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BRANDING THROUGH TRADE SHOWS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The automotive industry is a major global industry with a great history of exhibitions. As trade shows are getting more attention within studies, the same is not the case for automotive trade shows. Noteworthy, automotive trade shows emphasize non-selling roles such as image-building. This paper seeks to investigate image-building purposes of exhibiting automotive companies using integrated marketing communications (IMC). Data has been gathered from four participating companies in the Geneva Motor Show. The empirical findings show several reasons to implement IMC in trade show activities to enhance the brand image. By carefully blending the promotional tools the brand image may be enhanced. The findings imply the need for better knowledge within IMC for some companies. The findings also suggest that this relative new marketing concept yields plural benefits. The paper clarifies the image-building purposes of exhibiting automotive companies and leads to proposals for further research in an unexplored area.

Keywords: *automotive industry, trade show, exhibition, IMC, branding, brand image*

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1. INTRODUCTION

From only a handful of automotive companies competing on a global scale in 1970, the number within the industry has reached more than twenty world-scale companies (Clark & Fujimoto, 1991). This means that General Motors, which once was a dominant company, now faces serious competitive threats. Following CNN Money's (2012) global ranking of the world's largest corporations, nine automotive companies are within the top 100 positions, such as Toyota positioned on 10th place and Volkswagen positioned on 12th place.

The global importance of the automotive industry is without doubt arising, especially when looking back at the economic crisis and further on one of the first big challenges for the Obama Administration in 2009 regarding the "Big Three" (Klier & Rubenstein, 2011). The "Big Three" automotive companies, more recently known as "Detroit Three", refer to the three major US brands General Motors Company (GM), Chrysler Group and Ford Motor Company. Klier and Rubenstein (2011) report that GM and Chrysler would not survive without government intervention, as the economic crisis hit USA. Granholm (2008) warned that letting the "Detroit Three" disappear will lead to massive job loss, which further would affect national economy and security. She pointed out that 10% of the jobs in the United States are supported by the automotive industry, and noted that 3 million jobs could be lost if these companies would fail. This shows that the US government cannot afford losing this industry, and especially in regard to employment. Reed (2012) remarks slow expand for "Detroit Three", referring to gains that indicate progress and increased competitiveness in the market. With this in mind, the 2008 financial crisis has encouraged innovation for US automotive companies ("Detroit Three") through government bailout.

According to Tushman and O'Reilly (1996), firms have better growth possibilities by investing in R&D (innovation) during an economic downturn. Instead of weakening the automotive industry overall, the recession has led to a positive development for some parts of the automotive industry (Muller, 2012). Technology, quality and productivity with respect to innovation have made cars more secure, safer and more eco-friendly than before. In fact, the focal point of the government bailout to "Detroit Three" was a future with more fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly cars (Amadeo, 2012). Thus, the automotive industry has been through a global growth despite some uncertain economic fluctuations. Consequently,

environmentally issues have been improved due to technological innovation as a part of survival and growth.

However, to capture customers who are virtually all over the world, it has been critical to inform all stakeholders about brand development and benefits. In an industry where all manufacturers can meet the basic purpose of the car as a vehicle, while the quality and safety has begun to be similar among manufacturers, it thus suggests that branding is essential to the industry. Under reputable trade shows in international arena there is also no doubt about the purpose of participation, namely to build on the brand to the various stakeholders (Deraëd, 2003). With this in mind, he stresses that the brand differentiation has moved its focal point from the product to the customer. Thus, there should be more focus on the branding aspect in regard to the customers. Moreover, customers in the automotive sector distinguish the brand from the dealer (Huber & Herrmann, 2001). Hence, these are not perceived as one unit. In light of this, it should be stressed that this paper focuses on the brand (i.e. the car manufacturer/importer).

In international automotive shows the car manufacturers are surrounded by competitors, the press, potential customers, suppliers and the public (Kim, 2007). Such events are covered globally in visual form as well as in text form in the international media. An international exhibition will thus affect the international sales and reputation through advertising and promotions of the brand (Dawar, 2004). Therefore, it is reasonable to highlight the importance of branding in trade shows.

There are multiple dimensions of trade show performance, such as image-building performance, sales-related performance, information gathering and relationship improvement (Lee & Kim, 2008). As this paper will focus on the branding aspect of trade shows, it will more specifically be related to image-building purposes. According to Arnold (2002), enhancing brand image is among the "valid" reasons for trade show participation. Moreover, Drengner, Gaus and Jahn (2008) consider trade shows as ideal to enhance the brand image.

Besides the recent developments in the automobile industry, a great deal of success in marketing is reflected. Through various arenas car manufacturers highlight their products to stakeholders, but the choice of marketing platform consequently influence the strategy for achieving a given goal. By gathering industry affiliates together in the same arena at the same time, trade show participation has become increasingly important for many companies' marketing activity (Hansen, 2004). An important tool here will be the use of integrated

marketing communication (IMC). Kitchen and Burgmann (2010) remark an increasing importance in IMC due to technology that makes integration possible. Schultz and Patti (2009) consider IMC as an important marketing communication perspective. Krugman et al. (1994) characterize IMC as a coordination of communication tools for a brand. Further, Tafesse and Korneliussen's (2012a) findings indicate that trade shows achieve higher levels of marketing performance by using multiple media tools. Thus, IMC emphasizes the use of various media tools in a unified way. This indicates a shift from a simple form of media advertising to the integration of multiple forms of marketing communication tools. To achieve a successful communication strategy (IMC) with the purpose of branding, careful planning is required to achieve the goal. It will be necessary to make a marketing mix by integrating various marketing channels (Keller, 2001). Such a procedure would contribute to the branding aspect through three different stages in trade shows; pre-show, at-show and post-show.

Despite the historical importance of the automotive industry in a global perspective, including more than a century of trade show activities within its history (Frankfurt Motor Show [IAA], 2012), there is surprisingly enough a lack of knowledge in the literature regarding automotive trade shows. Although there is an increasingly number of research in trade show activities, probably none of these are specifically related to the automotive industry. With numerous important automotive trade shows across the world each year, addressing this literature gap is hence of utmost importance. More specifically, this paper will address the gap in the literature from an image-building perspective. Thus, enhancement of brand image through trade show participation will be emphasized.

With the foregoing in mind, the focal point in this paper is on image-building through participation at a major international trade show. Moreover, this includes involvement of (integrated) marketing communication. Hence, aspects such as booth design and staffing will be downplayed. Instead, the main aspects in concern will be the use of various marketing communication tools in each respective trade show stage and eventually the integration of these media tools. The statement of the major research question will thereby be as follows:

- Why do automotive companies integrate the various media tools they use before, during and after a major international trade show to enhance their brand image?

By answering the research question, this paper hopes to bridge the literature gap by focusing on enhancement of brand image in automotive trade shows. Moreover, the importance of IMC with the purpose of image-building for exhibiting automotive companies will be addressed.

This paper will thereby contribute to the literature by exploring the image-building aspect of automotive trade shows.

However, the research in trade show activities with regard to branding goals and IMC is normally addressed in a more quantitative approach (i.e. correlational designs). Hence, it is a research field that lacks in-depth analyses. According to Booth, Colomb and Williams (2008), questions that ask *how* or *why* lead to deeper research. Moreover, Yin (2009) suggests that research questions which start with either *how* or *why* are ideal for case studies. As this is the occasion of this study, as well as exploring lack of knowledge in a specific area of the literature, a qualitative approach within case studies has been chosen.

From a theoretical perspective, this paper contributes knowledge by addressing the literature gap in image-building within automotive trade shows. From a practical point of view, this paper may help automotive companies in decision-making by seeing possible similarities in image-building purposes, but perhaps more importantly, differences that might be taken into consideration when developing communication strategies for trade shows. With this in mind, both theoretical and practical implications are addressed.

In order to address the research question, it is necessary to clarify (1) the concept of branding, (2) what sort of media tools automotive companies use before, during and after the trade show to enhance their brand image and (3) why they try to integrate the various media tools into an integrated branding campaign (IMC).

The remaining part of the paper consists of four additional chapters. In Chapter 2, the theoretical part of the problem will be examined. Chapter 3 goes into choice of method for data collection, as well as analyzing the collected information. In Chapter 4, the results from the data analysis are presented and discussed. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the findings that provide a basis for answering the research questions, while implications and suggestions for further empirical study are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives a broader knowledge of the theoretical framework within the conducted study. In order to have a starting point for the research, a review of the current literature is undertaken. The matters of concern are the fields of branding, trade shows and integrated marketing communications (IMC). The relevant concepts will be related to each other, but moreover within the automotive industry. Finally, a short summary will be given.

2.1 BRANDING IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

“A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless.” – Stephen King, WPP Group, London.

As markets are getting more integrated in a global context, firms must pay more attention to their marketing strategy across national borders. When integrating the marketing strategy across different markets, it is important to focus on the firm's branding policy (Douglas, Craig & Nijssen, 2001). Most B2C firms consider development and maintenance of strong brands as a key element of their marketing strategy (Aaker, 1996; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). The word «brand» comes from the Old Norse *brandr*, which means to burn, derived from ancient civilizations of Etruria, Greece and Rome (Clifton, 2009). However, there are many definitions of brand meaning by different experts (Kapferer, 2004).

Despite plural definitions of what a brand is, very few studies have specifically asked what it really is (Maurya & Mishra, 2012). Nevertheless, authors generally agree with Aaker (1996) that brands are identified through products and services, and furthermore differentiated from other manufacturers by branding. This will serve as a reassurance to the consumer about the origin of the product or service. The definition of brand includes intangible aspects as well, such as associations, feelings and experiences (Aaker, 1996; Kotler & Keller, 2011). Thus, branding involves both tangible and intangible characteristics. Brands are hence not just symbols or logos, but also a reflection of an organization's values and culture to the public.

Grimaldi (2004) argues that a great brand needs to position itself in target audiences' minds. Hence, focused marketing operations are required. For example, the brand could be chosen to be seen as "value for money" or "luxury". Aaker (1996) argues that the marketing elements provide support for the brand positioning. These may, for example, include promotion and

advertising. According to Aaker (1996), this builds brand equity and recognition over time. By positioning the brand, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) argue that the brand strategy will provide meaning and focus into the organization. More clearly, this shows that people generally do not buy *what* we do; they buy *why* we do it (Sinek, 2009). Thus, an integration of the organization's vision and purpose into the brand strategy will give a meaning to stakeholders. Papa, Daniels and Spiker (2007) stress that this should also be integrated into the organization, as employees should understand *why* they do what they do – not only *what* they do. Interestingly, understanding why a company is in the business world involves both internal (inside of the company) and external (outside of the company) environments. This leads further to the notion of employees "living" the brand.

With the above in mind, customers nowadays demand more than just the product. An integration of something more into the product is now expected, hence companies cannot focus solely on technical specifications (or characteristics). However, this is something that involves both the organization and the public. In this implies a sender of information (and meaning), but moreover also a receiver. It can thus be regarded as brand communication between the company/brand and the receiver (e.g. media and potential customers). Before taking action with the (brand) communication, consumers' needs must be taken into account in the selection of one out of three brand concepts (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986): (1) functional needs, (2) symbolic needs, or (3) experiential needs. The functional brand concept is about benefits and qualities of a brand, whereas the symbolic brand concept may signify fun and entertainment. The experiential brand concept could focus on status and other intangible assets. In addition to carrying the brand concept meaning, many brands have an important identity value (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). In general, the branding aspect is therefore a crucial element which has to be managed correctly.

In the automotive industry, companies will be more focused on differentiating its products by implementing brand management strategies (Jain & Garg, 2007). Brod (2004) makes a comparison between the furniture industry and the automotive industry. He stresses that for the furniture, usually the retailer is the brand. However, in the automotive industry, the car manufacturer is the brand. Thus, car buyers have a sharp preference about the car as the brand. Brod (2004) suggests this is due to strong branding in the automotive industry, as these brands always have mattered to consumers. Clifton (2009) mentions the German automotive company BMW as a successful example in making a global brand identity. Because BMW use various visual factors which appeal to the stakeholders, such as design, styling of its cars,

showrooms and communications, the powerful automotive company's visual expression is clear, attractive, distinctive and noticeably as an easily recognized global brand image.

Clifton (2009) further points out that the BMW brand is an often-quoted example of a visual identity expression. However, she also exemplifies an opposite situation regarding Ford by the late 1950s. The mighty US automotive brand made visual and verbal errors with their model Edsel, as its design stayed out from other brands and became unpopular even by its unappealing name. Clifton (2009) stresses that this led to discontinued production. However, in regard to branding in the automotive industry and the fact that major international trade shows are huge arenas with a huge amount of stakeholders, an automotive company cannot afford to fail during its participation. This shows that it is crucial to focus deeply on the planning aspects during all three stages of trade shows, and eventually integrate the various media tools in a right manner to achieve a positive branding outcome.

In recent years, the number of car makes and models has grown in every product segment. Chatterjee et al. (2002) argue that the automotive industry should leave the product-based marketing to a brand-based strategy, in which brand management should be implemented. They stress that the automotive companies cannot afford losing their brand image. As the earlier gaps in quality, safety, fuel efficiency and performance have closed significantly, Chatterjee et al. (2002) further note that the remaining possibilities for differentiating products revolve around design (i.e. styling) and the emotional benefits for the consumers. Their study concludes that consumers attach significantly greater importance to relationship and emotional benefits than to a car's functional attributes. Thus, brand management plays a major role in getting competitive advantage.

With this in mind, Chatterjee et al.'s (2002) findings indicate that to build an advantage that competitors find hard to duplicate, automotive companies should act on all of the elements of brand affiliation. In their study of the joint venture NUMMI (New United Motor Manufacturing Incorporated) between Toyota and General Motors, Chatterjee et al. (2002) compare Toyota Corolla and Chevrolet Prizm, which both are manufactured in the NUMMI plant in California. This comparison shows that even if both of these car models receive high marks from consumer reports, and are still comparably equipped with similar price tags, the Toyota sells significantly more. This indicates that branding is essential for success within the automotive industry, as Toyota's name (i.e. brand) on the vehicle attracts customers.

In regard to the Chinese market for compact cars, Hoffe, Lane and Miller (2003) report that consumers are differentiating among brands, and usually based on emotional factors. Within these factors, the consumers are evaluating the company's image or friends' thoughts of the brand. Hoffe, Lane and Miller's (2003) research concludes that intangible attributes (i.e. those a customer attaches to a brand) are ranked highest by Chinese consumers. This indicates that consumer preferences are more important than functional attributes such as fuel efficiency. Deraëd (2003) stresses that automotive companies must maintain and further develop their brand image, especially as the increasingly identical technology does not let product differentiating be a success factor – but rather brand differentiating as a major factor of success. There is even an example of the car manufacturer Opel, as Deraëd (2003) argues that without brand strategy, Opel would not have been able to get back onto the growth path.

By looking at the indicators above, the purpose of branding within the automotive industry is of utmost importance. Manufacturers within the industry cannot any longer differentiate themselves through products, hence technology or quality, but rather on branding. Gopalakrishna et al. (1995) report that firms generate increased interest and awareness of their products (and thereby brand) during trade shows. Therefore, it will be reasonable to focus on branding at automotive trade shows. The following subchapter will go further into the automotive branding goals within trade shows.

2.2 THE ROLE OF TRADE SHOWS IN AUTOMOTIVE BRANDING

Trade shows are an important part of many marketing mix programs (Tanner & Chonko, 1995), and have gained increased attention as an area for interaction with stakeholders. Lacagnina (2012) reasons this trend by the decrease in face-to-face marketing opportunities, which make trade show exhibiting more and more valuable. In addition, Song (2003) reports that trade shows in Korea have obtained an annual growth of 14% to 45% since 1999. Moreover, the overall exhibition industry grew 1.5% from 2011 to 2012 (Center for Exhibition Industry Research [CEIR], 2013). According to a Simmons Market Research Bureau study, 91% of respondents ranked trade shows as "extremely useful" as a source for product purchasing information (Conventions.net, 2012). Actually, nearly \$24 billion is spent on direct exhibition annually by exhibiting companies (CEIR, 2012).

Anyway, trade shows occur within almost all industries nowadays, especially for global brands such as most automotive companies. It is as of this writing announced more than 430 upcoming automotive trade shows (BizTradeShows.com, 2012). This indicates that trade

shows have become a major part of the global branding within the automotive industry, especially as the car manufacturers will spend a lot of their budget for successful participation in major international trade shows.

The major trade shows within the automotive industry are mainly international, and are today mostly located in Germany, USA, Switzerland, France and China. Moreover this concept has raised bigger importance within the industry in other countries in newer times, such as Canada, United Arab Emirates, Russia and Brazil. It could also be worthy to mention that the trade shows usually take place in major cities, such as Las Vegas, Frankfurt, Beijing, Geneva and Paris. Even if trade shows are quite new kinds of branding areas in general, this phenomenon for automotive branding is well known through its industry's history. For instance, the first international motor show in Germany, IAA (International Automobile Exhibition), now more known as the Frankfurt Auto Show, took place in 1897. Its success has since then narrowed upwards. In 2011, for example, this annual auto show could count for 1,012 exhibitors, 235,000 square meters exhibition space, 183 world premieres and 928,100 visitors (IAA, 2012). In addition to this, more than 12,000 journalists from 98 countries reported from this motor show.

The annual motor show in the city of Geneva in Switzerland, known as the Geneva Motor Show, is also one of the major international trade shows in the industry. First held in 1905, it has since then been considered as an important major international trade show. For instance, the well-known automotive website Edmunds.com reports that a lot of historical world debuts have taken place in this motor show, such as the legendary Jaguar E-Type, the beautiful Lamborghini Countach and the famous Audi Quattro. During the 82nd Geneva Motor Show in 2012, 10,000 media representatives and 735,000 visitors from all five continents gathered around in one big trade show, which actually is among the world's top 5 events in this field (Altran Group, 2012). For instance, the world famous automotive television show and magazine Top Gear considered the Geneva Motor Show as the biggest show of the year in 2012 (Top Gear, 2012). As witnessed above, the role of trade shows in automotive branding is a "big business", thus the purpose of branding within a major international trade show cannot be avoided.

Trade shows are considered as brand building tools (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Moreover, Arnold (2002) considers branding as a revolution in trade shows. She notes that the exhibition industry is surrounded by brand and image issues, especially as branding environments have

replaced the traditional product showcases in trade shows. For instance, she remarks that the marketing communications side of a firm has now taken over the responsibility of the product side. Moreover, Kirchgeorg, Springer and Kästner (2010) suggest that trade shows are suitable to the corporate communication mix for the purpose of increasing confidence in brands.

Bonoma (1983) urges that firms must participate in trade show to avoid hurting the brand image, especially as competitors will take their place in the show. Williams, Gopalakrishna and Cox (1999) note that some companies may even participate in certain trade shows just to avoid misunderstandings due to the company's absence. They further mention that these companies avoid creating an image that might be interpreted by competitors (or consumers) as difficulties in finance or management. However, Arnold (2002) clarifies that the worst reason to exhibit in any trade show is because the company fears that their absence will be noticed. If that is the situation, then she suggests that it is even better to not exhibit. Instead, an overview of upcoming trade shows and preparation should be considered in order to succeed.

From the perspective of great leaders within the automotive industry who attended the prestigious Frankfurt Motor Show in 2011, Williams (2011) could define two major purposes of participation at major international trade shows. First of all, automotive companies want to build on the brand loyalty by connecting (potential) customers to the brand. Secondly, they want to increase brand awareness to the press and the public. Thus, there are two major branding goals during trade shows (Williams, 2011):

1. Creating bonds between people and the brand ("bond-branding")
2. Creating PR buzz among the large number of international media

In regard to the first branding goal (i.e. "bond-branding"), during the Frankfurt Motor Show 2011 Audi let show visitors experience new cars in an integrated test track on their booth – also known as the "Audi ring" (Williams, 2011). Volvo on the other side, focused on an elegant stand made of wood and glass, which actually could be a sign of design and luxury. In addition, Williams (2011) mentions that Volvo tried to bond people to their brand by attaching stories which show visitors could tell their friends at home. In light of this, one may assume that automotive companies develop their communication goals with the purpose of bonding people to the brand and hence increasing brand loyalty, but also with the aim of creating awareness around their brand to the various stakeholders (e.g. media and consumers). McEwen (2005) notes that although companies spend millions of dollars each year on fancy

advertising, use of celebrities or loyalty programs, they too often fail at creating a lasting relationship. Thus, marketers celebrate too early, that is, already from their "first date" with consumers. McEwen (2005) suggests that companies should instead focus on a faithful consumer-brand "marriage" (i.e. long-term relationship).

Amine (1998) suggests that firms will gain a long-run competitiveness in their respective market by improving consumers' loyalty to the brand, which moreover aims to consumers' brand commitment. Hence, avoiding emphasis on branding within the marketing strategy may cause a decline in firms' long-term competitiveness. Iglesias, Singh and Batista-Foguet's (2011) findings suggest that there is a relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. They conclude that this connection is mediated through affective commitment (i.e. own desire of commitment to a company). They moreover indicate that brand loyalty is influenced by brand experience, but only through affective commitment. Both internal and external environments are hence important when aiming to build on brand loyalty. Interestingly, these (organizational) values increase profits in the long run by creating or enhancing brand loyalty (Reichheld, 2001). This indicates that profit is related to customer value (brand loyalty):

“Business must be run at a profit, else it will die. But when anyone tries to run a business solely for profit... then also the business must die, for it no longer has a reason for existence.” – Henry Ford, automotive pioneer.

When it comes to the second branding goal (i.e. PR buzz), major international trade shows should be attractive, especially as a huge number of journalists will cover the event. For instance, Frankfurt Motor Show 2011 attracted close to a million visitors during the ten exhibition days, while thousands of international journalists attended the trade show during the two press days (IAA, 2012). Audi alone spent \$14 million erecting a display at the show (Williams, 2011), which indicates that a huge amount of money is invested for the valuable PR buzz to create brand awareness all around the world. Even if Audi is at home when in Germany (or Europe), there are "foreign" exhibitors such as Chevrolet participating at these major international trade shows. Williams (2011) notes that the latter US car manufacturer participated at the trade show with the purpose of growing brand awareness outside of their home area (USA), and in particular in Western Europe.

However, with trade shows within the automotive industry in mind, it seems like some automotive companies are inspired by the exhibitions, and thus the outcomes. Brands such as

Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, BMW and Volkswagen have created museums and showcases (Williams, 2011). In addition, the Italian sports car manufacturer Ferrari has created Ferrari World Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, which is the world's largest indoor theme park (Hancock, 2010). Thus, branded theme parks, showcases or museums are a part of automotive branding. Probably, these experiences may have been inspired by the exhibition history within the automotive industry. Hence, customers will experience a brand and receive stories that they eventually can bring outside of their head. Smith and Wheeler (2002) stress that experience and branding are interrelated. They argue that a customer can experience a brand, and then *brand* the experience. This provides them some stories about what they visualized and experienced.

Grönroos (2007) argues that marketers cannot build a brand, but only create right conditions for a brand image to develop in the mind of the customer. He adds that it is the customer that can build a brand. Thus, the branding goals of automotive companies will be affected by how they visualize their brand upon the show visitors. Therefore, a brand image is mutually constructed between the brand and the consumer (da Silveira, Lages & Simões, 2013). Zarantonello and Schmitt's (2013) study reveals that the relationship between pre-show and post-show brand equity in trade shows are mediated through brand experience, which in turn is an antecedent of brand attitude. Thus, the (pre-show) brand attitude of consumers participating in trade shows may be influenced through brand experience during the show. This supports the importance of consumers' experiences with the brand, especially as their brand attitude may change during the post-show stage because of their (received) brand experience at the trade show. Hence, brand experience affects consumer behavior toward the brand, which moreover may influence brand loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). According to Boulding (1956), people interpret the same stimulus in different ways. He emphasizes that people hence do not react to reality, but rather to *perceived* reality. A brand may therefore be seen as an image in consumers' minds (i.e. brand image).

As the foregoing has discussed the role of customers experiencing the brand, there should therefore also be given attention to how the company should *brand* (i.e. communicate the brand) the intended experience toward those who it may concern (e.g. consumers). Therefore, both marketing (brand) communication and customer experience should be taken into account. This involves the terms «brand identity» and «brand image» (Grönroos, 2007).

While the former term is related to *wanted* brand identity by the sender (i.e. the company/brand); the latter relates to *perceived* brand image by the receiver (e.g. consumers). This is further illustrated in Figure 1:

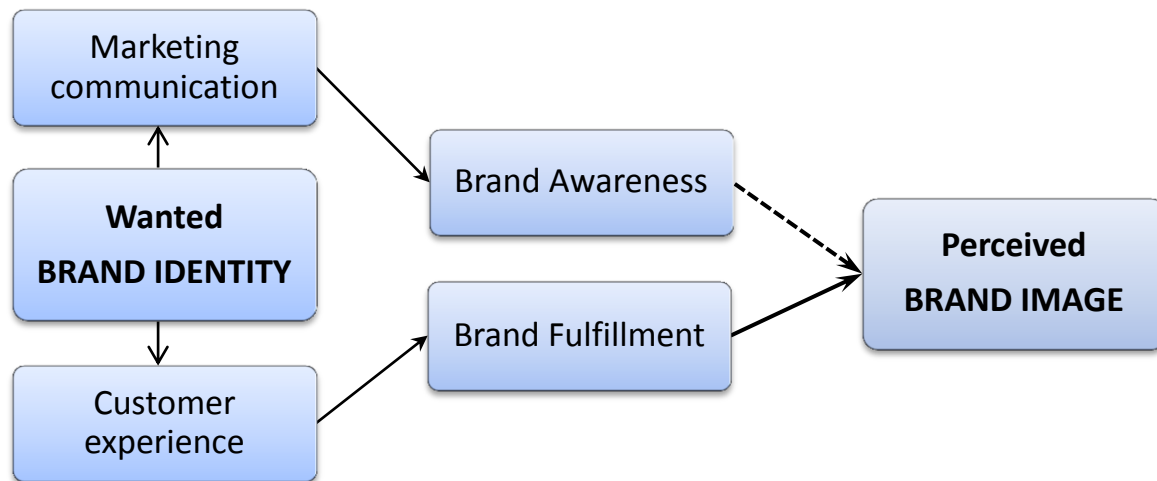


Figure 1: The service branding process. Adapted from Grönroos (2007, p. 336). Reproduced with permission from John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The branding process for a brand/company has been described by Grönroos (2007), as illustrated in Figure 1. The firm must firstly decide what brand image it wants its stakeholders (e.g. customers and employees) to have. This is the *wanted brand identity*. Secondly, the firm should plan its *marketing communication* with the purpose of creating *brand awareness*. This will make stakeholders aware of the existence of products or services that the firm offers. Moreover, with successful (and planned) marketing communication efforts also follow positive *customer experience* with the firm. However, it should be noted that unsuccessful (and unplanned) marketing communication may counteract this effect and thus lead to an unintended brand image. Therefore, the marketing communication aspect must be emphasized and moreover planned in a proper way. Furthermore, the customer experiences with the firm during the branding process form the *brand fulfillment*. This will then primarily lead to a *perceived brand image* in stakeholders' minds, whereas the planned marketing communication efforts support this branding process.

From the illustration and description of Figure 1, it can thus be assumed that communicators (e.g. brands, communications, PR and managers) transform the brand image over time. This process further intends to guide customers (and other stakeholders) away from the need-satisfaction. Instead, communicators assert stories and images that will dominate the customer

experience. In a trade show setting it is clear that firms make use of the right staff for the right purpose, which is, selecting the right personnel in order to achieve their branding goals. Tafesse and Korneliussen (2012b) emphasize that the marketing performance will be enhanced with the right staff. This moreover indicates that important trade show objectives (e.g. enhancing the brand image) will be accomplished in a better way by ensuring that the marketing communication is done in a proper way.

To achieve the branding goals through trade shows, automotive companies must integrate various media tools in each of the three stages within trade shows. This will yield greater marketing performance (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2012a). Thus, integrated marketing communications should be involved. With branding as the purpose of participation in automotive trade shows, it is crucial to mention the importance of the non-selling roles (Sharland & Balogh, 1996). Thereby the marketing communication aspect (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998), as well as planning the use of IMC in each stage of the trade show, is critical to achieve success (Reid, Luxton & Mavondo, 2005). Kerin and Cron (1987) mention that trade shows are important as a marketing tool, especially in regard to the frequency of use and the level of expenditure. Duncan and Moriarty (1999) argue that the marketing should be relationship-based. Furthermore, Grönroos (2007) stresses that firms must leave the traditional transactional perspective, which mainly focused on transactions as one of the cores of marketing. He notes that businesses must be more service-oriented. Duncan and Moriarty (1999) mention that services account for up to 80% of GDP in developed countries. In addition, Blythe (2010) points out trade shows as communication arenas, and furthermore urges firms to focus on the establishment of dialogues rather than one-way communication. He suggests that firms must get rid of their sales-related approaches.

Thus, the company must strive to be customer-oriented. In the same time, Grönroos (2007) urges that face-to-face (two-way symmetric) communication is the ideal. Likewise, Hansen (2000) urges that marketers cannot overlook the importance of relationship marketing at international trade shows. He suggests that it will reduce uncertainty as well as increase commitment between buyers and sellers. Thereby, the buyer will feel some sort of commitment to the "seller" (brand). Thus, the focal point of communication should be on relations as a dialogue – and not a "lecture". With this in mind, such an opportunity must be handled correctly with the right means and media tools.

There are three stages that should be considered within the branding aspect through trade shows; pre-show, at-show and post-show (Lee & Kim, 2008). Each of these stages should include appropriate communication aspects (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) have researched measurement of trade show performance. However, the latter and many other studies are based on sales-related performance. As witnessed in the automotive industry, the non-selling aspect is crucial during trade shows. In this respect, Hansen's (2004) measure of trade show performance is an exception as it concerns both sales-related and non-selling factors. This is further supported by Lee and Kim (2008), who have developed their own conceptual model of trade show performance measurements based on Hansen's (2004) framework. As the automotive industry is concerned about the non-selling aspects of trade shows, which eventually contribute to branding, Lee and Kim's (2008) determinants (and outcomes) of trade show performance will be the basis. The outcomes of the determinants are related to four performance dimensions; (1) image-building, (2) sales-related performance, (3) information gathering and (4) relationship improvement.

2.2.1 PRE-SHOW STAGE

The planning aspect should be taken seriously in regard to success at the upcoming trade show (Pitta, Weisgal & Lynagh, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial to be well-prepared as an exhibitor. Seringhaus and Rosson (2004) argue that a variety of pre-show activities are important in order to succeed in a trade show. Dekimpe et al. (1997) stress that pre-show promotion is among the key determinants of trade show performance. Lee and Kim (2008) classify three major determinants of pre-show activities; (1) quantifying objectives, (2) pre-show promotion and (3) booth staff training.

Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) argue that the key issue is to attract a niche audience, which are those with high profit potential. By that, they propose that special (customized) invitations may function as a key technique. They further consider direct mail as more general use to reach a larger sample. Lee and Kim's (2008) research shows that pre-show activities are considerably more important than at-show activities. Thus, pre-show promotion and booth staff training should receive more attention than at-show promotion, booth size, booth location and booth staff density. However, Lee and Kim (2008) stress that securing a good booth location is important in order to enhance trade show performance.

Among a variety of pre-show activities, Seringhaus and Rosson (2004) mention mail messages and press releases in order to create (brand) awareness about a company's presence

at an upcoming trade show. For example, automotive companies could e-mail press releases to a variety of journalists with information about the upcoming trade show and the booth place. For instance, Kotler and Keller (2011) consider press releases as brand building tools. Dekimpe et al. (1997) suggest that key visitors should be contacted by more direct methods as the trade show approaches. For better results, Clark and Fujimoto (1991) argue that there should be a close match of knowledge and skill between the booth staff and the booth visitors.

As for the automotive industry and the branding goals, Lee and Kim (2008) argue that pre-show activities enhance the brand image by strengthening pre-show promotion.

2.2.2 AT-SHOW STAGE

This stage is the only stage which is "live". Thus, this is a moment of truth. Seringhaus and Rosson (2004) argue that exhibitors have to do more than just providing a static display. They should create an impression that lasts in the mind of booth visitors. For example, as earlier mentioned from the Frankfurt Motor Show 2011, in which Audi gave the audience experiences that will stay in their memory. However, an attractive stand with a lot of attendees surrounding the booth at the same time makes it difficult to target key visitors (Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004). Moreover, Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) stress that success in this stage of the trade show is dependent on successful planning and preparation (i.e. pre-show activities). Lee and Kim (2008) classify four major determinants of at-show activities; (1) booth size, (2) booth location, (3) on-site promotion and (4) booth staff density.

According to Clark and Fujimoto (1991), customers should have direct contact with engineers and designers. They mention that it will lead to a powerful motivating influence on their behavior. Regardless if market research is systematic or unsystematic, they further stress the importance of face-to-face interaction with customers in the marketplace; in our case during the trade show. There is no substitute for this type of interaction, particularly for employees like test engineers, who in the development process, play an important role for future customers (Clark & Fujimoto, 1991). Thus, engineers and designers should be included among the personnel during trade shows. They should be able to capture important feedback concerning product development, especially through concept cars and technical specifications presented in a trade show, and further bring it back "home" to analyze, evaluate and develop the collected data in regard to branding. Additionally, exhibiting companies have the possibility to generate leads during the show (Williams & Gopalakrishna, 1993;

Gopalakrishna et. al, 1995; Dekimpe et. al, 1997). Hence, by getting in touch with numerous prospects, these prospective customers (i.e. leads) may end up as an investment for the future.

Upshaw and Taylor (2000) mention that an important part of the brand strategy is the management and manipulation of complex messages, which then are communicated to consumers as they visualize and personally interact with the brand. Heath and Heath (2007) argue that some ideas stick to the brain, while others get lost. They stress that it is necessary to develop short stories through simple messages. Furthermore, they mention that emotions make people care about the message, while unexpectedness hits the audience by engaging curiosity. This is further mentioned by Murphy (2010), who stresses the importance of effective messaging by focusing on clear, concise messages that resonate with the target audience. However, Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) do note that the staff must learn to listen before they speak.

Thus, automotive companies should ensure that their messages are simple, memorable and focused. In addition, there should be a two-way symmetric communication. These two steps will lead to brand awareness through simple but still memorable messages or stories, which in turn will assist the branding process to enhance the brand image.

2.2.3 POST-SHOW STAGE

In this stage it is critical to follow up the leads that have been gained at the trade show, especially before they turn from "hot" to "cold" (Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004). Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) indicate that action is the most important post-show activity, in which they refer to following up leads. But to keep important leads from the at-show stage, they stress that it might be necessary to create and record a lead form. Among the measuring guidelines, they further propose to re-evaluate the show participation, and compare results to goals. Lee and Kim (2008) classify two major determinants of post-show activities; (1) follow-up and (2) measurement.

As for the automotive industry and the branding goals, Lee and Kim (2008) argue that post-show activities enhance brand image by ensuring post-show feedback. This will lead to a stronger brand image in the mind of booth visitors.

2.3 THE ROLE OF IMC IN TRADE SHOW ACTIVITIES

Marketing communications is generally recognized as the promotion element within the 4Ps (price, product, *promotion*, and place) of the marketing mix (Hartley & Pickton, 1999). Due to progress in information technology (Kitchen et al., 2004), which in turn led to the emergence of integrated marketing communications (IMC) during the late 20th century (Hartley & Pickton, 1999), the growth and importance of IMC have followed continuously (Grove, Carlson & Dorsch, 2002). Moreover, Luck and Moffatt (2009) argue that the marketing concepts of the early 20th century cannot be valid any longer. Because of the interdependence between marketplaces across different countries, integration of marketing communications is needed (Kitchen et al., 2004). This is due to the increasing globalization in the business world, especially in regard to the automotive industry which is operating in different markets and hence different countries. Interestingly, Luck and Moffatt (2009) suggest a new paradigm in marketing, namely IMC.

Since trade shows gather manufacturers and stakeholders from different areas in the same arena, they are considered as an important marketing channel for companies (Huang, Tsai & Huang, 2011). Deraëd (2003) notes that customized and integrated communications via direct marketing will increase its importance in the automotive industry. In contrast, he mentions that there will be less importance for mass communication. Thus, the trend within face-to-face interaction is the future. Arnold (2002) considers personal interaction as one of the main ingredients of business. In addition, Grönroos (2007) argues for relationship marketing as increasingly important. Thereby, without any face-to-face communication (dialogue) there is no sign of "physical" relationships. Moreover, Keller (2001) suggests that marketing communication programs should be integrated as a whole. He further mentions that this marketing concept has changed a lot from those of 30 years ago, whereas the main challenges concerning marketers now are the various communication options available to reach consumers. This means that the modern marketing communication programs should take a look at different marketing options, and thereby integrate them into a unified program – and not solely.

The communications environment has significantly changed due to modern information technology. With a shift from mass marketing to focused marketing programs, brands may now build closer relationships with customers and moreover target potential customers in a more tailored way (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Hence, mass markets are fragmented and information about consumers is clearer. But with an increased number of media channels also

follows a richer mixture of communication channels toward consumers. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) stress that this may cause a problem for marketers since consumers are exposed to a greater variety of marketing communications. Furthermore, they argue that this may result in conflicting messages from different sources. Moreover, this may unconsciously lead to confused brand images from the consumers' perspective. This indicates the importance of integrating the various communication channels. Thus, the communication efforts should be considered in an integrated matter in order to transform the wanted brand identity in a proper way to ensure that the received brand image is as desired. To achieve this process in a good way, the company (and product) messages should be consistent, clear and compelling (Jobber & Fahy, 2006; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). This implies a carefully blended mix of the promotion tools (e.g. advertising, publicity and direct marketing). In fact, a key marketing decision within IMC is the promotional blend aimed at communicating to the target audience (Jobber & Fahy, 2006). Therefore, each of the promotion tools available must be evaluated carefully in regard to its strengths and weaknesses.

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) opens the door for marketers to combine their communications in order to construct a coherent and synergistic approach (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). Furthermore, consumers can be more enlightened, motivated, informed and influenced by implementing IMC (Keller, 2001). Thus, it is valuable due to its long-term strategy focusing on the brand. Pickton and Broderick (2005) indicate benefits of IMC as cost savings, better relations within the company's departments, greater consistency among the various communication messages, but moreover better use of media and promotion mix elements. However, it is important to ensure that all planned messages will contribute to the long-term goals of the marketing communication. In accordance with the integration of messages for the (1) short-, (2) medium- and (3) long-term goals with respect to marketing communication, Grönroos (2007) stresses that these stages will have an effect on (1) communication, (2) marketing and (3) image formation, respectively. A total (integrated) communication approach is hence needed in order to achieve the long-term goals, that is, wanted brand image among consumers through image formation. Therefore, these different time perspectives need to be viewed holistically in order to take employees, customers and even potential customers into account in every communication activity. Grönroos (2007) emphasizes that the planning of such long-term efforts unfortunately too often are separated from other campaigns. This signifies the importance of integrating it all into a unified brand campaign (IMC).

Carlson, Grove and Dorsch (2003) indicate that a company can generate positive feedback from customers by implementing IMC successfully. Moreover, IMC may help companies in building brand equity through synergy (Naik & Raman, 2003). Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) share the same view as the latter of IMC as a benefit to build brand equity for products and services. They stress that harnessing synergy across multiple media will provide support to achieve this goal. In addition, Reid's (2003) findings, which are based on the IMC mini-audit developed by Duncan and Moriarty (1998), indicate that IMC has a positive relation to a company's brand-related performance. Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) point out that IMC is flexible, in which it may be customized by various promotion mix elements. In the automotive industry at major international trade shows, an exhibiting company will thus be able to adapt itself upon the purpose of participating at each trade show.

For example, as earlier mentioned, Chevrolet participated in the Frankfurt Motor Show 2011 with the purpose of generating brand awareness in the Western Europe, while Audi decided to build both brand loyalty through customer experiences, and brand awareness through PR buzz for the international market. If this trade show would have been in a country where Audi perhaps would not be as popular or recognized as in Europe, the purpose of participating might have changed to the same as Chevrolet in Frankfurt. Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) stress that IMC's flexibility helps it reach the target audience. Thus, its flexibility makes it applicable at various trade shows. Thereby, IMC may always be "up-to-date" by selecting the right elements for the right occasion.

With the indicators mentioned above in mind, IMC is undoubtedly an important part for automotive companies to achieve their branding goals during trade shows. The reason of its importance is the ability (and necessity) of integrating the exhibit marketing within the IMC process and the company's marketing strategy, which thus will lead to success (Pitta, Weisgal & Lynagh, 2006). Keller (2009) suggests that brand awareness and moreover wanted brand image in consumers' minds will be obtained by mixing and matching various communication options (i.e. implementing IMC). In addition, recent research by Tafesse and Korneliussen (2012a) indicate that the use of multiple media tools (IMC) for companies in a trade show campaign environment lead to higher levels of marketing performance. Likewise, Voorveld, Neijens and Smit's (2011) findings demonstrate stronger campaign results through multiple media campaigns compared to a single medium campaign. Using consistent messages in a cross-tool campaign enhances the brand image more effectively than repetitive messages (McGrath, 2005; Navarro-Bailón, 2012). Thus, instead of exposing consumers with the same

message twice, Navarro-Bailón (2012) argues that the use of an integrated campaign (IMC) will generate more positive effects due to its consistency-based communication. This will moreover result in an enhanced brand image (i.e. more positive brand associations as well as brand attitude).

This chapter ends by summarizing the main connections between the major concepts in this paper. Trade shows can be divided into three stages; pre-show, at-show and post-show. These stages consist of various communication aspects to focus on before, during and after trade show participation. A mainly common aspect in all three stages is the existence of publicity, which moreover involves important decision-making within marketing communication. By relating these trade show stages to integrated marketing communications (IMC), that is, unifying them, the use of IMC plays an important role toward the company's branding goals.

Thus, this paper studies *why* exhibiting automotive companies implement IMC in trade shows to enhance their brand image. This implies an integration of the various media tools they use during the sequential trade show stages.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the choice of research method used for this study. Focus will be on why the chosen types of methods are used, but moreover also how these are applied. Then the investigated cases are presented, followed by the data collection process. Further, analysis of collected data is discussed, as well as considerations regarding ethics. Finally, quality of the research is taken into account.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

There are two extreme sides within philosophy of science; positivism versus social constructionism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). The former is related to quantitative methods; the latter relates to qualitative methods.

Within the quantitative paradigm, one goal is to measure causal relationships (cause-effect) between variables (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It should, however, be clear that this is based on an objective (value-free) view from the researcher.

Within qualitative methods, on the other hand, the aim is to increase general understanding of the situation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2012). The latter is, in contrast to quantitative methods, understood from a subjective (value-based) point of view. Hence, the main drivers of science within qualitative research are, as Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) note, the human interests (i.e. own values/"researcher bias").

The importance of a research design is reflected within its main purpose, namely to avoid that the collected data do not address the research questions (Yin, 2009). Components of the research design chosen for this study will be presented and discussed when the chosen type of research approach is defined (i.e. case study).

3.1.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Currently, the majority of research in marketing communications is quantitative (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). Gummesson (2007) suggests that there is excessive use of quantitative methods. He argues that qualitative methods are more open-minded with ingredients such as tolerance and critique, which furthermore lead to creative thinking and access to reality. Gummesson's (2007) findings indicate that the mainstream (i.e. quantitative) methods lack deep enough knowledge about the marketing reality, especially as the presence of non-verbal communication is important. His findings propose more use of the researcher, who thereby

will be able to observe, get involved and gather data from direct experience. Likewise, Opdenakker (2006) points out that face-to-face interviews, due to its synchronous communication of time and place, will have the advantage of capturing social cues (i.e. voice, body language, etc.).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 2) define the (qualitative) research interview as "an *interview*, where knowledge is constructed in the *inter-action* between the interviewer and the interviewee". Based on their definition, the researcher will gain deeper knowledge by digging deeper through mutual action (i.e. communication). Hence, the researcher will receive both verbal and non-verbal information through physical interviews. Moreover, this verbal/non-verbal information contributes to improving knowledge. With the foregoing in mind and since this study aims to get in-depth information of the research topics, a qualitative approach has been applied. This is also due to the low number of potential cases/companies in the automotive industry. Hence, this paper rather focuses on going in-depth within a small number of cases. Thus, the purpose of this study is to understand the research topic deeper instead of searching for standardization or generalization.

Within qualitative research, Creswell (1998) categorizes five traditions: (1) Biography, (2) Phenomenology, (3) Grounded Theory, (4) Ethnography and (5) Case Study. In this paper, the focus is on the latter tradition. In case studies, the essential purpose of the research is to develop an in-depth analysis of a single case or a small number of cases (Creswell, 1998; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). As this paper will focus on in-depth analyses within few cases, which are four different automotive companies, the research is based on case studies.

3.1.2 CASE STUDY

The literature on case studies is very extensive (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Stake's (2006) perspective of qualitative case studies, which is distinguished between instrumental and expressive studies, is more concerned with providing a rich picture of life and behavior within selected cases (i.e. organizations or groups) rather than issues of validity. While instrumental studies involve studying specific cases with the purpose of developing general principles, expressive studies are focusing on in-depth analyses of the unique features within cases. Furthermore, these unique features may be generalizable to other contexts. Thus, Stake (2006) can be seen as a constructionist. Yin (2009), on the other hand, stresses that (qualitative) case studies contain the same degree of validity as more quantitative methods.

Hence, Yin's (2009) perspective of qualitative case studies involves rigor (i.e. trustworthiness). Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of applying careful logic in comparisons.

Yin (2009) specifically identifies three categories within types of case studies, namely (1) *Exploratory*, (2) *Explanatory* and (3) *Descriptive*. In an exploratory case study, the purpose is to search for new insight. Thus, the exploratory approach aims to increase the understanding of a problem. In an explanatory case study, the purpose is to find interrelations between the investigated variables. In a descriptive case study, a descriptive theory is required before the data collection. The purpose of the latter is to describe a phenomenon. Hence, the purpose of the research determines whether one should use an exploratory, explanatory or descriptive approach.

The overall purpose of this study is to investigate automotive companies participating at a major international trade show, but moreover how they use this show to achieve their branding goals. As this goes deeper into the marketing (communication) strategy, and moreover into each of the three trade shows stages, this paper focuses on exploring the automotive companies' different communication goals within each stage of the trade show process. As these various trade show stages are explored, this paper will focus on getting a deeper understanding of *how* and *why* the investigated companies are doing what they do in the pursuit of their branding goals by participating in the given trade show. Yin (2009) remarks that case studies are mostly appropriate when the phenomenon studied cannot be separated from its context (i.e. branding in the automotive industry in relation to participation at a major international trade show). Hence, the data collection and data analysis will be explored and furthermore explained. Thus, this paper is focusing on an explorative design within case studies.

Yin (2009) points out that the research design of case studies should show logical connection between questions and findings. There are five important components of a research design to take in account when applying a case study: (1) research questions, (2) propositions (or purpose), (3) unit(s) of analysis, (4) logical link between data and propositions (or purpose) and (5) criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009).

Firstly, study questions should start with *who*, *what*, *where*, *how* and *why*. According to Yin (2009), case studies should be used when research questions start with "how" and/or "why". This is the occasion of this study, as the major research question asks "*How* do automotive

companies enhance their brand image by participating at a major international trade show?". *Secondly*, propositions should direct attention to what should be examined within the study. As this study is based on an exploratory case study, Yin (2009) suggests that propositions should be replaced by a purpose. This is due to an exploration of the research topic (and its research questions). The purpose of this study is to gain deeper knowledge within the research topic and its more specific research questions. Hence, this study does not pursue an explanation of different variables, but rather an exploration of how and why things are done as it is. *Thirdly*, the definition of the case setting and units of analysis within the case should be clear. In this study, the case setting is the Geneva Motor Show in Switzerland. The units of analysis (i.e. the "cases") are the interviewed persons (each representing an automotive company). To collect relevant data from these individuals/"cases", research questions and the purpose of research have helped identifying the correct data to collect. Yin (2009) suggests that this avoids covering "everything" (i.e. irrelevant information). *Fourthly*, the findings must be interpreted in relation to the research purpose. However, it is important to state the boundary or delimit what the study should look for. Or else, the research cannot be qualified as a case study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, what is outside of the boundary should not be studied. In this study, for example, the design of the booth or choice of booth personnel is beyond the boundary. Hence, the latter concerns will not be studied. In other words, only specific concerns related to the research questions of the study will be in focus (i.e. inside of the boundary). *Fifthly*, since much of case study analysis will not rely on statistical analyses, Yin (2009) suggests that the criteria for interpreting the findings should (1) rely on theoretical propositions, (2) define and test rival explanations or (3) explain how to collect data. Based on the theoretical framework, this paper is thus focusing on deeper knowledge beyond current literature.

With the foregoing in mind, a research design within case studies should include the five components proposed by Yin (2009). Thus, the research design should include the type of data to collect, which is indicated through research questions, its purpose (or propositions) and its analysis units. Moreover, the design should also clarify the next steps after the data is collected, which is indicated by logic linking between data and purpose (or propositions), and finally the interpretation criteria concerning the collected data.

3.2 CASE SELECTION

To get good answers in regard to the research questions, the informants must include those people who have adequate knowledge about the trade show process. The selection should also consider whether the informants have time to respond. In order to enhance the marketing performance of exhibiting companies, (1) the trade show objective setting task should be given to middle managers, (2) the trade show selection decision should involve lower and middle managers, and (3) the task of managing the booth should be assigned to lower managers (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2012b). Thus, mid-level managers, like marketing, sales and brand managers, can be ideal informants for trade show studies. They are not as far removed as top managers are from the trade show activity, while also possessing sufficient understanding of strategic trade show issues.

Case selection in qualitative research requires a small number of cases chosen for specific reasons (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). To get in touch with a representative number of cases, fifteen automotive companies have been contacted by e-mail. These companies have been contacted since they may be considered among the most common (and well-known) global automotive companies. Among the contacted companies, nine have replied. Those without any response within a week have been sent a reminder. However, there have been demanding weeks (and months) for the participating companies prior to the Geneva Motor Show due to planning and preparation for the show. Consequently, it has been a bit of a challenge arranging interviews with the right staff. For instance, the concerned interviewees have been reached through a couple of e-mails to various employees within the concerned companies. Although the interviewees are ideal for trade show studies, especially as they possess a lot of relevant information about the trade show process, they have also been provided the interview questions at approximately one week prior to the scheduled interview. This is done to ensure that the interviewees are prepared of what topics will be included in the interview, but more importantly to let them get answers within their organization if they do not possess adequate information in regard to some parts of the research topics. In fact, the choice of providing the questions in advance has been desirable among the concerned interviewees. As they have been able to prepare for the interview, they have thereby also saved some time in the middle of this hectic period.

As the research setting for this study is the Geneva Motor Show, the informants are hence related to this trade show. The reasons for why this show has been chosen are (1) the time frame for this study, (2) being one of the largest international motor shows in the world (Top

Gear, 2012) and (3) attended by the major automotive manufacturers (Edmunds.com, 2012). Since this dissertation occurred in close time to the case setting, it has been challenging to get in touch with potential respondents. This is due to hectic times for the participating (exhibiting) automotive companies, but also due to the limited time frame for this paper. This led to a reduction from nine replies to four potential respondents. The omitted companies have particularly refused due to time pressure. Nevertheless, one representative from each of the four investigated companies has been helpful in middle of the rush and hence set aside some time for an interview. These interviewees hold the position as (1) Marketing Manager, (2) Communications Manager, (3) Marketing & PR Manager and (4) PR Assistant, respectively. With Tafesse and Korneliussen's (2012b) suggestions in mind, these respondents are representative for this study.

The criteria for selection of cases have been to investigate automotive firms from two different continents, whereas some should be from the "domestic" continent of the Geneva Motor Show (i.e. within Europe) while others should be from a "foreign" continent (i.e. outside of Europe). This approach is interesting as it might cover differences between companies from different continents ("home" vs. "abroad"). In this paper, two European automotive companies and two Asian automotive companies have been analyzed.

In regard to ethical considerations, that is, (1) protecting the interests of the interviewees/companies, (2) ensuring accuracy and (3) avoiding bias in the research results (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012), the investigated companies and their respondents are anonymous. For instance, some elements within the information retrieved from the interview answers are modified in order to not disclose the interviewees (or the companies). This is, however, clarified with the concerned interviewees.

Therefore, the participating companies/interviewees are named «Alpha Asia», «Beta Asia», «Delta Europe» and «Zeta Europe», respectively.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

For this study, both existing data (i.e. published literature and printed media) and researched data (i.e. primary data) have been applied in order to reach improved knowledge within the case studies. The outcomes of the research will yield new insights and greater confidence through primary data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). In this paper, the interviewees are the sources of researched (primary) data.

When it comes to the importance of published literature, all research studies must demonstrate familiarity with current literature (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012)). This is to ensure that the research is not merely repeating what is already known, but moreover it should create an opportunity to build on what has already been done. Furthermore, the theoretical framework (within this study) may be a point of departure with the purpose of theory-building through an exploratory (or explanatory) case study (Yin, 2009). In this paper, articles from journals, textbooks and a small number of credible internet sources/journalists are the sources of existing data. Since this paper is searching for a deeper understanding of the research problem and its underlying themes, the primary data will be used in conjunction with already existing data (i.e. printed media and published literature). This will help to analyze and interpret the findings from the interviews with what is already known.

There are various types of techniques for collecting data in case studies, such as interviews, observations, documents and physical artefacts (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). However, not all of these sources of data collection need to be used (Yin, 2009). In this study, interviewing (and partly direct observation) is used. Interviews are among the important techniques for data collection, dissected into two extreme forms of interview: structured (closed) interviews and unstructured (open-ended) interviews. In contrast to the former form of interview, the latter (unstructured) form invites interviewees to a more freely expression of themselves. Consequently, this will yield insight into (unexplored) events (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

3.3.1 INTERVIEWS

Interviews possess the strengths of being targeted and insightful (Yin, 2009). Among various methods in qualitative research, interviews might be the mostly employed method. There are, however, three main structures of interviews: (1) *Structured*, (2) *Semi-structured* and (3) *Unstructured* (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). In contrast to the first type of interview (i.e. structured), which is often related to market research and moreover quantitative research, the two other interview types (i.e. semi-structured and unstructured) relate to qualitative research. In order to distinguish the more quantitative approach from the qualitative approach, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) indicate that the structured interview will be better for standardized questions and answers, whereas the semi-structured and unstructured interview will yield a higher degree of confidentiality through more open interview questions. In addition, the latter (qualitative) interview types involve more personal replies of the interviewee, including non-verbal clues. With the foregoing in mind, the qualitative research interview should be used when the study is looking to gain knowledge of

the subjective experience of a phenomenon. Therefore, in this paper, the semi-structured approach is chosen.

Thus, the qualitative research interview is an open interview since the goal is to not control the interviewee's answer, but rather showing openness to new and unexpected phenomena. Hence, the qualitative interview approach avoids predefined categories and interpretation forms, in contrast to quantitative interviews, which use a structured questionnaire. In comparison to, for example, a journalist's interview, Wengraf (2001) suggests that the qualitative interview can be spoken of its width instead of its depth. He clarifies that the concept of going in depth will provide a breadth of understanding, which is, getting more detailed knowledge. Moreover, he states that it is literally a "research" interview, which has its purpose of improving knowledge.

Qualitative researchers rely mostly on in-depth interviewing (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Questions that start with *who*, *what*, *when* or *where* are important, but by including questions that ask *how* and *why* will probably lead to deeper research and more interesting answers (Booth, Colomb & Williams, 2008). This is also supported by Kruuse (2007), who considers questions starting with *how* or *why* as open questions. This is to avoid leading to specific opinions on the topic of asking. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), it is in principle impossible to avoid leading questions in an interview when the focus is to lead the respondent to specific themes in his life world. In light of this, one should therefore avoid leading the respondent to specific opinions on the concerned topics. Furthermore, Kvale (1987) believes that there is less risk of leading questions in a qualitative interview than by questionnaire or survey. This is due to a greater opportunity to examine how the interviewee has understood the question. With this in mind, the interview questions for this study have been evaluated. This in order to get better and deeper answers based on the interviewees' own "views of the world".

In order to collect the data from the interviewees in middle of the case setting, access to the press days of the Geneva Motor Show has been permitted. Permitted access to the press days, which is intended to the media representatives, has been ensured through the press office of the Geneva Motor Show. Moreover, accreditation to these "pre-show" days has been done on site one day before the press days. Thus, through the mentioned process, an admission pass for the press days (including public days) has been issued. With this permission also follows the opportunity to experience this famous trade show from own point of view (of the world).

For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that the press days took place during the preceding two days before the "public" show opening, which is when the public gets access to the show. The public days lasted for ten days. Hence, the interviews have been conducted in Geneva, but moreover within the ideal atmosphere. This leads to an exceptional area, as well as a good timing, to get a closer look at the companies in regard to this study.

With access to the press days, the interviews have taken place on spot at the interviewees' stands, except one interview which took place in Geneva one day prior to the press days. The latter interview was conducted in one of the automotive companies' facilities, more exactly in a meeting room. The remaining interviews were conducted in the companies' (VIP) lounge, which is connected to their stand/booth in the show. These interviews were arranged for the second press day since the first day was intended to press conferences. Thus, the second press day was less stressful for the interviewees.

Prior to the interviews with the concerned persons, permission to record the conversation was obtained. Thus, in order to avoid "interruptions" during the interview, for example through taking a lot of notes, a tape recorder (audio recording) has been used. Exact words will not be missing when audio recording (Stake, 1995), but with this follows the danger of not taking any notes at all during the interview (Opdenakker, 2006). Hence, in addition to the tape recorder, some keywords have been written down. At the same time, taking some notes assured that all the interview questions have been answered.

Before starting the interviews, the author has introduced himself and the reason for the research being conducted. Then the questions have been asked to get answers to the research themes. Finally, the interviewee has been asked for any last suggestions or comments about the topic. Moreover, there has also been an agreement with the interviewees that they can be contacted later in case of subsequent questions. Two of the interviewees have been contacted later for clarifying questions. Each of the interviews lasted for 30-60 minutes.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

When analyzing a qualitative interview there are no standard methods such as statistical analysis. Choice of method for the analysis will depend on the purpose of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). There are, however, two different approaches to analyze the interview: (1) inductive analysis and (2) deductive analysis. While the former starts with having no ideas of what to look for (i.e. no theory in advance), Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) note that the researcher has clear theory for the study (i.e. categories/topics in advance) within

the latter analysis method. As this study is based on research questions and related theory in advance, the interviews are analyzed from a deductive perspective. An example of deductive analysis method is Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) three levels of analysis: (1) *Self-understanding*, (2) *Critical common sense* and (3) *Theoretical understanding*.

Firstly, in regard to their method of deductive analysis, the analysis process starts with self-understanding. This means that the researcher should try to see things from the interviewee's point of view and retain own presuppositions. Furthermore, the units of analysis must be pulled out, that is, statements relating to the main topic (i.e. research questions).

Secondly, during the level of common sense, that is, understanding the context, the researcher goes beyond what the respondent experiences and thinks about a topic. The researcher here looks for possible patterns in the data. The units of analysis that follow the same pattern are then structured and put together into joint analysis units. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) point out that this leads to a broader framework of understanding than what the respondent alone experiences.

Thirdly, on the theoretical level, the findings are linked to the theoretical framework. The interpretation here will go beyond the respondent's self-understanding (i.e. level one), and also beyond an understanding through common sense (i.e. level two). During the third (and last) level of Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) deductive approach to interview analysis, the units of analysis are linked to the topics of analysis (i.e. the theoretical framework).

3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

When the focus is on a particular theme, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that it would be most appropriate to use semi-structured interviews (as used in this study). This is to get the most reliable/valid answers to the research questions. Actually, research is worthless without rigor (Morse et al., 2002).

Guba and Lincoln (1981) distinguish the nature of knowledge between the quantitative (rationalistic) paradigm and the qualitative (naturalistic) paradigm. They note that the term "rigor" is related to quantitative research, whereas the parallel term for qualitative research is "trustworthiness". Although some researchers have argued that reliability and validity are terms pertinent to quantitative inquiry (Leininger, 1994; Altheide & Johnson, 1998), Morse et al. (2002) suggest that these terms are also pertaining to the qualitative paradigm. Hence, both reliability and validity should be maintained in qualitative research. Therefore, the terms of

validity and reliability should be applied in all research, irrespective of being within the quantitative or qualitative framework.

However, in order to obtain validity within qualitative research, the results of the research must be credible (i.e. reliable/trustworthy) and researched through obvious (transparent) methods (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Hence, it is important that the researcher explains where, what and how things are done. Moreover, this indicates that validity is dependent on reliability. Therefore, qualitative research cannot be valid without reliability.

In a qualitative context, reliability is obtained through questioning whether (1) similar observations may be reached by other researchers and (2) if there is transparency in regard to data collection and interpretation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). When it comes to validity in a constructionist (i.e. qualitative) viewpoint, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) suggest questioning whether (1) sufficient perspectives have been included and (2) if clear access is gained to the respondents' experiences.

To evaluate the research process with respect to quality criteria for case studies, Yin (2009) points out four considerations to take in account: (1) Construct validity, (2) Internal validity, (3) External validity and (4) Reliability. These tests will be presented and discussed in relation to this study. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the data gathering process has been managed properly and systematically to ensure the concerned criteria for research quality.

3.5.1 RELIABILITY

Among the four tests regarding the quality of research design (Yin, 2009), reliability is obtained by demonstrating that the operation of a study (i.e. the data collection procedures) can be repeated with the "same" results. Yin (2009) points out that the problem of ensuring reliability is concerned with minimizing errors and biases in the study. He suggests that the reliability can be strengthened by using a protocol of (case study) investigation. Thus, a case study protocol is a major way to increase the reliability of case studies. This protocol can be used as a guide for the researcher in collecting data (Yin, 2009).

In this study, a protocol of case study research is used. A case study protocol generally contains (1) an overview of the research project, (2) field procedures in collecting the data, (3) research questions for the case study and (4) a guide for reporting the case study (Yin, 2009). This dissertation has firstly been overviewed from a "bird's-eye view". Terms and concepts (within the theoretical framework) included in the case study have been clarified, as well as

the purpose of the research being conducted. By making clear understandings of relevant terms and concepts prior to the case study and its research objective (i.e. purpose), the procedures of collecting correct data from ideal research subjects have been less complex – and hence more reliable. Furthermore, a major research question for this case study has acted as the main objective (i.e. goal) and reason for this study being conducted. This is to gain deeper understanding within the research topic. In order to avoid a too general research question, which moreover may make it more complicated to measure the "same" results by other researchers in later studies, the major research question has been dissected into two more specific research questions. Hence, similar results may be found by other researches. In addition, the data collection (and interpretation) is transparent. Finally, when it comes to reporting the case study, this paper is guided by Yin (2009) and Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012).

With the foregoing in mind, but moreover Yin's (2009) and Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson's (2012) suggestions, the reliability of this study is strengthened through the use of a case study protocol and transparency in data collection (and interpretation). For instance, in addition to describing the data collection process, the interview guide (including answers) may be accessed in the appendices. Thus, the research questions are answered through transparent interview questions and answers.

The author has throughout this paper focused on explaining all the procedures within data collection in an unbiased ("objective") and consistent way. However, there is of course a possibility of personal biases during the interviews. Therefore, the results may be influenced to some extent by the author's and interviewees' experiences and attitudes.

Now as the reliability of this study is explained and argued for, the next step is to evaluate the validity of the research. With a reminder of Yin's (2009) criteria for quality in research, reliability alone as a criterion is not sufficient for defining a research design as credible. Moreover, as Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson's (2012) criteria indicate that validity is dependent on reliability, both reliability and validity must be obtained for a credible research. Hence, the next step is to judge the validity of this study.

3.5.2 VALIDITY

In regard to the validity of a case study research, (1) construct validity, (2) internal validity and (3) external validity must be judged (Yin, 2009). Construct validity involves identifying correct measures for the concepts being studied. Internal validity involves demonstrating

causal relationships (i.e. certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions). External validity involves determining whether the findings from the study can be generalized beyond the immediate cases.

In this study, Yin's (2009) foregoing criteria of obtaining validity are considered. However, the criterion of internal validity will be excluded in this study. This is due to the exploratory approach of this research, as Yin (2009) emphasizes that internal validity only concerns explanatory or causal studies – and not exploratory (or descriptive) studies. Hence, two criteria regarding validity will be discussed in this paper, namely «construct validity» and «external validity».

Construct validity might be the most challenging validity criterion in case study research. Since some critical views of case studies focus on the problem with operational set of measures, that is, objectivity vs. subjectivity (Yin, 2009). To meet this test, one of Yin's (2009) strategies suggests collecting data through different sources of evidence. In this study, a total of four interviews with four different automotive companies have been conducted. Thus, the construct validity has increased. Since all of the interviewees have received identical questions to answer, the evidence is strengthened through different perspectives. Although weaknesses of interviews may be directed to response bias, multiple sources (i.e. multiple interviewees) will reduce bias from solely one singular interviewee. Hence, these sources of evidence (or data) can be matched and compared in order to get a more correct and deeper understanding of the investigated phenomena. Another strategy to meet the criterion of construct validity is the use of direct observation (Yin, 2009). That is, for example, observations of meetings, events, etc. The strengths of direct observation are, as Yin (2009) note, the contextual observation and reality. In this study, the author has been on spot at the Geneva Motor Show. It should, however, be noted that direct observation has only taken place during the *press* days (i.e. the press days). Therefore, a live observation of what is really going on during the *public* days has not been observed. Hence, in regard to the collected data concerning the pre-show stage (in relation to the press days), the author may compare the gathered data with what has been observed during the two press days prior to the ten following public days. When it comes to the weaknesses of direct observation, Yin (2009) notes factors as «time-consuming», «selectivity», «reflexivity» and «cost». Since the direct observation within this study has only lasted for two days, the cost and the time have not been a barrier, especially as it has been combined with the conducting of interviews. Regarding selectivity and reflexivity, the author may have focused a bit more on the selected cases (i.e.

the interviewed companies). Nevertheless, as the show has been an interesting and exciting experience to attend and observe, also the other (uninvestigated) participating companies have got sufficient attention.

When it comes to the external validity, that is, whether or not the collected data is generalizable beyond the investigated cases, this criterion is a major concern when doing case studies (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), techniques to obtain external validity are such as examining across cases, as well as within cases, along with the theoretical framework. Thus, as this study is based on a literature review, which moreover is linked to the examination of the investigated companies, the external validity should be considered as accomplished. This is due to cross-case (and within-case) examination of the findings along with the literature review. Hence, the external validity of this research may although be approved since the findings are replicated, as suggested by Yin (2009). This means that the gathered empirical data from the four automotive companies show more or less similar information through the same questions. An example of a broader look of external validity, in relation to this study, is to look if similar results will occur during next year's Geneva Motor Show, or for example, during the Frankfurt Motor Show later this year. Hence, the external validity of this study may be a bit challenged through this point of view.

Nevertheless, there should be little doubt that the marketing (communication) strategy with regard to the branding goals for automotive companies (in trade shows) will change significantly in modern times. However, from a more critical viewpoint there is a possibility that these strategies (or goals) change over the years. If so, this means that future studies with this study's nature will get different results. Furthermore, the selection of fifteen companies that ended up with four cases has an importance for the external validity of this study. With this in mind, it might be questionable whether similar findings would be found by collecting data from other companies/respondents (e.g. those that refused to participate in the study). Therefore, this may lead to a lower degree of generalization beyond the investigated companies.

Now as the validity of this study is discussed and argued for, the next step is to connect the collected data to the purpose of this study. The next chapter will thereby take a closer look at the results and moreover discuss these results upon the research themes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the empirical findings. These findings are discussed in light of current literature and practice. The results are separated between each of the investigated companies and eventually compared with each other. The empirical findings will thus reflect the research themes from several viewpoints.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, four automotive companies from two different continents have been studied. These include a couple of "domestic" (European) companies on the one hand and a couple of "foreign" (non-European) companies on the other hand.

4.1 THE ROLE OF IMC IN TRADE SHOWS TO ENHANCE BRAND IMAGE

This subchapter deals with the enhancement of brand image through trade show participation. Specifically, this implies (1) the purpose of image-building, (2) the use of media tools, and (3) integrating these media tools (IMC). The views of each respective firm are presented and compared, and finally discussed in order to detect similarities and/or differences.

PURPOSE OF IMAGE-BUILDING

For «Delta Europe» the major branding goals for the Geneva Motor Show 2013 are to (1) generate brand awareness, (2) change the brand image, and (3) increase brand loyalty among existing customers. However, the purpose of changing the brand image is clear:

“We want to generate brand awareness to ensure people that our brand is nice and that we have technological cars... One of our main goals is [...] to change our brand image in order to capture more customer segments... Our new products are now more narrowed to younger customers... Our design strategy is related to a more modern view for younger customers.”

For «Zeta Europe» the major branding goals for the Geneva Motor Show 2013 are a part of the slogan, which implies more than just the product:

“The slogan we have [is] not only about the product, but also when it comes to communication. We want to put forward [...] the [...] unique design we have... Then [...] it's technology that has two aspects; one is the safety aspect... The other is environmental issues... So it's about enhancing our brand image, and this whole package goes together with our slogan. That's the idea. We want to make people aware

of our brand, but also enhance our brand image. So it's about brand promotion and brand image, which includes design, safety and environment. We want to promote a new fresh image of our brand. So we want to change the traditional image that we have.”

For «Alpha Asia» it is more about maintaining the current brand image through significant press coverage and thus "reminding" consumers aware of the brand image:

“Well, our company's major branding goal is awareness around our brand and thereby a significant press coverage. It's important to imagine that the Geneva Motor Show is a huge show room where we display new products and new technologies. These motor shows are the only occasions where you have all the international media present at the same place... The booth itself should reflect the brand's [...] image even more, which is quality and innovation. And we are also using advanced technology as a key aspect of the image-building process.”

For «Beta Asia» the major branding goal is clearly related to changing the brand image:

“Branding goals always depend on the theme of the show. This time [...] it has to do with changing long-lasting customer perceptions. Consumers often still think that [our] quality does not match with that of well-established brands, which is not true according to external research companies like JD Power. With all that, [our] objective is to rank highly in the overall media exposure before, during and post show...”

The purpose of enhancing the brand image is thus differing between the investigated companies. Interestingly, this implies the use of publicity in order to promote the new brand image. Thus, it is clear that the Geneva Motor Show is used as a huge platform to communicate the wanted brand image to a large (international) audience. According to Gopalakrishna et al. (1995), trade shows generate increased interest and awareness toward the brand. Grönroos (2007) argues that brand awareness is one step in the branding process, which eventually leads to the perceived brand image in consumers' minds. Since target groups (i.e. automobile enthusiasts) in particular are attending the event, the communication process may have the advantage of influencing the brand image (Drengner, Gaus & Jahn, 2008). Marketing communication is hence considered as a part of the branding process (Grönroos, 2007). However, Grönroos (2007) stresses that unplanned marketing communication may

counteract the effect and hence worsen the brand image. Therefore, well-planned marketing communication is essential when targeting the image-building purposes.

Noteworthy, as «Delta Europe» states:

“It takes time to change the brand image; it's not something that comes by the day.”

The purpose of enhancing the brand image for each investigated company is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Purpose of image-building

	Delta Europe	Zeta Europe	Alpha Asia	Beta Asia
Purpose of image-building	Attract new customer segments	Move from a traditional image to a fresh image	Maintain current brand image	Change customer perceptions

«Delta Europe» wants to promote a new image to capture younger customers. «Zeta Europe» intends to have a modern image with new design strategies, as well as emphasizing the safety aspect as one core element of the brand image. «Alpha Asia» aims to strengthen the current brand image of quality and innovation, but moreover they seem to promote the technology aspect further into the current brand image. «Beta Asia» wants to focus on quality in the brand image, as customers nowadays in general do not think that their quality is similar to competitors.

THE USE OF MEDIA TOOLS

The purpose of image-building for the investigated companies (as shown in Table 1) requires the use of various media tools in order to achieve these branding goals. There are subsequent steps to consider during the three trade show stages.

Starting with the *pre-show* media tools, «Delta Europe» separates the communication goal between the public and the press:

“For the public, most of the times it is direct mailing. So postal addressed mailing invitations to attract them to come to Geneva. For the press, we have press releases that contain all information about new technologies and new cars. We have two types

of press releases; our own local press release, and one from the brand's headquarter in the home country with all technical details, specifications and images. We do this good in order to give all journalists full information so they can give us good coverage in the media. We have a newsroom online [...] so they can download images, texts and contents.”

For «Zeta Europe» during the pre-show stage, the press is separated from the existing customers:

“First of all, we involve our existing customers. We really target it to them with private mailings, and we invite them to come and have a preview of what is coming to the showroom in the summer. This is why we choose this VIP lounge. We directly contact them through post and e-mail, which is more personal, but we also have a newsletter that many people have subscribed to. On the other side, we have the journalists. We had a small group of journalists who had the possibility to visit our production facility to take pictures of the cars from before. Then [...] they were already there with their publications. And press releases and a kind of a "sneak peak". Last week we announced it on Facebook as well, so of course social media... If you really focus with focus with a clear plan and a target, then you can get a lot out of [Facebook]. People share their opinions, and even pictures, so it's sort of a Mouth-to-Mouth marketing. And that's interesting.”

At the pre-show stage, «Alpha Asia» is just focusing on the press this year:

“When it comes to customer activities, we mainly use direct marketing tools such as letters and flyers to invite them to the booth if we are doing something. But now we are doing nothing for the customers. So for the media, they receive information through a press release so they can be informed that we will have a press conference at "this time" at the [...] booth, which is located "here" and we will talk about "this, this, this". We invite them to come, and to receive a press pack. More and more you can invite bloggers [to the press conference]... This is a quite new trend, because these guys are communicating through new channels, such as blogs and social media. This shows the importance of using social media. Right now in Switzerland it's not such a trend as it's difficult to find relevant bloggers. I think it's easier for the UK market and the German market to find these.”

«Beta Asia» has ensured that social media is included before the show:

“Before the show we are using digital tools, Facebook, bloggers, own websites, but also traditional printed media by sharing sketches, which are teaser images, with media. As always, we have a pre-established pre-publicity schedule for creating pre-show publicity. This includes [...] press releases... Usually also by our "the-day-before-the-show" Media Lounge with 300-400 journalists, but this time we opted not to organize one.”

All of the investigated companies are primarily using press releases before the show to create pre-show publicity by informing about their actualities for the show. This further leads to brand awareness, which may be a part of communicating the new brand image. Therefore, it is clear that the pre-show communication goal is to create brand awareness. According to Seringhaus and Rosson (2004), press releases are ideal in order to create awareness of a brand's presence at an upcoming trade show. Moreover, the use of press releases is considered as brand building tools (Kotler & Keller, 2011). The use of sketches and teaser images seems to have the purpose of attracting the media (and consumers) to attend the show. The role of pre-show media tools may therefore be regarded as creating brand awareness and curiosity in order to engage people and media to visit the booth, but perhaps more importantly, making these stakeholders aware of the new brand image through media publicity.

Another similarity among the cases is the use of press conference, which however may be considered as usual for all exhibiting companies. Noteworthy, the press conferences are already informed about in the press releases and takes place during the first press day. In addition, the importance of social media has been mentioned. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stress that, in the social media world, what is up-to-date today may be out-of-date tomorrow. The use of social media may hence be considered as a fast-moving world. Thus, social media might yield a lot of new opportunities (and communication channels), but on the other hand, it may also require full focus and a "daily" updated view on the ever-changing trends across this marketing area.

The importance of pre-show media publicity has been highlighted by the interviewees. It is supported by several authors, who argue that pre-show activities are crucial in order to succeed in the following trade show stages (Dekimpe et al., 1997; Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004; Pitta, Weisgal & Lynagh, 2006).

Regarding pre-show media publicity, as «Zeta Europe» states, the timing is important:

“If you do it too early, people lose interest by the time. If you do it too late, it's simply too late. So timing is exactly what it's about.”

When it comes to the *at-show stage*, «Delta Europe» still feeds the press with information although the journalists are usually gone:

“During the show [...] we have a newsroom online for the journalists... So here they receive a press release regarding our new European premiere here in the Geneva Motor Show. So we want to give them the right information as early as possible. All the information from our press conference is also distributed to the journalists... For the public, this year we have billboards around the Geneva Motor Show to communicate our new car. We have some print campaigns also to address not only to Geneva, but the whole Switzerland to make them come and visit our stand. For example, to see our new car in real life. We also take photo shots for social media campaign. Our goal during the show is to collect leads and then send them the necessary information in a second step by post. We don't distribute brochures or price lists here directly, we always collect addresses and send them the information at home. It's easier for them, and it's better for us to have their contact details.”

«Zeta Europe», on the other hand, has no focus at all on the press during the show:

“At the show we collect leads of course... We don't distribute brochures and price lists here, but instead we send them to your home directly. [Additionally], we basically take care of our customers. So it's exactly relationship marketing. We invite them to sit down, have a coffee, mingle with other people, exchange ideas and opinions... This also happens in our VIP lounge. We have an art session here at the lounge. As you can see, we have postcards that are related to the art session. And we use that for communication. We also produce stamps and stuff like that.”

Although it is normal to focus on existing customers during the show, «Alpha Asia» is not focusing on customer activities this year:

“To be honest, there is nothing organized [for final customers] during the show... We keep on using our communication strategy [...] as we are introducing a new engine and a new car; we are just using ads that we receive from the company's headquarter.

We are just translating it and communicating it. But it's nothing special, as it's not related to the show. We would have done it even if there weren't any show, because we're launching the new engine anyway. So we are just on the booth... So we are collecting some leads information... We don't keep the brochures directly at the booth; we are asking the customers to give us their contact details. As we are presenting the new engine during the show, we are also launching a TV commercial about this new engine tonight on Swiss channels. It will match quite well, as we are also talking about it at the Geneva Motor Show. But we are not the only ones doing that, as I've seen many of the other brands doing the same. So sometimes it's not the best idea or timing to communicate during the Geneva Motor Show because all brands are communicating at the same time. And it's difficult to differentiate yourself from all the other commercials, so sometimes it might be better to say nothing and start the TV commercial after the show. Besides that we are using print campaign and digital campaign also.”

For «Beta Asia» during the show, there is an emphasis on online advertising:

“We use live streaming on own website, YouTube, digital campaigns and market research at the show [in addition to] dozens of interviews and Facebook activities.”

The investigated companies have thus a different approach for the at-show stage than before the show. The journalists are gone and there is more about meeting potential customers (i.e. leads). For instance, Williams and Gopalakrishna (1993) emphasize the opportunity of collecting leads during the show. Interestingly, brochures and price lists are not distributed at the show, but rather sent after the show to the leads' mailboxes. Furthermore, there are several media tools used during the show. These include social media, billboards, TV commercial, and so on. Hence, the at-show stage is not only about gaining leads, but also to use various media tools outside of the show.

There is one exception about the media tools, as «Zeta Europe» tries to be different by using postcards and stamps from their art session as marketing communication tools. However, Arnold (2002) argues that successful trade show participation primarily depends on the planning aspect (pre-show) and the follow-up stage (post-show). Therefore, it may be assumed that the at-show stage could be better suited for gaining leads and taking care of the visitors since the journalists are gone and have already received the information they need. The journalists will thus "automatically" publish their ongoing articles regarding the Geneva

Motor Show on a daily basis, based on the pre-show press conferences and press releases from the various exhibiting automotive companies.

After the show, «Delta Europe» is following up the previous stages:

“We bring our earlier communication to the next level... For example with BTL and ATL communication with advertisings... It involves TV campaigns, print campaigns and billboard campaigns... [For the consumers], we keep campaign activities in order to get awareness until the launch [of a car]. And of course [we] follow up our leads from the show to send them the brochures to their address. Then prior to the launch, you can invite these leads to test the car. For the journalists after the show, we invite them [...] to special journalist events where they can drive and test the new cars... And the thing is that everybody is doing that. But it's important to show the cars in a good atmosphere and good surrounding, and for this reason it's normally organized globally.”

«Zeta Europe» still avoids TV advertisement after the show:

“For the consumers after the show [...] we have the new model year cars and we advertise them, but not on television, for example. We have a different approach... We occupy some part of one newspaper. Then we have online, which I think is a real big world, a world to itself, and we try to be there as present as possible. Online you can always target yourself, for example in Facebook you have these ads on the side and you can target that to people who like something linked to cars or perhaps design and stuff like that. So you can really target your audience, which are the persons who see your ads... But of course, billboards are also something we do, but not television – we don't do it at all. At this stage [...] we send out the prices and brochures to the leads' mailboxes at home. For the media, we actively use the press pool to let the cars on the road and get test reviews... For the big media or big magazines we might give the cars for a longer period. There are even 2-3 major media that get a car for a year, so they start by writing an article about first impressions. Then it continues with a new article, for example six months later.”

During the post-show stage, «Alpha Asia» actually arranges a new press conference:

“The PR Manager will organize what we call a dedicated press conference in order to offer the journalists the possibility to test our new upcoming car, to touch it closer, and

this should normally be organized about 6 months prior to our official release of the car. The journalists who have received the press pack from the Geneva Motor Show will be invited to the press conference, and here they have the occasion to test the car. After testing the car, they will write an article in their newspaper or magazine. This will be the start of the launching phase for the customers, so thereby we will begin our advertising activities with all the media we used to work with. These advertising activities include TV commercial, digital campaign, billboard campaign and print campaign. We always use these advertising activities, but of course it's dependent on the budget. For the new upcoming car, I have budget to use all of these media tools. For the leads, we will contact all customers who have asked [for brochures and pricelists] about the products. The dealer network will contact by phone or by e-mail. We use communication tools within direct marketing, such as flyers and letters. It's more difficult to do this by e-mail [as] the trend nowadays is to write a fake e-mail. It gives us more work, but it's a part of the game.”

«Beta Asia» is clear on what media tools to use after the show:

“We use digital campaigns, traditional ATL tools, market research and post-show analysis [but also] follow-up interviews [and] continuation of [...] Facebook.”

It is clear that the investigated companies are following up the earlier trade show stages. However, the follow-up is twofold; (1) the collected leads and (2) the press. Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006) emphasize action as the most important post-show activity. Seringhaus and Rosson (2004) urge that the leads must be followed up before they turn from "hot" to "cold". The leads have now received their requested brochures. By not distributing brochures and price lists at the show, the consumers can thus be aware again of the brand after show. This may be seen as brand awareness for the consumers, but more importantly, Lee and Kim (2008) argue that post-show activities will enhance the brand image by following up the already contacted consumers. Therefore, the importance of collecting leads from the show may be reflected in the post-show stage.

For the press, on the other hand, the journalists are invited to test the new cars after the show. This will further lead to media coverage through test reviews. In light of this, there is to some extent put an emphasis on surroundings on these journalist events. In Norway's major automotive media, for example, one may see reviews of various car models from different areas in the world. The brands may thus place the test cars at surroundings that reflect the

wanted brand image. A journalist event to test a sports car could, for example, be arranged at a race track. This may transmit brand images such as excitement (Aaker, 1997). For instance, Land Rover arranged an international event to test the new Range Rover in the desert in Morocco. This may reflect brand images such as wilderness, roughness, and so on.

These test reviews, as well as campaigns regarding actualities, are followed up after the show to ensure media publicity until the launch of the cars (or technologies). The use of media tools after the show includes below the line (BTL) and above the line (ATL) communications. BTL communications use niche-focused media (i.e. targeted and more personal), while ATL communications use mass audiences media.

A summarizing overview of the media tools used in the various trade show stages by the investigated companies is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The use of media tools

	Delta Europe	Zeta Europe	Alpha Asia	Beta Asia
Pre-show media tools	Press release, press conference, online newsroom.	Press release, press conference, newsletter, social media.	Press release, press conference.	Press release, press conference, digital campaign, print campaign, social media.
At-show media tools	Online newsroom, social media, billboard campaign, print campaign.	Postcards, stamps.	Print campaign, digital campaign.	Social media, digital campaign.
Post-show media tools	Digital campaign, print campaign, billboard campaign.	Print campaign, billboard campaign, social media.	Press conference, digital campaign, print campaign, billboard campaign.	Digital campaign, print campaign, social media.

It is clear that all of the exhibiting companies use press releases and a press conference prior to the show. Only «Alpha Asia» has avoided the use of social media during all stages. During the show, «Zeta Europe» stands out with a completely different approach. After the show, the publicity increases again. This indicates that there is an active "push" of media publicity with

the press during the pre-show stage and the post-show stage. For instance, Arnold (2002) indicates that a trade show success formula contains 40% planning (pre-show), 20% behavior (at-show) and 40% follow-up (post-show). Noteworthy, «Beta Asia» emphasizes social media during all three stages. Finally, it should be noted that there is use of multiple media tools. According to Tafesse and Korneliussen (2012a), using multiple media tools in a trade show campaign leads to higher levels of marketing performance.

INTEGRATING THE MEDIA TOOLS

By integrating the various media tools used during the trade show stages, «Delta Europe» considers some important aspects:

“It's very important for us. We have good global support and we are good organized. We are quick to support our dealers and customers, hopefully also our journalists to give them the information they need. There are two important aspects here. First, for us it's more efficient in a cost point of view with a linked communication. Second, the brand awareness and visibility is better when you have a strategy that is based on linked communication. For example, we've shown pictures and images all this year in brochures and then also see the campaign in newspapers. Then three months later at the launch you normally have the same subjects and the same headlines which also are within a linked communication. And this continues after the show also.”

«Zeta Europe» is also evaluating the importance of integrating the various media tools:

“It's very important. You always launch something big here in Geneva, it's either a world premiere or a European premiere. Let's say it's a world premiere. We try to tease a little bit, not too much, not too less. Then it goes over to the really active push, so it's like an evolution of the campaign. That's how I perceive it... Again it comes to the umbrella with our slogan, which is a big package that goes together. You can't strip that apart, so all the stages are linked. We communicate like this all the year... Well, we make it all fit together in a fluent way... At the pre-show, we for example use press releases. At the show, we for example use live event show and also collect leads. After the show we follow up these leads. Even if it's in different sections, they are still linked. The stages are fluent and linked.”

«Alpha Asia» puts an emphasis on having all the trade show stages integrated:

“It is quite important in order to have it all aligned. So it should be linked all the way... I think the key point is who is coming to the show. For sure, the media is one very important target for this integration. But of course it's important for us to target the customers also all the way. So this is linked all the way with the same topics in messages from start to end... We are trying to link it all from the pre-show stage to the post-show stage via the at-show stage. So we try to integrate all of the activities by linking them through all the stages.”

«Beta Asia» makes it clear how important it is to integrate the media tools:

“It's very important. All communications have to be aligned, both above the line and below the line advertising... All media tools have to be aligned to ensure integration... We use market research, which is pre-testing, and a lot of internal meetings with ATL and BTL teams to ensure full integration of all activities.”

It is clear that the importance of IMC is present. However, it may be assumed that «Delta Europe» and «Beta Asia» are most prepared and thereby aware of the concept of IMC, although the other two companies are developing it in a good way. Nevertheless, none of these companies seem to be lost in a plethora of different marketing communication sources. Such a rich mixture of communication channels may cause problems for marketers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010), but the investigated companies seem to have handled this part of integrating the media tools in a satisfactory manner. While «Zeta Europe» and «Alpha Asia» are implementing IMC because it will lead to linked stages and thus a fluent way of communication through all trade show stages, «Delta Europe» and «Beta Asia» are more focused on why they really integrate the various media tools they use. For instance, «Beta Asia» is using market research as well as internal meetings with above the line and below the line teams in ensuring integration of the activities. «Delta Europe», on the other hand, considers the implementation of IMC as cost efficient and a better brand visibility. These benefits are supported by Pickton and Broderick (2005), who mention cost savings, better relations to the other departments of the company, greater consistency among the communication messages, as well as better use of media and promotion mix elements.

All of the companies may have avoided conflicting messages from different sources. By integrating the communication tools, and thus linking all the communication efforts, the investigated companies may have influenced the consumers' minds to the wanted brand image. However, when integrating messages, Grönroos (2007) notes that changing the brand

image is among the long-term goals with respect to marketing communication. Therefore, the trade show stages may be considered as one step toward a bigger branding process. Thus, trade shows may be considered as a major part of a long-term image-building goal.

This chapter ends by evaluating the importance of IMC among the investigated companies, as shown in Table 3. The table is graded from «Not at all» to «To a great extent».

Table 3: Importance of IMC

	Delta Europe	Zeta Europe	Alpha Asia	Beta Asia
To what extent is IMC implemented?	To a great extent	To some extent	To some extent	To a great extent

The greater extent of IMC implementation, the greater will be the benefits. Having evaluated the investigated companies and their purpose of implementing IMC, one may assume that «Delta Europe» and «Beta Asia» have gained the most of the benefits. Nevertheless, «Zeta Europe» and «Alpha Asia» have also some benefits from following the concept of IMC, but unfortunately not to the same extent. This may be due to IMC as a relative new concept within the marketing literature (and practice), which interestingly has been considered as a new marketing paradigm (Luck & Moffatt, 2009).

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the main findings with the purpose of answering the research question. Then implications will be given, as well as proposals for further research.

5.1 CONCLUSION

The automotive industry is a major global industry which is still growing despite economic fluctuation over time. The same trend is shown in automotive trade shows, which have more than a century of history. However, one major change in the industry is the shift from product differentiating to brand differentiating.

As the communication aspect is of utmost importance in modern business, trade shows cannot be avoided by automotive companies. Major international trade shows yield an inevitable possibility of gaining huge publicity worldwide. Automotive companies could thus focus on strengthening their brand image through marketing communication, which may lead to an image in consumers' minds about the brand.

With technology improvement also follows the need of marketing improvement. To successfully participate in trade shows automotive companies will probably have a competitive advantage by implementing integrated marketing communications (IMC). The role of IMC is to unify the three stages of trade shows, in which the various media tools can be integrated. With IMC clearly implemented, the purpose of image-building can be achieved in a better way. However, the concept is still new in practice.

The major research question for this study is:

Why do automotive companies integrate the various media tools they use before, during and after a major international trade show to enhance their brand image?

There are several reasons to implement IMC. One reason is efficiency in a cost point of view; another reason is to gain better relations to the other departments of the company. Moreover, the brand visibility may be better by having a greater consistency among the communication messages. But perhaps more importantly for this study, an important benefit by carefully blending the promotional tools is the possibility to influence the brand image in consumers' minds. Noteworthy, automotive companies integrate the various media tools even before and after a major trade show due to a longer branding process, as image-building may be regarded as a long-term goal. Trade shows are thus one major part of a bigger image-building process.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS

The automotive industry and its historical trade shows have not received attention in the research. The author has argued the importance of the industry and pointed out an important gap in the literature. The knowledge gap specifically narrowed toward automotive trade shows has been investigated with regard to image-building purposes. Moreover, a relatively new marketing concept has been connected to the branding process, namely integrated marketing communications. As this study has been based on case studies within qualitative research, the author has moreover explored the gap in the literature by attending a major international trade show as well as conducting the research interviews with at spot.

The importance of IMC has been reflected at relevant parts of this paper. However, as it is a fairly new marketing concept, the analysis has shown partly different depth and understanding for the IMC concept among the interviewees. Although two of the cases were more aware of it, the two others somehow were in a good way to develop it further. Therefore, perhaps one or two cases may have been a bit influenced by trying to answer the interview questions in spite of somewhat knowledge within IMC. Nevertheless, the answers have been logical and hence relevant. The research should thus attempt to comply with additional discoveries in the similar fields.

This study has in particular investigated the image-building purposes of exhibiting automotive companies. Therefore, an emphasis on enhancing the brand image may have shadowed other perhaps important purposes of participation. Nevertheless, in a research field with probably no attention from earlier studies, there should be a starting point in order to investigate some chosen key themes in depth. This may further lead to discovering new areas to examine.

5.3 FURTHER RESEARCH

By connecting trade show activities to IMC, this paper focuses on the branding outcomes for exhibiting companies in a major international auto show. However, the gap in the literature between the automotive industry and trade show activities should be given more attention in future research. Specifically, the integration of various media tools with the purpose of branding during each stage needs deeper insight in this industry. Probably none research has been written specifically on the interplay between the automotive trade shows, IMC and branding outcomes. This paper will thereby mainly contribute knowledge of *why* automotive companies integrate the various media tools they use during all the trade show stages with the purpose of enhancing their brand image. Hence, benefits have been presented.

The author would like to suggest further empirical examinations of branding in automotive trade shows. An interesting perspective would be a similar problem as stated in this paper, but rather *how* the exhibiting companies integrate the various media tools. This implies a further look at the strategy. An interesting examination of the latter suggestion might be to examine whether the automotive companies, for example, rely on a team of tight-knit experts to plan their trade show media activities, or perhaps, tell their ad agencies to integrate their media activities around a particular theme.

Other interesting proposals of further research may be to investigate other aspects of automotive trade shows. One aspect may be from a journalistic point of view; another may be from a customer's point of view. The former may involve interaction with journalists and publicity effects; the latter might consider the branding effects of customers' brand experiences during the show.

However, empirical investigations of trade shows within the automotive industry are missing. As it is a major international industry with exhibition roots from more than a century, contribution to this research area should definitely be considered.

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QUOTATIONS

Quotation 1: Stephen King – "*A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless*". Accessed 15 December 2012, <http://www.finestquotes.com/select_quote-category-Branding-page-0.htm>

Quotation 2: Henry Ford – "*Business must be run at a profit, else it will die. But when anyone tries to run a business solely for profits... then the business must die as well, for it no longer has a reason for existence*". Accessed 15 December 2012, <<http://www.ieseinsight.com/doc.aspx?id=497&ar=11&idioma=2>>

APPENDIX 1

- *Introduce myself and the purpose of this study being done.*
 - *Ask probing questions to clarify the answer.*
 - *Ask if there are any last comments/suggestions on what we have been through.*
 - *Express gratitude for the time spent for conducting this interview.*
 - *Ask if the interviewee may be contacted later in case of clarifying questions.*
-

*INTERVIEW QUESTIONS***Branding (related to image)**

1. What are your company's major branding goals for the Geneva Motor Show?
2. How does your company develop different branding goals for the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show?

Communication goals + IMC

3. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *pre-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?
4. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *at-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?
5. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *post-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?
6. How important is it for your company to integrate the different *communication goals* with respect to the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into a unified campaign goal?
7. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the communication goals?

Communication tools + IMC

8. What kinds of media (marketing communication) tools does your company use during:
 - the *pre-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?
 - the *at-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?
 - the *post-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?
9. How important is it for your company to integrate the different *communication tools* used during the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into an integrated communication campaign?
10. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the media tools?

Closing question

11. Finally, how does your company differentiate itself from its competitors with respect to marketing communications?

APPENDIX 2**INTERVIEW WITH «DELTA EUROPE»**

Date and place: 6th of March 2013, Geneva (Switzerland).

1. What are your company's major branding goals for the Geneva Motor Show?

- The major goal is to present our car collection. And special to this show, is to present a European premiere. And moreover we mainly want to bring all the customer prospects and interrogate with them as a lead and give them the information that they need, and at best a test drive and a contract. We are inviting all our loyal customers directly here in Geneva to the VIP area that you are in. Especially dealers are inviting customers, it's a part of our loyalty program. And of course, our goal is also to achieve new leads. By this, we want to generate brand awareness to ensure people that our brand is nice and that we have technological cars.
- One of our main goals is also to change our brand image in order to capture more customer segments. Our new products are now more narrowed to younger customers, and we therefore have to attract these at the show to generate leads for later sales. Our design strategy is related to a more modern view for younger customers. But it takes time to change the brand image; it's not something that comes by the day.

2. How does your company develop different branding goals for the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Regularly we have one car in focus, and we use this show as a teaser or pre-show for our upcoming car model which is in focus. We also want to engage a lot of people to see the car at the show because this is normally the first time people can see the car from inside and feel it. We want to host all the visitors and give them a good feeling, and it's here of course important for us to generate new leads. We also take photo shots for social media campaign. Post-show we send the public images of the show. All of this we want to bring together until the launch of the car.

3. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *pre-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Pre-show, we want to create an interest toward the brand for the public. Our communication goal is completely separated between the press and the public. The head of PR is doing all the communication with the press, which include press releases and the press conference during the first press day. Here we want to show the journalists the new models and technologies of our brand. This year, it's a new European premiere and new technology. For the journalists, we have deeper details in the press releases.

4. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *at-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Our goal during the show is to collect leads and then send them the necessary information in a second step by post. We don't distribute brochures or price lists here directly, we always collect addresses and send them the information at home. It's easier for them, and it's better for us to have their contact details. Because if you just give brochures to somebody here, you don't know who it was. For example, prior to the launch of the car, you can send invitations to

the leads to test the car. Even if it's an international show, in regular we are only inviting Swiss customers as the show is in Switzerland. But the other countries may arrange something for themselves, of course. Close countries, such as France and Germany, have their own big motor shows each year.

5. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *post-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Normally we bring our earlier communication to the next level, which is after the show. For example with BTL and ATL communication with advertisings. It involves TV campaigns, print campaigns and billboard campaigns. Normally, Geneva is quite important for Switzerland, but since it is a major international show we also ensure that there is linked communication. The Geneva Motor Show is one point of our communication.

6. How important is it for your company to integrate the different *communication goals* with respect to the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into a unified campaign goal?

- There are two important aspects here. First, for us it's more efficient in a cost point of view with a linked communication. Second, the brand awareness and visibility is better when you have a strategy that is based on linked communication. For example, we've shown pictures and images all this year in brochures and then also see the campaign in newspapers. Then three months later at the launch you normally have the same subjects and the same headlines which also are within a linked communication. And this continues after the show also.

7. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the communication goals?

- What we are doing, is that when we are launching a car, we are briefing internally what we are doing, and then we are briefing our agencies to follow the strategy for the whole launch. And this depends on the launch date of the car, because Geneva is a big part for us as hundreds of thousands are visiting the Geneva Motor Show, so it's like a platform for us to show new technologies and new cars. For this reason, Geneva is also a strategy to communicate because you normally don't have so much people, especially people who are looking for new cars and people who are interested in new cars. Then we have the possibility to send these people some content and information in a good way.

8. What kinds of media (marketing communication) tools does your company use during:

- the *pre-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

1. For the public, most of the times it is direct mailing. So postal addressed mailing invitations to attract them to come to Geneva.
2. For the press, we have press releases that contain all information about new technologies and new cars. We have two types of press releases; our own local press release, and one from the brand's headquarter in the home country with all technical details, specifications and images. We do this good in order to give all journalists full information so they can give us good coverage in the media.

- the *at-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

1. For the public, this year we have billboards around the Geneva Motor Show to communicate our new car. We have some print campaigns also to address not only to Geneva, but the whole

Switzerland to make them come and visit our stand. For example, to see our new car in real life.

2. During the show, and even before the show, we have a newsroom online for the journalists so they can download images, texts and contents. So here they also receive a press release regarding our new European premiere here in the Geneva Motor Show. So we want to give them the right information as early as possible. All the information from our press conference is also distributed to the journalists through our online newsroom.

- the *post-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

1. Post-show depends normally on the launch dates. Then we keep campaign activities in order to get awareness until the launch. So the pre-launch activities depend on the launch dates. And of course follow up our leads from the show to send them the brochures to their address. Then prior to the launch, you can invite these leads to test the car.
2. For the journalists after the show, we invite them and the media to special journalist events where they can drive and test the new cars – but this also depends on the launch dates. And the thing is that everybody is doing that. But we know that we have good cars and that these are attractive, not only from the driving aspect, but also from the technological aspect. But it's important to show our cars in a good atmosphere and good surrounding, and for this reason it's normally organized globally. And the journalists get invited to come there to drive the cars and see them before the customers normally see them.

9. How important is it for your company to integrate the different *communication tools* used during the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into an integrated communication campaign?

- It's very important for us. We have good global support and we are good organized. We are quick to support our dealers and customers, hopefully also our journalists to give them the information they need.

10. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the media tools?

- When you are looking at the whole marketing mix, for example when we are taking the launch of our new car, for sure we are doing marketing above the line (ATL) and below the line (BTL), and then we have PR with the whole communications and inviting the journalists with a top pick that they are writing good about our products. Then we have PR channels and marketing channels, where we are combining PR and marketing also to give all necessary information in a good way to our prospects. We are also generating a dialogue, so they can interrogate with us also and send us some feedback with positive and negative points about the brand.

11. Finally, how does your company differentiate itself from its competitors with respect to marketing communications?

- For us it's important to be serious and communicate in a good way and to communicate the right things to the prospects. It's important to bring the modern technology and innovation in relation to our history. For this reason, it's quite difficult to say how we are differentiating. But we try to be better and try to work harder than the other ones, but if you look at our competitors they are also producing nice cars. I would say that the whole heritage thing and the design of the cars are quite special also; you can see the cars at a point of a statement also.

You can't buy heritage or history. So maybe we are focusing more on brand emotions, as we can communicate a lot from our past. So emotion is one of our points, both within technology and design. Therefore, we also try to communicate more personal with more knowledge about our customers. By this, they will get good feelings about our brand. I also think that our customers might have a family spirit. So we are doing it as personal as we can. And for sure, we are focusing on relationship marketing. We are focusing a lot on direct mailings and personal communication instead of doing big billboard campaigns. Normally we are also addressing information to our customers first and our prospects, so they can feel that they are a part of the first step. But first of all it's the press, and then it's the existing customers. But we also invite existing customers to special events to give them a special feeling that they are within the spirit of our family.

APPENDIX 3**INTERVIEW WITH «ZETA EUROPE»**

Date and place: 6th of March 2013, Geneva (Switzerland).

1. What are your company's major branding goals for the Geneva Motor Show?

- Well, the slogan we have is [...]. It's not only about the product, but also when it comes to communication. And there are a few things that we want to put forward. It is product on the first place of course, the [...] unique design we have because when you see it you know it, that it's something special. Then of course it's technology that has two aspects; one is the safety aspect which we have enhanced this year, the other aspect is environmental issues, trying to perform better, more fuel-efficient, less emissions. So we are trying to put that forward. So it's about enhancing our brand image, and this whole package goes together with our slogan. That's the idea. We want to make people aware of our brand, but also enhance our brand image. In one hand, we have this lounge here to make people live our brand's way of life. You can experience it here; over there you're more in a mess. So it's about brand promotion and brand image, which includes design, safety and environment. We want to promote a new fresh image of our brand. So we want to change the traditional image that we have.

2. How does your company develop different branding goals for the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Actually our slogan is really a center approach. We don't differentiate between the different stages of the show, but we have this umbrella and everything fits under this. So we try to integrate it all under our slogan, it all comes together under that. You're not supposed to get in a car and think "what do I want to do?" or "how does it work?", so it's supposed to be intuitive and simple. You should feel connected to the car as well. This year we will launch the brand's new dashboard system, where you can connect everything to it. So you are in the car, and the car is literally around you. So the car should be a part of you. It's a way of life as well. It's not only a car that brings you from A to B, but it's actually your second home because people spend a lot of time in the car, for example travelling, so you should feel at home there. So that's the idea.

3. What are your company's primary communication goals for the pre-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- This year we have a new model launch, the biggest in the brand's history actually. Of course you want to put it forward, but in the other hand, the cars will be available in the summer, so we don't want to jeopardize the previous model year because they're still great cars. It's just that they don't have the changes that the new ones have, and of course we still want to offer that to customers as well, depending on their needs and design desires – if they like last year's model better than the new design. We are of course teasing forward our new cars, but not too aggressively. We just put them forward to the press, and there are no ads on television, for example, or magazines, but purely through press releases and late pictures just two weeks before the show. So that's creating awareness that a new big launch is coming up. We don't reveal everything too early because people are not supposed to know that something big is coming, but two weeks before the show we released pictures of the cars together with a video

release and all the features that come together with it. So people get interested in it and really want to see what it's all about. If you do it too early, people lose interest by the time. If you do it too late, it's simply too late. So timing is exactly what it's about. And of course, we also had a secret which we didn't reveal until yesterday for the press conference. So that was supposed to be a surprise. In order to capture attention, [we] [entered] the stage [with our secret unveiling]. And your first impression is "what is he doing with [that], when it's a car show?", so then you already have the attention and that's what you want to bring forward. Then we can forward our important message that every car launch we have will feature a new safety element. So our goal in 2020 is to not have any injured or dead people in an accident with one of our cars. But this doesn't happen at the show, as it's difficult to do that when it's too crowded.

4. What are your company's primary communication goals for the at-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- At the show we collect leads of course; we have hosts and hostesses, who are so called "car explainers". What they do is that they have an iPad and collect your data and your interests. So we offer the service that we don't distribute brochures and price lists here, but instead we send them to your home directly. So if you come to the show on Friday, you'll have your brochures in your mailbox on Tuesday/Wednesday. And then of course they can choose for a test drive, and then the dealer will contact them and arrange that.

5. What are your company's primary communication goals for the post-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- After the show, you of course want to push forward the new model year cars. But still we don't want to jeopardize the previous model year cars because there are always two opinions; you like the new one better, or you like the old one better because the design is slightly different. So it's a matter of taste, so you want to leave the choice to the customer. So you have to keep it balanced, but still of course you want to promote the new model year and show what's new. Of course we want to sell these new cars.
- And of course we monitor the dealers to check if they have contacted the customers. The dealer should do it of own interest, especially as they are the closest to the customers. So they should follow up the lead. Actually, we develop a stage at the show, and after the show it's up to the dealer to perform at the stage. We want to gain new customers through the collected leads from the show.
- When it comes to the media, we give them cars to test drive after the show. There are no restrictions for them, so they can use it on their holiday if they want to. They can feel free to do that, for a period of two weeks, for example. But it's not that we bribe them, but to let them feel how it is to own one of our cars. If we arrange a trip to a mountain, for example, like last year, it's to show them what our car is able to do with a new four-wheel-drive system. Actually, that's what everybody does in the automotive industry. We don't make a big program out of that; we just focus around the cars. So it's more of showing the capability of the car. Then consumers can see this through media.

6. How important is it for your company to integrate the different communication goals with respect to the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into a unified campaign goal?

- Again it comes to the umbrella with our slogan, which is a big package that goes together. You can't strip that apart, so all the stages are linked. We communicate like this all the year. As mentioned earlier, it's not just the product that is designed around you, but also the communication.

7. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the communication goals?

- Well, we want to integrate, as I mentioned, a new approach of product, design and technology. First of all, it's a human centric approach. So the strategy might be dependent on what you want to put forward, of course. Even if there are several parts in the new approach, you still have to emphasize one part more than the other. We don't do the traditional ways of advertisements. In Switzerland, for example, our main competitors occupy the traditional fields of advertisements – so we can't beat them on that field. Therefore we try to find other ways, for example our art session that refers partly to our slogan, which is a different way with our own style. So you actually get more attention. Let's say you invest in a TV campaign, which will pass in a sort of an unnoticed way because it's hard to stick out. And in addition, you have the other brands that may invest ten times more in the same type of campaign. So it's hard to stick out there, that's why we try to find a different approach that fits the theme we want to put forward. And then again link it with our "slogan communication", and then again in the safety feature or unique design.

8. What kinds of media (marketing communication) tools does your company use during:

- the pre-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

3. First of all, we involve our existing customers. We really target it to them with private mailings, and we invite them to come and have a preview of what is coming to the showroom in the summer. This is why we choose this VIP lounge. And of course they are always welcome over there. We directly contact them through post and e-mail, which is more personal, but we also have a newsletter that many people have subscribed to.
4. On the other side, we have the journalists. We had a small group of journalists who had the possibility to visit our production facility to take pictures of the cars from before. Of course we announced that they must keep it a secret, but then when it came out they were already there with their publications. So that's the tools we basically use in the pre-show stage. And press releases and a kind of "sneak peak". Last week we announced it on Facebook as well, so of course social media – even if I didn't mention it until now. I think there are two sides to look at the social media, because you can be a fan of your breakfast milk – and then it's not really attractive. But if you really focus with a clear plan and a target, then you can get a lot out of it. You can, for example, offer something to your fans that they don't get at the dealership or your homepage. And you don't get it in magazines neither. So through Facebook people share their opinions, and even pictures, so it's sort of a Mouth-to-Mouth marketing. And that's interesting.

- the at-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

1. At the show, we basically take care of our customers. So it's exactly relationship marketing. We invite them to sit down, have a coffee, mingle with other people, exchange ideas and opinions... This also happens in our VIP lounge. Here we let them live and feel our brand. That's basically what is going on here at the show. And there is also live event show. But of course we collect leads. When it comes to leads, first of all people who come to our stand are

interested – or else they wouldn't come. Then we bring them to the people who are really in matter of collecting leads, who are kind of welcoming them and taking care of them. Then they collect the lead after that. So it's more about quality and not so much quantity. We also use CRM. But once we have a lead, it's a lead – we don't filter or differentiate them afterwards. But we try to filter them at the stand on the first place.

- the post-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

3. For the consumers after the show, of course we have the new model year cars and we advertise them, but not on television, for example. We have a different approach, as I mentioned earlier. We occupy some part of one newspaper. Then we have online, which I think is a real big world, a world to itself, and we try to be there as present as possible. Online you can always target yourself, for example in Facebook you have these ads on the side and you can target that to people who like something linked to cars or perhaps design and stuff like that. So you can really target your audience, which are the persons who see your ads. So it's really a target, that's what you do. But of course, billboards are also something we do, but not television – we don't do it at all. At this stage, as mentioned, we send out the prices and brochures to the leads' mailboxes at home.
4. For the media, we actively use the press pool to let the cars on the road and get test reviews on media. The press pool is taken care of by the dealership. For the big media or big magazines we might give the cars for a longer period. There are even 2-3 major media that get a car for a year, so they start by writing an article about first impressions. Then it continues with a new article, for example six months later. By having it for a long period, they include everything: services, costs, consumption... They measure the performance of the car in details, and in the end they make a big summary of it and notice issues they might have had. They also evaluate how the service is, for example when changing the tires at the dealership. So of course, this gives a big picture of how a customer would experience it. We always hope for good reviews of course, but journalists are free to say whatever they want. But we are standing 100% behind our product and we are both proud and confident of it. So we don't really try to push them or influence them; we are sure that the product speaks for itself.

9. How important is it for your company to integrate the different communication tools used during the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into an integrated communication campaign?

- It's very important. You always launch something big here in Geneva, it's either a world premiere or a European premiere. Let's say it's a world premiere. We try to tease a little bit, not too much, not too less. Then it goes over to the really active push, so it's like an evolution of the campaign. That's how I perceive it.

10. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the media tools?

- Well, we make it all fit together in a fluent way. We are focusing on a linked way between the different stages. At the pre-show, we for example use press releases. At the show, we for example use live event show and also collect leads. After the show we follow up these leads. Even if it's in different sections, they are still linked. The stages are fluent and linked.

11. Finally, how does your company differentiate itself from its competitors with respect to marketing communications?

- We cannot beat our competitors in traditional ways, because they are too big on that field. So we have an art session here at the lounge. As you can see, we have postcards that are related to the art session. And we use that for communication. We also produce stamps and stuff like that. And then we have the complete lounge here to let you feel welcomed and at home. We want people to experience and live our brand here, instead of only the traditional stands where people are rushing through the exhibition hall. We want to welcome the customers at our own home, which eventually will be their home also – hopefully.
- At the show, there are no differentiations. But we try to have a different stand every year, just like all the other brands, so the differentiating will be the stand. This year we want the people to just sit at one place on our stand, and receive all the information about our products. Instead of walking around to get information about different products, the product information itself will be “walking” to the same spot where the customer is sitting and watching a screen. But everyone has a big screen, so I don’t think anyone can make something extraordinary.

APPENDIX 4**INTERVIEW WITH «ALPHA ASIA»**

Date and place: 4th of March 2013, Geneva (Switzerland).

1. What are your company's major branding goals for the Geneva Motor Show?

- Well, our company's major branding goal is awareness around our brand and thereby a significant press coverage. It's important to imagine that the Geneva Motor Show is a huge show room where we display new products and new technologies. These motor shows are the only occasions where you have all the international media present at the same place, so each PR Manager in each concerned country will invite journalists to attend the press conference. The booth itself should reflect the brand's value and image even more, which is quality and innovation. And we are also using advanced technology as a key aspect of the image-building process.

2. How does your company develop different branding goals for the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Now as we are thinking about the different stages of the show, the big gap is dependent on the target audience.
- During the pre-show stage, we are focusing on the media, since they're writing about the brand and the automotive industry. We have two press days before the show, where we are talking about [...] actualities. Therefore, the first goal is to organize a press conference. If you want to organize a press conference, you should have something to say – but sometimes you really have nothing to say. In our case for this year, we have the CEO of the company who will be present today, and do the press conference tomorrow at the show. After the press conference, we could have invited the journalists in the evening for a party or a dinner, but this is a matter of budget. For our case, we let the journalists be free after the press conference. Then to how it works; our PR Manager sends a press release and a press pack to all the journalists in Switzerland in order to invite and inform them about what the company's President will tell and show them during the press day days. Therefore, we send this invitation in order to let the journalists bring the press pack on spot during the press days. In this press pack, there is a summary of the press conference with pictures and videos about the new products. This year for our brand, we are lucky because we are exhibiting a world premiere. This is our new effect for the Geneva Motor Show. Besides that, we are introducing a new engine.
- During the show, the audience is changing. We are here talking about the final customers. To be honest, there is nothing organized during the show for this target. We keep on using our communication strategy, therefore for these customers, as we are introducing a new engine and a new car; we are just using ads that we receive from the company's headquarter. We are just translating it and communicating it. But it's nothing special, as it's not related to the show. We would have done it even if there weren't any show, because we're launching the new engine anyway. So we are just on the booth, when I say "we" I mean all the sales staff and the dealer networks which are present. A good dealer should, prior to the show, send free entry tickets to their customers. Perhaps by organizing an event in order to present what the news will be. Therefore, the customers will probably come with their free entry ticket. So during the show, it's more of a customer-dealer focus. And it's even better if you have a

friendly relationship to the customer. During the at-show stage, the journalists are usually gone; so the customers are in focus here. Actually, more the local customers. At this stage, we are displaying the line-up of the car models that are available in the Swiss market. Normally it's the same line-up as in other countries, but the pricing will be in Swiss Francs and in Euros. So we are targeting more on local customers. For instance, customers from close countries, such as Germany, France and Italy, are sometimes asking questions that we are not able to answer because it belongs to their local strategy. In these cases, we are asking them to contact their local dealership of our brand.

- During the post-show stage we can retain two main target audiences; media and also the customers. For sure they came to the press conference, they received information and they know what's going on. I'll come back to this later.

3. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *pre-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Our primary communication target for the pre-show stage is to ensure that all major media are coming to the show, and to do that we have to attract them as I mentioned earlier, that is to have something to show them during the show. The basic thing is the economic situation of the company, but mainly what we are going to develop in the forthcoming years. We are only communicating what's new and what's actual to our strategy. In our case, it's a new engine this year and a new car early next year. Because if it's only, for example, financial results, it's not important or relevant. You have to exhibit either a concept car or a pre-production model. Not all the brands have something to say during the show, but you have to be there anyway in order to keep your brand aware. So there are two actualities; new product communication and new technology information. This is of course related to the media. We are teasing and trying to attract media curiosity by sending them press releases and pictures of what we are going to display during the Geneva Motor Show. Two weeks ago, we sent some drawing sketches of our new car to the media in order to give them a tiny overview of our new product. And the unveiling will take place during the press conference. So during the pre-show we are trying to tease the media by giving them tiny information, and thereby not everything, in order to force them to come and visit us so we can give them full coverage and full information. For us, it will be the upcoming new car, which is regarded as a concept car at the moment. And for the press days, our company's President will be available for exclusive interviews and photo sessions with the major media. This major media is chosen by the President himself and depends on the importance of the market. He has no time to receive everybody, so he has to make some choices anyway.

4. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *at-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- As I mentioned earlier, the communication goals during the show is to get focus on our product line-up. We are here talking at local scales. Our customer comes to visit us, and if the dealer network has organized something, as I already said invitations to visit us, our dealer will receive them and maybe make them an offer. Sales promotion and sales offer will be only offered in Switzerland. If I had been the dealer, I would have organized something in the end of February. There I would present the new engine, and then invite them for a cocktail or something like that after the presentation. A drink and an invitation to the Geneva Motor Show. I would only have selected the loyal customers who own a quite old car model, between 4 and 8 years old, and then present our new car combined with our new engine. Then

an appointment at the show could take place in order to make them an offer for the new car and the new engine, but with a discount. It's more like that during the show. In other words, it's more of a relationship strategy because the sales happen before and after the show – not during the show. So during the show we are mostly focusing on relationship marketing.

- The interested people and the customers have the possibility to request a brochure for the car models they are interested in. We don't keep the brochures directly at the booth; we are asking the customers to give us their contact details. So we are collecting some leads information. After these leads, we are communicating directly to our CRM agency. So the main communication goal during the show is to gain leads.

5. What are your company's primary communication goals for the *post-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- As mentioned, each customer who has made a request will be contacted after the show. Not by the importer, but the dealer itself. Then these customers will be informed about possible test drives. After the customer has received the brochure he requested, the dealer will be informed after the show that "Mr. Customer" came to the show and requested this brochure. Then the dealer will contact them in order to propose a test drive, or more information, or something like that. After that, the customer says "No, I'm OK" or "Yes, why not". That's the way of treating the leads. We are also doing that by e-mail, if he or she has checked that it's OK. It's more difficult to do this by e-mail, since people know they will get information through e-mail, and the trend nowadays is to write a fake e-mail. It gives us more work, but it's a part of the game.
- When it comes to the media, I've already told and explained what we do with the media. After the PR Manager will organize what we call a dedicated press conference in order to offer the journalists the possibility to test our new upcoming car, to touch it closer, and this should normally be organized about 6 months prior to our official release of the car. The journalists who have received the press pack from the Geneva Motor Show will be invited to the press conference, and here they have the occasion to test the car. After testing the car, they will write an article in their newspaper or magazine. This will be the start of the launching phase for the customers, so thereby we will begin our advertising activities with all the media we used to work with.

6. How important is it for your company to integrate the different *communication goals* with respect to the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into a unified campaign goal?

- It is quite important in order to have it all aligned. So it should be linked all the way.

7. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the communication goals?

- We expect the dealers to handle a major part of the integration in the communication goals. To ensure that this is done, we are monitoring the dealers.

8. What kinds of media (marketing communication) tools does your company use during:

- the *pre-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

5. The media will be contacted through a press release. When it comes to customer activities, we mainly use direct marketing tools such as letters and flyers to invite them to the booth if we are doing something. But now we are doing nothing for the customers. So for the

media, they receive information through a press release so they can be informed that we will have a press conference at “this time” at the [...] booth, which is located “here” and we will talk about “this, this, this”. And we invite them to come, and to receive a press pack.

- the *at-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

3. At show we are as I said focusing on the customers, so we will focus on direct marketing activities. If we decide to organize something, it happens sometimes that a new car model fits with the Geneva Motor Show, we organize something we call a “customer event”. If I take an example of one of our car models, we can easily imagine to invite all of our best customers of that model in order to give them a VIP presentation, and maybe beside that organize a test drive session outside the Geneva Motor Show. This is also regarded as a tool in the communication process, but these activities are quite costly because you have to think about the hotel, the lounge, and everything. We don't invite customers to the press conference, but more and more you can invite bloggers and things like that because they are not really journalists, but they are passionate in the automotive industry. If you know that these guys love your brand and write a lot about your brand, so why not invite them to the press conference. This is a quite new trend, because these guys are communicating through new channels, such as blogs and social media. This shows the importance of using social media. So they can use these channels in order to communicate about our brand, but right now in Switzerland it's not such a trend as it's difficult to find relevant bloggers. But I think it's easier for the UK market and the German market to find these.
4. As we are presenting the new engine during the show, we are also launching a TV commercial about this new engine tonight on Swiss channels. It will match quite well, as we are also talking about it at the Geneva Motor Show. But we are not the only ones doing that, as I've seen many of the other brands doing the same. So sometimes it's not the best idea or timing to communicate during the Geneva Motor Show because all brands are communicating at the same time. And it's difficult to differentiate yourself from all the other commercials, so sometimes it might be better to say nothing and start the TV commercial after the show. Besides that we are using print campaign and digital campaign also.

- the *post-show* stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

5. I think we have already been through this. As I've already said, these advertising activities include TV commercial, digital campaign, billboard campaign, and print campaign. We always use these advertising activities, but of course it's dependent on the budget. For the new upcoming car, I have budget to use all of these media tools.
 6. For the leads, we will contact all customers who have asked more about the products. The dealer network will contact by phone or by e-mail. We use communication tools within direct marketing, such as flyers and letters. But it's as I mentioned difficult to contact many of them through e-mail because they don't want to get “spammed”.
9. How important is it for your company to integrate the different *communication tools* used during the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into an integrated communication campaign?
- I think the key point is who is coming to the show. For sure, the media is one very important target for this integration. But of course it's important for us to target the customers also all the way. So this is linked all the way with the same topics in messages from start to end.

10. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the media tools?

- It's always the same media which are always coming. So we are not collecting new media, and normally the PR Manager knows his network very well and is seeing the journalists a lot of times during the whole year. And the media will be present at the same days at the Geneva Motor Show, and after that the PR Manager will contact them again in order to invite them to the press conference when we launch the new product.
- For the customers, we are trying to link it all from the pre-show stage to the post-show stage via the at-show stage. So we try to integrate all of the activities by linking them through all the stages. It's like a process to follow the customers from they entered the show and left the show, and then what's going on after. Then he will be followed up from entering the booth and still after the show, for example through newsletter if he has subscribed for that. If he hasn't given us his e-mail address, he will be contacted by phone and the dealer will contact him to follow up. The customer will also be contacted if we are launching a new car of the brochure he requested.

11. Finally, how does your company differentiate itself from its competitors with respect to marketing communications?

- Actually, we're not differentiating ourselves since all the importers will do almost the same. In the Geneva Motor Show information book, for example, we are advertising just like all the other brands. There is no differentiating; we are all doing the same.
- But actually the budget may decide this, as there are differences here. Some might have PowerPoint presentation, while others use famous actors. So I think that the main differentiating is due to budgeting reasons. Honestly, we don't have a huge budget.
- In fact, I'm not a fan of our "shy" strategy. While our brand doesn't want to give all the information, the European brands love to talk, they like to show off. So there is also a cultural difference in the way of communicating our information. This can be a problem in modern Europe, as European people love to know everything – so this is a little bit difficult for us. In fact, it's not only the media who is curious – us also.

APPENDIX 5**INTERVIEW WITH «BETA ASIA»**

Date and place: 6th of March 2013, Geneva (Switzerland).

1. What are your company's major branding goals for the Geneva Motor Show?

- Branding goals always depend on the theme of the show. [...]. This time, there are two goals. First, it has to do with changing long-lasting customer perceptions. Consumers often still think that [our] quality does not match with that of well-established brands, which is not true according to external research companies like JD Power. Second, it has to do with a thrilling element that comes with the launch of [a] performance version of [one of our car models] and a new B-segment concept car.
- With all that, [our] objective is to rank highly in the overall media exposure before, during and post show in relative terms recognizing the very limited advertising spending compared to key competitors.

2. How does your company develop different branding goals for the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Let us start with the pre-show stage. As always, we have a pre-established pre-publicity schedule for creating the pre-show publicity. This includes exact dates fixed for early press releases, dissemination dates for teaser images, early renderings, pre-publicity digital campaign, and so on. Usually also by our “the-day-before-the-show” Media Lounge with 300-400 journalists, but this time we opted not to organize one.
- When it comes to the at-show stage, branding goals are achieved through press conference pre-announcements, PC itself, live streaming of it, dozens of interviews and Facebook activities.
- Finally, on the post-show stage goals are achieved by follow-up interviews, review and analysis of the media monitoring results, continuation of digital campaign and Facebook.

3. What are your company's primary communication goals for the pre-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- For the pre-show stage, we aim to rank among the top 10 brands in overall media exposure.

4. What are your company's primary communication goals for the at-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- During the show, we aim to rank among the top 15 brands in overall media exposure.

5. What are your company's primary communication goals for the post-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- After the show, we aim to rank among the top 15 brands in overall media exposure and to see clear positive shifts of brand momentum throughout the Funnel analysis.

6. How important is it for your company to integrate the different communication goals with respect to the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into a unified campaign goal?

- It's very important. All communications have to be aligned, both above the line (ATL) and below the line (BTL) advertising.

7. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the communication goals?

- We use market research, which is pre-testing, and a lot of internal meetings with ATL and BTL teams to ensure full integration of all activities.

8. What kinds of media (marketing communication) tools does your company use during:

- the pre-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- Before the show we are using digital tools, Facebook, bloggers, own websites, but also traditional printed media by sharing sketches, which are teaser images, with media.

- the at-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- At the show we use live streaming on own website, YouTube, digital campaigns and market research at the show.

- the post-show stage of the Geneva Motor Show?

- After the show we use digital campaigns, traditional ATL tools, market research and post-show analysis.

9. How important is it for your company to integrate the different communication tools used during the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of the Geneva Motor Show into an integrated communication campaign?

- Very important, as all media tools have to be aligned to ensure integration.

10. What kind of strategies do you use to achieve integration in the media tools?

- As mentioned earlier, we use market research and internal meetings with ATL and BTL teams.

11. Finally, how does your company differentiate itself from its competitors with respect to marketing communications?

- Not dramatically. We do use more a "challenger" approach with humor than competitors, but everybody wants to be different, at the end of the day.