Aalto University
School of Business

Kings or Pawns? The role of communication intermediaries in the corporate identity communication of growth companies

International Business Communication

Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT
April 18, 2013

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Objective of the Study
The objective of the study was to examine the corporate identity communication process in growth companies and to observe the role that journalists and PR professionals have in this process as well as the benefits they pose to growth companies. The case company was a Finnish mobile gaming company that has experienced strong growth in recent years and operates globally. At the time of data collection the case company was still formalizing its communication strategy. The study explored the role of communication intermediaries to answer the research questions: "How does the case company portray itself in its press releases?" and "How do foreign journalists write about the case company in their articles?".

Methodology and Theoretical Framework
The data used in this study consisted of 6 press releases, 6 journalist-written articles and one semi-structured interview with the CMO of the case company. This data was analyzed using content analysis and appraisal analysis. The theoretical framework of the study illustrated how corporate identity messages informed communication intermediaries in developing their messages and how they became a channel for developing a unique corporate image and competitive advantage.

Findings and Conclusions
The findings of this study suggest that journalists as communication intermediaries are a valuable tool in the corporate identity communication process. When compared with company-issued press releases, their articles seem to reflect the same identity themes and in a similar tone. From the perspective of growth companies, where resources are often limited, this would suggest that using journalists in place of other forms of marketing and advertising in identity-related issues would be a worthwhile option. These results also suggest that using journalists to create a unique image and competitive advantage for growth companies could possibly be advantageous. These findings were used to define the practical implications the findings may have for growth companies.

Key Words: Communication intermediaries, corporate identity communications, image formation, mediated communication, growth companies, international business communication

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Kuninkaita vai sotilaita? – Viestintävälittäjien rooli kasvuyritysten yritysidentiteetin viestinnässä

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet
Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tarkastella kasvuyritysten yritysidentiteetin viestintäprosessia sekä tutkia PR-ammattilaisten ja toimittajien roolia ja mahdollisia hyötyjä tässä prosessissa. Tutkimuksen case-yritys oli suomalainen mobiilipeliyritys, joka toimii globaalisti ja on kasvanut voimakkaasti viime vuosina. Tutkimusaineistoa kerättäessä yritys vasta vakiinnutti viestintästrategiaansa. Tutkimus tarkasteli viestintävälittäjien roolia vastatakseen seuraaviin tutkimuskysymyksiin: ”Miten case-yritys viestii itsestään tiedotteissaan?” ja ”Miten ulkomaiset toimittajat kirjoittavat case-yrityksestä artikkeleissaan?”.

Tutkimusmenetelmät
Tutkimuksen aineisto koostui kuudesta tiedotteesta, kuudesta artikkelista sekä yhdestä avoimesta haastattelusta case-yrityksen markkinointijohtajan kanssa. Aineisto analysoitiin sisällönanalyysin sekä suhtautumisen systeemin keinoin. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys heijasti sitä, miten yritysidentiteettiviestit vaikuttivat viestintävälittäjien tapaan muotoilla viestejään ja miten heistä muodostuu kanava uniikin yritysimagon ja kilpailuedun luomiselle.

Tutkimuksen tulokset
Tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että toimittajat viestintävälittäjinä ovat arvokas työkalu yritysidentiteetin viestintäprosessissa. Tiedotteisiin verrattaessa, toimittajien artikkelit vaikuttavat viestivän samoja teemoja samanlaiseen sävyyn. Kasvurityksissä resurssit ovat usein rajatut ja tästä näkökulmasta katsottuna tulokset viittaisivat siihen, että yritysidentiteettiviestinnässä toimittajien hyödyntäminen muiden markkinointi ja mainostamiskanavien sijaan voisi olla hyödyllistä. Tulokset viittaavat myös siihen, että toimittajien hyödyntäminen uniikin yritysimagon ja kilpailuedun luomiseen voisi olla kannattavaa. Tuloksiin perustuen tutkija antoi suosituksia käytännön hyödyllisyydestä kasvuyrityskontekstissa.

Avainsanat: Viestintävälittäjät, yritysidentiteettiviestintä, imagon muodostus, mediavälitteinen viestintä, kasvuyritykset, kansainvälinen yritysviestintä

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1 INTRODUCTION

While companies in the Western world are faced with increasing competition with new markets opening up in Asia and South America and new competitors flooding the market, creating a way to stand out from the crowd has become a necessity. To stand out from the crowd, a company must be able to offer something unique, a differentiating factor, which adds value to consumers and thus makes them more likely to choose the services of this particular company. This is particularly important for small growth companies, as they usually have little recognition and little resources to create recognition.

1.1 Creating Differentiation

In a saturated and competitive market, product differentiation has often been offered as a way to success, but differentiation can also be used in other contexts, namely in how a company builds its identity and how it is projected. A unique identity and image help to not only differentiate a company from the competition but also to tide it over bad economic times or a crisis situation (Melewar & Jenkins, 2003, p.76) (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006, p.196). Thus, a unique identity and image can be seen as tools for building competitive advantage and market success (Hawabhay, Abratt, & Peters, 2009, p.3), which for a growth company equals survival.

Promoting a unique way of working, hiring policy, career advancement, environmental practices or other aspects of how a company conducts itself are all efforts to differentiate the company from its competitors. Differentiation as an established practice was only recognized in the 1930s by Robinson (*Economics of Imperfect Competition*, 1933) and Chamberlin (*Theory of Monopolistic Competition*, 1933) in their independent but nearly simultaneously published pieces of research on the shortcomings of the classical perfect competition model. Both authors noted that a changing market where product diversity was becoming the norm called for changes in marketing practices as well, which, under the perfect competition model would not have been necessary. Suddenly, gaining market share by differentiating one's product was commonplace which made product differentiation a very relevant and timely topic of study.

Today differentiation is no more a question of why, but of how and for which audience. Through a unique identity, companies try to attract favorable attention from investors, customers or future employees and to elicit action from them such as investing in the company, buying their products or seeking employment. (Cornelissen, 2000, p. 120)

1.2 Differentiation through Communication

How one creates a unique identity and how one is able to communicate it, however, is not as straightforward. Companies use different channels for corporate communications and not all of them are easily controllable. Company-produced communications can portray the identity of a company as desired, but company-produced communications do not enjoy the respect and legitimacy a more objective source such as journalism does. How then to decide, as a growth company with limited resources, how to allocate one's communication efforts to best create a unique image?

Understanding corporate image as a result of corporate identity, (Gray & Balmer, 1998, p.695) (Cornelissen, 2000, p.120) helps us to break down the problem into parts. Corporate image differentiation can thus be seen to stem from how corporate identity is conceived, differentiated, and finally communicated. Understanding this relationship is the basis for understanding a differentiated corporate image and competitive advantage.

As mentioned before, communicating corporate identity is achieved through various channels. It is not only the formal channels such as the press department or marketing team that are responsible, corporate identity is communicated by anyone who has a relationship with the company, i.e. is a stakeholder. Different stakeholders have different levels of engagement, and thus different types of identity communication output, but ultimately identity is communicated to some extent by all of them.

However, to study stakeholders that have a marginal effect on identity communications would perhaps not give rich enough data for a thesis project, which is why the stakeholders chosen for this study were journalists and PR professionals. They are the main sources of identity communication for the public but in terms of perceived objectivity, are not equal. Company-generated information is usually seen as highly biased whereas journalists as external intermediaries are seen to be more reliable and objective. This heightens their strategic importance for companies and in particular for growth companies with limited resources.

This perceived objectivity stems from journalism's traditional goal to be a mirror of reality (Mellor, 2008, p.474). However, as an objective reality is an unachievable goal, journalists will write about a company in a way that reflects his/her subjective and perceived reality. While a reader realizes this, a journalist is still perceived as a preferable channel to the company itself, who is certain to be biased.

For a company trying to build and communicate its own identity this journalistic responsibility or goal can sometimes be undesirable as it makes the identity communication process more difficult to control. However, in today's overburdened and overcrowded media landscape, a journalist may often find him/herself overloaded by having to produce news articles at an ever-increasing pace, leaving him/her less and less time to research a piece thoroughly and report objectively. This is where companies have an opportunity to influence coverage on themselves with the help of their PR professionals.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In this study, the researcher studied what happens at this stage of the communication chain. Do the journalists uphold their moral responsibility to portray reality or can they be swayed by the PR efforts of a company? Are journalists just pawns for companies to play with or are they kings, able to determine for themselves what and how they write? For a growth company with low resources but an increasing need for publicity, this is a very relevant question that can help decide whether to use time and resources on developing relationships with journalists or to spend these resources elsewhere such as in marketing efforts. If journalists can be influenced by PR professionals' efforts, it would seem logical to use them as important channels for identity communication. If, on the contrary, they do in fact remain impartial to PR efforts, this channel is perhaps no more important than any other. With the proliferation of start-ups today this is an interesting contemporary issue, which has not been extensively researched and the results of this study provide interesting insight into the subject and grounds for further research.

To answer these questions the study sets out to incorporate four areas of existing research, namely corporate identity and its communication, corporate image formation, cultural intermediaries, and growth companies. It aims to investigate the influence journalists as communication intermediaries may have on corporate identity communication in being part of the communication chain. A wealth of previous research exists on corporate identity communication, corporate image formation and growth companies, but communication intermediaries have not been extensively studied.

The concept is closely related to cultural intermediaries, and this study uses this field of study extensively to create the link between cultural intermediaries and the business world and thus describe communication intermediaries. The importance of communication intermediaries for growth companies operating in international markets is particularly important because company-released communications may be interpreted differently in different markets, but by using foreign journalists a company can ensure that messages can be adapted to each particular culture.

1.4 Research Questions

This thesis aims to study what role journalists play as an intermediary in the corporate identity communication process and discuss the role they may have in corporate image formation and creating competitive advantage. Previous research suggests that journalists have an incentive to keep messages fairly in line with the company releases in order to form a long-lasting relationship with the company in the future (Larsson, 2009, p. 131). This, however, contradicts the idea of “journalistic integrity” and mirroring the truth, (Mellor, 2008, p.474) and may result in journalist and PR professional collaborations that would be beneficial to growth companies in particular but that could ultimately cause many stakeholders to feel betrayed if such a collaboration were exposed.

To study how this relationship works in practice, the researcher selected a case company that represented a typical growth company operating in an international environment. The case company was at the time of data collection still a young company which did not place an emphasis on a certain channel, and thus a good subject for study.

To study the communication process in the case company, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How does the case company portray itself in its press releases?

The first question aims to identify key identity-related messages and tones in press releases. The identification will help to form an overall evaluation of how the company sees itself and how it would like to portray itself in the media.

2. How do foreign journalists write about the case company in their articles?

The second question focuses on journalists and their perceptions of the corporate identity of the case company. Identifying the key identity-related messages and tones the journalists portray will help to reveal how they relate to the portrayed identity of the case company and whether this is similar to the perception the case company has of itself.

This study will explore what it means to use an external intermediary in identity communications and what implications this may have for a growth company searching for effective ways to communicate its identity. It is in the interest of the company to be able to communicate its identity as seen by itself rather than to have uncontrollable coverage that is potentially harmful. However, controlling external communication intermediaries such as journalists is difficult and journalists are likely to resist any efforts to do so (Jempson, 2005, p. 268).

This study further elucidates whether using journalists to communicate identity is a good option for a growth company doing business in today's competitive marketplace by looking at the content and tone of company released press releases and journalist written articles discussing the same topics. The possible similarities and differences are evaluated to be able to factually assess the role of a communication intermediary in the identity communication process.

Through the analysis of articles written by journalists about the case company, the researcher expects to find that journalists are indeed influenced greatly by the press releases companies send them and that they echo similar messages and use similar tones to those of the company itself. The researcher also expects that due to the lack of time and financial resources, the journalists will value output more than journalistic integrity and maintain the original messages and their tone. These expectations, if proven to be correct, from the view of a growing company, would signal that journalists as intermediaries are an effective channel to use to communicate identity and form an image in an international business environment.

The motivation for journalists' behavior regarding the messages and tones is studied with the aid of relevant literature and empirical study. Journalists as cultural intermediaries have been widely researched and the upholding of journalistic values is a popular topic of study within the journalism field. Using these studies as a starting point and combining them with literature on corporate identity communication and growth companies, the researcher will attempt to develop a framework for studying the possible effects of using journalists as intermediaries in the identity communication process and ultimately image formation.

Using this framework, the researcher then compares two sets of data (press releases and journalist-written articles) through methods of content analysis and appraisal analysis to see whether the two sets of data are similar or not. These two main methods are complemented by a semi-structured interview with the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of the case company. Through these methods the researcher hopes to paint a clearer picture of the role communication intermediaries play in the corporate identity communication process and whether their use could be an efficient way for growth companies to plan their communications strategy and to create sustainable competitive advantage.

1.5 The Case Company

The case company in this study, Rovio, is a Finnish gaming company that has been growing rapidly since its launch of the mobile gaming app Angry Birds in 2009. The app has quickly become the number one paid app of all time. Since the initial gaming app, Rovio has expanded and produced eight further games for different platforms. The company has gained popularity all over the world and has successfully extended its brand to several related products such as plush toys, clothes, theme parks and mobile phone accessories to name but a few.

The aggressive expansion strategy is also evident in hiring where the company is actively recruiting young people to allow for continued expansion. The company has recently started an active communication strategy which is based on trying to portray the company as an entertainment company rather than a gaming company. This move away from the original position of being a technology-driven gaming company has been a strategic decision to place more importance on communications and marketing and to portray the company as a more diverse company than other gaming companies.

This meant that at the time of data collection for this study the company was still shifting towards its new strategy and using its communication function in a fairly limited way. Press releases (part of the data used in this study) were used actively, but the company was lacking a formal communication strategy to support the press releases. The company was, however, beginning to place an increasing importance on press relations. This made the choice to study press releases and journalist-written articles very appropriate for the case company in question.

1.6 Contribution to International Business Communication

The contribution of this thesis to the international business communication field is twofold. Firstly, it introduces the concept of communication intermediaries, which, to the knowledge of the researcher is new and has not been used before in the corporate communication field. This concept combines elements from cultural intermediary studies as well as corporate communication studies to develop a unique way of looking at the actors in the corporate communication chain of companies.

Secondly, this thesis attempts to enrich the international business communication field's understanding of growth company communication. Growth companies have a unique set of needs regarding communication which has not been widely studied. The present research helps to understand how communication intermediaries can be used in this context to help create an edge against competition – something that in a growth company context can determine whether the company survives or not.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This introductory Chapter 1 has justified the need for this study and described the objectives. Chapter 2 discusses the literature that forms the theoretical basis for the study, namely research on corporate identity and image, cultural intermediaries and growth companies. This chapter also presents the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter 3 details the research data and methods and Chapter 4 presents the key findings of the empirical study. These findings are discussed in Chapter 5. The final chapter, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by returning to the aims of the study and summarizing the findings.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to develop a theoretical background which justifies the aim of this study: to investigate the reasons why growth companies might use journalists in the identity communication process and how this might contribute to competitive advantage. The two main branches of research that this study is based on are corporate identity and image studies and journalism studies. In addition to this, a brief overview on growth companies will be given. Section 2.1 will look at the corporate identity and corporate image, whereas Section 2.2 will concentrate on journalists as communication intermediaries and their role in the communication process in a business context.

As the case company used in this study is a typical growth company, Section 2.3 briefly describes growth companies as a type of company and discusses the specific challenges they face in the marketplace. The final section, Section 2.4, brings together the theoretical background for this study and develops the theoretical framework that describes the identity communication process and how the framework will be used in this study.

2.1 Understanding the Corporate Identity Concept

This section will define corporate identity and its communication in Subsection 2.1.1 , look at it as a driving force of corporate image in Subsection 2.1.2 and examine how these two concepts may contribute to competitive advantage in Subsection 2.1.3. In this study, the researcher aims to examine the way growth companies use identity communications to create a unique image and competitive advantage and to understand this process, the researcher has discussed each element separately.

2.1.1 *Defining Corporate Identity*

This subsection will describe corporate identity as a concept and relate its relevance in the study. This understanding will create the basis for understanding how identity can be communicated which is discussed in Chapter 2.1.2.

Marketing and communications literature has long attempted to clearly define corporate identity, corporate brand, corporate image, and corporate reputation. These concepts are very closely related and are sometimes used interchangeably. Several researchers agree that these terms, as they are understood today, stem in one way or the other from corporate identity (Balmer, 1998, p.964); (Dacin & Brown, 2002, p.254); (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004, p.369). It is useful at this point to look at the evolution of the concept to understand it clearly and how it will be used in this study.

The corporate identity construct has its roots in graphic design and marketing, which according to Van Riel & Balmer, (1997, p.340) is evidenced in the backgrounds of veteran communication practitioners. Corporate identity was originally seen as something very tangible and was communicated through corporate logos, nomenclature and visuals, very similarly perhaps as how corporate brand is understood today. Olins (1978, p.104) echoed this view in saying that corporate identity equals the visual design of a company. Though this view may seem limited today, it played an important part in increasing the recognition of corporate identity thinking in business life. For example, Van Riel & Balmer (1997, p.340) later claimed that through the work of graphic designers the concept of corporate identity was formalized and senior management started paying attention to it in a significant way.

Balmer (1998, p.965) has researched the topic of corporate identity and image extensively and in 1998 developed a timeline for the evolution of the corporate identity construct in his paper “Corporate Identity and the Advent of Corporate Marketing”. The timeline's roots lay in the 1950s when the term corporate image first started appearing as a prequel to corporate identity. Corporate image was something managers thought about in relation to external stakeholders, which as mentioned before, made visuals extremely important. The role of graphic designers continued to be heightened up until the 1970s when managers started paying more attention to internal stakeholders. With this came the popularity of concepts such as corporate personality and corporate identity, where the personnel of a company played a key role in forming an organization's identity.

During this period Kennedy (1977) and Olins (1978) were influential writers who set the stage for such influential writers as Bernstein (1984), Dowling (1986) and Abratt (1989), who entered the stage in the 1980s. From the 1980s onwards, corporate identity garnered a considerable amount of academic interest from various fields from psychology to marketing and along with this, organizational identity and behavior began to gain prominence in the academic world in addition to the business world. With these changes, the corporate identity construct slowly began to become more multidisciplinary and form what is understood by corporate identity today. The main researchers behind this shift in perception were well-known professionals from the marketing and communication fields, such as Balmer (1998) (2001a) (2001b), Ind (1990) and Van Riel (1997).

In the 1990s, the growing interest in corporate reputation fuelled interest in corporate identity as well. This interest grew because of the realization that good corporate reputation can help create financial value, attract investors, retain employees and help consumers in buying decisions (Deephouse, 2000, p.1098). By this time, corporate identity was already understood to form a basis for corporate reputation and image, and this link garnered interest for all three concepts.

Corporate identity definitions today comprise many other elements than just visual identity, such as corporate culture, behavior, and market conditions as defined by

Bernstein, (1984, p.38) Ind, (1990, p.19) and Zinkhan et al. (2001, p.154). This makes it a more comprehensive concept such as is fit in today's complex marketplace. The multidisciplinary understanding of corporate identity has led to the formation of the corporate identity mix (Melewar & Jenkins, 2003, p.80), where corporate identity is composed of three elements: mind, soul and voice (Balmer & Soenen, 1999, p.74). This mix very comprehensively covers the various elements that are understood to contribute to corporate identity today.

In this mix, the mind represents managerial vision, corporate philosophy, strategy, performance, brand architecture, nature of corporate ownership and organizational history. The soul represents such subjective elements as employee affinities, internal images, distinct values and mix of sub-cultures. The voice is the external activities of the company, such as all controlled and uncontrolled communication, symbolism, employee and corporate behavior and indirect communication.

As Melewar & Jenkins (2003, p.80) note, this approach represents an interesting divergence from the traditional corporate identity mix of symbols, behavior and communications. For example, the idea of voice in the newer mix and symbols in the more traditional mix can be seen as parallels, but voice has a much wider meaning than symbols. In this way the new mix widens the corporate identity concept and leaves more room for interpretation and adaptation.

Regardless of how the corporate identity mix is defined, corporate identity at its base is a set of characteristics a company has that makes it distinct from its competitors. As described by Balmer:

> *"[Corporate identity] is shaped by the actions of corporate founders and leaders, by tradition and the environment. At its core it is the mix of employees' values which are expressed in terms of their affinities to corporate, professional, national and other identities.* (Balmer, 2001a, p. 261)

Based on Balmer’s and Van Riel’s extensive research on the subject as well as their own, Melewar & Jenkins (2003, p.81) have developed a framework for describing and defining the corporate identity construct. Their framework takes into account the origins of the concept as well as its later developments and summarizes the concept into four main dimensions: communication and visual identity, behavior, corporate culture, and market conditions. Particularly by adding the market conditions dimension, we can see the influence of later corporate identity research. In particular, we can see the influence of Balmer & Soenen’s (1999,p.74) “mind, body and voice” thinking, as communication and visual identity are grouped together. The framework is presented below in Figure 1.

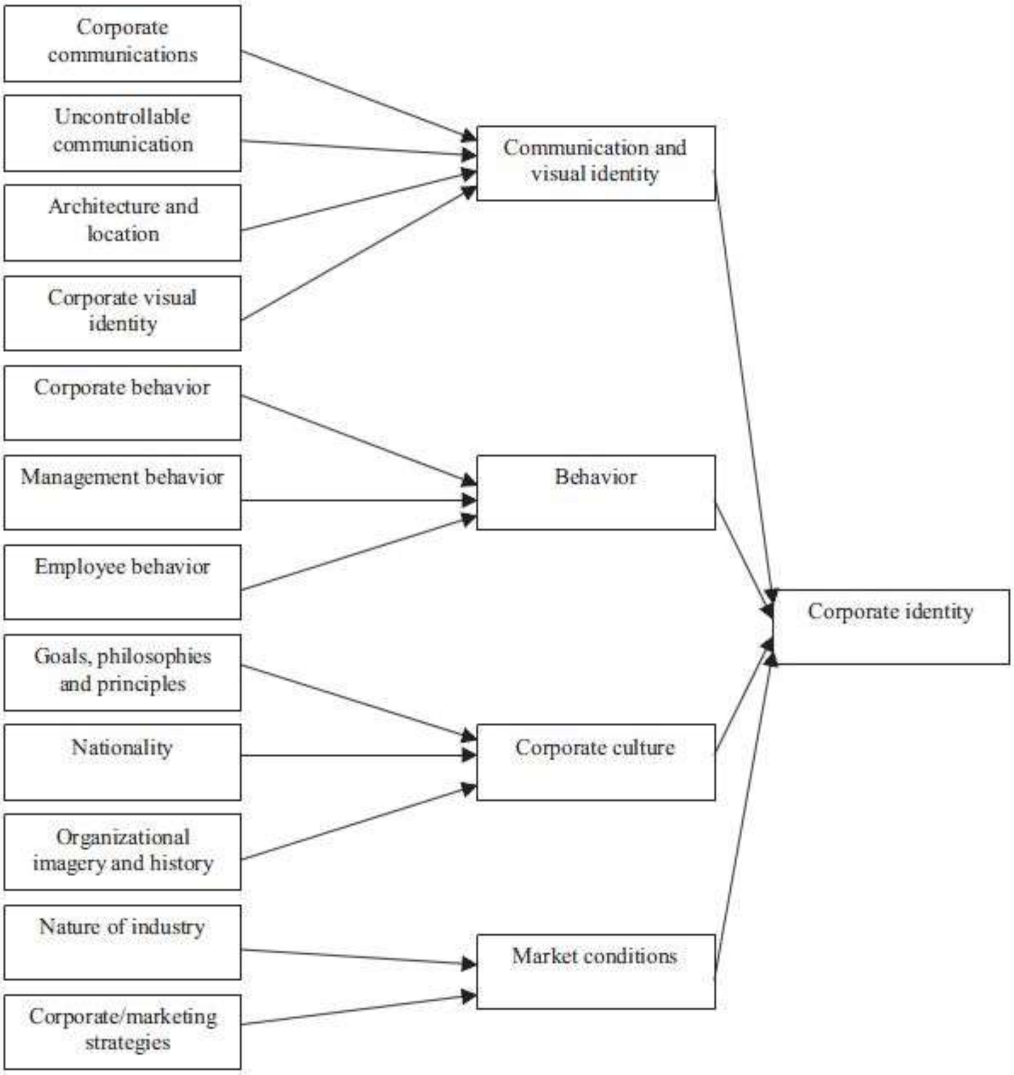

Figure 1. (Melewar & Jenkins, 2003, p. 81) Corporate identity construct.

In this study, this framework will form the basis of the understanding of corporate identity and thus how it is communicated. The framework incorporates in a complete way the most recent developments in the corporate identity construct and describes what dimensions the case company will have considered in constructing its identity, whether consciously or subconsciously.

2.1.2 *Communicating Corporate Identity*

This subsection will explain the processes through which corporate identity is communicated and how corporate image is formed. To understand the potential benefits of using journalists as communication intermediaries in the identity communication process it is important to understand how identity can be communicated. Image formation is the direct result of identity communication and therefore is also discussed, before Chapter 2.1.3 leads us to a discussion on how these two concepts may build competitive advantage.

Although communicating corporate identity is not a straightforward process and cannot be prescriptively explained, several attempts have been made. Balmer, a distinguished researcher in this field, has developed perhaps the most widely used model of the communication dimensions and how they relate to one another. Below, in Figure 2, the researcher presents Balmer's (2001b, p.12) Ac^{2}id Test diagram of the identity communication process dimensions and how they work together, creating, through co-operation, the multidimensional corporate identity construct.

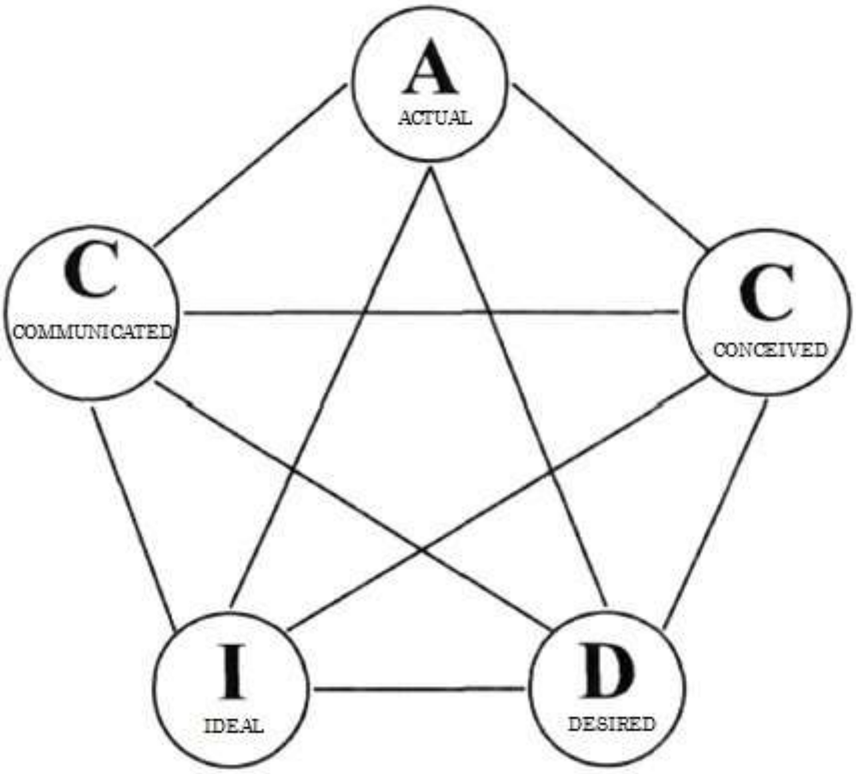

Figure 2. (Balmer, 2001b, p. 12) Ac²id Test of Corporate Identity Management ™.

While Figure 2 has no clear starting or ending point, the connectedness of all the dimensions allows one to start examining the diagram from any point. The figure describes how a company can have an ideal identity and how based on this ideal identity it maps out a desired identity that is perhaps more feasible but which also reflects its aspirations. On the basis of this analysis, the company develops a concept that it communicates (communicated identity) which leads to the formation of an actual identity in the minds of the public. The actual identity that is present in the public's mind is also influenced by other external things that the company cannot directly influence and informed by the conceived identity which was already present in their minds, before they saw or read any communications. This conceived identity is informed by their past and present knowledge of image, branding or reputation of the company.

It is management's decision and responsibility to determine which stakeholders and perceptions are most relevant and thus merit further attention when reviewing or constructing and revising the actual identity. None of these events, however, are isolated or happen in any particular order. Each event is connected to the others and influences one another through the feedback loop. This is why the communication process can be hard to examine and manage.

Corporate identity, whether ideal, actual, desired or conceived, is communicated through various channels; company-designed communications, employee communications as well as external, independent communications such as news coverage or reports by public interest groups. These form the "signs" that stand for the identity of a company and according to Christensen & Askegaard (2001, p. 304) "the total sum of [the] signs" help to form the corporate image. The authors stress that ignoring the feedback loop from the public, not acknowledging the interrelatedness of the Ac^{2}id Test components and communicating only its desired identity with no regard to outside opinion are common mistakes made in the communication process. This may lead to a disconnect with key stakeholders, where the company and its stakeholders do not share common views on the identity and therefore image perceptions are based on different things. This makes building a uniform image a difficult task.

To understand how to create a uniform image, one must first understand the corporate image concept. According to Cornelissen (2000, p. 120) corporate image is often used to mean an outsider's perception of corporate identity. The perception is influenced by a receiver's own experiences and impressions. As receivers' experiences and impressions differ greatly, so will the interpretations they make on a corporate image differ as well.

On the other hand, Gray & Balmer (1998, p. 697) maintain that corporate image is a mental picture of a company that is held by an individual. It is an instant association formed on the spot and is therefore a very intuitive estimation of a company. The image is therefore formed in a receiver's mind in response to corporate communications, which are the articulation of the identity of a company.

Whereas corporate identity is defined in the previous chapter as something stemming from real and tangible aspects of a company (such as corporate culture, visual identity etc.), corporate image is often described as an abstract idea that a stakeholder holds with regards to a company. As Zinkhan, et al. (2001, p.152) state, most stakeholders do not have time or the possibility to gather the correct facts about a company but rather rely on image to form opinions and make decisions. These decisions (e.g. whether to purchase or not) can be the deciding factor in the viability of a growth company.

As companies have several stakeholders with different personal experiences, they will also have several images. The differences between the images may exist because they are reflecting a certain identity characteristic (managers' identity, employee identity, product identity or organizational identity) more than the others. All of these sources will portray their identity differently, intentionally or not, and are thus likely to elicit a different response from the stakeholder. As such, according to Bernstein, (1984, p.14) corporate image can be seen to be the interpretations a stakeholder makes in response to the beliefs, impressions, feelings, knowledge and experiences he has of a company. These parameters may be related to one person in the company or the organization as a whole, but they form the basis of the image for any individual stakeholder.

The three views presented above differ in that Cornelissen acknowledges that environment plays a part while Gray & Balmer and Bernstein adhere more strictly to the idea of image being a direct result of communication. However, all of the views seem to agree that image formation is located somewhere between desired identity communication and perceived image retention. This is very close to where the intermediaries in this study (journalists and PR professionals) are located and highlights their role in identity communication, image formation and, to some extent, in creating competitive advantage, as will be discussed in Subsection 2.1.3.

Cornelissen (2000, p.120) further describes image formation as a complicated cognitive process that stems from corporate identity messages, and as such the actual formation process is difficult to examine. Similarly, Abratt (1989, p.63) and Zinkhan et al. (2001, p.152) believe that managing an image is not a straightforward or easy task, but also that careful planning and understanding of relevant factors involved in the situation make it a feasible one.

When forming an image, an individual will not consider all messages equally, but rather will select the thoughts and impressions upon which he will base his evaluation in accordance with what messages he is exposed to and what he is familiar with. As company messages (in any form) are often very frequent, images are also formed quickly and as immediate responses. This makes negative images easier to modify when and if they may arise. However, from a management point of view, this also means that images are not very lasting. Precisely because they are formed as immediate responses, they may sway in any direction at the slightest provocation. This is in strong contrast to company reputation, which is formed over time and can endure blows unlike image can. However, as reputation is built through repeated image formation instances, managing these instances is what makes a good reputation possible.

For this study, the gap between identity communication and image formation is of key interest. The presence of intermediaries such as journalists and PR professionals in this gap is clear as they communicate the identity through their articles and press releases, but the researcher is interested in knowing whether they are beneficial for a growth company seeking to create competitive advantage at lower costs. The next subsection will explore corporate image as a source of competitive advantage and highlight what could potentially be the benefit of intermediaries in the identity communication and image formation processes.

2.1.3 *Corporate Image as Competitive Advantage*

This subsection will describe how corporate image can contribute to competitive advantage and present a model through which this relationship can easily be examined. This model lays the basis for the theoretical framework used in this study.

The impact of corporate image and its position as a component of competitive advantage has been studied especially in the marketing and advertising fields, where researchers have found a positive link between image and company performance.. Lovelock (1984, p.134) describes the link very well in saying: *"(images) … are likely to play only a secondary role in customer choice decisions unless competing services are perceived as virtually identical on performance, price, and availability*." Even though Lovelock is a researcher in the marketing field and his statement reveals his tendency to think in terms of marketing's 4Ps, we see that the corporate image concept is mentioned before and above other potentially contributing factors in competitive advantage, which speaks to its importance.

Lovelock (1984, p.134) spoke here of service organizations, and in a similar vein Andreassen & Lindestad (1998, p.10) argue that "corporate image is believed to have a positive impact on customers' perception of quality, value, customers' satisfaction judgment, and customer loyalty", both of which seem to affirm the role of corporate image as an important part of building competitive advantage. Lovelock (1984, p.134) and Andreassen & Lindestad (1998, p.10) are all talking about service organizations, but Hall (1993, p.610) has extended this interpretation to a more general approach, arguing that companies who can produce products with attributes (such as image) that correspond to key buying criteria for customers, can create competitive advantage.

According to this thinking, having an image that corresponds to what a customer is looking for, or the "correct" image, can help create competitive advantage.

Creating this "correct" image is precisely what PR professionals aim to do when designing company communications. They aim to portray their company in their desired way, communicating the desired identity and are hoping to create a desired response. If this communicated identity is unique and presents the company in a way that is easily distinguishable from its competitors, the company can hope to create an edge, a point of difference, and thus competitive advantage against competitors. Furthermore, if the PR professionals are able to make journalists to convey a similar message, they can gain external validation for their message and achieve competitive advantage more effectively.

If this is the case, journalists would be acting as intermediaries not only in the identity communication and image formation process, but also as intermediaries to creating competitive advantage. As creating competitive advantage is a key issue for many growth companies, this offers insight into the research topic of why growth companies would be inclined to use journalists in their identity communications in addition to PR professionals.

Lovelock (1984, p.134) Andreassen & Lindestad (1998, p.10) further argue that images play an important role in the absence of other differentiating factors. It is particularly in situations where key decision-making information is either lacking or is very abundant that a desirable image can create the extra "something" or the extra incentive for a consumer.

In line with this idea then, we may say that in situations where little information exists, positive image becomes a key source of information. In situations where relevant information abounds, image may become the key differentiator. This would seem to tell us that corporate image has a particularly important role in creating competitive advantage for companies either in well-established markets or in markets that are very new and not yet developed. This further highlights the importance of image for growth companies.

This relationship between corporate image and competitive advantage has been researched extensively and in particular, Gray & Balmer (1998, p. 696) have formalized the relationship through the flow chart presented below.

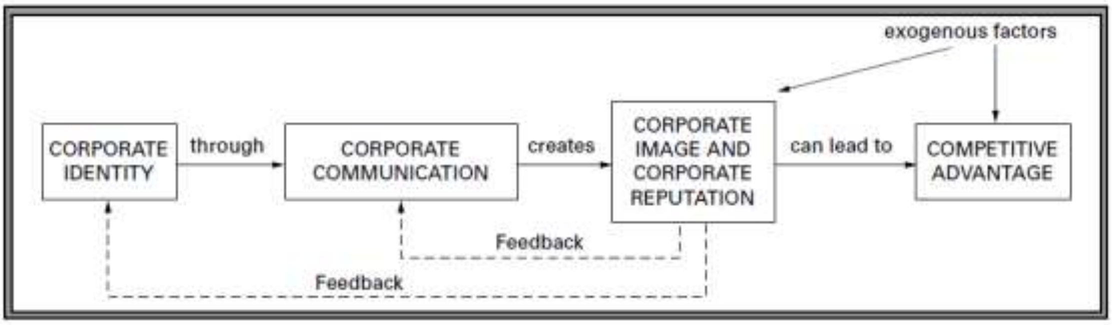

Figure 3. (Gray & Balmer, 1998, p. 696) Corporate identity and image as creators of competitive advantage

Figure 3 depicts the relationships that have been discussed in Subsection 2.1 starting from corporate identity, using corporate communication techniques to arrive at corporate image and ultimately, potential competitive advantage. While this relationship seems straightforward, it is anything but. In particular, in the final two stages of the flow chart (corporate image and reputation, and competitive advantage), we can see the influence of exogenous factors that have a deep impact on the relationship between the concepts discussed above. As the influence of exogenous factors is difficult to measure in particularly in a graduate thesis, this study concentrates on only the first two elements of the chain while recognizing their potential influence later on in the relationship.

The relationship presented in this model is central to understanding the role of journalists in this study, and in particular their relevance for a growth company seeking to create competitive advantage. The researcher will return to this figure when discussing the theoretical framework of this study.

2.2 Communication Intermediaries

This section will explore the nature of corporate public relations and the journalism profession in Subsection 2.2.1. Subsection 2.2.2 will discuss the issue of media framing and its impact on corporate communications. The final Subsection, 2.2.3, will discuss the role of journalists in the context of this study – as corporate communication intermediaries.

2.2.1 ***Journalism and Public Relations***

This subsection will look at journalism and public relations as fields and the characteristics they may share. It will also attempt to delve into the nature of journalism and its motivations which will help to form a link between the work of a general news journalist and a PR practitioner working solely in the business world, and what effect this may have on the press releases and articles used as data in this study.

Journalism, both business and traditional, has an impact on how we perceive companies and whether we are aware of them. The media is, for consumers, the primary source of information and having a strong presence in the media means having a strong presence in the public’s minds as well. In the business world, PR professionals provide journalists with company news, often in the form of press releases, to bring to their attention what is happening at any given moment without the journalist having to seek out this information themselves.

As PR activities are defined by Larsson (2009, p. 132), they “*involve traditional press conferences and press releases to various more or less successful long-tern agenda-*

setting-related activities". As press releases are an integral part of the data for this study, the PR field is a relevant subject to study which will give insight on what motivates corporate communication practitioners to write press releases and what ends they hope to achieve by doing this. Communication practitioners in corporations are often called communications officers rather than PR professionals (a term more often used in PR agencies), but as the tasks they perform are for the most part the same, in this study, the two will be treated as the same.

The primary role that the media is thought to occupy, is to work as a source of information, so that we get relevant information to be able to make conscious and informed choices. This role is often argued to be one of the most important factors in a contemporary society, to such extent, that many theorists even call it a prerequisite for democracy. In fact, Baker (2004, p. 132) goes as far as to say *"A free and independent press can make important structural contributions that are as great as or greater than many of the constitutional or administrative devices…"* Media, as some argue, is currently the only plausible way to build a well-functioning democracy. Indeed, it would be difficult to think of modern democracies without a free and independent press. Globally speaking however, democracy is not the only form of government and thus a free press is also not the only type of press. However, for the purposes of this study, the researcher will limit the scope of discussion to the free press, as the source data is from Western countries governed by democratic processes.

The role of the press as a source of information is particularly noticeable in today's world where people increasingly lack time and personal experiences, and rely increasingly on representations of reality that the media as intermediaries portray to us. (Kamalipour, 2010, p.87) Thus, the independence of the press is directly related to how we perceive and experience the world around us. Arguably, no press can be completely independent, but similarly any biases the press may exhibit tend to also be transmitted into our perceptions of the world.

However, the media are never merely an interpreter or mirror of the existing reality; they are part of it. They produce images and raise certain issues onto the daily agenda while ignoring others, very often in accordance with certain political views or specific ends. The German sociologist Jürgen Habermas, who has studied the relationship between patterns of communication and social change since the early 1960s, argued that in practice all communication, whether interpersonal or through mass media, can never escape the effects of the conditions in which it was produced (Manning, 2001, p. 6). Because of that, there is no such thing as objective news. All news articles can be called products of various *frames* – a concept that will be further discussed in Subsection 2.2.2.

Further detracting from objectivity in the business context, as Davis (2000, p.43) has shown in his research, is the fact that business journalists increasingly use information generated by a company instead of investigation as base material for news, which brings together the two topics covered in this section of the study; namely journalists and PR practitioners. For communication/PR departments, this means having more power than ever before to manage what is being said about their company. Amplifying the effect even more, according to Davis (2000, p.43), is the fact that viewers and advertisers are now more interested in entertainment as opposed to news, which decreases the resources news desks may have to produce well-researched news. With fewer resources at their disposal, news journalists rely more and more on PR communications as a fast and cheap way to fill pages while being able to devote more and more time to topics that resonate more with today's readers; topics that have entertainment value.

Larsson (2009, p.132) has studied the relationship between the PR and the media extensively and adopts the same view as Davis does, citing financial and personnel cutbacks as well as increased amount of news sources as reasons for the increased relevance of and reliance on information subsidies i.e. PR work. These information subsidies work by lowering the cost of the news and thus trying to increase consumption. Both Larsson (2009) as well as Davis (2000) agree that this has largely affected what Larsson (2000, p.132) calls “more alienated journalism”, that is, journalism which is strongly affected by outside forces such as PR and which moves further away from being independent and perhaps also further away from what consumers may in actual fact want and need.

According to the idea of journalistic autonomy or integrity, journalists should seek to stay as independent as possible and write in an unbiased manner, citing multiple sources for fairness (Napoli, 2010, p.7). Relying on sources that are clearly biased, such as company communications, would make it very difficult for a journalist to claim to be unbiased.

This integrity is well defined by Jempson (2005, p.268) by these words: *“Most journalists agree they have a responsibility to “get it right”, and resist the efforts of those who seek to control what they write and broadcast in good faith.”*

Journalists want to avoid being influenced by third parties with an agenda, or, as in the words of Jempson (2005, p.268), “those who seek to control what [journalists] write”. Clearly then, it is natural that there should exist some animosity between journalists and PR practitioners, which Jempson (2005, p.271) and Larsson (2009, p.133) well document in their research. According to them, journalists in particular are very skeptical of PR professionals, whereas PR professionals see the relationship as fruitful and collaborative. This “non-reciprocity” on the journalists’ part is due to their desire to remain as unbiased as possible while PR professionals by nature seek to influence or create biases that favor their companies.

In line with Jempson’s (2005, p.268) view of “getting it right” is Larsson’s (2009, p.133) claim, supported by McNair (2000, p.71), that despite all this, journalists are able to evaluate and disregard PR information and are skeptical of commercial interests, deeming textual product placement despicable.

There is however, an ever-increasing portion of journalists (particularly in the television-news media) that are fully aware of the effect outside sources may have on journalism and are prepared to embrace it. Underwood (2001, p.100) writes about the challenges the news media face in today's world, where diminishing profits are leading some media to offer the public entirely what it wants (celebrity gossip, fashion, entertainment news etc.) and in an unabashedly un-objective manner. These journalists have embraced PR professionals and other influence groups and are using them to keep up with the public's increasing demand for news at a fast pace, at the same time turning a blind eye to possible conflicts of interest or loss of integrity.

Why then are journalists so commonly employed in business and deemed a worthy investment of resources for companies? Larsson (2009, p.134) opines that quite simply publication in the media is more respected than other types of communication. It is as if, once externally approved by someone, information becomes legitimate or true. Also, and of particular interest in this study due to its concentration on growth companies, compared to advertising, media publicity is very cost-effective.

Before we look more deeply into using journalists in a business context, the next subsection will elaborate on media framing and on how it is used to serve the purposes of a company. We will also examine what objectivity means for the media and news organisations.

2.2.2 *Media Framing*

This subsection looks at media framing and how it affects journalism and consumers. It will also link media framing to a business journalism context, through which we can see how we can understand PR practices as framing to suit companies' purposes.

One of the main concepts in media studies is the frame. Frames are conceptual instruments that we use to understand the complicated world around us, and the different messages that we retrieve from it. We use frames to get the world in order and to dress it in words, so that we can decide what is important for us and what kind of decisions we should make. Ervin Goffman (1974, p.10f), who first used the term, defined framing as understanding or “making sense of events and things”. A core factor in Goffman’s (1974) theory is pluralism. This means that firstly, in most situations there are multiple events happening at the same time, and secondly, a single event might appear differently to different individuals. We are continually trying to relate events to a previously familiar pattern which is why frames are always subjective. These patterns emerge from our personal experience and change over time. In other fields, this process is also called socialization and refers to the inheritance of norms, ideologies, customs and skills that an individual needs to function in society (Clausen, 1968, p.3).

From a media perspective, Robert Entman (1993, p. 52) uses the following definition:
“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”.

Thus according to Entman, the media do not only select particular events to report, they also strive to make them more understandable for their audience by presenting them from a certain light that may be familiar to the audience. Thus framing relies largely on what is considered fact by its audience and interprets facts to support this position.

Every piece of media content – every news report, article, editorial, column and opinion – uses frames to highlight certain points and ignore others, to give us some background knowledge, but at the same time draw a line between what the person behind the story finds relevant and what not. What we understand as “news” is in fact a distilled form of multiple events taking place at the same time. The media do not only select particular events based on what they consider to be important; they also select particular facts to tell about those events. The problem is always, as Street (2001, p.37) stresses, that "the story did not have to be told like this; other frames could have produced a different outcome".

Media framing does not necessarily have to be understood as a negative factor, because without any frames there would just be too much information for us to understand. As McNair (2000, p. 82) explains*, "We need the interpretative moment in journalism [...] because the world is too complex, its information flow too rapid, for us to make sense of on our own".* With today's increasing amount of information sources and media outlets, there is not only more information for us to try to interpret but also more frames through which we may see the world.

Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009, p.183) look at framing through the psychological process of persuasion. They say that since the amount of information on a particular event or issue at any given moment is overwhelming, we need framing to help us make sense of it. As the journalist or communicator revises the beliefs or understanding we have by providing new information, it provides an opportunity for persuasion. The writers also mention priming as an underlying mechanism to framing, where people's decision-making is influenced by information that is most easily accessible or recently activated rather than all the information they possess. As a reader uses the information that is at "the top of his head", he is setting a frame for himself subconsciously.

However, framing can also be a power tool, and that is what makes it interesting for media researchers. By choosing certain frames, journalists can make an issue *appear* in a certain way (Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, & Trammell, 2005, p. 25). For example, if the media deliberately endorses one interpretation of the world over another, it can lead to problems for democracy. It can be easy to agree with policy changes, if only the factors supporting them are presented to us. Similarly, from a corporate point of view, it may be easier to relate to the image of a company and its products, when no product defects or management transgressions are revealed. So we see how the use of frames in a business context is what marketing professionals use as a tool and have been doing so for a long time.

In the marketing context, a very similar concept is that of positioning. While positioning originated as a term for product differentiation, it is at its heart a term for helping the consumer understand what the product (or brand) is promising by cutting through the noise of an overcrowded marketplace. Framing, at its most basic level aims to do just this. Hallahan (1999, p.225) describes positioning as creating points of differentiation and heightening product expectations in a consumer's mind. Designing (or framing) the offering and image of a company in a certain way can help to occupy a distinctive competitive position in a consumer's mind. This helps, in Balmer's (2001a, p.248) words to "see through the fog".

The choice of words can be a powerful form of framing. Language provides us with several possible ways to express our thoughts, and words are often far from neutral. Whether a company or its employees are described as "a corporate pig", "a corporate giant" or "an oil drilling company" impacts our perceptions of the company directly. These word choices evolve with time as has happened for example with CSR, which was originally called the Stakeholder Theory, but was later replaced by the CSR concept; a much more emotional phrase for the same concept. This is one of the most straightforward and simple ways to frame a topic, and also the most easily recognizable by a reader.

Framing can also be understood as a longer-term process. Even if one individual article seems objective, a broader scope may reveal that there is a bias. A newspaper or a magazine can choose to ignore one issue and highlight another, for example, and thus contribute to the agenda-setting for the general discussion in society. By constantly highlighting an issue in a certain light, the media can make the public concerned about the issue from that particular angle. As Neuman et al. put it, *"if the media cannot tell* *people what to think, the media can demonstrably tell them what to think about and how to think about it"* (Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992, p. 111). So we see the relevance of framing for the journalistic profession and how even when not actively thinking of a particular frame, a journalist will still be employing one, such as when choosing which story to report. This applies to PR professionals as well.

Hallahan (1999, p.224) and Choi (2010, p.31) argue that framing is one of PR professionals' key activities. They work to interpret product or service-related information from an organization and to package it into a form that is desirable and acceptable to their audience, i.e. journalists. Framing decisions are one of the most important decisions companies and PR professionals can make as they affect the key messages and specific themes that are communicated. Highlighting good qualities - philanthropic endeavors, community involvement, CSR – that are only partially related to the main activities of a company, aims to paint a more complete and hopefully favorable picture of a company. This is done in hopes of creating a positive frame of reference, so that when more negative news must be reported, the overall impression and evaluation of the company could still remain positive.

Whereas general journalism may use framing to help us make sense of the world around us, we can see that in a business context, where instead of an overabundance of news we may experience an overabundance of possible products or services, framing is also used to make sense of the marketplace. Frames will help us distinguish products or services from the mass and to organize products into categories or groups in our minds to make the market more easily understandable. This helps us in brand and product selection. From the point of view of a company, framing offers distinct possibilities in separating oneself from the competition and creating sustainable recognition and competitive advantage.

In this sense, in the business context, framing can be compared to positioning. Positioning helps a company or product stand out from the mass and creates a unique identity that consumers can identify with. As such, framing helps to shape corporate communications in a way that helps in creating a unique image and competitive advantage.

2.2.3 *Journalists as Corporate Communication Intermediaries*

This subsection attempts to collate the characteristics of journalists' and corporate communicators' work and to identify the similarities. Through this comparison and a look at some other research, this subsection elaborates on the concept of communication intermediaries, a concept not widely used in academia but very well-suited to this study and its purposes.

As actors between the company and the public, journalists have a lot of similar features as cultural intermediaries. The seminal work of Bourdieu (1984, p.359) on cultural intermediaries places them as actors between production and consumption. His work is centered on workers engaged in occupations involving presentation and representation such as sales, marketing, advertising and public relations particularly in the cultural sector. Negus (2002, p.4) similarly maintains that cultural intermediaries are workers who come in between production and consumption, as the word "intermediary" in itself suggests.

A similar view by Hirsch (1972, p.644) that places cultural intermediaries in between production and consumption uses the term gatekeepers. Hirsch used the term to describe the editorial selection process in news production in particular, but it has later been applied to other cultural industries and roles more generally. Negus (2002, p. 12) points out that gatekeepers were initially introduced as challengers to the idea that the news media presents consumers a reflection of "the world out there". Their role was to filter the world and its news, thus creating a news reality that corresponded to their priorities and world views. Similarly, in a corporate setting PR professionals are creating a view of their company that reflects their ends and views, but which does not necessarily correspond with an objective truth or reality.

The original concept of gatekeepers, Negus (2002, p.12) says, developed the idea of an "editorial selection of particular stories"; in other words framing. Gatekeepers are thus the ones to frame the world for any particular audience, in this case in a newsroom context. However, Negus continues to say that gatekeepers are not only passive agents making decisions on who to "let pass" and who not to, but that they rather have to actively seek out material, which gives them more power to influence output. In a business context, where journalists must constantly seek out material to write about, PR professionals become the link that lessens their load as they provide "ready-made" stories for journalists.

So we see that Negus's view is closely related to framing; the power to influence output through active material seeking offers a journalist the opportunity for relative objectivity in reporting.

Negus (2002, p.5) further reflects on Bourdieu's work saying that the importance of cultural intermediaries today is well-exemplified through their work in assigning value to various products. Journalists translate the value of a company and its products to us by telling us, for example, why we should be interested in a particular product and what advantages we can expect to obtain from using it. In doing so, Negus continues, intermediaries are constructing imagery and symbols that link production and consumption together, i.e. the company and the end user.

In today's world this may seem as outdated marketing practice, a way of the past, where advertisers were able to create demand by simply feeding consumers images and meanings. Today's consumers, particularly because of the use of the Internet are very adept in carrying out their own research and forming opinions based on that. However, one might argue that in today's world, assigning value is of particular importance in order to be able to make any choice at all, as we are exposed to so much imagery. Today’s marketplace is flooded daily with new products, brands and services and making sense of the onslaught of new products can be daunting even with the help of the Internet. So intermediaries who carry out a preliminary selection process help decrease the amount of new things we are exposed to. Thus intermediaries are still bridging the gap, albeit in a very different environment than what it was when the term was coined.

To look at journalists and cultural intermediaries through the eyes of other researchers, Mahon (2000, p.468) and Mellor (2008, p.471) call for the need to see journalists as “cultural producers” who “conceptualize, construct, and transmit meaningful cultural forms” and “construct, articulate, and disseminate ideologies about identity, community, difference, nation, and politics”. Thus, according to them, a journalist cannot and does not only take what is presented to them and transmit it forward; he also participates in the creation of culture, and of knowledge.

Following this line of thinking, one could say that in a business context a journalist participates actively not only in transmitting information about a company from a PR brief, but that he also gives life and personality to a company image through his own interpretation of it, similarly to how frames work. It is this view of cultural intermediaries then, which most clearly supports the idea of journalistic integrity, where journalists are able to act independently of a company, regardless of time or other resource limits.

In creating culture, it is a business journalist’s responsibility to look at companies and the business field in general to build a view that is as much based on facts as can be. Jempson (2005, p.268) argues this is somewhat different from the role of PR professionals, who represent companies directly and in theory, have no responsibility to the public. A journalist’s responsibility compels him to look for an angle that is true and understandable. Thus the journalist as a corporate communication intermediary should not be influenced as easily as a PR professional, and it is precisely this that makes a journalist trusted by the public and so valuable to a company.

A journalist’s responsibility is also not limited to the consumer. Their audience consists of various different entities and in the business context, investors in particular. Fieseler et al. (2007, p. 4) have written about the impact of journalists on share prices during the previous financial crisis (dot-com bubble of 2000) for example. At that time, share prices fluctuated very strongly based on what business journalists and analysts predicted, whether based on facts or not. This same trend was evident in the most recent financial crisis of 2008. Fieseler et al.’s research shows us just how much impact journalism can have on people’s real life perceptions. It is this impact that companies aim for when employing PR professionals to “promote” their company by releasing favorable press releases in hopes of reaching influential journalists willing to write about them.

In this business context, the role of journalists in society as reducers of information asymmetry is particularly important. To be valuable for the consumer, they have a responsibility to build a social culture where the realities of business are not hidden. As Jempson (2005, p.267) argues, when the public loses trust in journalists, everybody loses. Keeping journalists accountable to the public is also in the interests of corporations not only as business actors but as societal actors in the larger sense. Reaping the benefits of positive publicity is entirely dependent on the confidence the public has in journalists. When journalists are not trusted, all efforts at using them as corporate communication intermediaries are diminished and become a way to waste time and resources for a company.

In the context of this study, with journalists as well as PR practitioners in between a company and the consumer, they can be viewed as exhibiting similar traits to cultural intermediaries, as they were defined by Bourdieu. Furthermore, as this study examines these actors in a communication setting, it is appropriate to use the term "communication intermediaries" to describe these actors.

2.3 Growth Companies and Their Challenges

This section will discuss growth company characteristics in Subsection 2.3.1 and growth companies' challenges in today's marketplace in Subsection 2.3.2. The case company used in this study falls into this category which necessitates a brief look into relevant literature to understand the special characteristics such a company may have and what requirements they may pose on identity communication.

2.3.1 ***Growth Company Characteristics***

This subsection will describe briefly what makes a growth company. This will offer insight into the case company in this study and create a better understanding of its special characteristics.

As defined by Dake (1965, p.53) already back in 1965, growth companies are companies that are in the beginning stages of their life-cycle and have some type of strong competitive advantage (such as innovative products or growth opportunities) over its competitors and the economy in general that make them attractive for investors and likely to experience strong growth in the near future.

From a more macroeconomic point of view, Barringer, Jones & Neubaum (2005, p.664) define growth companies as an important part of national economies as drivers of growth at a larger scale. They also talk about the importance of growth companies in academic study as they are symbols of market acceptance and firm success. For example, when a company experiences rapid growth, it is a clear sign that the market accepts its offering, i.e. buys their products, services, branding or experience. From an academic point of view, studying growth companies over time helps in identifying business and consumer trends.

Strategically speaking, Feeser & Willard (1990, p.94) posit that high-growth companies are more likely to be very strategically aligned than low-growth companies, because high-growth companies are often innovators who produce new products that change the market. This is particularly visible in the high-technology sector where companies such as Google, Apple or Microsoft have launched entirely new products and spawned new industries along with them. High-growth companies are also at an earlier stage in development and often smaller which makes it easier for them to stay aligned and not stray from their initial strategy.

In this study, the researcher is studying a young Finnish mobile gaming company called Rovio, a company that was started several years ago, but has only recently experienced strong growth led by a strong product. It exemplifies a typical growth company and the growth company definitions presented here help to understand the special characteristics of the company under study.

It is a company that has a strong competitive advantage (strong brand imagery), it is currently experiencing high growth in terms of revenues as well as geographical and product expansion and has also spawned industries around itself (mainly through licensing agreements for merchandise). Reaffirming Barringer et al.'s (2005, p.53) claim of growth companies' role in society, Rovio has recently been a "media baby", sparking interest in the Finnish online gaming market more widely. So for the purposes of this study, the researcher is combining all three growth company definitions presented above. This positions the case company firmly within the growth company realm.

2.3.2 *Challenges Faced by Growth Companies*

This subsection briefly discusses challenges growth companies may face, particularly in the communications area. These challenges highlight the niche where journalists' work may be most useful for growth companies and how this may aid growth companies in creating competitive advantage. Literature that touches on growth company communications is still fairly limited, making it necessary here to also look at different branches of research such as marketing and strategy studies. This will offer insight into how companies such as the case company in this study operate and their specific challenges in an identity communication context.

Growth companies operate in very unstable and risky circumstances and their business challenges are often different from what traditional, more established companies face. Dake (1965, p.64) has studied common problems growth companies face which can often turn their exponential growth into dwindling sales or failure. He mentions that while growth companies may experience strong growth initially, enabling this growth takes up so much of their time and resources that they start to compensate for this by leaving other management areas (such as marketing, human resources or finances) neglected and concentrating solely on sales and development.

This same problem can be extended to company identity and image. Corporate communications professionals, to whom it often falls to manage identity and image considerations, is often seen as secondary to many firm functions and their value is not completely understood (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 3). In a strong growth situation this may be exacerbated. Growth companies are most often small and unknown with identities and images that are unfamiliar to the market and these aspects cannot initially be used as competitive advantage or a performance driver. As such, identity and image may not always receive the same attention as other areas (such as sales or product development) may receive.

Growth companies are, however, faced with difficulties when trying to communicate identity as traditional media are not necessarily available to them. Mainstream media today is highly centralized and polarized and concentrates mostly on big news pieces about large companies or major economic situations. Smaller companies and especially growth companies with no mainstream recognition can be left without attention in the media. Grabbing attention is harder for them and even if they manage to do so, it is very difficult to stand out from the crowd. The risk of bad press further makes it harder to succeed in gaining positive attention.

Several academics, e.g. Barringer, Jones, & Neubaum (2005, p.664) and Hambrick & Crozier (1985, p.32), who have studied characteristics of growth companies, have noted some similarities that are often part of the reason they may stumble in the long-run. Growth companies may develop a false sense of security derived from their ever-growing profits; also the fast growth in size and resources needed may cause turmoil along with internal conflicts due to stressed employees with unclear job descriptions. All of these factors contribute to a general loss of sense of direction and cause growth to stall.

Managing growth should thus be one of the most important focuses of rapid-growth companies. Growth management allows a company to better understand all the drivers of growth and not focus on a single dimension. As detailed above, a more comprehensive view of growth opportunities helps a company remain more strategically aligned, one of the characteristics of strong growth companies (Feeser & Willard, 1990, p.94). This should also include identity and image considerations.

Some studies (Barringer et al., 2005, p. 681) have suggested remedies to the problem of managing growth companies, but have so far not touched the area of corporate identity. As discussed in Section 2.1, the role of cohesive corporate identity and image lead to an internal feeling of unity and community and potentially competitive advantage. A company that has a strong sense of community and doing things together can develop a stronger tolerance for adversity (Barringer et al., 2005, p. 682). Growth companies in particular may benefit from placing special importance in this unity; another sign of strong strategic alignment. As not a lot of previous literature exists, studying corporate identity and image as key elements of managing rapid growth and creating competitive advantage offer fruitful fields for further study in the communications field.

For the purposes of this study, maintaining a strategically aligned identity to create competitive advantage is an interesting point. If journalists could be proven to reproduce corporate identity messages similar in both content and tone to what the company itself is saying, to be pawns instead of kings, and in effect thus helping to maintain an aligned identity, then journalists could be a beneficial tool for growth companies to use in identity communications. This question leads us to the theoretical framework used in this study to examine the relationship between corporate identity, image, competitive advantage and the role of communication intermediaries in this process. This relationship is examined in the growth company context, in this case within Rovio, the case company.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The previous sections (2.1-2.3) have reviewed the literature related to corporate identity communication and image formation, communication intermediaries and growth company characteristics respectively. Here, this literature is collated to form the theoretical framework used in this study.

The framework presented in Figure 4 describes how corporate identity is communicated through company press releases and the press. The press is further influenced by the same press releases the company has released, but also through the journalistic frame. As such, the journalist acts as a corporate communication intermediary: a link between the “production” of a corporate identity and the “consumption” of this same identity or the image it has transformed into. This chain is very strongly influenced by the model presented by Gray & Balmer (1998, p.696) which is presented in Chapter 2.1.3, in Figure 3.

A journalist writing an article is constantly influenced by these factors and the influences are transferred through his writing to a consumer reading the article. The journalist uses various frames to prepare or prime the consumer for a specific reaction and interpretation of facts. At this stage, the corporate identity transforms into an image, as it has now become an interpretation of what the company is communicating. However, a consumer’s image may also be influenced directly by the press release (in case he has read it) as well as the behavior and culture of a company, and market conditions. In the end, if the corporate image is deemed positive and unique, it may lead to competitive advantage for the company. During this whole chain of events, the company behavior, culture and market conditions are always present which have a secondary but constant effect on the process.

This model assumes a one-way communication process, where the arrows depict the flow of information. A communication intermediary will also be influenced by external factors such as consumer reactions, as communication is rarely one-way. However, for the purposes of this study this effect has not been discussed separately but has been grouped under the heading “company behavior, culture and market conditions”. This umbrella term covers more broadly all external factors that may influence the communication situation, but which are not under direct study here.

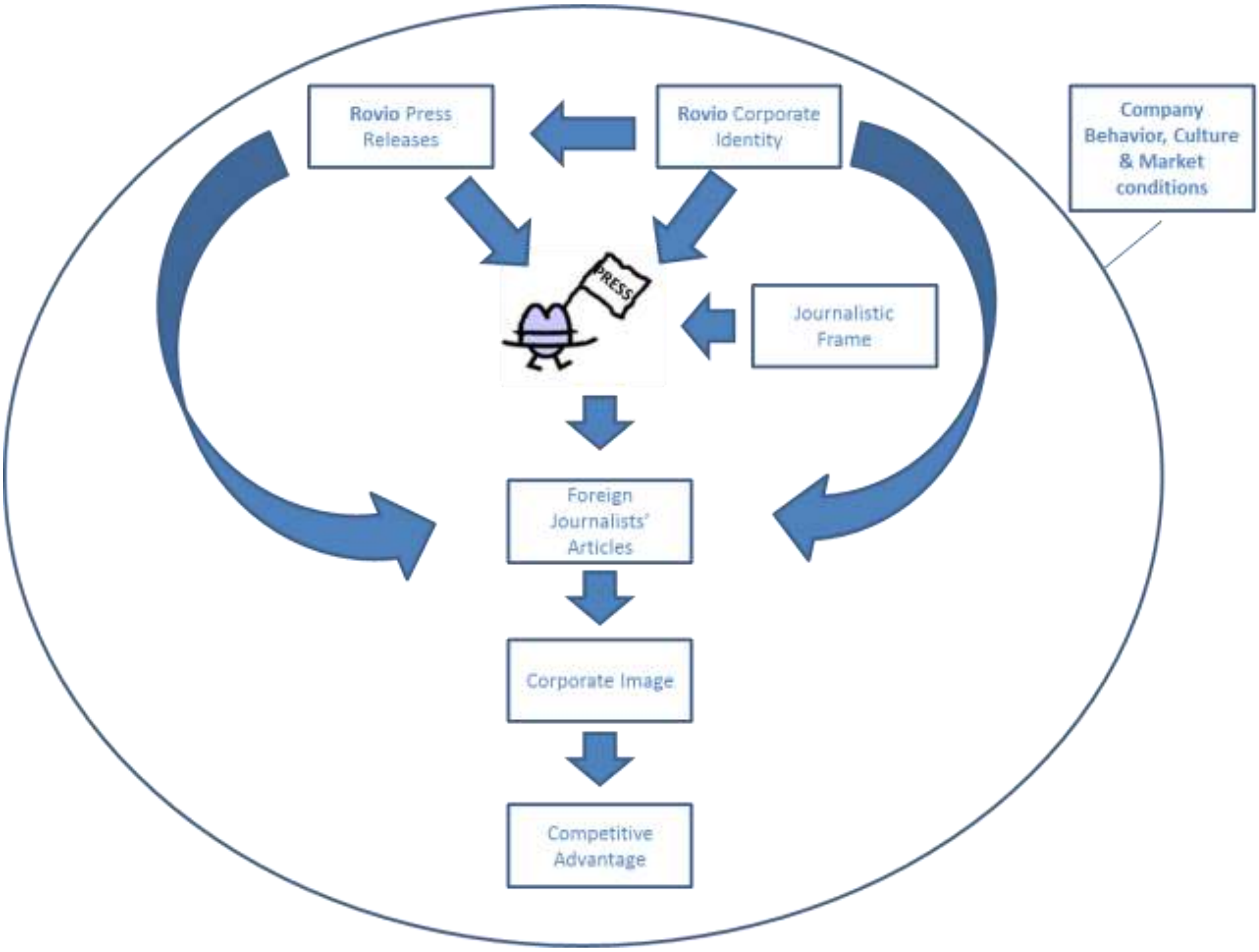

Figure 4. Theoretical framework: corporate image formation through communication intermediaries.

The framework depicts the corporate identity communication process as a function of several factors happening sequentially. An emphasis is placed on the journalist as a communication intermediary, who is a critical link in between the company and its audience, offering legitimization and interpretation, while working under its own motivations of journalistic framing. This link acts also as a modifier to the original message which the company has released.

From the framework we also see the connection between image and competitive advantage and understand the different processes it is dependent upon in a communication setting.

The framework does not explicitly highlight the growth company context, but as this framework is specific to this study and the case company in question is the source of all identity communications, the growth company context is implied.

3 DATA AND METHODS

This chapter outlines the research methodology for this study, presents the research design and justifies the use of these particular research methods. First, the chosen methods are described and justified. Second, the units of analysis are introduced. The third subsection reviews the data coding methodology in detail, and explains the methods used to analyze the data. Finally, the trustworthiness of the study is considered in the fourth subsection.

3.1 Research Methods

This section will outline and justify the research methods used. The methods used in this study are case study, content analysis, appraisal analysis and a semi-structured interview. These four methods are discussed briefly in the subsections 3.1.1. – 3.1.4

3.1.1 ***Case Study***

This subsection briefly describes the characteristics of case studies and why it is a suitable method for this work. It also looks at the choice between qualitative and quantitative case studies.

This is a single case study thesis aiming to describe the corporate identity communication process in growth companies and how it may lead to competitive advantage. In particular, it examines the role of communication intermediaries in this process.

The case study method is suitable for gaining in-depth insight on a single, relevant example that offers a basis for further study and extrapolation to other cases. Yin (2003, p.5) describes three situations where a case-study is particularly useful, namely:

(1) when the questions being posed are “how” and “why”, (2) the researcher has little control over behavioral events, and (3) the issue under study focuses on contemporary events.

In this case, Yin’s (2003, p.5) three criteria are very suitable as firstly the study aims to understand why growth companies use journalists and not only PR professionals as intermediaries, secondly the researcher has no control over how journalists report on the case company, and finally identity communication of growth companies is a contemporary issue that many growth companies deal with and has not been extensively researched yet.

In addition to this, Yin (2003, p.13) argues that a case study is a particularly suitable method of study when one wants to highlight the contextual conditions of the phenomenon under study. As opposed to an experiment, where all context is erased from a phenomenon, a case study assumes that the context will have an impact on the phenomenon and takes this into account.

In a subject such as the one under study here, context is paramount and cannot be ignored. Journalism by nature combines fact, interpretation and context as detailed in the literature review, and so to understand the role of journalists as communication intermediaries in the identity communication of growth companies, a case study is appropriate.

Gerring (2007, p.21) argues that although case-studies are typically carried out as qualitative studies, this need not be so. Case study research may be qualitative or quantitative, and in some cases, as here, a combination of the two. The following part will explain in more detail how both qualitative and quantitative elements of articles are analyzed for insight on the identity communication process.

3.1.2 ***Content Analysis***

This subsection briefly describes the characteristics of content analysis and why it is a suitable method for this work. It also justifies the decision of using qualitative content analysis as opposed to quantitative content analysis.

To study the content of journalist-written articles and how they relate to the content of company press releases, content analysis was used as a qualitative method in this study. Content analysis is a reputable and popular method in analyzing communication (Tong & Robertson, 2008, p.71). As described by Stepchenkova et al. (2009, p.454), it can quantitatively identify elements of a text and aid comparison and hypothesis testing, which for the purpose of this study is appropriate as the researcher is comparing two sets of articles (see Appendix 1).

Content analysis involves establishing textual categories and then counting the number of instances when those categories are used in a particular item of text (Ramos, Salazar, & Gomez, 2000, p.413). These categories can be built through either an inductive or deductive process, depending on the data and potential pre-existing theory. When no previous theory can be used, as is the case in this study, an inductive process is most suitable. This involves carefully examining the data and through a process of continuous comparison, establishing categories that reflect the content of the text (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p.3).

For example, in this study, several articles mentioned how the case company’s mobile game can be downloaded, on what platforms it works or how much it costs. The researcher assigned these a common category of “accessibility” as all of these mentions were meant to make the reader understand how they could gain access to this product. Similarly, in other occasions, categories arose from carefully reading the texts in the data and trying to understand the purpose they served.

Content analysis is divided into qualitative and quantitative approaches making it a very versatile tool for examining texts. For the purposes of this study, the qualitative approach is used, as the topic under study, corporate identity and its communication, cannot be defined by a general set of words or qualities. Stepchenkova (2009, p.456) describes the qualitative approach in content analysis as an approach that allows the researcher not only to observe frequency of usage as in quantitative studies, but to also determine the quality and meaning of use giving the results more depth.

Content analysis methodology typically starts with the codification and classification of terms used in the analysis. Sodhi & Son (2010, p.1317) explain how keywords and classifications are designated to create a research dictionary with which all data is analyzed. In the quantitative approach the keywords can be physical linguistic units such as words, sentences or paragraphs (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p.3). In the qualitative approach however, the keywords are usually individual themes, to better allow for differences in how they are described. This allows for a researcher's interpretation of meaning rather than assuming, as Pool (1959, p.4) criticizes, that "what a writer says is what he means".

To continue the example mentioned before, in this study, "accessibility" represents one of the individual themes that form a part of the research dictionary. To recognize this theme, the researcher linked it to a group of key attributes (available, interactive) which are further described by keywords (reach, downloadable, social, community…) (see Appendices 2 & 4). As discussed later in this Chapter 3.3.1, this taxonomy can also be called Main Category, Generic Category and Subcategory respectively. We see through this example, that although the researcher uses specific linguistic units (words) as keywords, she has also left room for interpretation by grouping these keywords by theme. This makes it possible for her to evaluate the data both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Research dictionaries can be either purpose-built or they can be taken from a ready-made list of well-known phrases in the field. However, Krippendorff (2004, p.287) notes that building a special-purpose dictionary often benefits the research in that it reflects the data more. Compiling a special-purpose dictionary is a rigorous task and is therefore not used as often as other methods such as existing dictionaries. For the purposes of this study, to fully capture the specific elements of corporate image needed for the identity communication of growth companies, a special-purpose dictionary was developed. The development process was started before analysis of data and revised during and after analysis, so that the dictionary would be as complete as possible and would reflect the needs of the study.

The qualitative approach is applicable for this research subject in other aspects as well. As opposed to the quantitative approach, Zhang & Wildemuth (2009, p.3) note that in the qualitative approach randomized data selection is not required, and thus the data can be selected from a pool that is likely to yield more meaningful results. They continue that the qualitative approach is mostly inductive and aims sometimes at creating theory instead of verifying or proving it. In the case of this study, this is of great importance as no theory existed to start out with but it was rather formulated in the course of the study and revised throughout the study as needed.

Zhang & Wildemuth (2009, p.11) further describe qualitative content analysis as paying attention to unique themes that illustrate the topic and thus offer a wider range of descriptive evidence than quantitative methods could. This is similar to what Pool (1959, p.4) posits - that the qualitative method allows for more interpretation.

To examine the chosen method more closely, the researcher turned to Hsieh & Shannon (2005, p.1278) who discuss qualitative content analysis as possessing of three distinct approaches: conventional, directional and summative. The main difference between the approaches is in the presence of theory. Conventional content analysis is usually used when existing theory is limited, whereas a directional approach to content analysis is used when theory exists, but the phenomenon is incomplete and needs more description. The third approach, summative, is what guides this study and is based on identifying and quantifying words or content to explore their usage. The summative approach seems quantitative at first but later the analysis is broadened and latent meanings and themes identified. This helps in identifying underlying themes instead of technically focusing on sentences or words as units of analysis. The summative approach as a concept is very close to what Zhang & Wildemuth (2009, p.3) call the inductive process where theory is created during the research so as to understand the underlying themes Hsieh & Shannon (2005, p.1278) also discuss.

Using qualitative content analysis allowed the researcher to compare the two sets of data both by frequency of categories as in quantitative studies, but also qualitatively, in a way that allowed for examining the meaning of the texts, helping to create a richer understanding of the data. This method by itself, however, was not enough for this study as it produced a one-dimensional picture of the data where only frequencies of categories were identified. To counteract this, the researcher also used appraisal analysis to further understand the data. This method is discussed in the next subsection.

3.1.3 ***Appraisal Analysis***

This subsection briefly introduces the appraisal analysis method and why it is used in the study.

Appraisal analysis is an approach that is used for *"exploring, describing, and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positioning and relationships*" (White, 2002, p.1). This means that appraisal analysis explores how a writer makes judgments and evaluates other people, events, objects and how the writer can create relationships with his readers. In other words, it tries to identify a writer's particular style.

Appraisal is divided into three interacting domains: attitude, engagement and graduation (Martin & White, 2005, p.35). For the purposes of this study only the attitude domain will be explored, because attitude can be considered focal in the analysis as Martin and White (2005, p.39) argue and thus distinguished from engagement and graduation. Engagement and graduation are resources primarily *"for adopting a position with respect to propositions and for scaling intensity or degree of investment respectively* (Martin & White, 2005, p.39).

Additionally, assessing attitude is appropriate for this study as it is used as a way to map feelings in English text, which are of primary interest in this study. The comparison of feelings of journalists and PR professionals will effectively reveal the difference in how they treat the company in their writing.

The attitude domain is divided into three further sub-types: affect, judgment, and appreciation. These sub-types are sometimes referred to by emotion, ethics, and aesthetics respectively. Affect indicates evaluation by means of showing how one is emotionally disposed to something, judgment indicates the normative assessments of human behavior in reference to rules or conventions and appreciation indicates assessments of the form, appearance, significance etc. of objects and people in reference to aesthetics. (Martin & White, 2005, p.42)

To illustrate this method, the following sentence from the data has been selected to show in practice how this method was used. *"After an extended period of beta testing, Rovio is proud to present Angry Birds for the Android platform."* This sentence was assessed following this chain of domains: attitude – affect – authorial evaluation – satisfaction – pleasure – inscribed – positive. As appraisal is used to assess the way the writer is evaluating an event or creating a relationship, the phrase "is proud to present" was under particular scrutiny. This part of the sentence most clearly demonstrates the author's sentiment and therefore offers the best opportunity for appraisal analysis. We can see that “proud to present” exhibits an attitude towards something, and more particularly an emotion. This emotion is expressed by the author (authorial evaluation) and attempts to convey satisfaction towards a particular event. Further, it conveys a sense of pleasure (as opposed to interest) and the emotion is inscribed (not invoked) in a positive way. This method was used sentence by sentence to analyze the whole set of data.

The appraisal analysis was carried out using the UAM Corpus Tool software (http://www.wagsoft.com/CorpusTool/), a tool which is based on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Through these methods the researcher evaluated the attitudes held by the writers of the press releases and news articles in this study. Evaluating the attitudes helped to understand the differences and similarities that occurred between the two sets of data on a deeper level and to see whether they were similar to what the content analysis results showed.

3.1.4 ***Semi-structured Interview***

This subsection describes the final method, the semi-structured interview, and how the interview was carried out.

As a final and supplementary method, the researcher carried out a semi-structured interview with the chief marketing officer of the case company. This interview aimed to understand the starting point for corporate identity directly from a key person involved. The interview concentrated on finding out what was the starting point for the corporate identity and what was currently being done to communicate it. The interview questions are presented in Appendix 5.

The results of the interview were used to shed additional light to the perception the case company has of itself and of its identity. The interview was conducted at company headquarters and took approximately 1 hour. The interview was conducted in Finnish, recorded, and transcribed all in one day so as not to lose important latent data. The interviewee, the CMO, had been working with the case company for 5 years and had been working with the Angry Birds game since its launch and so was involved in identity considerations both professionally and personally.

3.2 Data Collection

This section details the data used in this study and how it was collected.

The data used for this study consists of 12 articles about Rovio; 6 articles written by foreign journalists and 6 press releases by the company (see Appendix 1). The articles and press releases were all released within the same time period of 1.8.10-28.2.2011 and thus topically reflect similar issues. The articles used in this study were articles that were obtained through Finnfacts, a Finnish independent media service that operates as an interface between international media and Finnish industry and business. The journalists authoring the articles are all from either the US and UK and native English speakers. The articles were published on two different platforms; technology-oriented blogs or general interest newspapers, both online. The press releases are all official releases by the case company published online.

The secondary data, the interview, was conducted at the case company headquarters on October 11, 2011. The interviewee, was interviewed in Finnish and the interview excerpts have been translated for this research when used. The interview was semi-structured meaning that the questions were all open-ended leaving plenty of room for interpretation and breadth of answer by the interviewee.

3.3 Data Analysis

This section will explain the analysis carried out through content and appraisal analysis methods in this study. It will also define the units of analysis and how they were developed for this study. Finally, it describes briefly the technical task of carrying out the analysis.

3.3.1 ***Content Analysis***

This subsection discusses how data is prepared for content analysis and how the actual analysis is carried out. It describes the process of abstraction and taxonomy and how they serve this study.

The data was first divided into units of analysis; in this study the units were themes. Each theme represented an identity attribute which was further defined by more specific keywords (see Appendices 2 & 4). Organizing a text thematically is a popular way to define units of analysis in qualitative content analysis as opposed to quantitative content analysis, where more standardized units such as words, sentences or paragraphs are used.

However, to find these themes, the texts first needed to be analyzed at the sentence level. This was to ensure that the full meaning of each sentence could be extracted and the correct theme identified (the identification process was described in more detail in Chapter 3.1.2). The list of identified sentence-level subcategories is presented in Appendix 2, where the subcategories are listed and each subcategory includes a list of keywords or phrases that qualify it. Zhang & Wildemuth (2009, p.3) define a theme as expressing one idea or issue that is of relevance to the research. Thus the themes identified could be of different lengths word-wise, but always carried through one central idea.

Each subcategory was then given a name that described the identity quality it described. Subcategorizing themes is the first step in the abstraction process introduced by Elo & Kyngäs (2007, p.111) According to them, the abstraction process means formulating a general description of the research topic through generating categories. Elo & Kyngäs (2007, p.111) further explain the abstraction process to include three steps: grouping into subcategories, generic categories and main categories. The purpose of this is to arrange large quantities of data into easily understandable groups that are easy to manipulate in the interpretation process. Their diagram shown in Figure 5 demonstrates clearly the process of abstraction.

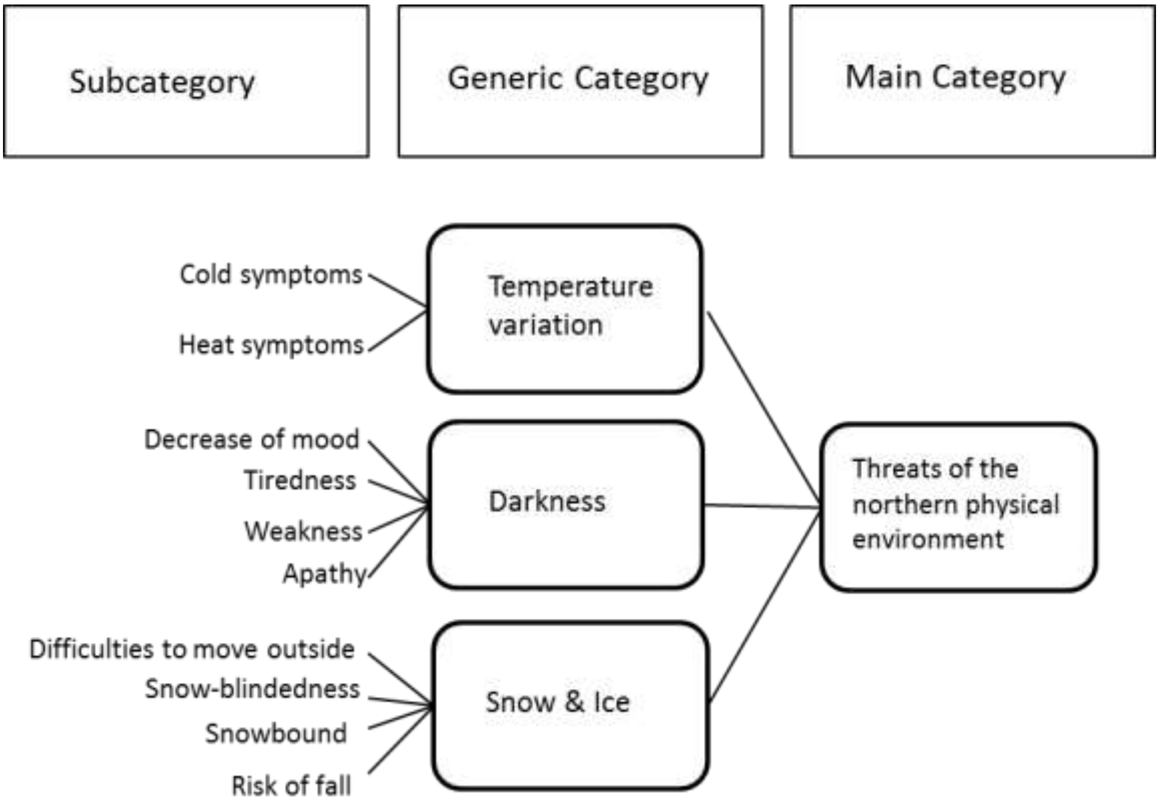

Figure 5. Elo & Kyngäs's (2007, p.111) example of the abstraction process.

As Figure 5 shows, the main category is defined by the content of the generic categories and the generic categories are defined by the contents of the subcategories. Elo & Kyngäs (2007, p.111) highlight that this not only creates a clear structure for evaluating the data, it also allows comparison between different groups, i.e. what belongs and what doesn't. This approach is very similar to and indeed is sometimes called taxonomy.

The created subcategories were subsequently grouped into generic categories but not into the final main categories. This is because, due to the nature of the data, the amount of generic categories in itself was very manageable and grouping further to main categories would have reduced the nuance of the data unnecessarily.

Once the required categories were established, the researcher manually counted the instances of each sub- and generic category and gathered the data into a table presented in Appendices 2 and 3. These tables were used as the basis for the interpretation of the results.

3.3.2 ***Appraisal Analysis***

This subsection describes how the data was prepared for appraisal analysis and briefly describes the software used for the analysis of the data.

In this phase of the study, the data was assigned an appraisal category based on the descriptions made by Martin and White (2005, p.39) and Whitelaw et al (2005, p.627). This process was described in more detail in Chapter 3.1.3. These descriptions helped to divide the data into categories based on affect, judgment, and appreciation and also, using the next levels of analysis, to take the analysis onto a deeper level. The next level of analysis is shown in Figure 6, a model based on the one presented by Read et al. (2007, p.2). By using this next level of analysis the researcher was able to look at what type of affect, judgment or appreciation was conveyed, whether it was direct or indirect, whether it was the author's attitude or not, and whether the attitude was in fact positive or negative. This helped to give a deeper picture of the data and gave nuance to the findings.

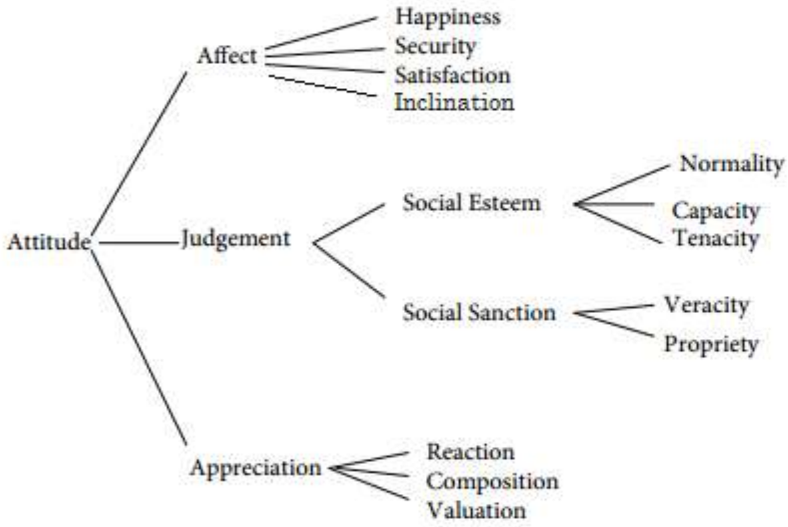

Figure 6. Attitude and its subsystems (adapted from Read et al. 2007, p.2)

This part of the analysis was performed by using specific text annotation software called UAM CorpusTool, strongly based on Halliday's seminal work on systemic functional grammar. Once the data was annotated, the software provided the analysis results in the form of a table, which is presented in Appendix 6.

3.4 Trustworthiness of the Study

This section evaluates the trustworthiness of the study, discussing factors that may enhance or reduce it. It presents a set of four criteria upon which the evaluation of this study's trustworthiness is based.

Trustworthiness is more easily defined in quantitative research than qualitative. In quantitative research it is simply defined by the validity and reliability and of the study.

Evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research has polarized researchers as Johnson (1997, p.282) & Smith (1984, p.379) argue. On the one hand, researchers emphasize the unique nature of qualitative research based on the epistemological assumptions and methods particular to it. On the other hand, some researchers call for the use of similar evaluation techniques as are used in quantitative research to maximize objectivity. What these two extremes have in common, however, is the fact that neither avoids the issue of trustworthiness.

Johnson (1997, p.283) also talks about one of the main risks in qualitative research trustworthiness – namely, the researcher bias. As qualitative research is often by nature exploratory and open-ended, research design is also often less structured. This leaves more room for researcher interpretation and subjective research results. Selectively observing, recording and interpreting results are clear faults that decrease the trustworthiness of a study, but can at times be hard to spot.

In qualitative research, therefore, the actions of a researcher should be scrutinized closely rather than the objectivity of results. Due to the nature of responses in qualitative study, results may vary even if the method were to be exactly replicated. Therefore, as Yin (2003, p.38) emphasizes, documenting the researchers assumptions and actions as carefully as possible, with the aim that another researcher could conduct the same study, is of paramount importance.

Lincoln & Guba (1985, p.219) have introduced a set of four criteria for the evaluation of a qualitative study's trustworthiness based on generally accepted evaluation criteria used in quantitative study. The four categories emphasized in the model (and expanded upon by the researcher) are:

- Confirmability: invokes auditing as a means to demonstrate quality. For example, the researcher can offer a self-critically reflexive analysis of the methodology used in the research. Proving confirmability aims to show that the characteristics that the researcher ascribed to the data can be confirmed by others.

- Dependability: is determined by the consistency of the study processes. It encourages researchers to provide an audit trail (the documentation of data, methods and decisions about the research) which can be laid open to external scrutiny.
- Credibility: refers to the extent to which the results represent the phenomenon under study. In qualitative study the researcher's knowledge and experience have a significant impact on the credibility, thus designing data collection methods and coding methods that are as transparent as possible becomes important.
- Transferability: refers to the extent to which the conclusions of the study can be applied in another context or study. For another researcher to make the judgment of transferability, sufficient description of data is required from the original researcher.

For this study, this approach for qualitative study trustworthiness was adopted instead of applying the rigorous methods of trustworthiness evaluation used in quantitative research. The trustworthiness of the study is discussed in both the research design section of the study (in describing the methods of study as clearly as possible, - dependability and transferability) and in the discussion and conclusions of the study (confirmability and credibility).

4 FINDINGS

This chapter will discuss the main findings of the study. The main findings were obtained through the content analysis and appraisal analysis of the articles. These findings are complemented by the interview of the CMO of the case company.

The findings provide answers to the research questions, which were:

1. How does the case company portray itself in its press releases?
2. How do foreign journalists write about the case company in their articles?

The findings are structured according to the research questions, so that Section 4.1 explains how Rovio is written about in the press releases. Section 4.2 then describes how the foreign journalists wrote about Rovio and compares this with how Rovio wrote about itself.

4.1 How the Case Company Portrays Itself

This section will look at the findings of how Rovio portrays itself in its communication. The findings are subdivided into three categories: results from the content analysis, results from the appraisal analysis, and interview outcomes.

4.1.1 ***Content Analysis***

This subsection presents the results of the content analysis of the press releases. The identified themes are presented grouped into generic categories in order of descending occurrence frequency.

The results of the content analysis show that the five generic categories through which Rovio tries to portray itself are in descending order of popularity as follows:

Progressive, Famous, Accessible, Modest and Tireless. Table 1 below represents the popularity of the categories as instances identified in the texts.

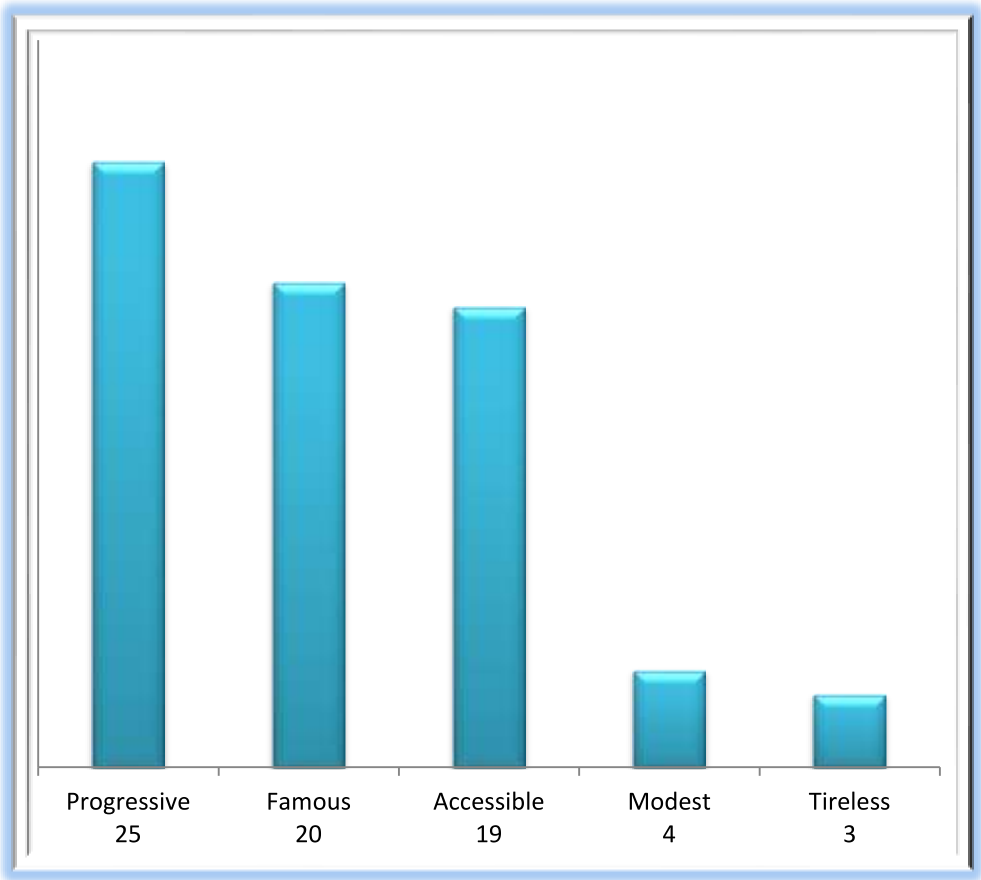

Table 1. The popularity of generic categories in company press releases

The categories shown here are further detailed in Appendix 4. Although there are some differences in the number of subcategory descriptors between the categories, the differences we see in Table 1 are mainly attributable to differences in portrayal by the author rather than category definition. To understand how each subcategory was formed, Appendix 2 shows keywords that were searched for to assign a specific subcategory to a unit of analysis.

Looking at Table 1, we see that Progressiveness, Fame and Accessibility were by far the most often identified themes. Although these themes were more broadly defined than the other two themes, this alone is not enough to explain the differences in occurrence frequency. The content of the press releases was much more heavily weighted towards these themes, which is reflected in the results.

One sub-category was eliminated from this table, titled “no theme”, as it did not fall into any of the generic categories. This category was formed for the purpose of being able to assign a theme even where no Rovio-related information was being relayed. Examples of such instances were:

“A games industry veteran, Järvilehto is one of the founders of Remedy Entertainment, the company behind the Max Payne hit games …”

Rovio press release, 4.2.10

The excerpt above was taken from a press release describing the upcoming collaboration with another game development company and describes the CEO of this company. As such it carries no information on Rovio’s identity and was categorized “no theme”. These instances however, were not very common and only two could be found in the press releases amounting to around 2.5% of identified themes.

4.1.2 *Appraisal Analysis*

This subsection presents the results of the appraisal analysis of the press releases. The Results were obtained from the UAM CorpusTool software, based on the process of annotation carried out by the researcher.

The appraisal analysis broke down attitude into its three components: affect, judgment, and appreciation. Out of these three, appreciation was the most often identified attitude, representing 45.7% of all attitude instances (see Table 2). Appreciation is used as a tool to ascribe value to things, events or natural phenomena, such as whether something catches our eye, whether it is innovative, whether it is beautiful, whether it is conventional etc. (Martin & White, 2005, p.56) Therefore, as the majority of the identified attitudes in the texts were appreciation, it seems to show that the company authors were attempting to help the reader in understanding the company and its product by placing value on them through appreciation.

As to the other attitude dimensions, this meant that affect represented 24.5% and judgment 29.8% of identified dimensions. The researcher also looked at the explicitness of attitude as it was expressed in the texts and found that 71.3% of attitude was inscribed, i.e. explicit. The majority of attitude (90.4%) was positive, none was negative and the rest (9.6%) was ambiguous or neutral in its polarity.

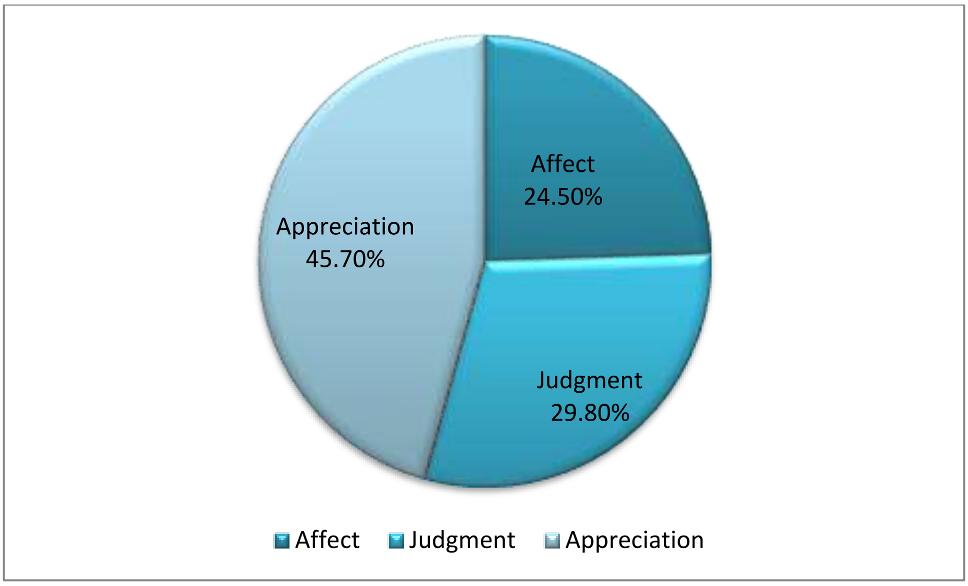

Table 2. Attitude in Press Releases

Table 2 represents the proportions of the three types of attitude in the company press releases. Appreciation was the most often identified attitude in the releases while judgment and affect represented smaller parts.

4.1.3 ***Interview***

The interview revealed three main things that Rovio attempts to communicate about its corporate identity: 1) growth, 2) speed & ambition, 3) passion & success. As the interviewee put it:

"So it's success probably, the one that comes out the most, and of course growth and speed as well. So going forward at a crazy speed."

This success is also something they try to emphasize when talking to journalists and other interviewers. Similarly, they try to emphasize the fact that they do not view themselves as being a gaming company anymore but rather an entertainment brand that has a gaming company at its core. In other words, they prefer to be viewed as a company that is expanding into new areas and consequently is developing an identity that is more broadly defined.

The interviewee said that this identity stems from both what they have actively recognized in their company and what has come out through their daily operations. They attempt to align these two things through their own understanding of corporate identity as well as the public's perception of it.

The interviewee said that their identity had changed somewhat with the success of Angry Birds in that they now do not bring the Rovio name out as much as before and prefer to project their identity onto the Angry Birds brand rather than the company brand.

4.2 How Foreign Journalists Portray the Case Company

This section will look at the findings regarding how the foreign journalists portray Rovio. The findings are divided into two categories: results from the content analysis and the results from the appraisal analysis. As the interview was conducted with a Rovio employee, the results from it are not applicable in this section.

4.2.1 *Content Analysis*

In this subsection the researcher will cover the results of the content analysis of the journalists' articles. The identified themes are presented grouped into generic categories in order of descending occurrence frequency.

Through the content analysis the researcher identified the subcategories and generic categories that described the perceived identity that the journalists used in their articles. There were five generic categories that the journalists used and they were the same five as the company itself used in the press releases, but in different order of popularity: Progressive, Famous, Accessible, Tireless, and Modest. The distribution of these categories is represented below:

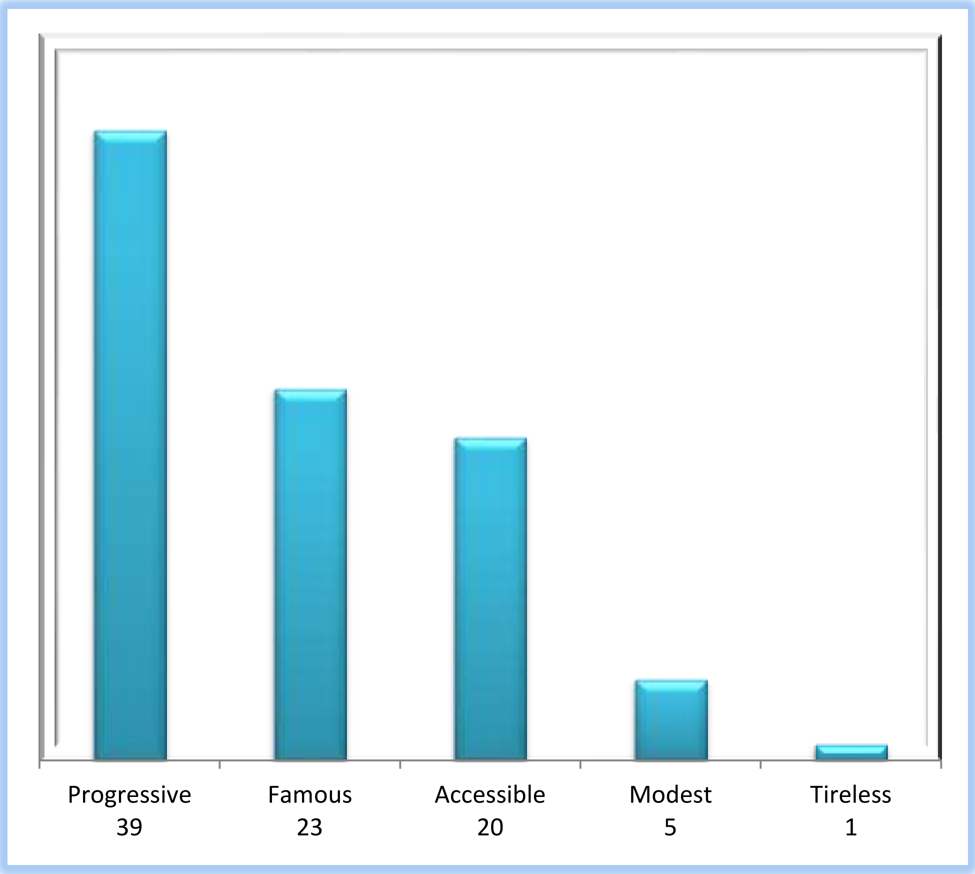

Table 3. The popularity of generic categories in the journalists' articles.

The generic categories that describe journalists' portrayal of Rovio differ in make-up somewhat from that of the press releases and are presented in Appendix 4. In the articles written by the journalists, more identity categories could be identified because the articles were often longer and more descriptive than the press releases and thus there were more subcategories to be grouped. Thematically however, these categories fell under the same generic categories as in the press releases. This helped in preparing a valid comparison between the two data sets.

As Table 3 shows, Progressive was the most popular generic category that was found in the texts with 39 instances. There is a large drop from this category to the next, with Famous only being identified 23 times and Accessible 20 times. The total amount of identified subcategories was 92, 17 subcategories more than in the press releases which shows that the articles were longer and more descriptive.

In the journalists' articles as in the press releases, the subcategory "no theme" could be identified a few times. There were only four of these instances however, representing around 4% of identified themes. In the journalists' articles, an example of such an instance was:

"However, now that the software giant [Microsoft] has signed a massive agreement with fellow Finnish company Nokia over use of the fledgling OS in its smartphone strategy, it seems an appropriate time to readdress the situation."

Pocket Lint 16.2.10

The other "no theme" instances were also related to other companies that were cooperating with Rovio, but as stated, represented a minority in the identified themes of the articles.

4.2.2 *Appraisal Analysis*

This subsection presents the results of the appraisal analysis of the journalists' articles. The results were obtained from the UAM CorpusTool software, based on the process of annotation carried out by the researcher.

The appraisal analysis broke down attitude into its three components: affect, judgment, and appreciation. Out of these three, appreciation was the most often identified attitude, representing 41.9% of all attitude instances (see Table 4). Here, similarly as with press releases, appreciation was the attitude most identified, which seems to show that journalists were also trying to ascribe value to the case company through emotions.

As to the other attitude dimensions, affect represented 32.3% and judgment 25.8% of attitude. The researcher also looked at the explicitness of attitude as it was expressed in the texts and found that 34.4% of attitude was inscribed i.e. explicit, which is almost 40% less than in press releases. The majority of attitude (80.6%) was positive, and only 3.2% was negative. The rest (16.1%) was ambiguous or neutral in its polarity.

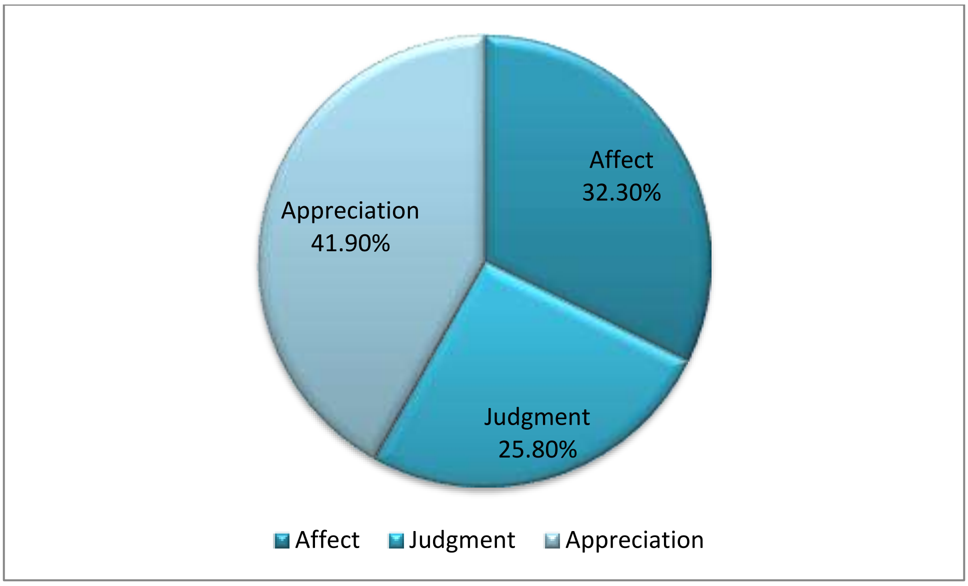

Table 4. Attitude in journalists' articles.

Table 4 represents the distribution of the three types of attitude in the journalists' articles, from where we can see that appreciation was the most popular attitude identified and judgment and affect represented smaller parts, even though the attitude dimensions were more evenly distributed than in the press releases.

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter combines and discusses the main findings presented in Chapter 4 and connects the findings to the theoretical framework presented for this study in Section 2.4. The chapter also discusses the benefits of using journalists as intermediaries in the identity communication of growth companies and to create competitive advantage based on the theoretical framework developed in this study.

Comparing the results of the content analysis of the data, we see that on a higher level, the way Rovio is portrayed in the data is very similar, independent of the source. Only the order of the last two generic categories is different, thus leading the researcher to conclude that on a thematic level, the content of both company-released messages (press releases) and mediated messages (journalists' articles) portray corporate identity in a similar way.

When looking at the make-up of these generic categories and examining the subcategories that they contain, we start to see more differences. The top 3 corporate identity messages remain the same but after that there is more variation. The subcategories are represented in descending order of popularity in Appendix 3. This leads the researcher to conclude that the main identified themes of success, accessibility and evolution are something that Rovio as a company has been pushing forth strongly and which the journalists have been responding to. This view is supported by the results of the interview that was carried out, where the CMO mentioned that success, speed and growth (i.e. evolution) were their main priorities in identity communication.

Nevertheless, despite the differences in popularity of the identity themes, the categories were largely the same. This goes to show that not only did the journalists discuss identity similarly to the press releases, but they seemed to give the most importance to the same themes as well. That these themes would correspond very closely to what the interviewee mentioned as the most important themes places more weight in this conclusion.

Further strengthening this conclusion is the make-up of the generic categories; the category “Progressive” contain the most subcategories in both sets of data (Appendix 4). This tells us that the identified identity themes were fairly centralized and that progressiveness in particular was a message that was sent out the most by both sources. In this way as well, the two separate sources are emphasizing similar aspects of the identity of the case company.

While journalists as communication intermediaries can be seen as gatekeepers or “agenda-setters” that separate interesting issues from the uninteresting and hence dictate which issues reach the public, the usefulness of journalists (from the point of view of a growth company) in identity communications is not a certainty. Journalists have their own agenda to keep, which may interfere with the identity targets of a company. On the other hand, as discussed in the literature review, journalists may not always keep to their agenda due to resource pressures which may favor the use of PR professionals in identity communications.

The results of the content analysis in this study seem to show that the risk of journalists keeping very strictly to their agenda is not too great. The identified themes were not always in the same proportion in journalists’ articles as in the press releases but the themes were nevertheless the same. This means that on a larger scale, journalists seem to be writing about the things the company in question, Rovio, wants to have written about it.

However, this gives a very simplistic picture of the publicity that Rovio gained through the intermediaries. To improve on the results, we can compare them with the results of the appraisal analysis.

The appraisal analysis, as we saw, told us that the attitude most often identified in both sets of data was appreciation. However, while both sets of data expressed appreciation most often, the proportion of appreciation in the journalists' articles was somewhat lower speaking to a more balanced style of writing. As appreciation is expressed when a writer wants to encode feeling and value (positively or negatively) to what people do (Adendorff & de Klerk, 2005, p.493), it makes sense that the company itself would use this style to write about itself. The fact that similar characteristics are also seen in the journalists' articles, where they seem to express positive emotion in relation to what Rovio is, is more surprising. Interestingly, as the emotions in the journalists' articles were overwhelmingly positive at 80.6%, this also speaks to the fact that journalists may not be sticking as strictly to their agenda of objectiveness as strongly as we may think they would be.

Unexpectedly, journalists expressed less judgment than Rovio did in writing about the company. Judgment, which institutionalizes feelings in relation to social and cultural valuations, could be seen as part of journalistic responsibility, i.e. reflecting company qualities with societal norms. The fact that journalists used this approach less often was therefore unexpected.

This could perhaps be explained by the fact that Rovio may want to compare itself to societal norms and show how it is exceeding them. For example, it is an important part of Rovio's rhetoric to say it is the world's biggest, first, best, most downloaded etc. application. Perhaps these factors could explain the higher instance of judgment in the press releases. In this case, it would be positive judgment as opposed to criticism.

Through the analysis of tone, we can see that both the data sets were written in an overwhelmingly positive tone. The press releases exhibited slightly more positivity, but this is to be expected as they are effectively promoting themselves. The journalists, on the other hand, are describing a modern phenomenon, and it is even a little surprising that they should be so positive about it and make so little judgments. However, as

16.1% of the journalists' tone was classified as ambiguous, it could perhaps mean that they meant to be more critical or judgmental, but did not present it in a way that could be interpreted so by the researcher. Here, however, it must be taken into account that the data sample was small with only 12 texts in total. The size of the sample may have a distorting effect and make the tone of the articles seem more positive than it would be with a larger sample.

Finally, looking at the last set of data from the appraisal analysis, the explicitness dimension, we see that press releases most often (71.3% of the time) expressed attitude explicitly. This means that the attitude was not hidden under complex sentence structures as was sometimes the case with the journalists' articles. Journalists often use more descriptive and intricate language, whereas press officers or PR personnel typically use more straightforward language to get the message and facts across as simply as possible. Therefore, the explicitness of the press releases as compared to the journalists' articles where only 34.4% was explicit, was expected.

Regarding the topic of this study, the corporate identity communication of growth companies, these results offer an interesting insight. The journalists in this case not only seem to repeat similar identity messages as the company itself but they also seem to adopt similar semantic positions towards their subject. This would seem to point to the fact that journalists are indeed using the help of other intermediaries to write their articles, in this case most likely Rovio's PR professionals.

These results seem to show that journalists are an effective intermediary to use in identity communication and image building. Growth companies are often resource-poor and since journalists are a very inexpensive way to promote a company they are a very cost effective way to create interest and discussion about a company. As the connection between identity, image and competitive advantage was made earlier in the research, we could also tentatively suggest, that using journalists in corporate identity communications could ultimately help in creating competitive advantage.

It is, however, also possible, that journalists are playing to their audience's desires rather than reporting what they believe to be correct. Kuronen, Tienari and Vaara (2005, p.250) discuss the role of journalists in business communication and argue based on Bourdieu's (1998, p.49) work that journalists survive and keep the interest of an audience by reproducing common ideas and ideologies. Thus it is also possible that the extensive similarities in the results of this study stem at least partly from this. The literature review discussed journalistic motivation extensively and although academics like to emphasize the role of journalists as interpreters of the real world, it may also be relevant to look at other motivations. What Bourdieu (1998) refers to is that journalists today are under a lot of pressure to sell articles and be popular with the public and sometimes the best way to do so may be to not ruffle too many feathers.

As the theoretical framework in this study presents, corporate identity messages are, however, only one side of the coin. How this identity is perceived or understood, in other words the corporate image, is just as important and its conception just as difficult to pinpoint as identity communication. So regardless of the fact that this study sheds light on what messages are being sent out, we cannot claim to understand how they are being understood based on this analysis.

To study how the messages are being understood, another study would have to be carried out, but as the theoretical framework of this study shows it would center heavily on external and indirect factors. This study has practically ignored these factors as they would have been too far outside the scope of the study.

In this study then, as the subject of study was the differences between the two types of communication channels chosen, we can see that for identity communication purposes, press releases and journalist-written articles seem to have similar messages and in similar proportions. That is, a consumer that would read only press releases or only articles written by journalists would probably have a similar picture about the case company in question, Rovio. However, as consumers rarely read press releases, journalists' articles would seem to be a very effective alternative channel for the company to reach its audience and communicate its identity. Journalists produce an easily readable text for consumers wanting to know more about a company, but they also, at least in a consumer's mind, offer objectivity and truthfulness that a company-issued statement never could. Additionally, from the perspective of a growth company, they offer external validation, which in the case of a growth company is particularly important.

What this means for growth companies is that they could possibly benefit from the use of journalists as intermediaries and use them as "free publicity" instead of investing in costly advertising or marketing schemes. In other words, journalists could be seen more as pawns than as kings by growth companies. A channel where a company is able to push through nearly all the messages it wants and also have them filtered through a "objective sensor" that legitimizes the message would be worth its weight in gold for a marketing and press department.

These results and speculations offer interesting thoughts on the role of journalism in society and how it is changing. Where once journalistic integrity might have been considered self-evident, it is today under threat from many directions, one of them being the business sector. The business sector is increasingly in need of positive press and growth companies in particular rely on press and awareness to grow. This may be creating a situation where companies are pressuring journalists to write what serves the companies' purposes and journalists feel obliged to do so, as they are faced with increasing time and money pressures. This relationship however, is constantly changing and certainly offers interesting areas for future research.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes the thesis by presenting the research summary, suggesting practical implications, discussing the limitations of the study and suggesting further research.

6.1 Research Summary

This section summarizes the research; what it set out to do, the methods used and the data collected. The summarized results of the study will be presented below in Subsection 6.1.1.

The purpose of this study was to explore the similarities and differences of press releases and journalists' online articles and to discuss the implications they may have for the corporate identity communication of growth companies and building competitive advantage. The motivation for the study was the increasing popularity of PR professionals using press releases and journalists as tools for corporate communication. The researcher wanted to investigate whether doing so could be effective or not. To do this the researcher focused on the output journalists gave and compared it to company-released press releases. This was done through the two research questions which were:

1. How does the case company portray itself in its press releases?
2. How do foreign journalists write about the case company in their pieces?

The questions were addressed through a qualitative content analysis, appraisal analysis as well as a short interview. The data consisted of 12 texts; 6 press releases and 6 journalist-written online articles. The articles were chosen among journalists that had visited a Rovio press event in Finland organized by a Finnish media agency, Finnfacts. The press releases were chosen based on their release date; coinciding dates meant that thematically the data sets corresponded to each other. The final piece of data was a 1-hour interview with the CMO of the case company.

The literature review focused on corporate identity communication and corporate image formation, journalists and PR professionals as communication intermediaries and their motivations, and finally growth companies and some challenges they face particularly regarding identity communication. On the basis of these topics, the researcher developed the theoretical framework, focusing on the identity communication process in growth companies and how it may contribute to creating competitive advantage.

The main findings of the study's content analysis indicated that both sources, PR professionals as well as journalists, wrote about similar themes in the data. In addition to this, the themes they wrote about followed similar frequency patterns, where the most popular themes were the same between the two media.

The appraisal analysis indicated that the tone used in both sets of data was mainly positive. Furthermore, in both sets of data, the appreciation attitude dimension scored highly, showing us that the authors were mainly attempting to assign value to the company through their writing. There were differences in the explicitness of the articles, which showed that PR professionals had a tendency to write more explicitly and directly leaving less room for interpretation, whereas journalists preferred to be more indirect. These results indicate that although journalists do seem to uphold their more balanced style of writing more than PR professionals do, they are both attempting to translate the value of the company for the consumer and thus invoke feelings and emotions towards the company.

The interview results indicated that the themes most important for the company itself were growth, speed and success. These themes were very similar to the themes that arose out of the two analyses carried out before. This result indicated that the identity of the case company was coherent internally and in how it was perceived externally.

The results also indicated that the phenomenon of journalists writing very similarly to press releases in an identity context is international. The journalists were from the United States and the United Kingdom, showing that the phenomenon is not country-specific. The fact that the case company also operates on a global scale offers more support to the international nature of these results.

The findings complement the theoretical framework of this study and perhaps call into question whether it might be readjusted. In the framework, press releases are a factor that contributes to how a journalist writes an article. However, based on the results of this study, more weight could perhaps be placed on this factor, as the results indicate that what is said in press releases is often repeated by journalists in a very similar way.

The results are also in line with what journalism researchers such as Brooten (2010), Al-Kindi (2010), Larsson (2009) and Jempson (2005) have studied, where today’s business pressures are influencing the objectivity and independence of journalism to a point where PR material, such as press releases, is gaining a more prominent position in journalistic work.

6.2 Practical Implications

This section discusses the practical implications the results of this study could have for growth companies operating in an international environment.

The findings imply that growth companies operating in an international environment would find it beneficial to use journalists for identity communication. The fact that the press release messages came through in the journalists’ articles at almost the same strength and with emphasis on the same things indicated that it would be a very efficient way to gain legitimization for the identity of a growth company and to start building a favorable and unique image. This in turn could be very helpful in creating sustainable competitive advantage for the company.

While growth companies are often under budget constraints, using journalists to disseminate identity communications would be a good alternative to using money for advertising aimed at creating and strengthening the brand.

There is however the risk of inflation if this approach were to continue to grow in popularity and use. If the use of such an approach to identity communication were very widespread, its effectiveness would be greatly decreased as consumers would begin to “see through the smoke and mirrors”. They would see the loss of objectivity and re-evaluate their belief in journalist-written business articles. As using journalists and PR professionals in this manner seems to be a growing trend, it is an issue that companies looking to use this method should be aware of.

Therefore, as often is the case, here too moderation would be key. Press releases as background material for journalists are certainly an established way of doing business, but to rely solely on them as a source of information would not create a balanced picture of the company. An overly positive view of a company may be a warning sign for consumers and thus encouraging editorial practices such as deeper investigation and screening would be advisable for the company as well.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

In this section, the researcher outlines the limitations that this study faces. As a study carried out with limited resources, there are several shortcomings that are likely to have influenced the result and findings of the study. The main limitations detailed below are the data sample as well as the qualitative method used.

The data sample used in this study is limited and offers a limited picture of the phenomenon. This means that based on such a small sample, the results cannot be generalized for any larger sample of growth companies. However, the results show a trend that could be tested further with a larger sample, which would help to see whether this trend can be consistently observed in the growth company market.

Similarly, the definition of a growth company becomes problematic. Growth companies are usually defined as companies with good growth prospects and potential for growth of income. However, this definition holds in itself a group of very disparate companies. Thus by nature, none of them are the same and could not use the same identity communication practices. Thus even if the results of this study were 100% reliable in a larger sample, extending them to such a varied group of companies would still prove difficult.

The case company Rovio itself is often described as a growth company but today it holds a fairly established brand in consumers' minds. The results obtained from this study seem to reflect that. Therefore applying the same logic to a smaller growth company or start-up might lead to misguided practices.

Although growth companies are studied here as a group, all growth companies are not the same regardless of the fact that they are classified as growth companies. They operate in different industries, have differing growth prospects, differing target audiences etc. In this aspect as well it is extremely difficult to generalize the results of this study to all growth companies. Nevertheless, perhaps through further research using these results as a starting off point, some generalizations regarding channel choice could be established.

The results of this study reflect the response of one stakeholder group; the media.
Although this particular stakeholder group is important, it is not the only one affected. As discussed in the literature review, corporate identity is a broad concept and limiting

communications to only one stakeholder group is not realistic in business. End users, investors and government officials are all examples of stakeholders who would be influenced by identity communications. Although the theoretical framework used in this study places them after the journalists, or as receivers of journalists' communications, in reality they are omnipresent and not just in one part of the chain. So to study corporate identity reception effectively, one should take into account the fact that no stakeholder is isolated.

This echoes Hallahan's (2007, p.10) view that it may be impossible to examine only one channel in today's world. Any perceptions a stakeholder forms are formed as a result of several influences and to only consider one would provide an insufficient and useless picture of reality. However, as journalists were the chosen medium in this study, to create a more complete picture of why they are acting as this research seems to suggest, it would have been interesting to interview the journalists who wrote the articles. They could have potentially offered more insight on why their articles were so similar to the press releases and whether the conclusions made in this research (lack of time, resources) were valid or not.

The data used in this study was collected through Finnfacts, a Finnish media agency. Finnfacts invited the journalists to Finland to visit Finnish companies and industrial leaders, which creates a selection bias. The reasons which Finnfacts's selection of journalists was based upon was not revealed to the researcher and thus the journalists may represent a skewed sample. So because the journalists were not chosen at random, they may have already had a particular idea about Rovio, or Finnish companies in general, which may have affected their writing as well.

Similarly, the group of journalists partook of a press event at the Rovio headquarters during their visit to Finland, making it possible that they could have formed social or professional ties with the company and its representatives. This could have had an influence on their choice of topics and particularly on their chosen tone.

Furthermore, the journalists represented in this study are all from English-speaking countries. Although this indicates that the subject under study is an international phenomenon, it may also skew the sample towards Anglo-American culture and its norms. If the group of journalists were increased to include journalists from other cultural and linguistic areas, the results may change.

The method used in this study also poses some limitations. As the methods used are mainly qualitative, they carry a high risk of researcher bias. Although the methods have been explained as thoroughly as possible to increase confirmability, dependability, credibility and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.219) the risk remains that the results are influenced by the researcher's previous knowledge and expectations.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This final section explores topics for further research. The topic of communication intermediaries is not an established one and therefore poses various opportunities for further research as detailed below.

As the previous section detailed, the results of this study would look very different if the research was done on a company at a different developmental stage than Rovio; perhaps a smaller start-up or a growth company just entering the mature stage. This type of research might help to understand the broad spectrum of companies grouped under the growth company umbrella and their specific characteristics. This could be a first step towards developing prescriptive advice on corporate identity communication for growth companies.

Perhaps a similar study could also be carried out on a mature company, and through the results of that study, a comparison between the two types of companies could be established to gain more insight into whether journalists act this way in relation to growth companies or whether it is a more general trend.

As mentioned before, a similar study carried out on a larger sample might also help to see whether the results from this study are valid and speak of a trend or rather of an anomaly. This could also help in developing prescriptive advice on corporate identity communication.

While this study seemed to show that using journalists in the identity communication process is useful for a growth company, journalists, like growth companies are not a uniform group. A study that incorporated journalistic factors such as experience, reach, fame or medium would yield interesting results. A study like this could help to understand the various factors that play together to create awareness and furthermore which factors are the most influential. It is clear that an experienced journalist from an established daily can reach more readers than a specialized trade magazine journalist, but to see quantitatively how big the difference in reach or awareness is, would be an interesting and very challenging topic for research.

Such a study could also investigate the carry-over effect of established journalists, meaning when younger journalists source ideas from more experienced ones.

This study is positioned in the field of international business communication, and while the limitations section of this study highlighted the problem of having only Anglo-American journalists as part of the data, this also presents a possible area for future research. Broadening this topic to other countries and other cultures would broaden the understanding on the identity communication of growth companies that this study has begun to open up. Particularly interesting for this case, but also for growth companies in general, would be research into journalist practices in China. China is today a major market for many companies (China is Rovio's second largest market by revenue in 2013), but the Chinese press is not a free press in the western sense of the word. It would be interesting therefore to see whether this has any effect on the results of this study.

While creating a global standard is hardly feasible, studying the variations that different cultures would add to these results presented here would be fruitful for the field of international business communication as a whole as it would help to understand cultural variability more generally.

Finally, it would be fairly simple and eye-opening to expand upon the appraisal analysis undertaken in this study. Appraisal analysis is a broad field of study that offers very valuable information on motivation and use of language. Due to the scope of this study it was not possible to apply all of the possible tools appraisal analysis affords a researcher, but to do so would deepen the knowledge of what journalists were aiming for in their writing and how they were doing it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Analyzed texts

Article 1

Angry Birds to go Online and Social

Rovio, probably the hottest company in mobile gaming right now, has no worries about Angry Birds running out of steam. Indeed it sees the franchise as having the long-term potential to match Mario or Sonic the Hedgehog. A big part of developing the game's audience? Entering the social gaming space.

At a presentation by Finnish technology companies in Barcelona this morning, Rovio's head of communications (calling himself "The Bird Whisperer") said that while Angry Birds already claims 75 million downloads, it's aiming to boost that to 100 million this spring. While he declined to announce any details of Angry Birds' move into the social space, Rovio is aiming to add another 100 million players as a result.

Given Angry Birds' popularity, and that Zynga's Cityville social game recently accumulated 100 million monthly active users little over a month after its launch, we'd say Rovio's target was pretty conservative.

While Angry Birds is heading for games consoles in the near future, it seems none of this planned growth will come from Windows Phone 7 – at least yet. Rovio has thus far held back from Microsoft's platform and there appears to be no immediate plan to change that. Rovio apparently sees the situation as "delicate", but if there's demand they will look at it.

Rovio has made the trip to Mobile World Congress as part of its quest to become "The most carrier-friendly developer", with the aim of signing more operators up to its recently announced Bad Piggybank operator billing system. As previously reported, players using Finland's Elisa mobile phone network will be first to have the option to pay for the 'Mighty Eagle' cheat via their phone bill.

Article 2

Rovio's Angry Birds Beta for Android Hits 1 Million Downloads

Rovio, the company behind the Angry Birds mobile game announced today that their Android Beta program recently hit 1 million downloads, making it what they claim is the biggest mobile beta test ever, with over 100,000 downloads per day on the Android platform. Representative Peter Vesterbacka explained that the full Android version of Angry Birds will be available "in the near future," and that the company hopes to meet a goal of 100 million downloads across multiple platforms like Apple including tablets like the iPad, Nokia, Android, Palm, PC, Mac, and soon to be Nintendo DS, Playstation, Wii, Xbox, and PSP.

New features for the game like the "Mighty Eagle," launched at the Nokia World summit allow users to purchase a "silver bullet" to bypass a harder level and continue along with the game. The Mighty Eagle feature is rolling out for Apple and Symbian should be available in October.

Rovio started small. A gaming company that began with three university students in Helsinki, Finland, it has captured the number one download spot in multiple country markets thanks to its Angry Birds game. The mobile game is based on the idea of angry birds that attempt to thwart evil pigs by catapulting themselves into the evil pig's castles to destroy them… obviously.

The game that launched in the Apple market is now available on platforms ranging from Symbian, Palm, and Nokia and has been recognized as one of the top games in multiple markets ranging from Finland and Sweden and topping off in the U.S. and U.K. where the game went straight to number 1 with over 7 million downloads on iPhone. And it's not an accident. The Angry Birds game was launched after intense market research of the Apple Market. Vesterbacka described the company's strategy when creating the iPhone game: "if you can make it in the Apple market, you can make it anywhere." And that's what they did; they created a multi generational game that would appeal to parents, kids, celebrities like Conan O'Brien, and even the British Prime Minister on first the Apple market. And it's fun.

Launched in 2004, the strategy behind the game was to create an entertainment franchise in the style of Sanrio's Hello Kitty or Nickelodeon's Sponge Bob Squarepants. Their marketing strategy revolved around a marketing concept where every tweet, every Facebook comment, and every user with an Angry Birds opinion receives a response. Clearly Rovio is a company that values crowd sourcing and perhaps this could mean that Angry Birds fans will have some say in future developments for the storyline of the game. The simple concept of the game lends itself well to an expanded entertainment franchise like that could be picked up by the likes of EA and Hollywood and an expanded story line that may focus on other characters within the game, for example, a story from the perspective of the evil pigs, perhaps.

Article 3

An encounter with Angry Birds – live from Rovio HQ

Angry Birds is so successful, its founder – Rovio – plans to turn it into a bestselling TV show and create a massive merchandising campaign around it, set to squash the likes of SpongeBob and Hello Kitty.

Speaking at Rovio's HQ in Helsinki, Finland, Mighty Eagle in chief Peter Vesterbacka told press how Angry Birds' success was certainly no fluke. "Angry birds was built to be a hit," he said explaining how the game had been carefully analyzed at every point in its design, built to eliminate luck at every stage.

"It was built to be an entertainment franchise from the beginning," said Vesterbacka, admitting that in the early stages, the firm had lobbied all its employees, their families and their friends to buy the game and push it to the top of the Finnish Apple App store.

Once it was number one in Finland, Rovio set its sights on Sweden, catapulting its angry birds to the top of that country's app store too. Once Sweden had fallen to the furious fowl, it was just a short step until it was noticed and featured on the UK Apple app store, where it has been perched at the number one spot for the past six months. It has spent five months at number one in the US, and bombarded the top spots of a further 70 markets around the world.

"It's a huge global thing, we're all over the planet," chirped Vesterbacka, boasting that the firm had seen seven million plus paid for downloads at 99 cents a pop – a well-padded magpie's nest.

Vesterbacka said Rovio was already in talks with people in Hollywood about "TV programmmes movies, all that jazz," building on what it says has become "a household name."

Rovio's 27 employees are no retiring robins, either, with Vesterbacka noting he and his colleagues quite enjoy the new found fame and having "random people in the street recognize you and recognize the brand – that's when you know you're on to something. It's really tough to create that kind of recognition."

While already flying high on the iPhone, WebOS and on Symbian devices – with a Symbian^3 version about to hatch – the firm has yet to release a full version of its popular game on Android.

The game has been in Beta testing on Android for just under two weeks and has already seen its millionth download, but it's unclear when the full version will be released.

It will apparently be in the "not too distant future," with Vesterbacka saying the process had been sped up immeasurably thanks to the massive beta. "That's why we did a beta in the first place," he said decrying the number of different devices and fragmentation

Android had. “But now we have so many people testing it with us, and offering feedback on bugs and problems, which means we can release it much faster.”

Rovio is setting its target at a lofty 100 million downloads across all platforms .This would be something akin to a “Tetris strategy” said Vesterbacka, who explained the game would also be sold on the stores for Xbox, Wii and other consoles.

Rovio is flocking to the merchandising bandwagon too, with Vesterbacka declaring the firm wanted to “beat the crap out of SpongeBob strategy.” SpongeBob, of course, makes around four billion dollars a year in merchandising for Nickelodean.

“Hello Kitty is also a very interesting franchise,” said Vesterbacka, noting “it’s all built around one image, it’s all very cute. We’re looking at what these guys are doing right and we’re looking at doing that.”

Of course, free plugs from massive celebrities certainly don’t hurt. “We get these random celebrity endorsements almost every day,” said Vesterbacka citing British PM David Cameron, the President of Australia, Conan O’Brian, Kylie Minogue, Tony Hawk and disgraced British soccer player Paul Gascoigne. “At least it’s a better addiction than his last one,” quipped Vesterbacka.

Vesterbacka said Angry Birds was a full quadrant app, meaning it was cross generation, appealing to all ages, and both sexes.

And with the recent release of the Mighty Eagle “silver bullet” which clears difficult levels for users who lure the big bird from its cage with a purchasable can of sardines, Rovio is swiftly flying towards an in-app purchasing model.

“Our ambition is to have over half of our fans to buy the angry eagle for 99 cents,” said Vesterbacka, noting that some of the levels were “pretty tough, and you can be stuck on it for hours or even days.”

Some app developers only aimed at getting three to five percent of their users to buy in-app downloads, which Vesterbacka said was “kind of like spamming.” Unfortunately, because of the nature of the Android Market, even when the full version does become available on Android, in-app purchasing won’t be available.

“I don’t know why he lives in a cave,” mused Vesterbacka, “I guess it’s just part of the story.”

The Eagle will be landing in October for iPhone and Symbian, but the updates don’t stop there. “When we do an update, about 80% of people update the game,” Vesterbacka said adding, “as a benchmark that’s pretty good.”

Just how will the firm follow up on its incredible success? Vesterbacka says Rovio will continue to make other games but that those will likely be spin-off titles from Angry Birds itself.

“They will be quite different, but they will fit perfectly into the story,” he said adding, “no one has told the story from the pigs’ perspective yet.” Of course, the original version of the “story” is a pretty simple and universal tale of hungry pigs stealing the eggs of increasingly angry poultry. “It’s all about telling a story without too many words. That's by design," he noted, aspiring to another famous birdie title – RoadRunner.

There won't be an "angry birds two," though, says Vesterbacka, telling the press to "expect the unexpected from us."

Angry Birds apparently took a full eight months to develop, but the firm claims it's "not about volume, it's about making every game very good."

"We really took time and got everything right," he said concluding with a rallying craw to developers to join the company. "We're actively hiring, designers, artists and coders," he said concluding, "We want to have a surplus in that area. We're ready to invest a lot."

Article 4

TechEye shares a cab with Rovio's Bird Whisperer - Angry bird is the word

Speaking to *TechEye*, Rovio's "Bird Whisperer" and temporary Cab Whisperer Ville Heijari says a rough estimate for Angry Birds' sales in 2010 is €6.5 million.

Heijari admits that revenues are small by global standards, relatively, but operators in his native Finland mostly wouldn't be able to muster the money to invest. For now most of the profits are being pushed back into Angry Birds so they can build and develop some more.

We shared a taxi from C/O Paris, where other Finnish companies held a breakfast with journalists. *TechEye* unfortunately missed it, in a morning panic that isn't exactly atypical. Heijari also said his company is not that far off from getting a license for a film - if you think about it. Talking of the Angry Birds partnership with 20th Century Fox for bird-related CGI film "Rio," he says "An Angry Birds movie is not a great jump from that."

Rovio is at Mobile World Congress in Barcelona to pitch to every operator they can and they are beyond busy. Angry Birds will soon, Rovio hopes, feature an in-game banking system where you can purchase, with real dosh, bits and pieces, called Bad Piggybank.

The Rovio CEO has a policy with his staff that they're not to wear suits or be stuffy. At a high profile awards event, Heijari says he told organizers to bog off when they demanded a black tie event.

They're hoping to shake up MWC, too - planning their own booth perhaps for next year, with live action Angry Birds. That's throwing plush toy birds at fortified pigs, by the way.

Article 5

Angry Birds Beta Hits One Million Android Downloads

We are reporting live from the Rovio headquarters in Espoo, Finland, taking a tour of their offices and speaking to Peter Vesterbacka, Rovio's "Mighty Eagle" and official spokesman.

Just now, Versterbacka announced that the Angry Birds Beta, released for Android Market just a couple of weeks ago, has already hit one million downloads via the Google Marketplace, with what they say makes it the most successful launch on Android to date.

The huge beta release has meant Rovio has been able to extensively test the game on Android, processing tens of thousands of pieces of feedback to fine tune the game. This has allowed Rovio to bring the release of the full Android game forward, although a release date was not divulged.

The news comes as part of a huge push by Rovio, taking them from being a company that traditionally made games for huge consumer games companies such as Electronic Arts, developing games for its Need For Speed franchise.

Vesterbacka admits that the company's huge success has been quite a shock to the Rovio employees, just a slight glimpse of the Angry Bird plush toy (pictured below) attracts all sorts of interested parties who frequently admit their lives have been dominated by the iPhone/Android/iPad/Symbian game.

Article 6

Angry Birds Take Over the World Wide Web

Not content with picking up the award for Best Mobile App at this year's Global Mobile Awards, Rovio wants to take Angry Birds to even greater heights by making it social, online, and compatible with games consoles. And that's all before we'll see Angry Birds 2.

Speaking during a presentation by Finnish technology companies here at Mobile World Congress, in Barcelona, Ville Heijari, Rovio's so called 'Bird Whisperer' (head of communications) said that far from the company looking to move onto the next big thing, it hoped to grow the Angry Birds brand into one that might rival Sonic the Hedgehog or Mario. As part of this strategy the company has branched out with a range of plush toys (that have already sold 1 million units) and will look to move into the console, online and social gaming markets soon – details on the exact plans were not forthcoming.

Also key is the newly announced Bad Piggybank operator billing system, which allows players to buy in-game content using the credit attached to their phone bill. This allows the company to circumvent app stores and gain even greater reach. Though with 75 million downloads already through conventional app stores, and expectation of hitting 100 million soon, the app store model clear still has its benefits.

One platform missing out on all the joy is Windows Phone 7, with Rovio saying it still hasn't decided whether to pursue that route yet. With Nokia and Microsoft's recent announcement of future collaboration, it surely can't be long before that move is made, though.

What's puzzling about all this is that the company didn't seem to be placing much priority on getting a new version of the game out any time soon, though the rumors of the pigs getting their own back were once again hinted at. Indeed we were told that there would be a whole world and back story created around the characters.

So, whether you're sick of it already, still addicted, or utterly oblivious, it sounds like there's going to be no escaping the Angry Birds for some time. Let us know what you think about that in the comments.

Press Release 1

Angry Birds available for Android

IT'S HERE. AND IT'S FREE. After an extended period of beta testing, Rovio is proud to present Angry Birds for the Android platform. First of all, we'd like to thank you for your patience.

Why is Angry Birds free on Android? We want to make Angry Birds available for as many people as possible. Previously, many people were experiencing problems in finding Angry Birds on Android Market, but now everybody can download the game on their device.

Angry Birds will run on second generation Android devices and upwards, with Android platform 1.6 or later. Your device needs to support OpenGL ES 2.0. QVGA display resolution is not supported currently, but we will add support for QVGA devices soon.

Angry Birds Android features mobile advertising. A future update will include the option to purchase and opt out of advertisements.

To get the game now, you can download Angry Birds on your device for free exclusively from GetJar (http://www.getjar.com/angry-birds). It will soon be available on the Android Market and Motorola SHOP4APPS, free of charge as well.

We have worked long and hard to ensure that Angry Birds gives the best possible experience on Android, and we believe we have reached our goal. We welcome our fans to see for themselves and have fun playing Angry Birds!

More Angry Birds goodies:

-Become a facebook fan: facebook.angrybirds.com
-Follow us on Twitter: twitter.angrybirds.com
-Official page: www.angrybirds.com
-Youtube: youtube.angrybirds.com

Have fun!

Best regards,

The Angry Birds Team

Press Release 2

With Halloween fast approaching, Rovio is excited to announce that special editions of its popular Angry Birds game – Angry Birds Halloween for iPhone and iPod touch and Angry Birds Halloween HD for iPad – are available on the App Store. Angry Birds has become a global phenomenon, and the new Halloween-themed games combine the game play of Angry Birds with Halloween treats like pumpkins, ghosts, ghouls and ghastly costumes.

Angry Birds Halloween includes 45 levels, which is three times more than regular updates. However, that's not all there is to these special edition apps; every aspect of the game has been recreated in the spirit of Halloween, so expect new spooky theme music, hair-raising graphical themes, and puzzling pumpkin-smashing action.

"With Angry Birds Halloween, we wanted to provide our fans with a special treat," said Mikael Hed, CEO of Rovio. "In addition to this new experience, we will also keep providing continuous free updates for Angry Birds."
Angry Birds Halloween is available for $0.99 and Angry Birds Halloween HD for $1.99 from the App Store on iPad, iPhone and iPod touch, or at *www.itunes.com/appstore/*.

Press Release 3

Rovio sells a million downloads of Angry Birds Halloween in six days

Rovio is happy to announce that Angry Birds Halloween has been a resounding success, with a million downloads in App Store in just six days.

Angry Birds Halloween and Angry Birds Halloween HD stormed the App Store charts across the world on iPhone, iPod and iPad, reaching #1 in the US and UK within 24 hours of launch.

“We’re delighted to see such fantastic reception for Angry Birds Halloween,” said Mikael Hed, CEO of Rovio. “We intend to continue creating more and more quality products and updates, and keep exceeding the expectations of our fans worldwide.”

The studio is overjoyed by the positive welcome from fans of Angry Birds everywhere, and are busy at work with providing updates for Angry Birds on Android, Symbian^3, Palm WebOS and the Nokia N900.

Angry Birds Halloween and Angry Birds Halloween HD are the first self-published Angry Birds titles for Rovio.

About Rovio

Rovio is an award-winning Finnish game developer, and one of the leading independent developers of mobile games worldwide. Previously, Rovio has developed games for some of the biggest names in the mobile space, including Electronic Arts, Nokia, Vivendi, Namco Bandai and Mr.Goodliving/Real Networks. To visit Rovio, go to rovio.com.

Press Release 4

The next Angry Birds update – Mighty Eagle!

After a long wait, the Mighty Eagle is almost here! This legendary and mysterious bird will be included in the next Angry Birds update, due to be released in the next few days. The update includes 15 levels in a hot new desert themed episode, **Ham 'Em High**, with a brand new shiny golden egg, and all the usual goodies we love to see from Angry Birds.

The Mighty Eagle is downloadable content. If you get stuck in the game, you have the opportunity to purchase a can of sardines, which you use to lure out the elusive Mighty Eagle. This phenomenal creature will then soar from the skies to wreak havoc and smash the pesky pigs into oblivion!

Mighty Eagle will help you skip the toughest obstacles, but there's a limit: you can only use the aid of Mighty Eagle to pass a level once per hour. In other words, when you pass a level with Mighty Eagle, you need to wait an hour to use him again to pass another level.

Is that all? Far from it! Mighty Eagle includes all new gameplay goals and achievements! In each level that you already cleared using the regular birds, you can smash away freely and try to fill up the destruction gauge! If you want to smash your way through every level leaving nothing behind, you have every incentive to do so! Mighty Eagle is an in-app purchase in Angry Birds and costs $0.99/£0.59/€0.79NZ$1.29 to download.

Press Release 5

Rovio Mobile announces Angry Birds for Intel AppUp center

Today, Rovio is happy to announce Angry Birds in the Intel AppUp ^{SM} center. In 2010, Angry Birds became a worldwide mobile phenomenon, with 50 million downloads in just one year. Now the game is available for netbooks and consumer laptops everywhere through the Intel AppUp center.

Angry Birds puts you in charge of a quirky flock of birds that go on an intense assault on the hungry pigs who have stolen their eggs. In the game, you use a slingshot to send the Angry Birds smashing into the pigs and their puzzling constructions. The netbook version includes 195 levels packed with hours and hours of gameplay, with free updates lined up for the future, just like with the mobile version.

“We’re excited to offer Angry Birds through the Intel AppUp center,” says Mikael Hed, CEO of Rovio. “Netbooks and consumer laptops are an untapped market for Angry Birds and a huge platform for casual gamers. Rovio looks forward to taking advantage of the innovative consolidated marketplace for PC apps Intel has provided.”

“We love Angry Birds. It’s one of our favorite games, so Intel is thrilled Rovio is bringing Angry Birds for the first time ever to netbooks and consumers laptops via AppUp.com” said Peter N. Biddle, general manager of the Intel AppUp center at Intel.

“Intel is beyond excited to work with Rovio and deliver a version of Angry Birds that takes advantage of larger screens and faster processors. It’s gonna rock.”

Angry Birds costs $9.99/£5.99/€7.99 to download in the Intel AppUp center at www.appup.com. Customers can expect free updates and enhancements to the game, free of charge. Initially, there will be a special promotion period where Angry Birds will be offered at $4.99 for a limited time.

For more news and information on Rovio products and updates, follow RovioMobile on Twitter and like Angry Birds - Rovio Mobile on Facebook.

About Rovio
Rovio is an award-winning Finnish game developer, and one of the leading independent developers of mobile games worldwide. Since 2003, Rovio has produced over 50 titles for multiple different mobile platforms. To visit Rovio, go to rovio.com.

Press Release 6

Angry Birds developer Rovio ramping up for console development; Employ industry veteran from the Max Payne and Alan Wake franchises

Petri Järvilehto, known from the best-selling Max Payne and Alan Wake franchises, today joined Rovio Mobile Ltd. as Senior Vice President of Console Development. Järvilehto will ramp up console game development teams to take the Angry Birds success story to current and emerging console platforms. He remains on the Board of Directors of Remedy Entertainment Ltd.

A games industry veteran, Järvilehto is one of the founders of Remedy Entertainment, the company behind the Max Payne hit games (adapted to a Hollywood blockbuster movie starring Mark Wahlberg) as well as Alan Wake, the critically acclaimed Xbox360 exclusive title. He has led various key projects at Remedy, such as Max Payne, Max Payne 2 as well as the initial game design of Alan Wake.

Rovio Mobile Ltd. is the developer of the global gaming phenomenon Angry Birds, which has been downloaded by more than 75 million times by consumers worldwide and has set all the sales records in the current mobile gaming market. Globally recognized as the definitive mobile game by mainstream media, Rovio is now moving on to take Angry Birds to new gaming platforms outside of mobile.

"We want to make Angry Birds a long lasting global gaming franchise, and we see the console platforms as a way of delivering an even more entertaining, powerful and involving experience," said Mikael Hed, CEO of Rovio. "Petri has an outstanding track record and we're thrilled to have him take the lead of our console development."

"Angry Birds is one of the fastest growing gaming franchises in the world right now," said Petri Järvilehto. "I think we're only in the beginning, and with consoles we have the opportunity to create a new kind of gaming experience."

The Mac and PC versions of the game were released in January 2011. The company is yet to disclose any details on their current console activities.

For more news and information on Rovio products and updates, follow RovioMobile on Twitter and like Angry Birds on Facebook.

About Rovio
Rovio is an award-winning Finnish game developer, and one of the leading independent developers of mobile games worldwide. Since 2003, Rovio has produced over 50 titles for multiple different mobile platforms. To visit Rovio, go to rovio.com.

Appendix 2

Subcategories and their qualifying keywords/phrases

- Successful: claim/have/gain/sell + million, popular, first place, success, recognition, best, leading, take over, hottest
- Evolving: develop, go to/into, improve, make more, new, expand, growth, plans, build on, update, invest, in the works, look at doing, getting, recreate
- Ambitious: add, aim, reach, wants to be/take, one day, in the future, ambition, meet, aspire, cross-generation, not content, hope to grow
- Humble: conservative, ordinary, surprised, thank you, delighted, overjoyed, excited
- Available: operators, [phone manufacturers], platform, reach, download/-able, cooperation
- Innovative: first, change rules, not traditional, unexpected, shake up, [product features]
- Recognized: famous, celebrity
- Strategic: consider, analyze, build, situation, if
- Hard-working: no accident, intense, takes time, busy, hard, extensively
- Fast: quickly, [time frame], sooner, faster, bring forward
- Interactive: response, Facebook/twitter, community, social
- Young: non-formal, not stuffy
- Global: world, global, worldwide

Appendix 3

Subcategories by frequency of occurrence

Journalists' articles

Subcategory	Instances
successful	19
evolving	19
available	16
ambitious	10
hard-working	4
no theme	4
interactive	4
strategic	4
innovative	3
fast	2
recognized	3
global	2
humble	1
young	1

Press releases

Subcategory	Instances
available	16
evolving	14
successful	11
global	8
fast	6
innovative	6
humble	4
interactive	3
hard-working	3
no theme	2
recognized	1
ambitious	1
	75

Appendix 4

Generic categories by frequency and their components

PRESS RELEASES

Progressive	**Famous**	**Accessible**	**Modest**	**Tireless**
25	**20**	**19**	**4**	**3**
evolving	global	available	humble	hard-working
fast	successful	interactive		
innovative	recognized			
ambitious				

JOURNALISTS' ARTICLES

Progressive	**Famous**	**Accessible**	**Tireless**	**Modest**
39	**23**	**20**	**5**	**1**
evolving	global	available	hard-working	humble
fast	successful	interactive	young	
innovative	recognized			
strategic				
ambitious				

Appendix 5

Interview Questions

CMO Peter Vesterbacka – Rovio 13.9.11

1. How would you describe Rovio in three words?
2. How do you think Rovio is seen at the moment?
3. Where does this identity come from?
4. How do you follow the development of your identity?
5. How has the popularity of Angry Birds changed Rovio's identity?
6. Who is your primary target group and how do you reach them?
7. How well does Rovio's identity fit with other cultures?
8. Does your identity remain the same as you grow as a company?
9. What things do you want to highlight in company interviews?

Appendix 6

Appraisal Analysis Statistics

	Press releases		Articles	
	Percent	N	Percent	N
ATTITUDE-TYPE	N=94		N=93	
affect	24.5%	23	32.3%	30
judgement	29.8%	28	25.8%	24
appreciation	45.7%	43	41.9%	39
AFFECT-TYPE	N=23		N=30	
authorial-evaluation	91.3%	21	50.0%	15
non-authorial-evaluation	8.7%	2	50.0%	15
AFFECT-TYPE2	N=23		N=30	
un/happiness	47.8%	11	10.0%	3
dis/satisfaction	21.7%	5	40.0%	12
in/security	8.7%	2	13.3%	4
dis/inclination	21.7%	5	36.7%	11
UN/HAPPINESS-TYPE	N=11		N=3	
misery/cheer	72.7%	8	66.7%	2
antipathy/affection	27.3%	3	33.3%	1
DIS/SATISFACTION-TYPE	N=5		N=12	
ennui/interest	20.0%	1	58.3%	7
dis/pleasure	80.0%	4	41.7%	5
IN/SECURITY-TYPE	N=2		N=4	
dis/quiet	0.0%	0	50.0%	2
dis/trust	100.0%	2	50.0%	2
JUDGEMENT-TYPE	N=28		N=24	
normality	28.6%	8	12.5%	3
capacity	53.6%	15	50.0%	12
tenacity	14.3%	4	37.5%	9
propriety	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
veracity	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
unclear	3.6%	1	0.0%	0

APPRECIATION-TYPE	N=43		N=39	
reaction	7.0%	3	0.0%	0
composition	4.7%	2	7.7%	3
social-valuation	88.4%	38	92.3%	36
REACTION-TYPE	N=3		N=0	
impact	33.3%	1	0.0%	0
quality	66.7%	2	0.0%	0
COMPOSITION-TYPE	N=2		N=3	
balance	50.0%	1	100.0%	3
complexity	50.0%	1	0.0%	0
EXPLICITNESS	N=94		N=93	
inscribed	71.3%	67	34.4%	32
invoked	28.7%	27	65.6%	61
ATTITUDE-POLARITY	N=94		N=93	
positive-attitude	90.4%	85	80.6%	75
negative-attitude	0.0%	0	3.2%	3
ambiguous	9.6%	9	16.1%	15