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# Editorial

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The current issue of the *Journal of Product & Brand Management* (Vol. 25, No. 3) has in total eight contributions, all in the area of product and brand management. Continuing the 25th year celebration of the journal, this issue starts with a contribution from John Balmer, member of the Journal's Senior Advisory Board, and seven papers are regular submissions that stem from the 10th Global Brand Conference of the Academy of Marketing's SIG in brand, identity and corporate reputation, held in Turku, Finland, on 27-29 April 2015. The conference attracted over 90 delegates from 20 different countries around a lively academic and culture-bound social program. The 2015 conference theme, creative brand and design, highlighted innovativeness and the pivotal role of design in the development of brands and in business in general. For many conference delegates, this was their first visit to Finland, and going to the world's largest smoke sauna and jumping in the ice-cold sea water in between was definitely a memorable experience!

The papers of the current issue highlight the wide and global interest in branding research. The 22 authors are based in universities from eight different countries.

John Balmer (Member of the Senior Advisory Board) and Weifeng Chen examine the attractiveness of the Tong Ren Tang (TRT) as a Chinese corporate heritage tourism brand and its significance for Chinese national identity. The study considers the saliency of Balmer's augmented role identity notion *vis-à-vis* corporate heritage institutions/corporate brands. They find that TRT attractiveness to domestic Chinese tourists/customers is attributable to its multiple role identities – national, corporate, temporal, familial and imperial – and to how it reaffirms their sense of Chinese national identity, lending credence to Balmer's augmented role identity notion. Their study links the corporate brand notion with the nascent corporate heritage brand domain and the established area of heritage tourism.

Julien Grobert, Caroline Cuny and Marianela Fornerino investigate the impact of brand attachment and familiarity on perceived congruence between the logo and the brand by exploring the role of "surprise" in the case of a radical logo change. The study was conducted with 220 students – current and future – following a university logo change. Their results demonstrate the importance of surprise in the acceptance of a logo change; higher brand familiarity increases negative surprise, whereas higher brand attachment enhances positive surprise. They conclude that companies that aim to change their logo must pay special attention on how they communicate with their most loyal consumers to generate a positive surprise.

Samuel Kristal, Carsten Baumgarth (Member of the Editorial Review Board), Caroline Benhke and Jörg Henseler analyze the general effect of co-created products on the brand equity of observers (OBBE) and test the influence of different

implementations of the co-creation approach on the OBBE. They conduct a between-subject experiment with a 2 (intensity of integration: democratically voted vs commonly created)  $\times$  2 (expert knowledge: no expert knowledge vs expert knowledge) design plus one control group (zero co-creation), and find that co-creation can have a weak positive effect on the OBBE and that integration intensity and consumer expertise marginally affect OBBE. They conclude that brand managers should aim to convert observers into participants instead of setting the focus on the presentation of the user-designed product to the mass market.

Bill Merrilees (Member of the Senior Advisory Board), Dale Miller (Member of the Editorial Review Board) and Wei Shao examine mall consumer brand meaning through understanding consumer brand associations of shopping malls. Using SEM, they analyze survey data from 755 Australian shopping mall consumers and find that mall atmosphere and mall merchandise are the main determinants of consumer mall satisfaction, while consumer mall satisfaction and mall merchandise are the main determinants of consumer mall brand attitudes. Their findings reveal that mall branding is essentially experiential branding and provide sound guidance for mall managers by suggesting priorities in shaping the mall brand, the emphasis on mall atmosphere and the criticality of tenant mix.

Ulf Aagerup and Jonas Nilsson explore symbolic green consumer behavior (GCB) by investigating the impact of anticipated conspicuousness of the consumption situation on consumers' choice of organic products. They analyze whether self-monitoring ability and attention to social comparison information (ATSCI) influence GCB in situations of anticipated high conspicuousness. The results of two experiments show that the anticipation of conspicuousness has a significant effect on GCB and that this effect is moderated by consumers' level of ATSCI but not by their self-monitoring ability. Because ATSCI significantly interacts with green consumption as a result of the anticipation of a conspicuous setting, although self-monitoring ability does not, they conclude that social identification is an important determinant of green consumption.

Jenniina Shivonen and Linda Turunen analyze how consumers determine the perceived value of fashion brands in online flea market; in particular, how fashion brands are perceived when sold second-hand in Facebook flea markets. Analyzing data collected from seven Facebook flea market forum discussions, between 2014 and 2015, by means of qualitative content analysis, their findings reveal that perceived value is negotiated and evaluated through six antecedents: perceived quality, price, design, origin, authenticity and brand availability. Price and quality appear as focal aspects when determining the value of a used brand in second-hand markets. However, availability, origin and design also have an influence on perceived value and serve as means of distinguishing between different flea markets for fashion brands. Finally, their findings also reveal that the passing of time appears to be an important factor influencing consumers' considerations of perceived value.

Galina Biedenbach and Siarhei Manzhynski investigate the perceptual differences between employees of industrial companies in Belarus characterized by various levels of internal brand commitment and their evaluations of a

company's sustainability performance. They identify three clusters of employees:

- (1) uncommitted sustainability laggards;
- (2) committed sustainability followers; and
- (3) committed sustainability leaders.

The three clusters differ with regard to the main determinants of internal brand commitment, which are brand orientation, internal brand knowledge and internal brand involvement. Their findings also identify significant perceptual differences between how each cluster evaluates a company's sustainability performance. Their study makes a theoretical contribution to research on internal branding and sustainability by examining the potential interrelationships between internal branding strategies and sustainability performance in the context of a transition economy.

Christian Boris Brunner, Sebastian Ullrich, Patrik Jungen and Franz-Rudolf Esch investigate the impact of symbolic product information (product design connotations) on consumers' perceived brand evaluations. In an experimental setting, they consider as key factors the congruence between design connotation and product category and the level of product involvement as well as brand strength. They conduct an experiment with 490 participants in which consumers are confronted to different product design connotations. Based on the cognitive process model "SARA", they examine how product design connotations are used as heuristics in the working memory when making brand judgment. Their results show that product design connotations are used in consumers' information processing as an anchor for brand evaluations. This effect is stronger if connotations are incongruent to the

product category due to consumers' deeper elaboration process, and the impact of design connotations is higher for weak compared to strong brands.

We would like to thank the reviewers involved in the assessment of the papers in this issue, and for providing guidance to the authors on how to improve their submissions. The people who reviewed papers in this issue are based in universities from seven different countries and are listed below in alphabetical order:

- Ulf Aaagerup, Halmstad University, Sweden.
- Sally Baalbaki, Metropolitan State University of Denver, USA.
- Gargi Bhaduri, Kent State University, USA.
- Debra Basil, University of Lethbridge, Canada.
- Claudia Henninger, The University of Manchester, UK.
- Pramod Iyer, University of North Texas, USA.
- Anthony Kent, Nottingham Trent University, UK.
- Rui Lopes, University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL), Portugal.
- Gerald Mazzalovo, Universite Paris-Dauphine, France.
- Michela Mingione, University of Rome Tor Vergata, IGF, Italy.
- Sara Spear, University of Portsmouth, UK.
- Jin Su, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA.
- Michael Walsh, West Virginia University, USA.

We hope that you find reading this issue intellectually stimulating and enjoyable – Francisco Guzmán and Ulla Hakala.

**Francisco Guzman and Ulla Hakala**