and youth merchandise. Most clubs tend to take advantage of the opportunity to let the supporters bask in the reflected glory during success through special merchandise which may increase brand association.

- Most clubs may overemphasize the importance of product quality. However with bad quality their supporters won’t wear the merchandise and the marketing effect is lost.
6. REFLECTIONS

In this chapter we will freely reflect over the thesis you just read. What was interesting and what could we have done differently also we will discuss the implications that our conclusions may have for the football industry and other industries.

6.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study of this business was very interesting for both of us as we are ourselves fans of different sport teams. We were suspecting that the clubs would be quite homogenous in their approach to merchandise as most of the merchandise we see around us looks quite similar. However there proved to be some major differences especially between clubs with large and small fan bases. Those with larger fan bases proved more often than not to be working quite in line with the theories we studied and also, which probably pleases Melin and the other authors, more successful. Brand Association seems to be the closest link between Brand Identity and Brand Equity.

6.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The conclusions should be applicable to other major Scandinavian team sports like Ice Hockey and Handball as their supporter behaviour should be quite similar to the Scandinavian football clubs. Regarding the football markets we believe that the results are most applicable to countries with similar culture and football interest. Perhaps the Austrian, Belgian, Czech, Dutch, Finnish and Swiss markets are the closest in this aspect.

6.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis focus on the football clubs’ perspective and what they experience add values to their merchandise. For further research we recommend to study the supporters’ perspective to cover the areas of Self-Image and Reflection to get a full view of the Brand Identity Prism.

We also recommend studying other football markets to disclose to what extent our conclusions can be applied to them. During our interviews with the clubs we heard numerous times a complaint that it was hard to reach the high volumes needed to launch a new product. A study on this area with the
purpose to solve the clubs’ scale disadvantages should prove very beneficial as more personalized products can be designed for the supporters.

6.4 OTHER REFLECTIONS

We have seen that MFF is slightly over represented with quotes and exemplification. We believe that is due to our perception that MFF’s case was usually the one that best exemplified how a theory was put in practice, Per Welinder’s answers which we found well formulated and MFF’s interesting case with mainly the unique Tartan pattern. We will send this material to the participant clubs and Svenska Spel who sponsored our research and made it possible for us to visit the clubs.

Melin (2006) discuss the product and that the package is more important if consumers can’t predict and experience the product before the purchase. In this case a part of the package would be the merchandise that those who are already fans wear (other parts could include the atmosphere in the stadium and the star players) and the real product is the football club and the purchase is whether or not a person will invest his time, money and emotions and become a fan. The perception the person who is not yet a fan has regarding the merchandise his friends, family members and colleagues wear may, with this in mind, have a significant factor whether or not he or she will become a football fan.
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INTERVIEWS
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- Interview with Head of Communications, Per Welinder, Malmö FF, 2010-05-04
- Interview with Head of Market, Barbro Bengtsson, 2010-05-04
- Interview with Vice President and Head of Sales, Jørgen Noes, AGF Aarhus, 2010-05-05
- Interview with Head of Customers, Olav Lindebø, IK Start, 2010-05-06
APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEWS

AGF AARHUS
Date: 14:50, May 5th
Interviewee: Jørgen Noes, Vice President and Head of Sales
Way of conduct: The initial contact was made through an e-mail on April 1st which was sent to the person, Jørgen Noes, on AGF’s contact list who we thought had the most influence over merchandise. In that e-mail we also asked for the person with most influence and knowledge over AGF’s merchandise development. It turned out that it was Jørgen and we scheduled a time for an interview in person in the afternoon of May 5th. We sent him the questions over e-mail a week before the interview. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes. The interview was conducted in English and transcribed by us.

HELSINGBORGS IF
Date: 08.30, May 4th
Interviewee: Christian Nilsson, Head of Sales
Way of conduct: The initial contact was made through an e-mail on April 1st which was sent to the person, Head of Market Rickard Nilsson, on Helsingborgs IF’s contact list who we thought had the most influence over merchandise. In that e-mail we also asked for the person with most influence and knowledge over Helsingborgs IF’s merchandise development. Christian Nilsson answered our e-mail and we scheduled a time for an interview in person in the morning of May 4th. We sent him the questions over e-mail six days before the interview. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes. The interview was conducted in Swedish and transcribed and translated into English by us.

MALMÖ FF
Date: 12:00, May 4th
Interviewee: Per Welinder, Head of Communications
Way of conduct: The initial contact was made through an e-mail on April 1st which was sent to the person, Head of Sales Magnus Svensson, on Malmö FF’s contact list who we thought had the most influence over merchandise. In that e-mail we also asked for the person with most influence and knowledge over Malmö FF’s merchandise development. It turned out that it was Per and we scheduled a time for an interview in person at noon of May 4th. We sent him the questions over e-mail six days before the interview. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes. The interview was conducted in Swedish and transcribed and translated into English by us.

IK START
Date: 20:00, May 6th
Interviewee: Olav Lindebø, Head of Customers
Way of conduct: The initial contact was made through an e-mail on April 1st which was sent to the person, Olav Lindebø, on IK Start’s contact list who we thought had the most influence over merchandise. In that e-mail we also asked for the person with most influence and knowledge over IK Start’s merchandise development. It turned out that it was Olav and we scheduled a time for an interview in person in the evening of May 6th. We sent him the questions over e-mail eight days before the interview. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes. The interview was conducted in English and transcribed by us.

TRELLEBORGS FF
Date: 14.30, May 4th
Interviewee: Barbro Bengtsson, Head of Market
Way of conduct: The initial contact was made through an e-mail on April 1st which was sent to the person, Head of Market Barbro Bengtsson, on Trelleborgs FF’s contact list who we thought had the most influence over merchandise. In that e-mail we also asked for the person with most influence and knowledge over Trelleborgs FF’s merchandise development. Barbro answered our e-mail and we scheduled a time for an interview in person in the afternoon of May 4th. We sent her the questions over e-mail six days before the interview. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes. The interview was conducted in Swedish and transcribed and translated into English by us.
APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONS

- How much from your total turnover is generated through merchandise?
- What product accounts for the highest revenue of your merchandise?
- How many supporters do you have?
- Who is your average supporter?
- What types of persons and characters are used in the merchandise and what feelings are they supposed to convey?
- How well does your merchandise follow fashion trends?
- For what types of merchandise do you compromise with the team logo and colours?
- How do you work with the team logo and colours in the merchandise?
- How do you think that the look of your merchandise affect the club brand?
- How do you try to affect the brand through the look of your merchandise?
- How are the club’s norms and values being portrayed in the fan merchandise and in the development of new products?
- How do these products affect the value of the club’s brand?
- What attributes besides the logo and colours makes your merchandise characteristic for your club?
- What input do the supporters have in the development of merchandise?
- What can be improved with your merchandise?
- What is the main purpose of your merchandise?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX 3. TRANSCRIPTS FROM INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX 3.1 INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTIAN NILSSON, HELSINGBORGES IF

Alexander Falck (AF) – How much from your total turnover is generated through merchandise?

Christian Nilsson (CN) – About 2-3 % of the total turnover.

AF – Where does the rest come from?

CN – Revenues from tickets, sponsorship, different revenues from TV agreements.

AF – What product accounts for the highest revenue of your merchandise?

CN – It is the jersey.

AF – How many supporters do you have?

CN – It depends on how you define the word supporter. We have an average attendance of 10 000 on the games, so we have at least 10 000 supporters watching the games.

AF – How would you describe your average supporter?

CN – The average supporter is a man between 25 – 35 years old.

AF – Does he have any specific job?

CN – He has a middle income, worker, “a Svensson” (an average Joe). I think that is the average supporter.

AF – Do you work with any persons and characters to convey feelings in your merchandise?

CN – Yes. We work quite wide in our marketing, but in the merchandise marketing we try to use our players as persons to market merchandise products. We also try to use celebrities that have a connection to HIF, both local and national celebrities, to make the products a little bit cooler to wear. It should create a permission to use the merchandise product. I think that we convey the feelings through the merchandise. We want to that make it cooler to use HIF branded products. It should get the permission first in order to pass, like you talked about earlier, partly to find a good range of products to suits all the targets. It should also be accepted to have it, to be proud of using products with the badge on it.

AF – How well does your merchandise follow fashion trends?

CN – Historical, we have followed the fashion of merchandise and from merchandise suppliers, but that kind of fashion doesn’t really follow the regular clothing fashion trends. But we are now working with a new supplier who works with a different cycle. They are working with the regular fashion trends and we try to get the merchandise to follow the regular fashion trends. There are also other details that should be there, like some colours. We have tried work with the regular fashion trends, in the previous year, with the development of which products that are going to use this, but it takes some time before getting there.

AF – How do you experience the changes?
CN – We haven’t gotten far enough to get that change; it takes time before we get there. For example there is fashion both in colours and details in the polo shirt. Sometimes it is fashion to have large badge on the back, or like now the fashion is to have some cool black and white text or photos, and also some t-shirts. We try to work with those kinds of fashion things.

AF – How do you work with the team logo and colours in the merchandise?

CN – We try to always use our logo as an original. The colours are in the basic merchandise selection. But it is a thing we have talked about, the clubs has often one or two colours to work with. One can’t only work with those colours. We have red and blue, royal blue. They are not exactly the commercial colours in a regular clothing selection. We try to work with other colours. We worked a lot with black and white which are good colours to work with, but also with other colours. We have talk about to trying to use pink and find some products.

AF – Are you ever going to use light blue?

CN – I don’t think that it will ever be light blue, it’s too emotional.

AF – For what types of merchandise do you compromise with the team logo and colours?

CN – It’s a very limited amount of products. Firstly it must be unisex products if you talk about pink, for example pink is not really a fashion colour anymore. It used to be a more fashionable colour, but now it’s more like a regular colour in the selection. If you look at fashion colours the upcoming spring and we were to find some fashion colours that aren’t red and blue. Then we try to develop for example a unisex cap or it could be a hat, kid products. So it’s a more limited amount of products. We try to stay away from clothes when it comes to follow the fashion trends because they have different fits. Women want one type of fit, and men want another type of fit, some want different type of collars and so on. So we look more at this kind of details when we follow the development, because it’s more than just colours when following the fashion trends.

AF – How do you think that the look of the merchandise affect the perception of the club brand and the feelings of it?

CN – I think it is very important and it has a great affect. I believe that it is a very important channel when you want to gain approval for and develop the brand for the merchandise products because it is a carrier of the badge that is going to be seen everywhere. At the same time that you want to make it funny commercially, you should also take care of the brand so it doesn’t ruin the development of it. I think that branding is very important when it comes to the range of souvenirs.

AF – In what way do you try to affect the brand through the merchandise?

CN – We have two kinds of manuals for our brand. We have a graphical profile manual that tells us what we can and can’t do with our brand, generally speaking. It is very strict. You can’t put a cross over the brand, we can’t use any colours we like in the chaplet or the badge, we can’t change the size however you’d like, it has to be relative and so on. We have another manual when it comes to the merchandise where we can do more things than the regular manual where there is a line of what to stick to on the badge and the brand. There is, besides that, another brand and that is Helsingborgs IF. It is important that we follow the whole organizations brand. Then there are some limitations. Some messages, texts, fonts and stuff which should be avoided when following HIF’s brand. We have some values we believe in.

AF – How are the club’s norms and values being portrayed in the fan merchandise and in the development of new products? Are you doing this?

CN – We try to do that but have not come that far with it. We work also with the norms and value that we want to convey. In HIF we work very much with our marketing. We haven’t come as far with the merchandise brand as a bit behind in the merchandise process. What is important right now is to get our products out, to find a selection that fits the supporters, so we haven’t worked in detail to find values. We haven’t come far enough to do that, for us it is more important to make sure that we have good products and that we release a good selection, to get the selection of souvenirs accepted. We have worked a lot with innovation and changes with the merchandise. So we haven’t come far enough to convey values in the merchandise.

AF – How do you think it is going to affect the club’s brand? Are you going to start doing this?

CN – Yes we are going to start doing this, we have said that the first step is important that the merchandise get accepted. The next step is that we trying to convey values in a clearer way when communicating through our merchandise products.

AF – What do you think the effect will be?

CN – It’s hard to say, I actually don’t know. In the long run I hope that we can convey the HIF brand in a good way through the merchandise, especially to add value with the merchandise. This is important for us right now, but the next step is to increase the value of the whole organisation and to have a good profile in the merchandise supply. It can enhance the whole organisations profile, ergo the brand. In the long run I think, even if we are far from being there, it is more important for us to convey the merchandise. If we see the merchandise selections as one part and the HIF unit as another I believe that we are only there to add value to the merchandise brand, or what to call it.

AF – What attributes besides the logo and colours makes your merchandise characteristic for your club?

CN – Right now we are looking to find some new stuff like that but there are no other natural addition in the merchandise selection besides the HIF badge and Helsingborgs IF. That is what we work with because there are not many other things, but we try to find more of additions that we can use.

AF – One might consider Olympia.

CN – Yes, actually we talked about it the other day. We are one of the few teams that has an arena where the name is not owned by a company. Olympia is a strong brand, as we said the other day, which we want to establish… We have talked about other stuff, like we try with the slogan “football should be experienced live”. That is something we have put a lot of time to establish in peoples mindset when we market the games. Perhaps in the long run we can get something in our merchandise like for example “sundets pärla” (the pearl of the strait). There are concepts like that which we are working with but there isn’t anything natural strong so we have to find or create something to make it strong in the future. We had a meeting with a designer that designs for the regular fashion market, and talked a lot about how important it is with different attributes to enhance the brand, how to find them and how important.
they are. So this is something we have to study and work with. But then again, I can’t see that any other clubs that have strong attributes, or maybe they have?

AF – AIK have Råsunda, and there are some chants about Råsunda. They have also started with the slogan “Kom och ta oss” (come and get us), but that hasn’t been working so well, haha. When the fans were singing “vi är överallt” (we are everywhere) they used it to develop scarves and stuff.

CN – I think that’s important. She (the designer) said that it is really important to have some news-value in the selection. It is good to develop some new stuff and not only use the HIF badge, but also adding some new ideas.

AF – The scarves saying “Vi är överallt” works quite well, and I see it a lot on Råsunda.

AF – You were talking about barriers earlier. What do you do to overcome them to get people to wear HIF products outside the arena and at other circumstances that is not related to Helsingborg?

CN – That is a challenge that we are going to work with a lot ahead. We have looked at the selection of products and tried to adapt it after different targets. There are many different targets like the “Svensson” dad that is 40 years old, he has certain needs. The kids between 9-11 years old has certain needs, the women has certain needs, the hardcore fans has certain needs, and the businessmen that wear shirt and tie has certain needs. All of them don’t buy the same products, and because of that we have been looking for a selection that fits all the targets. But it has also resulted in a wide selection of products and many of them don’t sell that much. For us it is important that... Well 80% of our selection is selling very well, and it might be more important to focus on that. For example, we have a lot of business men and CEOs on the games like sponsors and so on. They don’t buy the red t-shirt with a larger badge on it, or the red and blue scarves. It might be better to have black scarves with a discrete badge on it, or a nice-looking black polo shirt with a discrete badge on it. We try to find that kind of selection. Yesterday (May 3rd) we were in Gothenburg and watching GAIS, they had developed a black blazer with a GAIS badge on it just to find that kind of target. We have looked on having a selection that fits every target. That’s one part; the other is that we are working with the targets differently. Some targets, like souvenir purchasers, we can easily attract through the internet, web shop and sending out mails, but other targets we might have to work differently with. The business men might need offers to be able to attract them to purchase a souvenir. We work partly with the supply of products but also to sell it in different ways to reach them.

AF – I think that you have answered the next question: How are you handling the demand from supporters who want to dress fashionable? So we can drop that on if you don’t have anything else to add?

CN – No.

AF – What type of fans accounts for the highest merchandise revenue? Is it the 25-35 years old men?

CN – Well we don’t really know but we think that the best target for our souvenirs is the mother with the son around 5-15 years old. It is the kids that purchase a lot so we have increased our selection for them, in the ages between 5-15 years old. This selection has increased a lot during the past three years. It is many gifts like grandmother wants to give stuff to her grandson. The age 0-15 is not the buyer, that’s where the products are. It is the mother, father grandmother, and the friend that wants to purchase a gift to his other friend that just had a baby, and so on. So the buyer is somewhere between the age 25-40 years old, but the products that has the highest turnover is the ones made for the age of 0-15 years old.

AF – How do you reach those buyers?

CN – That too is one thing we have been looking at a lot, how to develop for our products to reach them better. The best way to reach them is during the games. It is the most natural way of reaching them during the games and having souvenirs available. We also have souvenirs available on external sale-related places and to market the souvenirs in a good way like the website, through a well-functioned web shop and so on. But we don’t intensively work with any kind of direct marketing towards the different targets. We have never been working with any kind of direct marketing like sending out mails, catalogues, e-mails, advertisements, no addressed marketing for our merchandise.

AF – Have you ever considered doing that?

CN – Yes, actually we have. Maybe not find the a specific target but more like to market the merchandise and to raise HIF’s merchandise one level to make it a little bit cooler. Now we are looking at a completely new selection. When we get it we will show that and start the marketing through different channels showing the customer that HIF has advanced one level. That is the first step how we are going to market the products to get people to discover that the products have become better.

AF – What attributes do you think adds an external value for the customer? Do they feel accepted in the group or? Do you understand the question?

CN – Not really.

AF – If I wear this shirt for example, I wear it because I want you to like it and that I feel accepted. There are some things about the shirt like if it is ironed. The internal value is that I think it is comfortable.

CF – What you as a buyer values?

AF – Exactly

CN – First of all, I believe that the value is that the shirt is a product of the club. It is to show appurtenant to the club, that’s the most important thing I think. Then it has to fit with the customers other purchasing values. When I buy clothes I want good quality and that is a comfortable garment. If I’m going to buy a shirt it has to be comfortable, have good quality, and nice-looking. I think that is what is most important for the customers, in the regular, that you have a wide selection of clothes. For example that it follows his regular values when it comes to products when he buys something else. But the most important is that he should take the step and buy one of our products to show that he is supporting HIF or AIK, or whatever he supports. It is the appurtenant that is important.

AF – How are products designed to attract new supporters?

CN – That’s something that when we are looking at. The designer we are working with designs a lot to the regular business, so to speak. Her cycle is more that she is designing towards the summer of 2011; we are trying to follow that fashion trend as best as we
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Falck, Alexander

We are also trying to look at different attributes like to have a cool quote or something else that is cool, especially on those products that our supporters likes for the moment. Therefore it is important to have news-value in the clothes, so we get some turnover in the souvenirs and then sell new ones continuously. I don’t think we are working that much to develop products to attract new supporters.

AF – Can you think about any specific part of the products…?
CN – We could develop something if we find a new target that is big and has enough of potential to purchase a larger amount of a specific product. There has always been the regular cap for example. A couple of years ago it was popular with the trucker-cap. This would be one way of attracting a certain target who is interested to buy this kind of cap. It could be stuff like that, but we are small when it comes to merchandise, we sell too few of those things to be able to work like that. For example, if we were about to purchase trucker-caps and the minimum quantity would be 300 and we might only sell 100 of them. We don’t have enough customers to make special products and to follow that development. Unfortunately we can’t quite manage that but I hope when can be able to do that in the future.

AF – How do the sales differs from year to year, what appears to be the main factors for the changes?
CN – It is quite steady. I have been working with HIFs merchandise for the past 12 years and we have about the same turnover as the past 12 years. The years that differs some just a small growth or fall, but it is connected with the football success, it might increase then. When we won the championship back at ’99 we sold more souvenirs, when we play games in the European cup or play more games it might also increase a little. Like last year we finished on the 8th place in the table I think, not a good result and no European cups, then we might sell less.

AF – No larger differences?
CN – No larger differences.

AF – Do the supporters have any input in the development of merchandise?
CN – Yes we have constantly dialogs with them, and it is all kinds of supporters. We have supporters in the stands, older talents, younger kid clubs, and there are a lot of different supporters. We have an ongoing dialog with them on all kind of levels, but in merchandise as well where they can express their needs and what they want.

AF – Finally, What is the main goal with your merchandise?
CN – Our main goal can be described in two ways. We want more supporters to use our products, it should be more red, more HIF on our products. We want it to be more legitimate to use our products everywhere, like in school, in town, everywhere. The other goal is to make more money by selling our merchandise.

AF – What is your next goal? What goal do you have for the next five years?
CN – I signed a contract with some new partners January 1st this year. Our goal is to double our turnover in two year. It’s a hard goal to reach until 2012 for the next, lets say three years. But we are going to double our merchandise turnover by the year of 2012.

AF – Is there anything you want to add?
CN – No.
AF – Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX 3.2 INTERVIEW WITH PER WELINDER, MALMÖ FF

Alexander Falck (AF) – How much from your total turnover is generated through merchandise?
Per Welinder – Well if we look at the shop as hole, it generated around 8 million SEK, or 7 million SEK which mean 7 of 190 million SEK. I believe that is about right, in 2009 and it is around 4 % isn’t it?
AF – Yes.
AF - What product accounts for the highest revenue of your merchandise?
PW – A single product is the jersey, that’s a single product that generates most cash.
AF – Is there any other product category that is selling much?
PW – Leisure clothes, hoods, and polos, and that sort of clothes, fashion clothes also generates a lot. But that is a wider range of products; otherwise the jersey is selling the most. We did a fun thing this year where we created a new jersey for the first match of the season. We printed all the names on it of the people that has represented the A-team throughout the years, 100 years. 652 names and the first home match were played without any advertisement. Not even Svenska Spel. After that we sold the jerseys separately, and it was sold-out during the weekend. We got 500 jerseys, and sold it for 700 SEK each.
AF – How do you do when you sell-out a limited product? Do you order more?
PW – No, it’s more fun to sell out than to have in stock. We tried with this and it worked, and now we know that there is a demand for limited edition stuff if they are good enough. This one was really good. You have a target of people whose name was on the jersey, or had a relative whose name was on the jersey and so on.
AF – How many supporters do you have?
PW – How are we going to measure that?
AF – When we asked Helsingborg, they answered the number of the average attending supporters. But also in a wider perspective.
PW – We had an average attendance of 15 000 people last year, but we have much, much, more supporters. It’s hard to say, it is impossible to say how many supporters we have. But we know that MFF is the biggest team in Skåne. If you look from Höör, Hörby, Hässleholm, down to Eslov, Barsebäck. To the east you have Kristianstad, down to Simrishamn, Tummelilla, Sjöbo and so on, 50 % of those who is interested in football are MFF supporters in that region. Then we have an area of 650 000- 700 000 persons. And the interest of football in Sweden is 35 % that are interested in Allsvenskan. Only in that region, we should at least have 100 000
supporters only in that region. If you add people that have moved away and the rest of Sweden you get more. The total amount of supporters should be a couple of 100 000.

AF – Who is your average supporter?

PW – It is easier to talk about the average visitor, and they are between 15-30 years old. It’s a man, if he works he has a middle income, if he is younger like around 15 then he is still in school and so on. It’s quite an average Joe. If we look at the median, there are more men than women aren’t it so? Isn’t 51-49 in the community?

AF – Isn’t it the other way around, because women live longer and more women are born?

PW – More boys than girls are born. Generally speaking.

AF – What types of persons and characters are used in the merchandise?

PW – It’s our players, if we are going use anything. We don’t use persons otherwise.

AF – Even old players?

PW – Yes. We have the Bosse Larsson scarves…But it is players. What we want to convey is always “pride over the club”. It’s always what we want to have. Pride over the club, tradition, success, we are in the proud business, one can say.

AF – How well does your merchandise follow fashion trends?

PW – Quite well actually. We see which garments are selling and stick to them. We can never become a fashion brand in that way. We can just be a sub-cultural fashion and that it is right to wear our products. Hoods and so on that sell quite much in the general leisure segment, we also sell a lot of them. We sell a lot of Polo-shirts. We don’t have jeans for example. The jeans fashion differs from year to year, and we don’t follow those trends.

AF – Have you ever thought of selling jeans?

PW – Maybe not that one…. It’s more in the other direction, we are looking on products for businessmen. Everyone that is in a meeting and is planning to go to a game in the evening, what do those wear?

AF – If they have a light blue skirt, it could be MFF.

PW – Exactly one doesn’t have to stand out. Instead you may want to send discrete signals. In the same time it makes you feel appurtenant to the club, that you are dressed for the game and so on without the need of wearing a jersey.

AF – How do you work with the team logo and colours, light blue, in the merchandise?

PW – To that extent where it is appropriate. We have decided what colours it should be…. If we work with light blue then it is our light blue. The badge always has the same colour in every situation. If you enter our shop you will get a heavenly blue feeling, general speaking. We have some complimentary colour to light blue. White and black is also a part in our basic selection. The badge can be put on white, black, grey, and heavily blue. Its there you find the spectrum in our clothes, mostly. There might be some children clothes that are still in pink, and maybe it also should be so in the future. But I’m not sure if it should be MFF on it, maybe we should work with our “mini blue”, our children club instead.

AF – Is there any types of merchandise, besides the children clothes, where you compromise with the team logo and colours?

PW – No.

AF – Do you have any plans to change that?

PW – Never to compromise with our club badge.

AF – But colours…? Sell clothes in black, red or yellow, grey or others…..?

PW – Well, not MFF clothes, it wouldn’t be MFF clothes. It won’t feel like MFF. I think it’s hard to sell. Once again, it’s a sub-culture… Red can look good, but it don’t feel like MFF. We are not there yet, but it possible in the future that we want to get a collection with other colours. But we work with Puma; in our store we sell Puma clothes. There are many colours in their collection but it’s not a MFF brand

AF – How do you think that the appearance of MFF clothes affect the club brand?

PW – As I said before, I think it is to be proud of the brand. If you like the club, you want to be proud of what the club put its badge on. I think it is important to have a well thought concept what the badge should be put on. For example, this is not wise (Per Welinder points on a door mat with the MFF logo on it).

AF – To walk all over the badge?

PW – Yes, I can’t believe it. Also it is the wrong colours, nothing is right with it. But it is an old sin so. I think it can affect a lot; a good work in the shop can generate brand benefit. Pride of the brand, no doubt.

AF – How do you try to affect the brand through the merchandise?

PW – To get good stuff, that looks good, and has a good quality. Not to walk into the trap (Per points to the door mat again), so to speak. During the last years we have switched suppliers and got a wider selection of suppliers. Before it was more like a part of a business agreement, that one developed everything and in return we bought everything, then it looked thereafter. But that is history, now we have Puma as main supplier and they got good designers and good quality on their products. We can also work with others more freely based on what products we want to develop, which has generated a boost in the shop…. Especially in quality and also on the turnover.

AF – How are the club’s norms and values being portrayed in the fan merchandise and in the development of new products?

PW – It sticks to the chromatics and we don’t develop clothes that feel wrong, hahaha. What can that be? We wouldn’t develop a burglar mask for example, hahaha. Not even if it would be modern and cool.

AF – Are you ever going to develop clothes that say “Hate Helsingborg”?

PW – No, no way. We don’t hate Helsingborg. Nothing like that. We have to send those signals that we want to be associated with, and that we are proud of our club. We can’t engage what others do and do not do. I think that is important, and not just for us but also the whole community. There is a weird debate where the community hate is high priorities. One can say whatever they like about anything and get away with it, in the papers. You don’t get sued for defamation, but rather applaud because “finally someone speaks
up”, and take the honour from someone in a funny way. We live in a world where the word respect is about fear of being beaten up. We don’t want to be a part of that.

AF – How do these “proud” products affect the club’s brand?

PW – It’s hard to say. It’s going to take an advanced measurement to find out how a collection affects a brand. But we must believe that if we want to be seen as professional in everything that we do, then we have to act professional in everything we do. Then we have to care as much as possible about all the things we can care of. Like how the webpage looks like, how the reception looks like and so on and of course what clothes and products we are selling.

AF – What attributes besides the logo and colours makes your merchandise characteristic for your club?

PW – It is the founding year, 1910, that is very characteristic for us. Mainly that…Then there is a little, little, little with the northern stands, but that is not characteristic for our club. But 1910 is characteristic.

AF – That is what you are using?

PW – Yes. We also got a relationship with Scania as the Scania team, and the flag of Scania. We used “Skånelaget” (The Scania team) in the ‘80s during the years of success and wore it on the chest. We’ve taken that back a little, back then we were the only Scania team, now we are not the only Scania team anymore but we are clearly the biggest. We also got a strong connection to Scania, and we have put the flag of Scania on the neck of the jersey… As a symbol, that we are not only a city team but also regional team. The flag of Scania keeps on coming back, time after time, in our selection.

AF – What has been done to get the fans to wear your clothes in circumstances that are not associated with your club?

PW – It’s to keep a good selection of nice-looking stuff. It can not only be match clothes, there has to be some polo and t-shirts and so on. The only thing that can be done is to develop nice-looking clothes. I believe we can do better with that, and take it to a higher fashion level. As I said before, we could develop a nice-looking business shirt. I believe there are many that would use it on a weekday, if it doesn’t have MFF written all over it. Nice-looking and discrete… We work with it a little like that…But it is hard to go all the way in a short time.

AF – We can drop the next question about how are you handling the demand from supporters who want to dress fashionable?

PW – Yes.

AF – Describe what type of fans that accounts for the highest merchandise revenue?

PW – I would say that it is the family watching the game. The visit is more than just going to a game; it’s an experience that the family shares and also getting a memory back home for the kids…. Buy things to the kids that are too young to participate. If I have to choose a single supporter group, it would be them. They shop a lot. I don’t know if it is the grandmother, grandfather, mom, or dad that makes the purchase. But the situation is that you are there with some people and want to give them as much experience as possible. I believe that.

AF – What attributes on your clothes adds external and internal value for the MFF supporters?

PW – It could only be our badge, there isn’t anything else we can do.

AF – An external value is that I think that it is a nice-looking shirt… that you feel appreciated.

PW – But that’s an attribute, that the shirt is nice-looking. Or do you mean…

AF – I mean the character, what parts of the product ….

PW – We can only hope that everything we develop is nice-looking enough for people to wear them. It is that way we have to work. What we have that’s an attribute is our badge which can create many feelings and signals.

AF – How are products designed to attract new supporters?

PW – Well, what we are doing right now is to get better kids selections. That is one way of attracting new customers. We have developed a symbol in our kids club, “mini blue”… and “Kicken” who is a funny cloud that we are using with some of our products. We got otherwise a constant rotation in the shop. New stuff is coming in, and it’s a high turnover in the shop. We attract new buyers, but I don’t know if they are new supporters. Even if you have purchased something and return a month later you will find new products. The velocity of the turnover is important, at least when it comes to scarves where we have a wide selection. We work in series, when the scarves are sold-out we buy in a new one.

AF – How do the sales differs from year to year?

PW – They are increasing. The main changing factor last year was that we moved into Swedbank Stadion, got a new supporter shop and a better display on everything. It is larger, better, and easier to find, a better location.

AF – What have you notice from previous years, how it differs?

PW – The club had a high attendance at the games back in 2004, 2005, which also increases the sales on the game day. If there are many that buy a ticket, they tend to buy something more also. The audience is very important.

AF – Is it a big difference?

PW – What has happen is that we have few games with low supporters. We got a good attendance, even those games that have fewer supporters. This means that there is a lot of work in the shop even at those games. We had good sales in the shop, the first quarter this year. And why is that? Well it’s because we had several release of different products. New products like the jersey that I told you about earlier (with 652 names on it). Or events like to buy the tickets at the shop, finding reason to get people to the shop. The sale is good when people are in the shop. It has a good display, its easy to find, and offers good products. That is the important thing.

AF – What input do the supporters have in the development of merchandise? Direct input?

PW – It depends on what you refer to?

AF – Do you speak with them?

PW- Yes, but its more indirect. We have a constant dialog with our supporters, both online and in real life. They ask us if we can develop some stuff, or that one wasn’t ‘very nice-looking and so on. But I think that we are like every other detail shop on that level…Whatever moves the fastest… It speaks for it selves. We are not far from our supporters. All of us are supporters, everyone
that works here comes from some kind of supporter background and they still got their old friends who are supporters. What differs from Hennes & Mauritz, who must speculate how people will dress like this year and design after that, is that they can’t ask and there is no ongoing dialog. We know that things like jerseys and scarves are things that are always interesting, and if we can keep signal our colours and the clubs tradition in a good way they will come with a request.

AF – What is the main goal with MFF’s merchandise?

PW – The main goal, like everything else that is not related to football, is to make a profit to get more money to the team. Haha, it is as easy as that. That’s why we have this business. Those who haven’t realized that are out drifting. We can’t have people employed in shops or in chanceries, if it doesn’t generate money to a better A-team. It can’t be done otherwise; we always have to ask ourselves: why are we doing this? Why? Why? Well because we believe that we can make money, which makes us getting better salaries and players and so on. It has to be the overall goal for everyone that is working here. It’s the only thing we should do, to get as good team as possible. One must contribute with what one can; the profit margin in the shop is one way.

AF – Is there anything you would like to add?

PW – No, I think that it has covered everything. Are you doing a complete research of Allsvenska teams, or have you selected just some clubs?

AF – We have send mail to every team in Sweden, Denmark and Norway in the highest league and got answer from you (MFF), Helsingborg, Trelleborg, Aarhus, and IK Start. So we are on a road trip doing interviews with these clubs.

PW – What is the reason of doing this study; do you have a hypothesis that is tested?

AF – The research formulation is how Scandinavian teams, in the highest league, uses merchandise to build the brand. We think that there hasn’t been much thought of building a brand; it’s more like making nice-looking product. I believe it’s common.

PW – It’s the same thing referring to football merchandise. If it’s still nice-looking with a badge on it…. It enhance being proud of the team. If it’s not nice-looking it doesn’t matter, nobody will buy it and never build a brand.

AF – We don’t have any hypothesis yet but we work after that research question. Time will tell what these interviews tell us.

PW – Clothes is one of the most personal items I have. It’s a way to express how I feel today and how I want to perceived etc,etc,etc. Everything you want people to buy and wear must be questioned what’s the function with this garment. It’s not enough to say “somebody is going to buy it”, you wouldn’t get far thinking like that. You must find enough quality and design for people to buy it. When its worn people should look at it and say” it’s nice that MFF develop good-looking stuff”. If one can’t do that I think it’s better not have a merchandise department. MFF has been there, in the past. We settled for just putting the badge on it, because we knew that people would buy it. Some people buys anything if it’s MFF on it, but those people are not being contemplated as nice dressed, or not being very smart hahaha. One might segment an image of a crazy supporter who does everything for the club and it is not the best image.

AF – I think that most of the Swedish club’s merchandise comes from that area. You want to have a shop, and you put a brand on all your things and this has lead to that supporters are seen as less fashion oriented.

PW – Have you been to the shop?

AF – Yes.

PW – What did you think?

AF – There is a lot of the colour light blue. I’m an AIK supporter. I want to have nice-looking clothes without people necessary knowing that I’m an AIK supporter. For me it would be enough with for example a black shirt with a yellow button, so other AIK supporters know that I’m an AIK supporter while others just thinks that it’s a nice shirt. It’s that kind of clothes I’m interested in that and that’s the reason why I want to do this study. You have a lot of light blue products. I really liked the t-shirt with 1910 printed on it, with the stripes. It looked like a regular nice-looking t-shirt, when you look closer you see that it is a MFF t-shirt.

PW – We have an ongoing cooperation in the leisure segment with shirts and so on. We are going to work with a different kind of signal that isn’t that common today, it’s tartan fabric, the Scottish pattern that’s on kilts. We have got an official tartan tagging, which has an industrial design right even in Scotland because it signal the MFF clan. We are going to use that pattern as a signal. It can be used on a woman’s skirt, shorts...

AF – ... like the Burberry pattern.

PW – Exactly! But with tartan, our tartan. It can be used on the inside of a shirt and so on. We are investigating this kind of thing, but we aren’t there yet. The result is going to be really good. It’s going to be expensive but we got a good offer from Stenströms. It’s going to be a good shirt, one of their best shirts; it is hard to get anything better in Sweden. I believe very much in that. In the same time we have the opportunity to create another segment with clothes, where something else besides the colour or a logo as signal. You can put the pattern on the inside of the waist and so on, but we aren’t there yet.

AF – I believe that Swedish merchandise… It’s still not really accepted to wear a jersey or a heavenly blue shirt that screams MFF; it’s not that cool to be supporter in certain situations. But when it comes more products like this and people start thinking that you make nice-looking clothes, and then it can become nice to wear a t-shirt with the text MFF like a red shirt with the text Coca-cola can be cool now.

PW – There is also a difference between Stockholm and Malmö. It is more accepted here, MFF is deeply-rooted in the city. Every second person in Malmö is affected of what we are doing, both indirect and direct… Whether it is a colleague who has seen the game, or a family member. It becomes much over an entire season. I think that we have a greater acceptance of a regular polo shirt; it can be worn on a regular day in town. It’s neither lame nor cool but we don’t have a certain fashion level that’s taking it all the way. What makes it problematic is to find the level where you can make some money. You can’t do it just to satisfy your own need of developing nice-looking stuff, even if you want to. If you mange to sell 500 products of something it is really a great deal, it’s hard to sell a big amount of one single product. It’s no problem selling the jersey; we can sell more than 1000 during an entire season. But to sell 500 shirts is respected, even in a regular shirt store and we are supposed to sell them in 15 game days. To be able to succeed we
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must have a distribution that we don’t have today. You have to find stores who are willing to purchase them to their selection. We become more like a wholesaler than a retailer. Who could do that? Stadium stores, but then again you don’t buy shirts for 1400 SEK at Stadium. We can sell our jersey at Stadium, athletic clothes, which are selling quite well. You can also buy the teams exercise outfit in the shop. A black MFF exercise jacket is not fashion but it is a sub-cultural fashion, its street fashion and it works. We are still not there where we reach people who want to buy pants, cardigans and stuff like that. It is doubtful that we ever going to be big enough to pull of those kinds of things. It is the distribution that is doubtful. I think that AIK has an advantage, because AIK has an extremely large supporter group. They must have the largest supporter group in Sweden without a doubt.

AF – We also have Djurgården and Bajen in Stockholm.

PW – They are not even close…

AF – I think that if you have regular men clothing store who is selling Stenströms shirts here. They have no competition from other teams. So they can pick up MFF shirts into their selection without anyone being offended. But if a Stockholm store purchase a selection of AIK shirts, then Djurgärdare and Hammarbyare don’t want to go there.

PW – Exactly But I think that if they can get around that they would succeed because those clubs are much smaller, if you look at the amount of supporters compared to AIK. I know the guy that started Svenska Fans, Anders Nettlebladt, and we have discussed this matter a lot. I think it’s connected with when Bystedt joined AIK back in the ’90s. They made a lot of IT investments much earlier than any of the other clubs and suddenly everyone in Sweden could follow AIK no matter where you lived. They got the forum and everything up and running. If you look at the amount of visitors on AIKs website I think that it ha 4-5 times more visitors than any other club in Sweden.

AF – But you have double turnover right?

PW – Yes.

AF – That’s all, it was nice meeting you.

PW – I can show you the new arena if you have time.

AF and Rasmus Bergqvist (RB) – Absolutely!

APPENDIX 3.3 INTERVIEW WITH BARBRO BENGTSSON, TRELLEBORGs FF

Alexander Falck (AF) – How much from your total turnover is generated through merchandise?

Barbro Bengtsson (BB) – It is really a quite small part. We generate about a quarter million from merchandise. It is actually too little but it has to do with tradition. You might end up in a bad circle. If you don’t sell anything, you can’t buy anything. And if you don’t buy anything you can’t sell anything. There are some things that constantly sell like caps, scarves, and some products for kids. Often you have to buy a larger quantity, because much is manufactured in China. You need to buy a larger quantity to be able to buy it. But the things that are selling are caps, scarves, jerseys, some pacifiers and other products for kids.

AF – What accounts for the highest sales?

BB – Scarves.

AF – How much of the quarter million comes from the total revenue?

BB – The whole organisation generates about 28 million SEK, but that’s with everything and it is wrong to try to compare with money from Svenska Fotbollsförbundet (Swedish FA), it is better if you compare “pear with pear”. You might compare with how many supporters you have. I know that it is not fair to compare the whole organization’s revenue, but we generate just below 30 million SEK.

AF – How many supporters do you have?

BB – In our supporter club?

AF – No, more like how many supporters does Trelleborgs FF have? The other clubs have stated their average attendance at the games because they think it is hard to estimate it.

BB – It is hard to estimate the number of supporters we have. We have an average attendance of about 3000 people per game. That is what we got last year, and is about where we are going to end up this year.

AF – How would you describe your average supporter?

BB – What do you mean with the average supporter?

AF – The one that is most common in the arena, general characteristics…

BB – What kind of person he or she is?

AF – How do he or she look like? Is he or she old or young, a worker, a local?

BB – OK. We have a crowd… Besides True Blues, which is our supporter club with many young people, other supporters we have in the club are probably about 40+. There are they the most common…?

BB – Besides from True Blues. We work with getting the growth from below the organisation, and worked very much with it. Everyone that buys a membership in our supporter club can attend the games for free if they are under the age of 18. This makes the stands more alive and True Blues has increased their members with 100% Everyone that buys a membership to the club are probably about 40+. Members of True Blues are considerable much younger and we want to create a growth there.

AF – Other than the age, is it a man or a woman?

BB – It is a man. It is about 80-20%, 80 % men and 20 % women.

AF – What types of persons and characters are used in the merchandise and what feelings are they supposed to convey?

BB – None
AF – I mean in the product. Are there any persons or characters that are printed on the products, or connects with the product?
BB – No, because the players just like many others in life switches employer. A player that plays for us this year might not be here next year. We try to profile our brand instead. That is what we want to get out, we want get out Trelleborgs FF as a brand and load it with several things that are associated with our club. The club will remain, but players might leave. So it is hard to profile a player when he might leave next year.
AF – How well do you think that your merchandise follow fashion trends?
BB – We do that quite well. We got a company, Intersport, which we purchase our merchandise from. They are quite fashionable, I think.
AF – How do you use the team’s logo and colours in the merchandise?
BB – If we deviate from our logo, or?
AF – How do you use your logo, is it on every products or?
BB – It differs depending on the product. Some products can have a big logo like a kid t-shirt can have a big logo but on an adult polo shirt it might not look as nice. We rather put something nice-looking on for example the collar. It differs from garment to garment, it has to look good. It is the design thing that differs from garment to garment.
AF – Do you ever compromise with the team logo and colours in the clothes?
BB – No.
AF – How do you think that the appearance of your merchandise affect the club brand?
BB – I think if we can appeal to a younger audience, which we want to do, we should select products that appeal to a younger audience. And it is about selecting cool t-shirts and hats that are related to fashion trends. It is important how many stripes it is on the cap peak, it is important if you want to appeal to a younger audience. It is very important.
AF – How do you try to affect perceptions of Trelleborg’s merchandise? For example the right amount of stripes on caps and so on.
BB – We think it is important that we use our brand. It is our brand we profile, and it is the club we want to profile. We try to select products’ that appeal to the younger audience, and we also hope to appeal those who are 40+. You notice quite soon what is and isn’t selling. We also wish to have a little bit more economical resources to purchase more things. At the end of the day, that is what it’s all about. We are trying but then if it affects our brand… We don’t want to been seen together with something that contradicts with our policy in the organisation. We are not politically engaged so we don’t want to be seen with political brands, we are politically independent. We say no to drugs and tobacco, we most definitely don’t want to be seen with clothes that advertise drugs and tobacco.
It’s not a part of our world. This kind of things, if you mean that, affects the brand.
AF – Do you have anything else that should associate with Trelleborgs FF than the logo and colours?
BB – Do you have anything else that should associate with Trelleborgs FF than the logo? For example the founding year, Vångavallen or True Blues.
AF – What attributes or parts on the products are characteristic for Trelleborg besides the logo and colours?
BB – It has to do with wearing a shirt today look like, how do the cap look like to get them to purchase our supporters. It differs from garment to garment.
AF – What attributes or parts on the products are characteristic for Trelleborg besides the logo and colours?
BB – We are using our brand very much and it looks the same everywhere, and we don’t change that. Our blue colour is something that we stick to. Some teams change the colours on their clothes and are not strict to keep the same colour on their jersey year after year. I think it is important that we keep our blue colour, and to profile our brand because we should take care of it. That’s what TFF is, that’s what Trelleborgs FF is, it is our logo. I believe it can create a mess if you profile “one club, one heart” one day, and then “we are 85-90 years old” the next day. I believe that it is important to profile one message to be significant, and that it should be associated with us. If one has 10-15 different things be associated with, it can easily become messy for the potential supporters. This is what we have chosen to profile.
AF – What attributes or parts on the products are characteristic for Trelleborg besides the logo and colours?
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AF – What do you do with the products to attract new Trelleborg supporters?
BB – Everyone that moves into the community, and don’t just move within the community, gets a letter from us where we welcome them to the community and to football. They also get two tickets in case they want to watch football. They also get a discount in the shop so they can buy a scarf or a cap. Then we always have a special offer every match which can be found in our match program like “this game we offers a scarf for 50 SEK instead of 100 SEK”.
AF – How do you get new supporters through merchandise, how is it designed?
BB – We want to get a growth from beneath and we are looking on what young people would wear. And to be thorough in selecting things that we know that young supporters purchase. How does a modern t-shirt today look like for young people between the ages of 15-30 years old, or 25 years old? How do the t-shirt look like, how do the cap look like to get them to purchase our supporter products.

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AF – Do you have a demand from supporters who want to dress fashion-considerable and how do you try to meet that demand?
BB – The taste differs, that’s the reason that there are x amount of stores with fashion stuff. It is impossible to satisfy everyone, but we try to satisfy the larger crowd of people. Someone want a smaller v-shaped t-shirt, while others wants bigger v-shaped t-shirts, some wants collars others don’t. It is impossible to buy everything. We believe that using a t-shirt is to support the team; it shouldn’t only be fashion stuff. It doesn’t fit my thoughts about fashion, one might think to wear it anyway is to support the organisation. One can’t get 50 different t-shirts; it is both practically and theoretically impossible.
AF – Describe the supporters that generate the largest merchandise revenue?
BB – The ones between 15-30 years old.
AF – What parts of the products adds external and internal value for the customers’?
BB – The external value is that we get our products out, our brand. That is an external value for us.
AF – What about the customer? How do you experience this? If I as a Trelleborg supporter wear a TFF jersey, what do I get for external value? Do I get group appurtenant or appreciation from the group? Internal value can be that I support the club.
BB – You support an Allsvenskan team in your home town and that is hopefully something positive. Also, that they have appurtenant to an organisation and that they have appurtenant in us as an organisation or in our supporter club. It is therefore, we hope, that they buy a scarf, or a cap, or a t-shirt from us, to support their team. This is what we want with internal value, we want that people supports us. The day when we don’t have an audience that supports us, then we don’t have a team in the long perspective. It is very important.
AF – How do the sales differs in merchandise from year to year? What appears to be the differences?
BB – Merchandise is connected to the economy a Swede have. We turn to a group of young people, between 15-25, who might be unemployed. The unemployment has grown larger, larger and larger. And supporter stuff isn’t always cheap. If they want to buy a jersey, which they often want, it costs 400 - 500 SEK. They might want to buy one every year. We have noticed that when the economy decreases and the unemployment increase, which has happen here in Sweden the previous years, the demand for cheap supporter stuff increase. And the demand for expensive supporter stuff like jerseys, sweatshirts, and so on decrease. It is a little bit connected. If one has bad economy one wouldn’t change things every year, like one having a good economy would do. 
AF – What input do the supporters have in the development of new merchandise?
BB – We always ask our supporter club and they come with suggestions of what we can buy. It can be both good and bad suggestion like everywhere else. We try to listen to them when they think that it would be cool to... For example when we qualified for Allsvenskan 2007, they thought it would be cool to develop a scarf that has the text “Allsvenskan 2007” on it, before the start of Allsvenskan 2007. When we won Superettan 2006. We did that and it sold really well. So we try to listen to them, they come with good and sometimes less good suggestions.
AF – What is the main goal with your merchandise?
BB – It is important to get our brand out through merchandise, but also that the ones that wear the merchandise support us as a club in the community. So that is also very important.
AF – Finally, do you have anything you want to add? Regarding how Trelleborg uses merchandise to build the brand?
BB – We wish that we could sell more; we wish that the interest would be greater. Trelleborg is by tradition not a football town if we compare with any other organisations where the football has deep-roots. Trelleborg is a fantastic sport town. They have an elite rugby team and elite swimmers. We have an elite handball team here. So it is a lot to compete with. And if the football don’t have any deep-rooted tradition then it is hard to take shares. We wish to be better and more and bigger, but we are working on it. In time, I think that we are doing the right thing working to get younger forces and get the growth from beneath. I think it is very crucial for this organisation if it should grow in time, it is the growth.
AF – Thank you
BB – Thank you

APPENDIX 3.4 INTERVIEW WITH JØRGEN NOES, AGF AARHUS

Alexander Falck (AF) – We’ll start with some background questions…
Jørgen Noes (JN) – Yes
AF – Like how much from the total revenue in Aarhus comes from the merchandise?
JN – Merchandise, that means every on-field clothing, every merchandise, everything in total…?
AF – Yes
JN – Actually we have a little interesting case here in Aarhus. We have outsourced our merchandise sides. So the total turnover at the moment is approximately 5 million Danish kroner. Then we outsource it in four, so our margin, our revenue is between 10 and 15% of that. Normally in a retail store if you have a bottom line in the range of that, you are actually doing pretty good. So at the moment we have it outsourced but at the end of this month (May 2010) we take it over again and start developing it, because the guys who have the greatest interest in developing it is ourselves. Intersport is running two retail stores in Aarhus at the moment and for them it is of course only one leg of their business. But to us it is the only retail leg that we got, of course together with selling beers and food and beverage at the games. That is why we move it here.
AF – So at the moment you are getting 5 million from merchandise in AGF…?
JN – No, around 500 000 Danish kronor. Between 500 000 and 750 000 is the revenue.
AF – And the total revenue for the whole club?
JN – Total… minus 43 million, hehehe… In the last financial year.
AF – And the total turnover?
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JN – That is for the club approximately 50 million and for the company, because we have two companies owned by the overhead, the holding company. Running all of this facility is one company and the football club is the other company. The total turnover is approximately 100 million Danish kroner and that is almost a 50/50 split between the two companies.

AF – What single product accounts for the highest revenue?

JN – The shirt, the white home jersey, no doubt. I’d say about 80 percent, that’s one item.

AF – When you take over the merchandise how much do you think you will increase?

JN – I have a business plan that should double the merchandise in three years.

AF – So you will earn around 1 million Danish kroner by then?

JN – Hopefully more, because we should be able to ultimately generate a higher increase when we do it ourselves? A retail store that is doing 10-15% in profits are actually doing pretty good. So I hope that 15% percent of our turnover will be profits. Which would bring us to a 1-1.5 million Danish kroner net from a turnover of 10 million in a couple of years.

AF – So, how many supporters do you have?

JN – Yeah, that’s the question. I actually read that before, what is the definition of a supporter?

AF – Usually the other club’s have said their average attendance.

JN – We have basically 12 000 visiting our games. But what is a fan and how many are there… If we have 12 000 per game that means that we have at least 18 000 fans because not everyone is going every time. But it is interesting, there have been some analyze in Denmark from the Danish football association. And they define a fan as a person who has a kind of positive feeling towards a club in particular. That’s interesting due to if I generate a new sponsor and this sponsor is selling products on this key target amount of fans that they can reach. And the sponsors ask us and we say between 70 and 100 thousand fans of AGF. But there’s only 12 thousands on the games. Lets say 18 000 hardcore fans.

AF – And can you identify the average supporter?

JN – I can. He is a man, around 95% is. He is between 19 and 39, that is between 60% of the fans. 7% is unemployed, 19% is students because Aarhus is a student city, 27% are what we call in Denmark “funktionær” I now in Sweden it means “managers” but I’m not sure what is the translation to English. Lets say businessesmen. 7 % craftsmen… 7% only (craftsmen). That is unusual, normal football clubs have higher rates of unemployed and craftsmen. That is due to we are in a student city. Every year there comes 27 000 new students here which gives us a special situation.

AF – Do you focus on that in your marketing?

JN – Yes we do. We know that, of course their primary interest is football. Second is sports in general, then travelling and then cars. As we say translated; they love football, they love cars and they love titts. That’s the average football fan. We focus on that in our marketing certainly. We went to one of the major travel agencies, Apollo, and said we have this number of supporters with that shirt, and they didn’t buy 18 fans that they can reach. And the sponsors ask us and we say between 70 and 100 thousand fans of AGF. But there’s only 12 thousands on the games. Lets say 18 000 hardcore fans.

AF – What types of characters and persons do you use in the development of the merchandise?

JN – In development…

AF – No, more like on the jerseys and t-shirts and scarves.

JN – We use different, because we have the on-field. All the on-field gear is Hummel, our main sponsor; they have designers who bring up different suggestions. Then we approve of the items. That is all the on-field gear that Hummel is making kind of an proposal to us and then we decide if we want to agree on certain designs. On the more average, no-name, no-brand. Actually we go to the market; we will have two suppliers in the future. And they are going to meet us two times a year bringing the assortment that they propose to us. And then we say OK lets agree on that. That’s bed linen, that’s the no name t-shirts with a slogan, hats, scarves etc. That’s two suppliers, then we make half year assortments, you know. They run half a year and then we change 10% of the assortment every half year. We are so small that we need to have a supplier. I don’t want to hire people and make them specialists at merchandise. That doesn’t any sense to me. We like to work with specialists and they bring their stuff to us and then we take it from there. When we reach 10 million we might hire a specialist, but not at the moment. I perfectly know that when you have this wholesaler inside its of course more expensive. If we bought it in Poland or Rumania or Spain or China it would be cheaper. But the margin will be better if we do it ourselves or if we buy it ourselves from a local specialist who could put together three Danish clubs. AGF, Aalborg and Odense and the only thing they change at the production plant is the logo. It must be the best way, I believe so. So two companies and Hummel of course our sponsor.

AF – We’re thinking also about the persons in the club that is projected in the merchandise.

JN – Alright, that is only players.

AF – And what feelings are they supposed to convey?

JN – The players are, like in Sweden, a kind of idols. And we have three Danish national players. Of course they are pushed to take on attention and they are idols to the kids. We try to use our own players. We just signed Martin Jørgensen back from Italy and we have made a jersey to tribute his welcome home. Of course he have carried all the marketing for that shirt. We also have Jacob Poulsen who you Swedish guys know, he scored the decisive goal against you and of course we have used him a lot.

AF – So what feelings are they supposed to convey besides being Danish?

JN – All our players are supposed to signal health, physical awareness, politeness, they are supposed to be humble… that is very important to us. They also participate often in campaigns against mobbing, smoking, drinking and driving and stuff like that. They are supposed to be role models especially for those between the age of 10 to 22.

AF – How well do you follow fashion trends in your merchandise?

JN – Nothing. We might in a phase three. We have the phase one, that’s on-field and scarves and stuff. In phase two we go a little bit business perhaps. But in phase three, and that’s in three to five years, we may go fashion.
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AF – The business phase, is that things like shirts and jackets?

JN – Could be yes. But more like pullovers with embroidered gothic AGF-logo, discrete because we have sponsors who don’t want explicit exposure but they like to be discrete and that is what we call business. Also I think that we are going to offer a lot of business profile dress to our whole sponsor network. Because a lot of them buy fleece jackets, t-shirts and stuff like that so why don’t they buy it from us instead? Phase one is the hardcore merchandise and phase two is business to business. We have three kinds of hardcore assortments; we have the on-field, what we call the big AGF where the logo can’t be taken off and then we have kids. And perhaps in three to five years we want to go into cyber space where the fans can design this month’s AGF-supporter t-shirt. The fans can design it and we manufacture it in the phase two.

AF – How do you work with the team logo and colour in the merchandise?

JN – Well a AGF-shirt is white hehehe. White means a lot for people in Aarhus. If you are a Aarhus supporter then you are white, no racial meanings of course. Our away jersey is blue. Then we do ones a year a totally different jersey. We make 1000 copies. We made it green and gray this year with horizontal stripes. We will release the next one in October-November, right around Christmas time. It is going to be a little collector’s item actually; some need to have it every year. The logo is the logo that is always the same.

AF – Do you ever compromise with the colour or logo in your merchandise?

JN – Not logo, no. We have two logos but when we use them they are always the same, always. And I don’t think we’re going to rethink the logo. It is so well known so it would be mad to change anything.

AF – How about the colours?

JN – We have the away shirt and the third jersey.

AF – How do you think that the look of your merchandise affect the perception of the brand AGF?

JN – I think it is very important. Very important. And we use a lot of resources in doing it right and try to feel what the fans expect. The new version of the white jersey is actually inspired by the old Umbro jersey from the beginning of the 90’s. If you check the internet you’ll see it. We use a lot of resources for the look because that is the identity, both for the fans and us. The green and grey was actually elected one of Europe’s 20 ugliest shirts ever. But that’s OK for me as long as it affects people.

AF – What measures are you taking to affect the brand through the look of the merchandise?

JN – We don’t see it that way. We see it all like a complete unit actually. The merchandise and the brand complement each other. The one thing is nothing without the other thing so its actually a unit. It’s a combination.

AF – OK, so do you try to increase the perception of the brand by improving the look of the merchandise?

JN – No. I believe that that is two sides of the same coin. The merchandise is the brand and the brand is the merchandise.

AF – How are the club’s norms and values being portrayed in the merchandise?

JN – I don’t think we use it that much in the development. Our norms and values are openness and quality and to be humble. I don’t believe that that is a part of the development of the merchandise and I haven’t seen it as a part of our products.

AF – Do you think that the norms and values will be seen in your merchandise in the future?

JN – It’s hard for me to see a situation where it would be. Of course we won’t go yellow because Brøndby is AGF supporter’s hating club number one so we definitely won’t go yellow, ever. That could be a part of our products but that’s not a part of our norms. Also we have the third jersey every year which haven’t been seen before, but it’s not part of our values. That could be seen as a desire to be seen as innovative but we don’t see it that way.

AF – What attributes besides the logo and your colour do you think is characteristic for your merchandise?

JN – When we are taking over we never going to make a bad quality product. We don’t want to sell t-shirts for 25 or 30 Danish kroner. We want to sell t-shirts in high quality. That means that if we buy jackets they should be from high quality. We rather sell less units in high quality than a lot of products in junk quality that is going to disappoint the fans. As you both know, we have like 25 t-shirts in our closets and there is just two or three that we like to use. And probably those are the ones of the best quality. And that is what we are aiming for when we are developing. I don’t want to buy a lousy t-shirt in lousy quality

AF – I think actually that as a fan, you want to buy whatever the club is producing but when you come home you end up never wearing those shirts if they don’t look good and are made of a good quality.

JN – Yeah, we think of that when we are developing. We can take a look at that later in the shop.

AF – What measures are you taking now and in the future to get AGF fans to wear your clothes outside of the arena?

JN – That is sort of the business-to-business assortment and I can show you what we are going to make in the future. Because if we can get people to use AGF clothes on a daily basis that would be enormous. That mean we can make polos with a discrete AGF logo in the same colours. But I don’t believe and I’ve seen a lot in the past, that it will be a big part of the sales. I saw in Brøndby, the second largest merchandise seller in Denmark, there was only two or three or four items from that category. So I don’t believe at the moment that it will be a big part of our assortment.

AF - How are you handling the demand from supporters who want to dress fashionable?

JN – We are going to involve the fans in the business product development. So that is how we are going to take that.

AF – What type of fan account for the highest income of your merchandise?

JN – That is the typical supporter I think, the man between 19 and 39, definitely.

AF – What attribute ads external and internal value for your customers in the merchandise?

JN – Quality. Quality over all. I want to sell you a shirt every year but I am proud to see fans still wearing six year old shirts.

AF – Is quality mainly external or internal you think?

JN – Both actually. That it looks good gives it some external value but the quality alls adds internal value. Nothing ever compares to good quality. Long term and short term is always quality.

AF – Do you design products to attract new supporters?

JN – Yes
AF – How are they…?
JN – We are not doing it per se, but we are looking in to it. Actually we have made some hair wax. Whether we can attract new supporters I don’t know but it’s a funny new thing. One of Denmark’s biggest hair wax producers is a AGF fan and he made a special series with our logo on. Whether it can attract new supporters I don’t know. To buy merchandise from a club you need to be a fan. I don’t think merchandise will attract new fans, I don’t believe that. But I’m not sure.
AF – How do you see merchandise sales differ from year to year and what seems to be the main reasons?
JN – I think it is increasing but it is very, very dependent of the results on the pitch. I’m sure it’s going to increase over the next couple of years as we are going to put more focus on it. But when we find the level, our level I believe it’s gonna be a question if we are good enough developing things that the market demands and don’t know they demand, to meet the known and unknown demands. That will be the most important thing, that’s our capability to put the right products on the market. And I believe we’re gonna have a distribution strategy as well. It is important to make our shirts available in the whole part of eastern Jutland. That’s in the sport business, maybe in the fashion business as well. We haven’t quite decided yet whether we are going to enter the fashion business. We have a mobile trailer that can move out to the club that we are co-branding with, in our challenge development. Distribution and target development are going to be the key focuses for us.
AF – What input do the supporters have in the development of new products?
JN – They don’t have any input now. Maybe a t-shirt that a fan designed but we can’t really say that the fans have any input at the moment. We talk with the fans but we are careful because a small number of fans can move our thoughts too far away from what is profitable. What has to run this is our feelings and facts and some help from some of the other clubs. We are cooperating very well, except on the pitch. Haha. We don’t produce anything that is less than 200 items. We have too many different styles I believe. And it’s going to be a marketing issue if we pick up a product.
AF – What is the main purpose of AGF’s merchandise?
JN – There’s not one main purpose. There is two main purposes. One is the branding and signal we are sending to our supporters and the other one is economics. I can’t say that one is more important than the other because they are so closely connected. But that are our two main purposes. The brand brings supporters to the stadium but of course the economics is important as well.
AF – So, finally is there something you’d like to add about how AGF is using their merchandise to build the brand?
JN – No, I’d like to take you to the small store. We have one store downtown and a mobile one for the games this one here (small shop by the stadium) is the third one.

APPENDIX 3.5 INTERVIEW WITH OLAV LINDEBØ, IK START

Alexander Falck (AF) – How much of your total revenue is generated from merchandise?
Olav Lindebø (OL) – If we take the numbers from last year. Last season, 2009, it’s about 2% of around 100 million Norwegian kroner so that means it’s around 2 million kroner.
AF – What product account for the highest total sales?
OL – If you just count the number of products sold I think it is scarves and flags but if you count in revenue it would be the jersey, the home jersey.
AF – So you have better margins on jerseys.
OL – Yes we do.
AF – How many supporters do you think that you have?
OL – It’s hard to say cause it differs from game to game. Last year we had about 8400 on average. It differs from lets say 11 000 down to 6 000 depending on our results.
AF – Can you appreciate a number of total Start fans?
OL – Well we have filled the arena at occasions so about 15 000 if we are doing very well. But our loyal supporters I would say about 10 or 11 thousand.
AF – How would you describe the average supporter?
OL – I think it’s pretty much the same as every football supporter. I think it’s most men, we think that we have maybe a bit difficulty on hitting the men between say age 20-25. We have a gap there. So the kids from 6 to 13 and also youth and then from age 30 to 60 maybe. Mostly men but we have a fair amount of women as well.
AF – Are there other demographic stereotypes like what do they do for a living?
OL – When it comes to geographic it is very much in the Kristiansand city. But we have also supporters from west, about an hour drive west. And also an hour drive east. So it’s a big community but our main customers, supporters are from Kristiansand city.
AF – What types of persons and characters are used in the merchandise and what feelings are they supposed to convey?
OL – First of all we would like to think that we have a very, very good youth team, which brings a lot of good players up to our first team. And we would like to appreciate the job being done in our youth academy by using our local young players in all our merchandising and marketing. So first of all the persons and characters used are our local stars. Maybe Bolaførs is our biggest star when it comes to football skills but we tend to use the local guys more because we want to have a local anchorage.
AF – Are there any specific feelings that you like to convey with use of local stars?
OL – We like to convey the emotion that we make it on our own. We don’t have to buy expensive players to do well. We produce the players ourselves and they are from this city, they’re from Kristiansand. Today (IK Start – Lillestrøm SK. May 6th) we had at most 10 Norwegian players and they were from Kristiansand, which is a pretty high number. That’s what we want to convey to our supporters, that we are a local team and our players are local and that is how it is going to be.
AF – How well do you think that your merchandise follow fashion trends?

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OL – The thing is with Start, Umbro our supplier of kits and stuff have their main office here in Kristiansand. So we use very much of their designers and their own people in designing our stuff. We have a very good deal with them and they deliver everything to us so they have a big say in designing and they have their own designers. So we use them a lot, and we are pretty much tied up to what they think. Of course we have our say and we can tell them what we wish to do but we are very much tied up to what they believe is the right design. When it comes to fashion trends I don’t think that fashionable clothes is the best way to sell supporter articles cause the average supporter, I think, would like to have something identical to the players. Something that is easy to see that it is a Start product. We don’t follow trends that much. It might be that we have other stuff that is not related to football like this flashlight for example (Olav is pointing to a silver flashlight) or slippers or whatever, that’s where we look at trends. But when it comes to clothes, which is our main focus, it’s very much the club colours and being identical to what the players are using. Both when it comes to jerseys and training equipments.

AF – I think you answered much of the next question already but is there anything you’d like to add about how you use the club’s logo and colour?

OL – As you can see around us everything is almost yellow and black (IK Start’s home colours), those are of course our main colours. We have tried this year, we made something else like the grey, hooded sweater and pants, and they are doing very, very well this year. So we see that the fans want to buy something else as well. We have designed a new badge as well that says 1905, which is of course the year we were founded. So this one is new (pointing to the badge). We have tried to expand our customers and it is doing pretty well.

AF – Will that badge only be on certain clothes or are you planning to change your official logo?

OL – This will always be our main logo, the flag (the white and blue logo). But we will use that more I think because it is not necessarily tied up to us as a football team. It might just be that some people think that the clothes look good and they’ll buy it even if they don’t have much feeling for Start as a club. We’ll try again next year to see if it is a fluke or a trend. We also do other colours on hats and caps but our main colours are of course yellow and black.

AF – You just described when you compromise with the colours but do you ever compromise with the logo?

OL – No. The only thing we might do some times is to have it white and black (instead of white and blue). But almost every time it’s blue and white. Here on the ball (a yellow ball) for example we have changed it to black. But the flag is always the same and it is on every product we have I think, we don’t compromise with the logo. Just colours, sometimes.

AF – How do you think that the look of the merchandise affect the perception of the brand, Start?

OL – As I said before the clothing brand is not necessarily combined to Start, it is just as much Umbro and they are very strict on what they want to put their logo on because they want to have quality all the way through. That again helps us because we know our supplier we know where our clothes are coming from and we know that it is good quality. I don’t think the customers thinks that our clothes are of poor quality because Umbro is making it. Even the flags are made by Umbro.

AF – So, do you think that the clothes you are selling are both Umbro branded and Start branded?

OL – Most of the time yes.

AF – How do you try to affect the perception of the brand through the looks of your merchandise?

OL – Again it comes down to quality I think. We believe that the average supporter of football doesn’t necessarily think about the quality in the merchandise. When it comes to building the brand, we believe that the quality is good, the colours are good; it doesn’t get destroyed when washed. We think that it is a quality product which is going to affect our brand, with quality products we believe that you can build a strong brand.

AF – How are the club’s norms and values being portrayed in the merchandise?

OL – To some extent they are but, again, with Umbro we know that everything is OK when it comes to child labour or whatever it might be in foreign countries. We also have our own social responsibility through our brand called “Start Life Support”. We tend to use that logo a lot and our players are playing every single game with the Start Life Support logo on their back. And we try to tell our sponsors and supporters that we also have a social responsibility as well as a commercial responsibility. And all the sponsors are paying a part of their sponsorship directly to Start Life Support.

AF – Can you describe Start Life Support a little bit?

OL – It’s a project that has been going on for a few years now. At the current time we are building a new school and a new football field in Uganda and one of our players, Ole Martin Arst, is responsible for the whole life support. So we use our players also in ethical challenges. And all our sponsors are paying us depending on how high we are getting in the table at the end but a part goes straight to Start Life Support to build schools and football fields in Uganda.

AF – How have you noticed that these norms and the work with Start Life Support affect the brand?

OL – Our sponsors really appreciate our efforts in Africa. We think that of course we are doing it first of all to help the people of Uganda and the youth of Uganda but it is also a nice way to say that we are not all about football. We are also taking a social responsibility in foreign countries. I think that if you behave OK and if you communicate that you have good intentions the brand will get stronger. But we need to communicate that we are doing it and we might not be good enough to say that this is what we are doing. I think that few people know what start life support is, everybody has heard the name but few people know what it is. We are working on increasing that brand as well.

AF – Are you thinking of including it in some other merchandise some way?

OL – We have thought about, letting Ugandan kids making stuff and selling it in our store just down the road, but I don’t think that the customers are going to buy it. First of all you have to express what Life Support is and make it a strong brand. Then we can use it in our merchandise but we have to build the brand of Start Life Support first. That’s a work in progress.

AF – What attributes besides the logo and colours are characteristic for your merchandise?
OL – Again, I think it’s the quality line of clothes. All our clothes are quality made and approved by Umbro so nothing sold in our store is a bad product. I don’t think our average supporter care about the fabric type or how the colours are doing in washing; they just care about the price and being easily recognizable in the streets and on the stadium, is that what you are looking for?

AF – Yeah, and also if you have other attributes like for example this new badge or lines or something that makes a shirt a Start shirt even though you don’t see the logo?

OL – I don’t think we have any typical Start lines… Again, Umbro makes everything so it’s pretty much out of their catalogue. So we can change the colouring and some design but it’s pretty much straight out of their catalogue which is available also in non Start colours and design.

AF – Do you have any specific words that you connect with Start?

OL – Yeah, we have three words. They’re in Norwegian so can I say it in Norwegian?

AF – Yes, of course.

OL – Samspill, cooperation. Sund galskap, healthy craziness. And Skryt (bragging). Samspill, skryt och sund galskap are our three main words and I don’t think personally that they say that much about the club and what we are trying to communicate. But those are the words we are using now. We are working on maybe finding a new brand stamp.

AF – Can you see it anywhere in the merchandise?

OL – Very little. Maybe on like slippers, but I don’t think we have it on any t-shirt. It’s more like an internal thing, how we are supposed to work.

AF – What measures are taken to get the fans to wear your clothes in other circumstances that are not associated with the club or football?

OL – Like I said, our typical buyer wants to buy authentic things. But we have tried this year with the grey, hooded sweater and we find it interesting to see that it is selling pretty good. So at the current time we have only the grey one and a few more hats. And of course a lot of children products like school kits, slippers and bottles. And that is used on every day and not just at match day.

AF – How are you handling the demand from supporters who want to dress more fashionable?

OL – We don’t think it’s a demand. We haven’t heard that people want to buy merchandise with Start that doesn’t necessarily look like Start merchandise. But again, we have tried and things look good so it might be an area for improvement and we will improve. But of course we are tied up to what Umbro makes and what they design. But we have a say what we want for every year, what we want and what we want to develop during the season.

AF – Is the deal that everything has to be Umbro made?

OL – It has to be Umbro approved. We have some products that is not Umbro but it’s just small things like slippers because they don’t make it. As long as Umbro makes it, that’s the one we use.

AF – Describe what type of fan account for the highest merchandise revenue?

OL – I think it is the typical football crazy young man who buys everything. Who buys the home jersey, the away jersey, maybe even the keeper jersey. Who buys two sweaters, who buys the bag for practice, who buys the hat for winter. Who buys something for his kids if he has kids. It’s the typical football fan who loves everything about Start. You saw them down, just by you (the singing fans at the stadium). They were a very small group today, there are usually a lot more than today but I don’t know why. So it’s the typical football supporter, it’s the typical, yeah, young man. 26 years old maybe or even lower who buys almost all the lines every year. We change our jersey approximately every three years. So the jersey of this year is exactly the same as the jersey we had last year. I don’t know if that is smart but that is how we do it.

AF – What attributes in your merchandise adds external and internal value do you think, for the customers?

OL – I don’t know how to answer that because… External value, what do you mean with that?

AF – It could be for example group acceptance or that people find you attractive… Internal value would be more the feelings you get inside.

OL – It’s kinda hard to say. I think that the South of Norway doesn’t have that much emotions. They’re pretty straight forward. And it’s kinda hard to say how the external values are created other than the hardcore fans that you saw today. Of course when they buy stuff they have a strong bond between them. But I don’t think that’s why people are buying the merchandise. To get a group mentality or make themselves feel good. I don’t know if I am answering the question at all.

AF – How are products designed to attract new supporters?

OL – Of course we try to get supporters at a young age. So we focus a lot on children products. And also because football interested parents tend to buy merchandise for the kids. So we have a big line of children products like school supplies and wrapping paper and everything that a kid needs. Even football boots made by Umbro which are good boots in black and yellow. Attract new supporters… we don’t make that much for girls actually when I think of it. We have a few pink hats and that kind of stuff. But our products are pretty mainstream so I don’t think you will see a very innovative or new product with a Start logo on it. Again of course because Umbro is our supplier of everything and we have to use their products as a part of the deal.

AF – But they do products for girls too?

OL – Yeah but they are not doing that many products that are typical for girls like teen dresses and stuff. I think the only team in Norway that does that kind of stuff is Vålerenga. They have a big, big, big store in Oslo and they make a lot of stuff that is not tied up to the club logo and colours, they even make jeans. I think they are the only team who does that and they are doing quite well but the funny thing is that their supporter club owns the brand. It’s not the club that owns the brand and the supporter club is also developing most of the products and they’re doing their own things. And I think that is why they can do what they want because every Norwegian club is tied up to some kind of brand, if it’s Nike or Adidas or Umbro and everybody is very tied up to that. So Vålerenga is the main club in doing stuff that is not connected to football, and they are doing good. They’re doing very good.

AF – Does Vålerenga receive any of the profits from their supporters?
Is There More to Merchandise Than Making Money?

Bergqvist, Rasmus
Falck, Alexander

OL – Yeah I think they do. I’m not sure how they split the income but I think it’s a cooperation between the club and the fans.
AF – How do the sales differ from year to year in merchandise, and what do you think is the main reason?
OL – I think the main reason is how well we’re doing. In 2005 when we almost won the championship, we lost in the last round. Everybody was wearing black and yellow, everyday. And not just on match days, but every day. Everybody was wearing it in this town. So it’s very, very much up to the results on the pitch. We have about 6000 loyal fans who are here no matter what. And the others are coming and going, depending on our results. It’s the same way with the sales of merchandise. So our main difference is the success on the field. But it’s also the launch cycles. Next year we’re going to get a new jersey, so of course we are going to sell a lot more jerseys next year. Because people want the same dress that the players are playing in. As I said, I think that we change shirt every three years. Also when we change the jersey we tend to change the sweaters and t-shirts as well just to have a big turnover, so it’s a three year cycle. Year one we sell a lot. Year two we sell a little less and in year three we sell less than in year two. Then again in the new year one we sell more.
AF – What input do your supporters have in the development of new merchandise?
OL – Not much, we don’t get much feedback either. I think the only feedback is that they don’t buy what they don’t like and that is the feedback we get. I think feedback usually comes from the same few persons. They contact us and give suggestions and wish to make some changes on existing products. Most of all we make our own decisions together with Umbro and their designers. Our supporters don’t have much say in what is being sold in our stores.
AF – What is the main purpose of the merchandise section in Start?
OL – It’s of course to build a brand. So people can see that we are a club even on non-match days. It’s to… maybe I have to take this in Norwegian.
AF – Ta det på Norsk.
OL – Nej, det är att vara synlig i vardagen, to be there on every day to remind people that there is a game coming up or to keep reminding them that Start exists. And that we are going to play, even though we play bad sometimes, it’s always a new game. We want people to remember that we are here.
AF – What do you think can be improved in your merchandise?
OL – There’s a lot of things that can be improved. First of all it’s the products that we make on our own. I think we have done too much last year, focusing on one player in our merchandise. Maybe make toys with his name on the back for example. Then the player leaves and we have a problem because nobody wants to buy a product with of a player that’s not here anymore. One of our biggest local stars is now the captain of Vålerenga and we have a lot of products with his name on the back and of course they aren’t selling. But I think we have to make our products more independent of players. I think it’s OK that players are taking photos and wearing the stuff to sell more products but we don’t necessarily have to make our products for a specific player. We see now that we have a big, big problem in selling those kind of products so we need to make our products more standardized. And we need to have one colour, that is our colour. We now have the yellow colour in four different colours. We need to find one colour and stick with it and we need to find, maybe, a design and stick with it. And we need to produce the same over and over again so people will get used to see that kind of products.
AF – Have you thought of using old stars and legends in your merchandise?
OL – We are using them at the stadium on match days. Today I think there were 25 former players doing different things on the stadium. So we are using them very much on match days. We are also using a bit of retro jerseys and stuff but they are not selling. So we have kind of put it away and said that we probably should focus on our current day products. But we do use our former players very much on match day and during the weeks as well.
AF – Finally, is there anything you’d like to add about how you use the merchandise to build the brand?
OL – I think we have a long, long way to go. If you see at the really big clubs and what they are doing and producing and spin off products, it’s amazing. I mean in Norway and Scandinavia in general I think we have a long way to go to make it more accessible and to make it easier to combine the supporters and merchandise.
## APPENDIX 4. CONTENT ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Trelleborgs</th>
<th>Malmö FF</th>
<th>IK Start</th>
<th>Helsingborgs</th>
<th>AGF Aarhus</th>
<th>Offering on start page of web shop of products with a personality besides the logo and colour</th>
<th>Number of clicks to reach web shop from main page</th>
<th>Number of products with a personality</th>
<th>Recurring themes besides logo and colour</th>
<th>Description of other themes</th>
<th>Compromised logo</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trelleborgs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It was down due to restructuring</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,2,4</td>
<td>Scania references, 1910 (founding year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 cap, 1 scarf, and 1 whiskey glass</td>
<td>6 different products, changed when updated</td>
<td>3 different match jerseys and 2 red t-shirts</td>
<td>6 products (1 cap, the jersey, 1 hood, 1 polo and 2 red t-shirts)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stålhett (The Pride of Scania)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malmö FF</td>
<td>1 cap, 1 scarf, and 1 whiskey glass</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The logo blended with the colours of one cap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IK Start</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 different products</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The logo blended with the colours of one cap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsingborgs</td>
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<td>3 different match jerseys</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The logo blended with the colours of some polos and glassware</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGF Aarhus</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*2 t-shirts with names from the players of MFF’s European Cup final 1979, 1 t-shirt Wilton Figueiredo in the kids selection, 1 scarf and 1 mouse pad of Bosse Larsson, 1 book and 1 DVD of Zlatan Ibrahimovic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2 t-shirts with names from the players of MFF’s European Cup final 1979, 1 t-shirt Wilton Figueiredo in the kids selection, 1 scarf and 1 mouse pad of Bosse Larsson, 1 book and 1 DVD of Zlatan Ibrahimovic

** 0 = None, 1 = Black, 2 = White, 3 = Grey, 4 = Pink

*** 0 = No, 1 = Yes

Other comments:
HIF: Fairly big selection of products, had the page in English but no products, the page looks less developed than MFF’s.
IK Start: Rather small selection, a number of links without products, the home jersey is always visible, relatively big share of kids products.
Malmö FF: Easily navigated and professional looking web page, can’t see enlarged pictures of most products, huge selection of products.
Trelleborgs FF: Can’t find the jersey, small selection of clothes (2 t-shirts, black hood and 1 pair of boxers), the exact same structure as HIF’s.