A MODEL FOR BRANDING PRACTICES IN A NEW SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENT WORK

DECLARATION WITH REGARD TO INDEPENDENT WORK

I, GARTH ALLISTER VAN GENSEN, identity number 6112115177088, student number 9954538, hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the degree DOCTOR TECHNOLOGIAE: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, is my own independent work. It complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as with other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations at the Central University of Technology, Free State and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself of any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

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SIGNATURE OF STUDENT **DATE**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER 1:

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 2:

A THEORETICAL RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER 4:

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO ASPECTS RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION BRANDING INTERNATIONALLY, NATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY

CHAPTER 5:

PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE BRANDING OF SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRANDING PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

- distinctive challenges
- new unfolding national and international landscape
- merged and incorporated institutions
- branding practices and strategies
- qualitative research approach
- market orientation mindset
- visionary leadership
- an integrated entrepreneurial culture
- a model which would result in brand enhancement of institutions
- experience economy and its relatedness to brand
- relevance and branding

Distinctive challenges are currently facing South African higher education institutions. Among others they are funding; quality assurance; globalisation; the emergence of private higher education; the idea of an entrepreneurial university as an alternative; enrolment capping; as well as merged and incorporated institutions. It is critical that these challenges be addressed urgently.

However, the lack of proper marketing and branding strategies at institutions of higher learning in view of the new unfolding national and international landscape, leaves much to be desired. In the past, branding of higher education in South Africa was not an area of priority, because higher education operated in a protected, regulated market with a steady income. The current higher education

scenario necessitates higher education institutions to re-visit their branding strategies as a means to grapple with the distinctive challenges facing them with the purpose of enhancing quality; delivering graduates to the world of work; as well as being relevant by being responsive to society and the economic needs of the country in order to adhere to the outcomes of the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (RSA DoE 2001).

A thorough literature study involving current and relevant literature on branding and branding practices was undertaken, after which a mainly qualitative research approach was followed. Focus group interviews at two entrepreneurial universities abroad; informal conversation interviews at seven South African higher education institutions; as well as a case study were conducted. Participant observation in the workplace relating to branding and branding practices also took place. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to capture recurring patterns and themes during the research process.

What became evident from the literature was that branding strategies of higher education institutions are generally restricted to *informing* and *visual* identity. The results of a survey done in 2004 by UNITECH, a body representing marketing and communication units of universities and former technikons (currently Universities of Technology) in South Africa, was also quite significant for this study. The following deductions regarding marketing and communication practices at South African higher education institutions could be made from this survey: There is a lack of an integrated marketing approach; executive management lacks understanding of branding practices; there is a lack of strategy with regard to marketing and branding; as well as a lack of internal communication. These deductions were consistent with the researcher’s own observations and are also confirmed by the informal conversation interviews held at the seven South African higher education institutions as part of the empirical investigation. The case study to highlight the branding practices of a higher education institution in the central region revealed that the implementation phase focused strongly on external/outward exercises, and that the internalisation aspects of their branding were narrowed to information only. The new visual identity of the institution was emphasised, whilst the internal processes remained the same as always.

The aforementioned aspects are an indication that South African higher education institutions need to re-visit their internal practices. A market orientation mindset is of crucial importance for higher education institutions in South Africa to move towards an entrepreneurial mindset. The Universities of Warwick (England) and Twente (the Netherlands) were selected for this study as a result of the astounding successes they have achieved with their entrepreneurial activities. According to the respondents from both universities, the following aspects – among others - are extremely important for their successes: visionary leadership; an integrated entrepreneurial culture; a focus on external as well as internal communication; and relevance.

The primary purpose of this study was to develop a model for South African higher education institutions which would ultimately result in brand enhancement of institutions that would be perceived as relevant and society-minded to live up to the challenges of the new and changing landscape in South Africa. The proposed model in this study is based on two overarching fundamentals, namely the experience economy and its relatedness to brand, as well as relevance and branding, which should be an integrated approach that could ultimately lead to successful external branding.

ABSTRAK/OPSOMMING

SLEUTELWOORDE/-TERME

- besondere uitdagings
- nuwe ontluikende nasionale en internasionale landskap
- samesmelting en inkorporering van instellings
- handelsmerkingpraktyke en strategieë
- kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering
- 'n bemarkingsoriënteringsgedagterigting
- visioenêre leierskap
- 'n geïntegreerde entrepreneuriese kultuur
- 'n model wat handelsmerkbevordering vir instellings tot gevolg sou hê
- ondervindingsekonomie en die verwantskap tot die handelsmerk
- toepaslikheid en handelsmerking

Besondere uitdagings staar hoëronderwysinstellings tans in die gesig. Hierdie uitdagings behels onder meer befondsing; gehalteversekering; globalisasie; die ontluiking van private hoër onderwys; 'n entrepreneuriese universiteit as 'n alternatief; toelatingbeperkings; asook die samesmelting en inkorporering van instelllings. Dit is van die uiterste belang dat hierdie uitdagings as 'n saak van dringendheid aangespreek moet word.

Die gebrek aan behoorlike bemarking- en handelsmerkingstrategieë aan hoëronderwysinstellings in die lig van die nuwe nasionale en internasionale landskap wat besig is om te ontvou, laat egter veel te wense oor. In die verlede was handelsmerking aan hoër onderwys in Suid-

Afrika nie 'n saak van prioriteit nie, want hoër onderwys het dit in 'n beskermde, gereguleerde mark met 'n vaste inkomste bevind. Die huidige hoëronderwysscenario noodsaak hoëronderwysinstellings egter om weer hul handelsmerkingstrategieë in oënskou te neem. Dit moet geskied as 'n metode om die besondere uitdagings wat hulle in die gesig staar, aan te spreek met die oog op kwaliteitverbetering; die lewering van gegradueerdes aan die arbeidsmark; om relevant te wees deur te reageer op die behoeftes van die samelewing en die ekonomiese behoeftes van die land; asook om steun te verleen aan die uitkomste van die *National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE)* (RSA DoE 2001).

'n Deeglike literatuurstudie is onderneem. Dit het huidige en relevante literatuur oor handelsmerke en handelsmerkingpraktyke gedek. Hierna is hoofsaaklik 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering gevolg. Fokusgroeponderhoude aan twee entrepreneuriese universiteite oorsee, informele gespreksonderhoude aan sewe Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwysinstellings, asook 'n gevallestudie is onderneem. Deelnemerobservasie in die werksplek met betrekking tot handelsmerke en handelsmerkingpraktyke het ook plaasgevind. Die konstante vergelykende metode van data-analise is gebruik om patrone of temas wat herhaaldelik gedurende die navorsingsproses voorgekom het, vas te vang.

Wat duidelik geblyk het uit die literatuur was dat handelsmerkingstrategieë van hoëronderwysinstellings oor die algemeen beperk is tot 'n informerende en visuele identiteit. Die resultate van 'n opname wat deur UNITECH in 2004 gedoen is, was ook beduidend vir hierdie studie. UNITECH is 'n liggaam wat bemarkings- en kommunikasie-eenhede van universiteite en – soos daar voorheen na hulle verwys is – technikons (tans Universiteite van Tegnologie) in Suid-Afrika verteenwoordig. Die volgende afleidings met betrekking tot bemarkings- en kommunikasiepraktyke aan Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwysinstellings het duidelik uit hierdie opname geblyk: Daar bestaan 'n gebrek aan 'n geïntegreerde bemarkingsbenadering; daar heers 'n gebrek aan begrip rakende die verskaffing van handelsmerkpraktyke onder die uitvoerende bestuur; daar bestaan 'n gebrek aan strategie met betrekking tot bemarking en handelsmerking; asook 'n gebrek aan interne kommunikasie. Hierdie afleidings stem deurgaans ooreen met die navorser se eie waarnemings en word ook bevestig deur die informele gespreksonderhoude wat by die sewe Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwysinstellings gehou is as deel van die empiriese ondersoek. Die gevallestudie om handelsmerking van 'n hoëronderwysinstelling in die sentrale streek te beklemtoon, het aan die lig gebring dat die implementeringsfase sterk op die eksterne/uitwaartse aspekte gefokus het en dat dié wat verband hou met die internaliseringsaspekte van hul handelsmerke slegs tot inligting beperk was. Die nuwe visuele identiteit van die instelling is beklemtoon, terwyl die interne prosesse dieselfde as voorheen gebly het.

Die bogenoemde aspekte is 'n aanduiding dat dit noodsaaklik is dat Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwysinstellings hul interne praktyke noukeurig moet herondersoek. 'n Bemarkingsoriënteringsgedagterigting is dringend noodsaaklik vir hoëronderwysinstellings in Suid-Afrika met die oog op 'n entrepreneuriese gedagterigting. Die Universiteite van Warwick (Engeland) en Twente (in Nederland) is vir hierdie studie gekies as gevolg van die verstommende suksesse wat hulle behaal het met hul entrepreneuriese aktiwiteite. Volgens die respondente van beide universiteite is die volgende aspekte onder meer uiters belangrik vir hul suksesse, naamlik visioenêre leierskap; 'n geïntegreerde entrepreneuriese kultuur, 'n fokus op eksterne sowel as op interne kommunikasie; asook toepaslikheid.

Die primêre doel van hierdie studie was om 'n model vir Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwysinstellings te ontwikkel wat uiteindelik 'n handelsmerk-bevordering vir instellings tot gevolg sou hê en wat verder as relevant en samelewingsgerig gesien sou word ten einde die uitdagings van die nuwe en veranderende landskap in Suid-Afrika die hoof te bied. Die voorgestelde model in hierdie studie is op twee oorkoepelende fundamentele beginsels gebaseer, naamlik die ondervindingsekonomie en die verwantskap daarvan tot die handelsmerk, asook toepaslikheid en handelsmerk, wat 'n geïntegreerde benadering behoort te wees wat uiteindelik tot suksesvolle eksterne handelsmerking kan lei.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEO: Chief Executive Officer
CHE: Council on Higher Education
CIPD: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CTP: Committee of Technikon Principals
CUT: Central University of Technology, Free State
DoE: Department of Education
ECIU: European Consortium of Innovative Universities
FET: further education and training
GET: general education and training
HAIs: historical advantaged institutions
HDIs: historical disadvantaged institutions
HEQC: Higher Education Quality Committee
HR: Human Resources
HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council
HTT: Holding Technopolis Twente
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
IMC: integrated marketing communications
IT: information technology
KPA: key performance area
MCE: Management Centre Europe
MBA: Master of Business Administration
MIS: management information system
MoE: Ministry of Education
NCHE: National Commission on Higher Education
NEPI: National Education Policy Investigation
Nikos: Dutch Institute for Knowledge Intensive Entrepreneurship

NPHE: National Plan for Higher Education

NWG: National Working Group

PQM: Programme and Qualification Mix

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority

SAUVCA: South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association

SET: Science, Engineering, and Technology

SMSs: cellular text messages

TOP: temporary entrepreneurial positions

TQS: total quality service

UFS: University of the Free State

UK: United Kingdom

UNISA: University of South Africa

UMDNJ: University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

USA: United States of America

UT: University of Twente

UW: University of Warwick

VC: Vice-Chancellor

WMG: Warwick Manufacturing Group

www: world wide web

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The changing landscape, as well as the realities and the pressures of higher education in South Africa demands innovative strategic thinking to meet the many new challenges. According to Fehnel (2002b: 1 of 18), realities are viewed to be those factors in one's environment that create conditions that one cannot ignore. Pressures can be regarded as forces in one's internal or external environment that may reflect and reinforce realities – or may cause one to take his or her eyes off reality and to act in ways that will only exacerbate a situation in the long run.

Pressures and realities in South African higher education are, among other things, a history plagued by inequalities; new policies directed to eradicate the very same inequalities; private higher education; increased diversity in types of institutions; increased reliance on partnerships and alliances; simultaneous increases in competition and cooperation among institutions; an increasing reliance on private funding for public higher education; a demand for quality; pressure to find solutions to the growing financial problems faced by institutions; and the current merging and incorporations of higher education institutions. An institutional merging could be defined as an amalgamation in which two or more institutions give up their legally independent status in favour of a new joint authority (in *The Teacher* of 25 August 2003: 1 of 3). Obviously merging and/or incorporations have implications for the new institution's culture, vision, mission and branding practices.

A brief look at the current situation of higher education in South Africa is necessitated by the above-mentioned pressures and realities and informs the discussion in Chapter 1.

1.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SETTING

In order to throw light on the need for this research, it is imperative to analyse the South African higher education policy context thoroughly. In doing so, the necessity and significance of this research becomes evident.

1.2.1 Background to policies and legislation

All the history teachers and even lecturers have always tried to "justify" their subject to energetic youngsters who have only been interested in the now of life, emphasising that *one needs to know the past to be able to understand the present and to predict the future*. It is true, since one needs to know the past in order to grasp the happenings of today and, to a reasonable extent, predict the future with regard to a number of things. It is thus no coincidence that the terms of reference of higher education in South Africa also revolve around the "historical" (Mzimela 2002: 2 of 2). Nobody will ever be able to grasp the reality in South Africa without taking a good look at history. An educational backlog had been created that would eventually take generations to eradicate.

Between 1910 and 1948, South Africa was a Union governed by South African political parties, but with the British Monarch as the Head of State. Du Pré (2002: 1 of 6) highlights "the policy of the all-white governments of the day was that of 'guardianship' of the people of Africa." He further states that schools, colleges and teacher-training colleges were established by missionaries and were under the control of a variety of church denominations (Du Pré 2002: 1 of 6).

The Nationalist Party, which took power in 1948, introduced a new interventionist character into the relations between state and civil society as it relates to the terrain of higher education. Badat (in Reddy 2003: 8 of 66) maintains that in this year the number of Black students enrolled at universities stood at a mere 4.8%. The Nationalist party was very Afrikaner nationalistic, which advocated total segregation in all spheres, including education (Du Pré 1994: 3). This resulted in an administrative practice in which all social services were provided separately and unequally. The different ethnic groups required their own departments, for example Native, Indian and Coloured Affairs, creating an enormous administrative and policing bureaucracy. Further sub-departments had to deal with education, health, welfare and other services. Reddy (2003: 6 of 66) advocates that the groupings classified as "non-Whites" were expected to labour to serve White society and culturally assume roles and practices expressing subordination to secure the basis of White privilege and superiority.

Separate education departments were set up to administer institutions for persons classified as "European"

(White), “Coloured” (people of mixed ancestry), “Asiatic” (persons of Asian origin, generally referred to as “Indian”) and “Native” (also referred to as “Bantu”, “African” or “Black”). Du Pré (1994: 4) notes that financial and other resources were allocated along hierarchical lines: most were allocated to institutions designated for “Europeans”, next came Coloureds and so on down the line. Pityana (2004: 5 of 16) agrees with this when he notes that the system of higher education was based on colour and ideology.

In South Africa the state refused to provide education for Africans during the initial decades of colonial rule. Christian missions established primary schools and later secondary schools. The University of Fort Hare’s case illustrates the state’s reluctance to support higher education to Africans. It took decades before the University of Fort Hare received financial support from the state and from South African business.

Much can still be said about the history of higher education in South Africa. Marketing of higher education was not high on the agenda of most institutions. The different groups were homogeneous and clustered together and, to a certain extent, cut off from the rest of the world. It is, however, not in this study’s sphere to dwell too much on the South African history of inequalities. This study will rather seek to find answers with regard to the way forward from a branding perspective for higher education institutions in South Africa. Therefore, a look at the more recent legislation will be discussed in more detail. Without such a discussion it will be difficult to come to a full understanding of why the branding of institutions is of such importance.

Like in the corporate sector in South Africa and elsewhere in the world, branding has gained much more prominence during the last decade and is arguably an organisation’s most important and return on investment asset. Institutions of higher learning will also have to look more carefully to the formulation of their mission and vision statements and try to establish niche areas with more differentiation to ensure that they have a sustainable role to play. All these imperatives necessitate a more professional and scientific approach to the branding of institutions of higher learning.

1.2.2 The post-apartheid legislative and policy context for South African higher education

The higher education scene is governed by policies, in other words, by strong interference from the government. The scene and landscape are thus strongly influenced and governed by law. Major political changes would then also see major changes in higher education like in South Africa. Until 1990 the production of education policy in South Africa was a relative simple issue. According to Jansen (2002: 2 of 17), the “state maintained control of education policy in ways that were bureaucratically centralised, racially exclusive and politically authoritarian.”

The first policy announcement with regard to higher education in South Africa after the transition to democracy in 1994 was of major importance. The government of the day had to show that there would be a break with the past regime. However, a revolutionary "big bang policy" was not to be followed. Bengu (in Maassen 2002: 7 of 10) states that "… owing to the sophistication and fragile nature of higher education a radical approach to transformation was not adopted." Jansen (2002: 1 of 16) also mentions that the new policy had to be pre-eminently symbolic. The fact that a policy is largely symbolic in nature, does not mean that it will lack impact.

The policies for higher education in South Africa are pre-empted by the obvious need for transformation. This need has been the subject of intense debate since 1990. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) of the early 1990s and the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) of 1996 addressed the issue of transformation. The former was an extensive research project which brought together hundreds of activists, analysts and academics in order to develop a comprehensive plan to transform South African education (Van Gensen 2002: 42). The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is regarded as the ministry's "expert" advisory group and its recommendations on transformation and restructuring were largely accepted by the ministry. The ministry announced the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (RSA DoE 2001) in February 2001. Cooper (2001: 1 of 3) notes that this plan listed "massive problems of inefficiency and dislodgement resulting largely (but not solely) from the Apartheid era". In April 2001 the National Working Group (NWG) was appointed by the ministry to launch a further probe into the recommendations of the CHE. They were to advise the ministry on the restructuring of the institutional landscape of higher education in South Africa. The NWG was of the opinion that its recommendations would result in the transformation of the education system and lay the foundation for a higher education system that would be consistent with the vision, values and principles of a democratic order and which would, in addition, contribute to social and economic development (Van Gensen 2002: 43).

The CHE, in its own words, regards the question of labour market trends and concomitant resource development as important to social and economic development in a "knowledge driven world" in the NPHE (CHE 2002: 51 of 68). The provision of higher education should be expanded based on the structural changes in the South African economy and the shifts in the labour market over the past couple of decades. These shifts denote the endemic shortage of high-level professional and managerial skills, particularly in the economic-based and science fields. Higher education institutions in South Africa with the will and "buy-in" attitude could expedite this shortage by engaging in strong marketing efforts to recruit, retain and put through the targeted students in the identified fields, namely science, engineering, technology and commerce. All these imperatives will in future impact on the programme offerings of institutions, how they will position themselves, as well as their branding strategies.

Current policies and legislation (1996 – 2005) impacting on the South African higher education landscape also needs to be analysed in order to gain a broader perspective on branding practices in a future higher education scenario.

Policies governing and dictating the higher education setting in South Africa are imperative for the current and future landscape. It is not within the sphere of this study to look at all the policies governing higher education, but to have a brief look at those fundamental policies which, in turn, will have a profound impact on how higher education institutions will grapple with the future, specifically in a market environment. The recent NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) is the most significant document which tries to address the challenges facing South Africa's higher education in a very ambitious way.

1.2.3 Current policies and legislation

Currently the main driving force of higher education legislation is undoubtedly the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001). It is regarded as the final leg of the transformative legislation and was released in February 2001. In his speech on 5 March 2001 at Sol Plaatje House in Pretoria, the then Minister of Education in South Africa, Prof. Kader Asmal, launched the government's NPHE by saying that the NEPI of the early 1990s kick started the debate by placing policy options on the table. The report of the NCHE lay the basis for the subsequent Green Paper, the Draft White Paper and the Education White Paper 3 – A Programme for the Transformation of the Higher Education System (Asmal 2001: 1 of 5).

In order to fully grasp the current higher education setting in South Africa, a brief look at certain outcomes of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) is necessary, because higher education institutions will have to - and some have already done so - devise plans and practices towards these outcomes that will impact on their marketing and branding approaches. This is closely linked to financial limitations of institutions of higher learning, enrolment capping, as well as changes in subsidy formulas.

Outcome 1

Increased participation rate

A demand for equity in higher education has been a cornerstone in the struggle against apartheid. Kraak (2001: 5 of 36) advocates that "The call for increased access and higher education participation rates for blacks in the higher education system is a response to apartheid's inequities in education, as well as a response to globalisation's growing pressure for a more highly skilled future workforce."

President Thabo Mbeki posed the question whether South Africa's education system is indeed on the road to the 21st century. In trying to do justice to the past and to put the education system on the road to the 21st century, the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) promotes a policy of growth, which is an expansion of student enrolments. In literature such an expansion is usually defined as a transition from elite to a mass system, or massification. It denotes more than a mere increase in enrolment. It also includes the composition of the student body; the diversification of programmes, curricula and qualifications; as well as the introduction of multiple entry and exit level points. According to Cloete (2001: 1 of 9), higher education will be on the road to the next century if it is making progress with the "double transformation” task facing it. On the one hand it must deal with the issues relating to the history of South Africa and, on the other hand, with developments relating to the expansion of higher education, globalisation and the role of knowledge in the economy and culture (Cloete 2001: 1 of 9). Marketing practices should thus not only expand as far as numbers are concerned, but in doing so be responsive to the role that higher education ought to play in South Africa.

Outcome 2

Increased graduate outputs

Two main goals are set by the Education White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997) and the subsequent NPHE (RSA DoE 2001), namely that the student throughput rates must increase, while the success rates of Blacks must also improve. Kraak (2001: 6 of 36) maintains that “The key point to emphasise is that the rationale for restructuring the higher education system is to ensure fitness of purpose, both of the system and of the individual institutions.” The higher education system is currently not operating efficiently in terms of its core mandate, which is the production of knowledge and graduates. Badat (2003a: 8 of 11) adds another dimension to the problem when he states that it is unlikely that there will ever be congruence between the outputs of higher education in terms of graduates and the immediate and specific needs of public and private sector employers. A different approach to branding of higher education institutions which should focus, among others, on programmes that are areas of need, for example Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), could address this concern effectively.

Outcome 3

Broadened social base of students

The boundaries of access to higher education need to be extended to an entirely (new?) group of South African citizens. This suggests the opening of traditional, educationally conservative institutions to a new category of "non-traditional" learners, for example adults, women and people with different abilities. The ministry sees higher education as having a crucial role to play in the creation of a "learning society" involving people of all ages and all walks of life. The NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) proposes the increase in the participation rate through recruiting workers, mature learners, women and the disabled, in addition to opening doors of South African institutions to students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Munro (2001: 2 of 3) indicates that a broadened social base of students is realisable through changed recruitment and marketing practices. According to the New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education (2002: 11 of 12), a further solution to this complex problem could be by supporting a lower common admissions' requirement and by facilitating the recognition of prior learning. The broadened social base goes hand in hand with changes that create the lifelong learning culture that will impact on a national and societal level on economical and competitive performance. The totality of the educational purpose as well as the global context within which the educational system operates, is clearly marked by phrases such as "the information society", "skills development and research", and reference to universities and universities of technology becoming the "powerhouses for the development of a critical mass of black intellectuals and researchers" (Munro 2001: 2 of 3).

Outcome 4

Increased recruitment of students from SADC countries

In 1992 SADC was established in Windhoek. The following 14 Sub-Saharan states are members, namely Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These states (SADC) signed a Protocol on Education and Training in terms of which universities and other tertiary institutions in member states should be encouraged to reserve at least 10% of the student places in the institutions for students from other SADC countries. South Africa, with regard to higher education numbers, is the dominant member state of SADC. South Africa is on record for expressing commitment to greater regional collaboration. Zuma (2004: 2 of 3) reiterates that, "before we can look globally, we must work in our neighbourhood first." He further states that: "the presence of students from SADC and beyond is of enormous benefit to South African students, giving them the valuable opportunity to learn from fellow students with different experiences and perspectives." The researcher is of the opinion that the South African government focuses much more on regional engagement and understanding than in the past. Therefore higher education in South Africa should be seen to play an important role as far as regional commitment is concerned and should increase its brand and image.

Outcome 5

Changed enrolments by fields of study

Major changes have occurred in the shape of the South African higher education system by intended major or the field of specialisation during the period 1993 to 1995, as well as during the period 1995 to 1999. The statistics that will consequently be discussed, was gathered by Cloete and Bunting (2000: 24-25). The headcount total of students following majors in the broad humanities reached a peak in 1995. It fell during the period 1996 to 1999 to a total close to that of 1993. The total of humanities majors have fallen in 1999 by 52 000 or 16% from the peak of 329 000.

In contrast to this, the number and proportion of students specialising in more career-orientated programmes in business and commerce has risen by 56 000 or 62% since 1993. Majors in science and technology have grown between 1993 and 1999, but not to the extent of business/commerce.

The result hereof is that the total proportion of head count enrolments in 1999 in humanities declined for the first time below 50%. In 1999 the proportions of total enrolments represented by these broad fields were: humanities 49%; business/commerce 26%; and science and technology 25%.

According to the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001), the fifth outcome (changed enrolments by fields of study) wished to see a ratio of 40:30:30. However, Cloete and Bunting (2000: 24) are of the opinion that the present production of school leavers with the qualifications required for entry into science/technology, suggests that any hope for substantial growth in these fields may be displaced. "The school system's production of candidates with higher grade mathematical passes and higher grade physical sciences is barely enough to meet an annual inflow of 30 000 students into programmes which place strong emphasis on mathematics and on mathematics plus physical sciences" (in *Sunday Times Insight* of 3 February 2002: 1). Kotecha (2002: 7 of 16) indicates that measures need to be taken to ensure shifts in the relative weight of students across the humanities, business/commerce and SET fields of study, with an emphasis on the last two fields without sacrificing the participation in the first.

Outcome 7

Increased equity in access and success rate

The NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) states that significant changes have taken place in both the race and the gender profile of the student body in the higher education system, but the changes have not gone far enough. According to the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997: 10 of 32), "equity of access must be complemented by a concern for equity outcomes. Increased access must not lead to a 'revolving door' syndrome for students with high failure and drop-out rates". Badsha (2004: 1 of 2) echoes this view by reiterating this seven years later when she states that no country which is committed to quality access to higher education can afford a "revolving door syndrome", that is admit students, take their fees and churn them out with no qualifications. Access and success cannot be separated".

Closely bound with issues of access are those of affordability. Tuition fees run at about R10 000 per year or 30% of the actual cost. A huge gap persists between fees and the ability of most Black families to pay (in *Education Guardian* of 1 October 2002: 1 of 5).

The global, inclusive term of "equity", used alike for students and staff, refers to policies and procedures enabling and encouraging groups in society at present under-represented as students in higher education institutions and programmes or study areas, to gain access to and demonstrate successful performance in higher education, in addition to transition to the labour market. According to the Higher Education Authority (2000: 14 of 68), it also refers to extending opportunities for suitably qualified people - regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or other extraneous considerations - to achieve staff positions in higher education and to advance professionally according to merit and achievement and without discrimination based on these extraneous considerations.

In higher education policy and analysis terms such as "access", "equal opportunity", "equality of outcomes", "affirmative action", and "equity" are frequently encountered. However, the key concept is "equity", conceived as fairness; equality of treatment where comparable features and conditions pertain; and opportunity to participate and contribute, without hindrance through prejudice and discriminatory customary practice. It does not need to connote equality in any or precise or mathematical sense, nor does it imply uniformity of institutional provision or entry and study requirements. It is widely accepted that substantial diversity and fitness to individuals and groups, as well as their circumstances, are appropriate if the varied needs of students are to be met (Higher Education Authority 2000: 14 of 68).

The seventh outcome of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) was against this background, namely increased equity in access and success rates. Not only should equity and access be promoted, but also access with success. The media (in *Sunday Times Insight* of 3 February 2002: 1) rightfully asks whether the taxpayers are receiving value for money with government expenditure on universities of technology and universities reaching an amount of R8 billion. Higher education institutions have the vital responsibility to produce high-quality graduates, knowledge and knowledge-based services to fuel economic growth to enable South Africans to compete on a global scale. However, the throughput rate is not what it should be. If South African universities and universities of technology had had reasonable throughput rates in 1998, about 100 000 graduates would have been produced instead of only 75 000. What makes matters worse, is the fact that South African higher education has unacceptably high numbers (about 16%) of students who quit each year.

According to Rossouw (2001: 1 of 1), the Education Department is using this figure to suggest that some institutions are mismanaging their government money. It is also felt that South Africa continues to produce graduates who lack the knowledge, attitude, competency, capacity, skills, literacy and numeracy to effectively execute their responsibilities as employees (in *Sunday Times Insight* of 3 February 2002: 1). Added to this, students are not properly prepared, nor inducted for university studies, experience financial problems and receive poor career counselling. It has been accepted that the General Education and Training (GET) and the Further Education and Training (FET) do not have the ability to address these problems and that higher education has the expertise and human resource capacity to deal in innovative ways with it, for example foundation programmes and extended curricula. The challenge here is an enormous one, almost anomalous: Obtain more learners from a disadvantaged schooling system, among others, and make sure they are successful.

Outcome 14

Increased graduate enrolments and outputs at the master's and doctoral levels

This outcome set by the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) is that master's and doctoral enrolments should increase. The ministry was concerned that, even with the current few enrolments, drop-out rates were high and completion rates were low.

The fact that students in SET programmes are incentivised by way of new funding formulas is promising. More students in this band are needed in South Africa to fulfil the country's human resource needs. Higher education thus plays a major role and, by doing so, higher education is becoming more relevant and, arguably even more important, perceived to be relevant.

The NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) notes that the higher education system is currently producing approximately 4 600 master's degrees and 750 doctoral graduates annually. Funding mechanisms will be used to speed up the process and the intake of foreign students will be supported.

The NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) also proposes that more master's and doctoral students be recruited from the SADC region. The current minister of education, Ms Naledi Pandor, is of the opinion that it is unacceptable that South African universities produced the same number of Ph.D.s today as they did 30 years ago (see paragraph 1.4).

Academics can and should also become more involved in identifying and promoting post-graduate studies among students. One wonders what the result in post-graduate enrolment would be if the top 20% of graduates of each programme were invited to a special session whereby they were invited and encouraged to enrol. Maybe even incentivised? This could lead to more applied and contract research in response to societal needs which, in turn, is a move to the entrepreneurial university discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Once again the all-important notion of relevance comes to the fore. Relevance and its relatedness to brand enhancement are also discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

1.2.3.1 *Closing remarks on current policies and legislation*

The NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) and its expected outcomes should not have come as a surprise to institutions of higher learning. It was debated and deliberated on for quite some time and the Ministry of Education (MoE) emphasises that discussing and planning the future of higher education must come to an end. It is indeed time to act.

Some of these outcomes of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) were highlighted in this section. The outcomes are listed in the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) and are meant to be the *end* *result* of which institutions of higher learning should work towards. Institutions of higher learning will in the case of some outcomes, be incentivised to accelerate the process, but with certain outcomes there are no clear incentives. It is disappointing that no reference is made in the NPHE to a much needed Information Technology (IT) drive, which is crucial in almost any sector.

The researcher is of the opinion that these outcomes could be addressed by new branding and managerial strategies and by different approaches and emphasis on current strategies. From the empirical investigation done in Chapter 4 among institutions of higher learning, it is quite clear that they are much more concerned about their *theoretical* outward message than the *practical* outward message. It is also clear that higher education institutions feel that they can convey messages to their stakeholders without operationalising those messages internally.

This thesis proposes an experience economy to elevate higher education institutions to be perceived as relevant and responsive to societal needs in their quest to be answerable to the country's human resource needs. This, in turn, will enhance the brand of institutions of higher learning in South Africa in a sequential way. Internal excellence based on the experience economy leads to brand enhancement which will then have, among other things, a major impact on the goals of South Africa's needs.

The researcher is of the opinion that the outcomes of the NPHE cannot be achieved if higher education in South Africa is seen as an *alternative* by school-leavers; it must be regarded as the first choice. In the case where students are not capacitated to enter the higher education band, the FET band should be the answer. However, higher education can only be regarded as the first choice by its stakeholders if it was to be perceived as relevant. The researcher also holds the view that relevancy (in the case of higher education) can only be "perceptualised" through the experience economy. Chapters 3 and 5 elaborate further on this.

Although the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) is regarded as the main driving force in South African higher education, also from a branding perspective, other forces which also have a major impact will subsequently be discussed.

1.3 OTHER FORCES IMPACTING ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

1.3.1 The emergence of private higher education

The ministry recognises that private higher education plays an important role in expanding access to higher education, in particular in niche areas, through responding to labour market opportunities and student demand. According to the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997: 13 of 32), the key challenge in expanding the role of private institutions is to create an environment which neither suffocates educationally sound and sustainable private institutions with state over-regulation, nor allows a plethora of poor quality, unsustainable "fly-by-night" operators into the higher education market.

Conventional thinking would suggest that the rise in private higher education in South Africa is a recent phenomenon, but a closer look reveals otherwise. Fehnel

(2002a: 346) states that the South African College was the first private provider of higher education. It was founded in Cape Town by influential citizens who sought better quality of education for their children in 1829. In 1918, almost a century later, the institution was granted university status and became what is now known as the University of Cape Town.

The evolution of higher education from private initiatives into public institutions, as well as into divergent racial groups, was underscored by the passage of the extension of the University Act of 1959, which created different and separate universities for the "non-White" population (Fehnel 2002a: 346-347). The same writer adds that racial separation also featured in the legislation in 1967 that created the Colleges of Advanced Technical Education. These colleges became technikons in 1979 and by 1980 the landscape had stabilised into racially divided sets of universities and technikons. Today the roots of these universities and universities of technology, formerly known as technikons and in some cases as private institutions, had long been forgotten.

Added to the above and to further necessitate the need for different approaches to branding, is the fact that international institutions have opened branches in South Africa.

1.3.1.1 *The size of private higher education in South Africa*

Private higher education is smaller than what was initially thought. In 1995 the NCHE estimated that approximately 150 000 students were enrolled in private higher education institutions (in *Volksblad* of 26 February 2004: 11). These institutions offered mainly certificates and diplomas in the fields of human resources development, business administration, communications and information technology (Badat 2003b: 1 of 3). However, of the estimated 150 000 students in the 1990s, there were only 85 000 students in 2001 in this sector (in *Volksblad* of 26 February 2004: 11). This is according to a survey which was done by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 2003. It is interesting to note that, according to a study conducted by the University of the Western Cape in 1998, there were 120 private providers with enrolments of fewer than 1 000 students, while within this group 90 providers had fewer than 250 enrolments (Fehnel 2002a: 351).

According to this research, the borders between private higher education and public institutions are also not clear. Most students that are enrolled at private institutions are part of public private partnerships. At private institutions 55 428 students are enrolled for programmes which are certified at the public institutions (in *Volksblad* of 26 February 2004: 11). Early in 1998 the MoE issued guidelines for private providers on registration processes. The Department of Education (DoE) recommended that private institutions form partnerships with public institutions in order to facilitate registration. But less than a year later the minister proclaimed a moratorium on public-private partnerships. This signalled a significant change in policy towards private providers. There were growing concerns about the quality of many programmes offered by private providers. Many of these new private institutions were inexperienced and could not provide the necessary registration information to the DoE. Appropriate course material for quality assurance purposes could, in many cases, not be provided to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (Fehnel 2002a: 357).

Bengu's perspective (in Maassen 2002: 7 of 10) was that private higher education institutions would strengthen the element of competitiveness of the public institutions of learning, but they had to work within a certain regulatory framework.

1.3.2 Quality assurance

Sursock (in Nel 2004: 2 of 16) comments that quality assurance has only become a major issue in higher education in the early 1990s. It seems, however, that this trend is now so strong that it is identified as the emergence of the "evaluative state" in higher education.

Liston (1999: 34) mentions that "Assuring quality is about conformity and reproducibility. The concept does not sit well in education where individual students and teachers provide enhancement to the learning experience and foster diversity".

Historically, quality has been associated more with the accreditation of learning programmes, which was carried out in a variety of ways at various levels for the past 100 years. Nel (2004: 3 of 16) remarks that the tradition of accreditation was transformed into the quality assurance movement in higher education and some examples of accreditation bodies that were transformed into quality assurance bodies are:

- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education 1992 (USA-based organisation)
- British Higher Education Quality Council (1992)
- State Education Commission of China (1995)
- University Grants Committee of Hong Kong
- New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (1994)
- The European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (1997).

1.3.2.1 *The South African context*

In what could be deemed the response to the international movement and to address the demand for accountability, a number of regulating and controlling bodies have been set up in almost every country to regulate higher education and to ensure that quality improvements take place. In South Africa two major pieces of legislation were passed to address the current situation, namely the SAQA Act (RSA 1995) and the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997).

The SAQA Act (RSA 1995) states its objective as follows:

- "Create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
- enhance the quality of education and training;
- accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities and thereby contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social economic development of the nation at large" (CHE 2004: 1 of 1).

The Higher Education Act (RSA 1997) defines its objectives as follows:
To standardise and regulate higher education as well as to provide for the establishment, composition and functions of a CHE. Furthermore, it desires to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public higher education institutions as well as for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor. It also wants to provide for the registration of private higher education institutions, quality assurance, and quality promotion in higher education. In the last place, the CHE wants to provide for transitional arrangements; having certain laws repealed; as well as providing for matters connected therewith.

The CHE points out that this Higher Education Act (RSA 1997) sets out quite clearly the roles and responsibilities of the CHE and its sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), with regard to policy- and quality assurance-related matters in the higher education sector. The functions of the HEQC as advocated by the CHE (2004: 1 of 1) are to promote quality assurance in higher education; to audit the quality assurance mechanisms of institutions of higher education; and to accredit programmes of higher education.

The programme of the HEQC includes some of the following:

Institutional audits whereby all public and private providers of higher education will have an audit at least once in a six-year cycle beginning in 2004.
Programme accreditation: All the new intended programme offerings of public and private providers will have to be

evaluated by the HEQC before they can be offered to see if they meet minimum standards of quality.

Quality promotion and capacity development: A number of initiatives are undertaken by the HEQC to promote quality. One such initiative is the development of a set of guides to good practice to strengthen teaching and learning in a few areas. Another initiative is a quality literacy campaign aimed at making students more aware of quality issues in higher education, indicates Singh (2004: 3 of 4).

1.3.3 Mergers

Reactions to mergers of the South African higher education sector were mixed (in *The Teacher* of 25 August 2003: 1 of 3). If these responses could be measured on the Richter scale, they would measure a massive earthquake. Reactions ranged from extreme opposition to cautious support and all the way to enthusiastic endorsement. Some of the responses were that a wholesale approach of merging higher education institutions in South Africa was far too blunt an instrument to create optimum efficiency, equity and quality in higher education. The intention was to overcome administrative, human and financial constraints as well as the apartheid-induced fragmentation of the system (in *Dispatch* of 14 February 2002: 1 of 2). There is also rage in some quarters at recent merger proposals that left a few privileged institutions untouched, while targeting numerous others. It is, however, not in the sphere of this study to debate the issue of merging.

The NWG in its report in 2002 regarding "The Restructuring of the Higher Education System in South

Africa”, proposed that the country’s 36 universities and technikons be reduced to 21. This NWG was appointed by the former minister, Kader Asmal, shortly after the NPHE had been unveiled in April 2001. The working group set out to formulate specific proposals for institutional mergers region-by-region that would reduce the country’s total number of institutions.

The higher education system in South Africa will be composed of 21 higher education institutions and two National Institutes for Higher Education. Under the new structure, there will be 11 universities (two of which will offer vocational type career-orientated degree programmes to address local needs), six Universities of Technology (formerly known as technikons) and four comprehensive institutions. Additionally there are those who categorise South African higher education institutions further as historical disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) and historical advantaged institutions (HAIs) (The International Comparative Higher Education Finance and Accessibility Project 2003: 1 of 11).

The 11 universities and four comprehensive institutes are the following:
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
University of Johannesburg
University of Cape Town
University of Witwatersrand
University of the Free State
University of Limpopo
University of Pretoria
The North-West University

Rhodes University
University of Stellenbosch
University of South Africa
University of the Western Cape
University of Fort Hare
University of Zululand.

The six Universities of Technology are the following:
Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science
Tshwane University of Technology
Vaal University of Technology
Durban Institute of Technology
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Central University of Technology, Free State.

Challenges facing merging institutions are, among others, developing new admission policies and academic programmes; redefining institutional identities and cultures; setting up new government structures; and consolidating funding. Maybe even more challenging is the creation of the new institutional type, namely the comprehensive university (The International Comparative Higher Education Finance and Accessibility Project 2003: 1 of 11). A budget of about R3.1 billion was set aside to cover the cost of mergers (in *Sunday Times* of 15 December 2002: 2 of 4). Added to this, the new institutions should develop new images and develop strategies and practices on how they are going to accomplish it.

1.3.3.1 ***Perspectives on mergers***

The following were perspectives on mergers (in *Sunday Times* of 15 December 2002: 2-3 of 4):

- Professor Mosala, Chairman of the Association of South African HDIs, said Asmal's (the then Minister of Education) plan was "anti-black".
- Professor Balintulo, Chairman of the former Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) in South Africa, said technikons had no grounds to be optimistic. Reducing the number of technikons was inconsistent, arbitrary and politically motivated and came at a time when the need for technikon education was growing.
- Professor Saleem Badat, Chief Executive of the CHE, said the new hybrid organisations would offer a range of courses, from university qualifications to technikon diplomas. In fact, technikon diplomas would be expanded.

The above represent three totally different perspectives on the issue of mergers. Each perspective is based purely on the angle and subjective interest. Each point is obviously highly debatable, but the researcher is of the opinion that only one issue should be looked at: The net effect, in other words higher education as a whole should be the winner, nothing else. The mergers are a reality and have changed the higher education landscape irrevocably.

1.3.4 Funding

Yet again a brief look at the history of some issues of funding of higher education in South Africa is necessary, for the reason that during the period before 1994, the South African government's policies mirrored apartheid's divisions and the different governance models which it imposed on the higher education system (Bunting 2002: 116).

Bunting (2002: 116) further states that, prior to 1994, two broad types of government funding were in place in South Africa. The first was that of negotiated budgets and was associated with HDIs. The second was that of formula funding for HAIs. The latter were given considerable administrative and financial powers. They could decide how their grants from government were to be spent; how many staff they should employ; what their tuition fees should be; and how any surplus funds should be invested. The other institutions were not given similar powers. Tuition fees and details of their expenditure budgets had to be approved by their controlling government department. They had to apply from this government before employing new members of staff, even down to the clerical and service staff.

Resulting from the 1997 White Paper 3, the new funding framework replaced the funding formulas for universities and universities of technology which had been in operation up to and including the 2003/04 financial year (in Government Gazette: Government Funding of Public Higher Education 2003: 1 of 45). According to The New Funding Formula For Higher Education (2004: 1 of 3), this new framework is primarily a goal-directed, distributive mechanism which distributes government's grants to institutions in line with national goals and priorities and approved institutional plans.

According to the new funding framework, public higher education institutions are awarded (a) block grants which are undesignated, and (b) earmarked grants which are funds designated for use for specific purposes.

1.3.4.1 *Block funds*

Block grants are segmented into the following categories:

- Research output grants.
- Teaching input grants.
- Teaching output grants.
- Institutional factor grants (in Government Gazette: Government Funding of Public Higher Education 2003: 3 of 45).

The implications of these new funding formulas are that institutions of higher learning need to become more output driven. The emphasis is now more focused on results.

1.3.4.2 *Earmarked funding*

Earmarked funds will be used for the following broad purposes:

- The national student financial aid scheme.
- Teaching, research and community development.
- Interest and redemption payments on loans approved before 1999.
- New capital projects.
- Institutional restructuring in order for institutions of higher learning to brand the new institution effectively, among other things (in Government Gazette: Government Funding of Public Higher Education 2003: 3 of 45).

Generally the new funding mechanism deals with the issue of outputs rather than inputs. Institutions of higher learning are now compelled to look at results and successes and not just at numbers.

This new funding formula is regarded by Jansen van Rensburg (2004: 1 of 10) as a way of allocating limited government resources to meet the needs and its focus is not on cost but rather on meeting specific agreed to objectives.

1.3.5 E-learning

The higher education environment, as well as the general marketing of higher education institutions, will also be substantially influenced by e-learning. Taylor (2002: 1) notes that "fifth generation distance education (The Intelligent Flexible Learning Model), incorporating the use of automated response systems and reusable learning objects' databases, has the potential to provide students with a valuable pedagogical experience at significantly lower cost than traditional approaches to distance learning and conventional face-to-face education." These initiatives could be irresistible to potential students. Educational institutions worldwide are offering courses via the Internet and a global lifelong learning economy is emerging, in which institutions must compete for students.

1.3.6 Globalisation

Globalisation will have a major impact on the future of higher education marketing. With globalisation also comes a diversity of culture, management style, expertise, technology, academic backgrounds and political orientation. Given the broad diversity of higher education systems around the world, it is surprising that institutions of higher learning are confronting the same challenges, placing them in a similar state of transition. One of the important outcomes of the transitional forces being experienced by higher education everywhere is a global environment of increased competition (The Future's Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World 2000: 3 of 18).

The new competition between higher education institutions – for students, for scarce resources, for recognition – is central to today's higher education's arena. There is no doubt that the free market mentality is impacting higher education in essentially all nations (The Future's Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World 2000: 4 of 18). Therefore the debate about the merits of globalisation is increasingly framed as – how much the percentage of students studying in other nations, or the number of institutions establishing alliances – rather than whether it is taking place (Merisotis 2000: 1 of 2).

Furthermore, the rate at which globalisation grows will be driven by financial considerations since, plainly stated, someone has to pay for all this movement of students, teachers, ideas and information. The down side to these competing tensions is the fact that globalisation may have little impact on narrowing the gap between the have and have-nots in the educational pecking order. While participation in the United States of America (USA) in higher education has grown substantially in the last 30 years, the gap in participation between low and high income, as well as between White and minority populations has remained virtually unchanged.

Effective branding strategies can ease the financial burden somewhat by private funding, because it is a fact that a rapidly globalising nation enjoys economic growth rates that are 30% to 50% higher than those for other countries (Merisotis 2000: 1 of 2). Globalisation will therefore benefit all.

The researcher is of the opinion that the existence of a global environment of technological innovation, instant communications, as well as strategic alliances should also be recognised. Inextricably linked to globalisation and its implications is the concept of an entrepreneurial university. The matter of relevancy has been and is mentioned numerous times in this chapter. One of the key elements of the entrepreneurial university, apart from its other positive attributes, is that it is perceived to be relevant to society. The researcher is of the opinion that no brand, no image, and no exercise can ever reach its full potential without relevance.

1.3.7 The entrepreneurial university

The idea of entrepreneurial universities has gained support in "response to constrained fiscal conditions and increased competition" and "many institutions have positioned themselves strategically to function in this increasingly entrepreneurial environment to maintain a competitive edge…" (Subotzky 1998: 8).

An entrepreneurial university actively seeks to innovate in how it goes about its business. It seeks to work out a significant shift in organisational character so as to arrive at a more promising posture for the future (Clark 1998: 4). Badat (2003a: 4 of 11) is of the opinion that there is an emerging discourse around the notion of the entrepreneurial university. Higher education institutions

are criticised for not being entrepreneurial enough and, in the face of declining public subsidies, are implored to search for new streams of income. Some want institutions of higher learning to be businesslike and expect them to behave as such.
In essence, what does it mean to be an entrepreneurial university? Is it possible that a university commercialise its intellectual property, or privatise its distance learning and be called an entrepreneurial university? It seems as if the answers to all these questions are negative. Clark (in Van Aardt Smit 2003: 12 of 14) describes an entrepreneurial university with concepts like "entire university becoming enterprising"; "taking risk"; innovation"; and "a shift in organisational character". It is most definitely not accidental or incidental transformation that can be implemented in a selected manner, nor a temporary change, but rather a process without end, although it does not happen overnight. However, those universities responding the quickest, will have the greatest benefits. It is also an international phenomenon and does not happen just in isolated incidences. It is a fundamental change in culture and direction (Van Aardt Smit 2003: 12 of 14).

The kind of research entrepreneurial universities are known for, includes but is not limited to, research projects in response to societal needs and it can be directly linked to their involvement in society.

It needs to be said, however, that the notion of entrepreneurial universities and whether public institutions should opt for the entrepreneurial route, have created conflicting responses from academics and public communities. It also needs to be said that many countries (especially South Africa) have witnessed significant transformations and reforms in their higher education systems, including the emergence of new types of institutions; changing patterns of financing and governance; the establishment of evaluation and accreditation mechanisms; curriculum reforms; and technological innovations. These changes in institutions of higher learning, coupled with a changing economic environment, impacted heavily on universities [Salmi (in Van Aardt Smit 2003: 1 of 14)]. It is still an open debate whether South African institutions of higher learning can go the entrepreneurial route. South African institutions might have neither the capacity, nor the culture to go this route.

1.3.8 Enrolment capping

In reaction to the financial dilemma faced by higher education and the pending problems associated with unexpected and extraordinary high growth rates in enrolments, the DoE proposes individual growth scenarios for each university, ranging from a drop in actual enrolment numbers, no further enrolment growth to and, in some instances, moderate growth. These proposals amount to retroactive changes with regard to 2003 for the 2005 funding year, and 2004 for the 2006 funding year (SAUVCA 2004b: 1 of 5).

These proposals resulted in an outcry among the student fraternity and, in some cases, resulted in turmoil on certain campuses. However, the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, reiterated that this does not mean that the doors of learning are closing. She further stated that students now had greater access to higher education

than before and that financial aid through the government bursary scheme was greater than before. According to Pandor, the controversial plan to limit the numbers of students that universities can enrol are intended to diversify options for students and there are no plans in place yet. According to the report, it is still being discussed with universities (in *Mail & Guardian* of 16 March 2005: 1 of 3).
SAUVCA (2004b: 1 of 5) is extremely concerned that the introduction of capping enrolments without any improvement in government funding of higher education will, in time, lead to universities laying great emphasis on attracting students who can pay their fees. It could have a detrimental effect on the efforts within higher education to widen access, especially for academically deserving, but economically and financially marginalised students. Increased access should remain a priority and requires adequate funding.

Enrolment capping also seeks quality and a move towards SET programmes. This, in turn, will have an impact on the branding and marketing practices of institutions of higher education.

1.3.9 Programme and qualification mix (PQM)

The DoE is responsible for evaluating and considering the programme and qualification mix (PQM) of public higher education institutions in South Africa. One of its objectives is to limit the duplication of programmes and thus limit the wasting of resources. Therefore public higher education institutions should apply for PQM approval to offer a new learning programme (SAQA 2005: 1 of 11).

This PQM exercise has certainly forced institutions of higher learning to take stock of their academic programmes and to engage in serious forward looking academic planning. It furthermore brought a certain element of order nationally and has constituted some kind of context against which applications for the introduction of new academic programmes can be assessed (CHE 2004: 1 of 8).

1.4 PERSPECTIVES ON DIFFERENT ISSUES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION ARENA

Subsequently, the perspectives of different authors on varying issues in the South African higher education arena will be expressed. It provides a meaningful insight by different leaders with different opinions into current issues effecting and affecting the current higher education terrain in South Africa. It serves merely as a background to this study and is added to showcase general feelings of opinion leaders.

Pandor holds the following opinion *on master's and doctoral students*: "It is unacceptable that South African Universities produced the same number of PhDs [*sic*] today as they did 30 years ago" (in *Business Day* of 4 October 2004: 1).

Ahmed Essop expresses the following view *on funding*: "...the present university funding formula which leaves institutions of higher learning free to decide on student enrolment numbers and on what teaching programmes to offer would soon be *kaput*" (in Holiday 2004: 1 of 3).

Subotzky holds the following view on *enrolment capping:* "The whole capping exercise comes from a climate of fiscal constraint … there is a paradox in the government reversing the whole trend towards the expansion in higher education" (in *Mail & Guardian* of 16 March 2005: 2).

Piyushi Kotecha, Director of the South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA), says the following *on merging*: "The danger of restructuring … is that it absorbs an enormous amount of energy during a time when South African Universities are feeling increasing competition from private universities in the United States, Europe, and Australia that have opened campuses in South Africa" (Rossouw 2004: 1 of 6).

Badsha states the following *on access*: "The issue of access has certainly been at the forefront of the struggle for quality higher education over the past two decades. The gains have been significant – 73% of students in higher education are black; just over 50% are women; a participation rate of 18% has been achieved; and enrolments in science engineering and technology are now 27% of the total" (2004: 1 of 2).

Pandor once again expresses the following view *on changed enrolments by fields of study*: "While overall gender quality had been achieved in higher education, women remained under-represented in a number of key areas of study like science, engineering, technology and in post-graduate studies" (in SAUVCA 2004a: *Higher Education in the News*).

Pandor in addition states the following *on increased equity in access and success rate*: "The taxpayer is wasting a whopping R1 billion a year paying for university students who fail in their first year of study. I am concerned about the throughput of students in higher education, especially those from disadvantaged communities" (in *City Press* of 26 September 2004: 1).

Singh has a clear view *on quality:* "The responsibility for improved quality and the pursuit of excellence is the responsibility of higher education institutions themselves" (2004: 4 of 4).
Lagace states the following *on e-learning*: "Some students enjoy following a course on their computer while others need a good deal of face-to-face contact in order to learn. For some individuals, online education is not a concept that will ever fit" (2004: 1 of 2).

Benghu unequivocally states the following *on private higher education*: "A growing number of Private Higher Education Institutions (in South Africa) are strong educational ventures as they place quality at the centre of their planning" (in *The Teacher* of 4 May 2004: 1).

To conclude, Schulte reports as follows *on the entrepreneurial university*: "…the entrepreneurial university will contribute to the development of its region, and through co-operation with other entities, to economic development in general" (2004: 1 of 1).

The above recent quotes from opinion leaders conclude the background of the higher education terrain currently in South Africa. In some cases these opinions link directly to possible solutions (see the last quote of Schulte). With the above perspectives in mind, the problem statement for this research comes to the fore.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Branding of higher education in South Africa has not been an area of priority and maybe understandably so, because it operated in a protected, regulated market with a steady income. This view is confirmed by Mzimela (2002: 1 of 2), who advocates that institutions of higher learning in South Africa were guaranteed a steady subsidy income and student enrolment. Unfortunately the market is now deregulated, open to outsiders, vulnerable to amateurs, and government subsidies come with numerous strings attached. Private higher education institutions have sprung up and government has new funding formulas mostly concerned with throughputs and outputs, which - in turn - influence competition among higher education institutions. While some might want to regard the above as "unfortunate", others might say that it is about time that higher education wakes up and smell the real word of competition. Sequential to this, branding has become almost a science on its own, taking into consideration, among other things, consumer behaviour.

The researcher is of the opinion that the rise in competition has been fostered by pressures for growth caused by increases in demand for higher education services, coupled with declining budgets available to ministers of education. Simultaneous increases in competition and cooperation among higher education institutions, which are seemingly contradictory conditions, are also necessitating these institutions to prioritise their internal practices that will enhance their brand and, in a sequential manner, image and reputation. However, a traditional perception of branding that is overly skewed to communicative outward strategies needs to be adjusted to be more consumer-orientated inward practices. Added to this, new kinds of branding are required by the world of work as well as by industry.

The problem statement is therefore the lack of proper internal branding practices based on the experience economy on the one hand and a total new higher education landscape unfolding on the other hand. This necessitates higher education institutions in South Africa to re-visit their internal practices as a means to address the distinctive challenges facing them with the purpose of enhancing quality, delivering graduates to the world of work, in addition to being responsive to society and the economic needs of the country. Added to this, higher education institutions need to be financially sustainable and relevant within a regional and national context.

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In South Africa, government has responded to societal needs and deems the future role of higher education to be responsive to the needs of society. The external demands for responsiveness have fuelled a need to re-visit branding and marketing strategies in higher education. The challenges facing higher education in this regard are to be responsive to societal needs and, whilst doing so, having a good institutional image.

The primary purpose of this study is to develop a model for higher education institutions in South Africa which would ultimately result in brand enhancement of institutions that would be perceived as relevant and society-minded to live up to the challenges of a new and changing landscape in South Africa. This model is based on internal practices based on the principles of the experience economy and relevance which, in turn, would lead to brand enhancement of a new higher education terrain (see Chapter 5).

1.6.1 Aims

This study wishes to achieve the following aims:

- Marketing and communications divisions of higher educations institutions in conjunction with other units should re-visit their internal practices in order to grapple with the distinctive challenges facing higher education institutions (see paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5).
- In addition to the above aim, marketing and communications divisions of higher educations institutions, also in collaboration with management and other units, should, among other things, adopt a market orientation mindset in order to be more successful with branding, recruiting the best possible students, as well as third-stream income (see Chapter 5).

1.6.2 Objectives

The study furthermore wishes to fulfil the following objectives through different methodological approaches that will be elaborated on in paragraph 1.7:

- Creating an awareness of the intense needs for a new approach university-wide with regard to branding (see empirical investigation in Chapter 4; also see paragraph 3.8).
- A critical reflection by marketing and communication divisions of higher education institutions on the

challenges facing them to develop new strategies (see paragraphs 1.1 and 3.1).

- Creating a model for higher education institutions in South Africa which will ultimately result in branding practices that will face up to the challenges of a new and changing terrain in South Africa (see Chapter 5).
- Enhancing the quality of current branding practices (see Chapter 5).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

A thorough literature study involving current and relevant literature on marketing and branding of higher education was needed. An in-depth look at current internal practices relating to branding of different higher education institutions in South Africa (nationally, see paragraph 4.9.1); a thorough investigation on a process followed to brand an institution (regionally, see paragraph 4.10.2); as well as current practices of two entrepreneurial universities abroad (internationally, see paragraphs 4.4.3; 4.5 and 4.6), were essential.

1.7.1 Research techniques

Focus group interviews were conducted with two entrepreneurial universities abroad to establish, among other things, their relevance, their perception of relevance and their relatedness to brand. Informal conversation interviews were conducted at seven institutions (10 participants) of higher learning nationally, mainly to obtain an in-depth look at their internal practices which are inextricably bound to brand. It was done face to face in their university setting.

This informal conversation interviews were of particular importance for, among others, benchmarking purposes. Furthermore a case study was done into a university of technology to establish how it has branded its new status as a university of technology, as well as its new name.

Participant observation in the workplace relating to internal practices which relate to branding was also useful to generate ideas. By also being a participant observer, the researcher attempted to enter the lives of the marketing officials. This was possible due to the researcher's main tasks in a higher education institution.

1.7.2 Sampling

"Purposeful" sampling of marketing officials were done as a strategy to choose small groups of individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about branding practices in higher education (McMillan & Schumacher 2001: 175). It was done internationally at two universities, nationally at seven universities and regionally as a case study.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following aspects are indicators of the demarcations of this research:

- Only acts and policies in terms of the South African context are regarded as directive, although the international tendencies that pertain to the South African context should not be ignored.
- Although the target group is adherent to eight higher education institutions (case study included) in the

current higher education landscape in South Africa, the researcher interviewed 10 participants (see paragraph 6.4).

1.9 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The following concepts are clarified in order to ensure clarity and to provide a better understanding of their contextual use:

1.9.1 Branding

Although many definitions and clarification about branding exist (see paragraph 3.2), this study emphasises its worth mainly through internal operations and processes which would lead to an experience by the stakeholder. Therefore, the researcher views branding in a higher educational sense as the conscious intervention by management and the marketing division in every function that can have an effect on its customer base. This intervention includes committed employees; visual identity; relevance with regard to its offerings; and process management, to name but a few.

1.9.2 Marketing

Marketing (see paragraph 3.4) is the process by which companies satisfy customers' needs. This is achieved by the manipulation of the elements of the *marketing mix*. This mix has traditionally been seen to be the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place and promotion. Since recently an expanded mix has three additional elements, namely people, physical evidence, and process management.

1.9.3 Experience economy

In its simplest form the experience economy (see paragraph 3.10) is the notion that brand equity can be achieved through experience. Only then can the brand become real. This is a shift away from the overly skewed understanding that brand equity is achieved through visual identity and outward branding exercises.

1.9.4 Process management

Process management (see paragraph 3.7) is the pertinent techniques and tools applied to a process to implement and improve process effectiveness, hold the gains, and ensure process integrity in fulfilling customer requirements (Six Sigma 2005: 1 of 4). Moreover, this study accentuates the fact that process management should not only be seen as a tool for smooth internal operations, but should be expanded to enhance customer delight.

1.9.5 Relevance

Relevance, as a term, is a widely used concept. For the scope of this study and in a higher education sense, it is the term used to link it to the significance of higher education, among others. Furthermore, it is linked to brand enhancement in the sense that institutions should embark on activities that will cause them to be perceived as relevant.

1.9.6 Corporate citizenship

Corporate citizenship (see paragraph 5.4.2) is the commonly used term that refers to stakeholders' expectations of organisations to be economically, environmentally and sociably sustainable; to be accountable and transparent; to be inclusive; to be ethical; and to be more equitable. In a higher education sense it includes all the aforesaid, but with an added emphasis on community outreach elements which form part of its core functions.

1.9.7 Reputation

Reputation and branding are quite synonymous concepts (see paragraph 3.5). However, for the scope of this study as well as in a higher educational perspective, reputation is viewed as an advantage that comes more naturally, that is a sequential benefit which comes after careful and consistent brand-building based on the experience economy.

1.9.8 Integrated branding

Integrated branding (see paragraph 3.8) in an uncomplicated way is a strategy to move an institution in an effective direction by integrating all actions and messages internally and externally. The higher education scenario, because of its multiple operations, tends to be loosely structured in terms of its branding exercises. This concept seeks to combine all efforts in a strategically integrated way.

1.9.9 Market orientation

Market orientation (see paragraph 5.3.4) is more of an attitude pervasive throughout an organisation (and in higher education) where involvement from the customer in the service production process means that administration, academic and support staff work effectively together (Shoemaker & Muston 1999: 1 of 17).

1.10 PLANNING OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

In this chapter an introductory perspective on the historical and current higher education terrain, as well as a problem orientation regarding the need for higher education institutions to re-visit their internal practices in order to be relevant to societal needs has been provided. Chapter 2 captures the theoretical aspects of the empirical research methodologies, whilst Chapter 3 focuses on the theoretical perspectives of branding. Chapter 4 describes the research component, namely the empirical investigation used for this study. In Chapter 5 a model is developed for higher education institutions which could ultimately result in an awareness that no successful branding can possibly take place without internal practises being aligned to the brand message. Finally, Chapter 6 contains a summary of the conclusions as well as the recommendations of this study.

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter provides a broad and introductory perspective and orientation of the historical and current higher education terrain; the major impact that the NPHE has in the South African future landscape; as well as other major factors impacting on South African higher education. The problem orientation, namely that higher education institutions lack proper internal practices to live up to the new landscape envisaged for South African higher education, is also outlined in this chapter. The planning of the research report is also included.

The following chapter will focus on the theoretical aspects of the research methodologies used in this study.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the theoretical perspectives of research. In educational research, two main paradigms have dominated over the past 100 years – the quantitative and the qualitative research paradigms.

According to Scott and Usher (1996: 59–64), traditionally some methodological strategies (for example experimental, *ex post-facto*, correlational and survey) have been designated as quantitative and others (ethnography and condensed case study) as qualitative. In a similar way, some methods (structured interviews, questionnaires and focus group interviews) have been categorised as quantitative, while others (unstructured interviews and participant observation) have been categorised as qualitative. In the past the quantitative approach dominated the study of higher education, since the kind of research and line of inquiries were more based on quantitative-structural studies (Schwarz & Teichler 2000: 15). Conrad, Haworth and Lattuca (2001: xi), on the other hand, emphasise the rise and growing acceptance of qualitative research in higher education. In this regard, Pring (2000: 56) states that educational research seems to fall into two “philosophical and competing camps”. One embraces a scientific model for understanding educational practice; the other emphasises that human beings cannot be the objects of science and that research must focus upon “subjective meanings”. However, as Pring (2000: 56) argues, the many ways in which research is conducted reveals a more complicated scenario. Understanding human beings, and thus researching into what they do, why and how they behave, call upon many different methods, each making complex assumptions about what it means to explain behaviours and personal and social activities.

Higher education as a discipline tends to cut across various disciplines. Schwarz and Teichler (2000: 14-15) identify four main "spheres of knowledge", structured according to the logic of themes and disciplines or related areas of expertise of higher education. According to them (2000: 15), many research projects that aim at cutting across disciplines and themes include the following typology:

- quantitative-structural aspects of research;
- knowledge and subject-related aspects;
- person- or teaching- and learning-related aspects; and
- aspects of the institution's organisational governance.

It is thus no surprise that the assumption that the qualitative and the quantitative research paradigms represent two distinct and opposed approaches to the study of the social world, is being challenged and has led to a fierce debate on these research methodologies by various writers.

2.2 DEBATE ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Shulman (in McMillan & Schumacher 2001: 10-11) notes several reasons why educational researchers debate about appropriate research methods to study education, namely:

- Educational enquiry demands the selection of a particular set of measured observations or facts from infinite possibilities.

- Disciplined enquiry refers not only to a systematic investigation, but also to the disciplines themselves. Research principles are somewhat different in each of the disciplines.
- The major reason why research methodology is an exciting area in education, is that education itself is not a science or a discipline. Education is a field of enquiry where the phenomena, events, people, processes and institutions constitute the raw materials for inquiries of many kinds.

Scott and Usher (1996: 59-64), Pring (2000: 43) and Cherry (2000: 89) reiterate that the debate on quantitative and qualitative research is not to deny that differences between them exist, but that the two methods do not belong within separate research paradigms and thus can be used within the same investigation.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 8) confirm the tensions related to the opposed approaches of qualitative and quantitative research by stating that the academic and disciplinary resistances to qualitative research illustrate the politics embedded in this field of discourse. Qualitative researchers are called journalists or soft scientists, and their work is termed unscientific, exploratory, or subjective. Positivists further allege that so-called new experimental qualitative researchers write fiction, not science, and that they have no way of verifying the truth of their statements. But, as Babbie and Mouton (2001: 16) state, the search for "truth" does not imply a search for certainty or absolute truths, but a search for the most valid or best approximation to the world.

Conrad *et al.* (2001: 27-29) as well as Krathwohl (1998:5) agree that qualitative research is often contrasted with quantitative research. The picture is complicated when it is considered that, within each of these broad categories, there are "sub-schools of thought". Where a quantitative researcher might seek to know what percentage of people do one thing or another, the qualitative researcher pays much greater attention to individual cases and the human understandings that feature in those cases. Krathwohl (1998: 232) further states that in the past, qualitative researchers were defensive of their method, while quantitative researchers were extremely critical of it. Because qualitative methods are not identical to those of the natural sciences, some quantitative researchers view them as unscientific and never as satisfactory as experimentation.

The sharp contrast between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies is referred to as the "False Dualism" of educational research (Pring 2000: 43). He states that the sharp contrast between qualitative and quantitative research is made on the basis not of "appropriateness to task", but of "epistemology" and even "ontology". Researchers work within different paradigms. These differences are reflected in the respective languages of each and in the way in which key ideas or concepts take on a different logical character. These concepts link together in logically different ways and take on slightly different meanings. Such words as "objectivity" (and, by contrast, "subjectivity"), "reality" (and "multiple realities"), "truth" and "verification", "knowledge" and "meaning" are interrelated and defined differently. Cherry (2000: 89) indicates that the distinctions *within* the so-called paradigms are often as significant as the distinctions *between* them. Quantitative research will cover enquiries which range from the detailed measurement and correlation of performances within a behaviourist tradition to the large-scale surveys of social trends. Qualitative research will cover symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnography and hermeneutics. The failure to recognise the complexity of enquiry and of the nature of that which is being enquired into, causes the blurring of the distinctions within the research paradigms. This, in turn, leads to the sharp contrast between them.

Although differences and debates are characteristics of scholarly activities, Pring (2000: 87) cautions that the deep divisions between educational researchers based upon philosophical positions have a profound impact upon the conduct of research. The way in which we understand and explain the social world, and thus educational practice, is more complex than that. The researcher would like to embrace a combined method according to which the one supplements and complements/triangulates the other in order to reach the most correct interpretation of the research problem.

2.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DEFINED

Qualitative research is not easy to define, because qualitative research methodology has many different viewpoints. Separate and multiple uses and meanings of the methods of qualitative research make it difficult for researchers to agree to any essential definition of the field. Qualitative research ranges from cultural understanding (ethnography) to the larger suggestion of an alternative philosophy paradigm (naturalistic), to the field of encircling assumptions and techniques (O'Connor 2001). O'Connor (2001: 18) elaborates by stating that qualitative research does not involve the same terminology as ordinary science. According to him, qualitative research is *grounded theory,* built up from the ground. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 6-8) share the opinion of Crowson (1987: 3-4) that qualitative research is difficult to define clearly, because it has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own. They further describe qualitative research as a set of practices, embraced within its own multiple disciplinary histories, constant tensions and contradictions over the project itself, including its methods and interpretations.

The process of qualitative research emphasises the qualities of entries and the process and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. The socially constructed or nature of reality; the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied; and the situational constraints that shape inquiry; are emphasised by qualitative researchers. Such researchers accentuate the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.

Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg (in Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 7) note that qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities and the social and physical sciences and is thus "multi-paradigmatic" in focus. Cherry (2000) states that qualitative research is a field of enquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject-matters. Winburg (1997: 3) defines qualitative research as research that produces descriptions of *how* and *why* people do certain things. According to Krathwohl (1998), Babbie and Mouton (2001), as well as McMillan and Schumacher (2001), qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This implies that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 53) add that qualitative research takes its departure point as the "insider perspective" on social action, which in turn creates room for participant observation. Qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the insider's perspective (also referred to as the "emic" perspective), as also emphasised by Ratcliff (2002) and Krathwohl (1998: 229); to "get inside" others to view the world as they perceive it. Krathwohl (1998: 229) also refers to the emic view as the "phenomenological" point of view. Bogdan and Biklen (in Krathwohl 1998:235) call it *thinking naturalistically* and argue that, through our experiences, we construct a view of the world that determines how we act.

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 53) indicate that different terms are often used by different researchers as synonyms for qualitative research, for example "ethnography" (Agar, Lofland, Hammersly & Atkinson); "field research" (Burgess); and "naturalistic research" (Denzin, Schatzmann & Strauss).

It is important to bear in mind that, behind the theory, method, analysis and methodology of qualitative research, stands the personal biography of the researcher, who researches from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, "a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)", as Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 18) point out.

The quantitative research paradigm will subsequently be discussed to obtain a more balanced perspective on both paradigms in order to take an informed decision on the research methodology of the study.

2.4 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DEFINED

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 49), McMillan and Schumacher (2001), Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001), as well as Punch (2000), draw attention to the quantification of constructs in the quantitative research paradigm. The quantitative researcher believes that the best, or the only way of measurement is assigning numbers to the perceived qualities of things. Quantitative research as empirical research is indirect and abstract and treats experiences as similar, adding or multiplying them together, or quantifying them. Cherry (2000: 77) adds that in quantitative research statistical techniques have been developed so that quantitative methods can be applied using experimental approaches, cross-sectional/survey design and time series design. Related to the assignment of numbers to the perceived qualities of things, is the central role of variables in describing and analysing human behaviour, which is known as "variable analysis". The central role is afforded to control for sources of error in the research process. The nature of control is either through experimental control or statistical control. If properly designed, quantitative research can more effectively control certain kinds of error, such as selective and biased interpretation (Cherry 2000: 77). However, human behaviour is much more complex than this explanation.

Not only do various differences between the two research paradigms exist, but also quite a number of similarities do. These similarities inform the discussion that follows.

2.5 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Similarities between qualitative and quantitative research as described by Blaxter *et al.* (2001: 65) include the following:

- While quantitative research may be used mostly for testing theory, it can also be used for exploring an area and to generate hypotheses and theories. Similarly, qualitative research can be used for testing hypotheses and theories, even though it is mostly used for the generation of theory.
- Qualitative data often include quantification (for example statements such as "more/less than", "most", "a few", as well as specific numbers), whilst quantitative approaches (for example large-scale surveys) can collect qualitative (non-numeric) data through open-ended questions.

- The underlying philosophical positions of the two research methodologies are not necessarily as distinct as the stereotypes suggest.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 11) emphasise that both quantitative and qualitative research require an explicit description of data collection and analysis procedures. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 10) note further similarities, namely that both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with the individual's point of view. Qualitative investigators think they can come closer to the participant's perspective through detailed interviewing and observation. They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture their subjects' perspectives because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials. The empirical materials produced by interpretive methods are regarded by many quantitative researchers as unreliable, impressionistic, and not objective. Although many qualitative researchers will use statistical measures, methods, and documents as a way of locating groups of subjects within larger populations, they will seldom report their findings in terms of the kind of complex statistical measures or methods to which quantitative researchers are drawn.

As mentioned in paragraph 2.4, various differences between qualitative and quantitative research exist.

2.6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Not all qualitative researchers share the same point of view regarding the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. Blaxter *et al.* (2001: 85) note that an important difference is with regard to the structure and process aspects. Quantitative research is especially efficient at getting at the structural features of social life, while qualitative studies are usually stronger on process aspects.

Another difference stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 10) is that qualitative researchers are more likely to confront and come up against the constraints of the everyday social world. They see this world in action and embed their findings in it, whilst quantitative researchers abstract from this world and seldom study it directly. Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions of the social world are valuable, whereas quantitative researchers are less concerned with such detail, because it interrupts the process of developing generalisations. Qualitative researchers use – among others - ethnographic prose, historical narratives, first-person accounts, still photographs, life histories, fictional "facts", and biographical and autobiographical materials. Quantitative researchers use mathematical models, statistical tables, as well as graphs and usually write about their research in impersonal, third-person prose.

From the literature of the following writers, namely McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 11-15), Cook and Reichardt (in Ratcliff 2002), Babbie and Mouton (2001: 309) and Blaxter *et al.* (2001: 85), additional differences between qualitative and quantitative research are provided as illustrated in Table 2.1:

TABLE 2.1: Differences between qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Multiple realities	A single reality
Phenomenological	Positivistic
Detailed description of phenomenon	Measurement and statistics
Extension of understanding by others	Results replicated by others
Primarily inductive	Primarily deductive
Process-orientated	Outcome-orientated
Holistic	Particularistic
Subjective/insider-centred	Objective/outsider-centred
Summary generalisations	Least complicated explanation preferred
Sources, evidence	Numerical data
Tentative summary interpretations	Statements of statistical probability
Anthropological worldview	Natural science worldview
Understanding a social situation from participants' perspectives	Establish relationships between measured variables
Relative lack of control	Attempt to control variables
Flexible changing strategies; design emerges as data being collected	Procedures are established before study begins
Ethnography using "disciplined subjectivity"	Experimental design to reduce error and bias
Prepared researcher becomes immersed in social situation	Researcher role: detached with use of instrument
Discovery-oriented	Verification-oriented
Goal of detailed context-bound generalisations	Goal of universal context-free generalisations

Explanatory	Confirmatory
Goal: understand actor’s view	Goal: find facts and causes
Driven by subject’s perspective	Driven by researcher’s concerns

Many of these differences discussed between quantitative and qualitative research are not absolute. Researchers may combine both research methodologies in a single study, or some of the characteristics of these methods. This does not necessarily imply that the combination of these methods is in conflict or incompatible.

2.7 COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) established that both quantitative and qualitative inquiry modes contribute significantly to our knowledge of education. This balanced treatment of both approaches in research is also emphasised by the perspectives of Babbie and Mouton (2001) as well as Blaxter *et al.* (2001) who state that, despite the fundamentally different premises and epistemological traditions, quantitative and qualitative approaches should not be seen as opposing or mutually exclusive. Although their respective basic premises cannot be reconciled, the two approaches should be regarded as potentially compatible systems of investigation, and procedures from both approaches can be co-operatively employed to serve the purpose of research even better.

Blaxter *et al.* (2001: 84) and Babbie and Mouton (2001: 368) emphasise that, although there is no question that certain types of questions necessitate certain types of research design, and therefore also specific methods, this does not mean that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is not possible or desirable. Predominantly qualitative methods of data collection and analysis during the implementation evaluation study can be used. In the outcome evaluation study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods – both to collect and ultimately to analyse data - can be used.

It is now common for researchers to use more than one method. The main method might, for example, be a set of interviews or a series of observations, but this is likely to be complemented, at the very least, by some documentary analyses to enable the researcher to explore relevant literature or policy. Most research projects in the social sciences are, therefore, in a general sense of a "multi-method" nature (Blaxter *et al.* 2001: 84). The researcher might complement interviews within an institution with the analysis of available documents in order to compare written or spoken versions, including for example an analysis of policies and reports.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection have strengths and weaknesses. The aim of any research study is to design and execute the project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the conclusions and results are optimised, as stated by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 368). No amount of design can anticipate every possible source of error.

By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the strengths of each method can be capitalised on and higher quality data can be ensured. When qualitative and quantitative research techniques are employed, the philosophy of one research methodology is used, for example the qualitative research paradigm, but with application of certain techniques of another research philosophy, like that of the quantitative research paradigm. During this study the above-mentioned approach will be used. The researcher will vary the usage of these techniques during this study.

In empirical research the sampling of the research group (respondents) is also of vital importance for ensuring high quality data.

2.8 SAMPLING

Two ways of sampling are described by Cherry (2000: 54), as well as by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 287), namely the traditional social science approach where a representative sample of the population is studied, and the phenomenological approach where a sample technique is employed.

The researcher will use "purposeful" sampling, also referred to as "purposive, judgement or judgemental" sampling (McMillan & Schumacher 2001: 175). The same authors reaffirm that "information-rich cases for study in-depth" is selected in this way. Silverman (2000: 104) adds that purposeful sampling demands that one thinks critically about the parameters of the population one is interested in and chooses one's sample carefully on this basis. Thus, using a purposeful sample is useful for obtaining the vital and most applicable information needed.

It should be borne in mind that human and social

phenomena are very complex. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), such an approach to purposefully selecting people or settings for a study acknowledges this complexity. The changing South African higher education landscape, specifically the process of mergers and incorporations of higher education institutions, necessitates acknowledgement of this complexity.
When deciding on the sample composition, size and representation of the research, the researcher also has to consider ethical issues in research.

2.9 ETHICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH

Ethics is generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad, as McMillan and Schumacher (2001), Blaxter *et al.* (2001) and Babbie and Mouton (2001) reiterate. The same writers note that the conduct of ethically informed social research should be the goal of all social researchers. Although ethical issues arise predominantly with qualitative research methods of data collection due to the closer relationship and interaction between the researcher and the participants of the research, all social research gives rise to a range of ethical issues. These issues include privacy, informed consent, anonymity and being truthful.

Pring (2000: 140-141) argues that "ethics" is quite often used loosely, for example interchangeably with morals. Normally a distinction is drawn by philosophers between "morals" (concerned with what is the right or the wrong thing to do) and ethics (the philosophical enquiry into the basis of morals or moral judgement). Translated into the language of educational research, "ethics" for Simons (in

Pring 2000: 140) refers to the "search for rules of conduct that enable us to operate defensibly in the political contexts in which we have to conduct educational research".

Pring (2000: 140) elaborates that there is rarely a clear-cut and context-free set of rules or principles which can be applied without deliberation and judgement. There is a constant need to reflect on those values which inform the research and the ways in which those values might be made concrete in the research activity itself.

2.10 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

2.10.1 Document analysis

A proper literature review helps to place the researcher's work in context of what has already been researched, allowing comparisons to be made and providing a framework for further research (Fink in Blaxter *et al.* 2001: 120). Fink further notes that the literature review is a "systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting existing recorded work". McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 109) emphasise that the knowledge of the literature is used in stating the significance of the problem, developing the research design and suggesting further research.

In this study an in-depth literature study, which is relevant to branding in general but also to higher education in particular globally as well as in South Africa, in addition to Internet and newspaper reports/articles were used in order to provide valuable information and insights into the complexities of branding strategies.

2.10.2 Interviews

Focus group interviews as well as informal conversation interviews were held with the different respondents to the study.

2.10.2.1 *Focus group interviews*

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 455) state that the focus group interview is a strategy for obtaining a better understanding of a problem or an assessment of a problem, programme, or idea by interviewing a purposefully sampled group of people rather than each person individually. According to them, a social environment in which group members are stimulated by the perceptions and ideas of one another can increase the quality and richness of data through a more efficient strategy than one-on-one interviewing.

Morgan (in Flick 1999:122) adds that the hallmark of focus group interviews is the "explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction formed in a group" (see paragraphs 1.7.1 and 4.4.3).

2.10.2.2 *Informal conversation interviews*

Interviews that are more like a conversation/discussion are referred to as "informal conversation interviews" by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:438; see paragraphs 1.7.1 and 4.9).

The findings of the focus group interviews as well as of the informal conversation interviews will be elaborated on in paragraphs 4.5; 4.9 and 4.11. The focus group interviews were suitable for this study due to the collective discussions and shared views on entrepreneurial universities. In addition, the informal discussion interviews were suitable because the purpose thereof was to discuss the insights, perceptions and interpretations of the respondents' institutional branding strategies.

2.10.3 Case studies

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 490), case study research contains "description, analysis, and naturalistic generalisations". An extensive description of the case and its context is based on a wide variety of data sources, namely documentation, archival records, interviews, and participant observation. A few key issues, which are analysed further, are presented so that the complexity of the case can be appreciated.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) identify several types of case studies, for example "intrinsic", "instrumental" and "collective". Intrinsic case studies are undertaken for better understanding of a particular case. In an instrumental case study, a particular case is studied to provide insight into an issue. The case is of secondary interest, facilitating our understanding of something else. The choice of case (see paragraph 4.10.1) is made because it is expected to advance the understanding of branding practices at South African higher education institutions. A number of cases may also be studied jointly in order to acquire into a phenomenon. This is called a collective case study – it is not the study of a collective, but an instrumental study extended to several cases.

2.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA

To give any research credibility, it is of the utmost importance to apply quality control measures. Two of the main mechanisms of quality control are validity and reliability of data. According to Mouton and Marais (1996: 79), the central consideration of validity concerning the process of data collection is that of reliability. They describe reliability and validity as "trustworthiness". This perspective is also emphasised in the literature by McMillan and Schumacher (2001) as well as Punch (2000). The reliability of data or observations is influenced by the researcher, the participant, the measuring instrument (focus group interviews, informal conversation interviews and case study), and the research context (South African higher education landscape) in which the research is conducted.

When enhancing validity and reliability in the qualitative paradigm, Babbie and Mouton (2001: 275) warn that one should be more concerned with triangulation, writing extensive field notes and reasoned consensus. Triangulation is defined by Denzin (in Babbie & Mouton 2001) as the use of multiple methods, a plan of action that will raise social science researchers above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies. By combining methods in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one method. Triangulation can be done according to paradigms, methodologies, methods, and so forth.

Triangulation in this study involved using more than one method in the collection of data. A combination of the following sources of data, namely documentation, informal conversation interviews (see paragraph 2.10.2.2), focus group interviews (see paragraph 2.10.2.1), a case study (see paragraph 2.10.3) and participant observation (see paragraph 4.8), were used. The information from the use of the combination of these sources of data will be analysed in Chapter 4 to establish the findings of the triangulation. Triangulation is generally considered to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research. This statement is confirmed by Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Punch (2000: 247).

Although the researcher should strive with everything in his power to deliver truly valid, reliable, and objective studies, the reality is that this can never be attained completely. Rather, as Babbie and Mouton (2001: 276) indicate, it remains a goal, something to be striven after.

2.12 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Due to the multiple methods and multiple sources of data that are used to study human behaviour (Punch 2000: 174), there is a variety of techniques to analyse data, because there are different questions to be addressed and different versions of social reality that can be elaborated upon.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) state that data analysis entails several cyclical phases which are, among other things, the following:

- Continuous discovery, so as to identify tentative themes and develop concepts and mini-theories. In this regard Blaxter *et al.* (2001: 192) reiterate that data analysis is an ongoing process with earlier analysis informing later data collection.

- Categorising and ordering of data typically follow after data collection, so as to refine one's understanding of patterns and themes. The development of categories, as well as integration of concepts and connections to existing literature, are ways of reconstructing the data. Differences and consistencies can be found in this way.

The researcher made use of the constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse 1994: 134) of analysing qualitative data, which combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. This method will be elaborated on in Chapter 4 in order to contribute to the proposed model in Chapter 5.

2.13 CONCLUSION

Although the similarities and differences of the two main research paradigms, namely the qualitative and the quantitative research methodologies were discussed in detail, the emphasis should not be on the differences, because the differences refer to a "False Dualism" (Pring 2000: 43). This "False Dualism" is being challenged and debated by educational researchers worldwide and it has led to a much more balanced perspective regarding the two research paradigms. The debate has further led to the question of whether quantitative and qualitative methods should or could be combined effectively in one study. This has been debated in some detail in the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences, as highlighted by

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 368). These cases increasingly become the exception to the rule, because social researchers are much more pragmatic and eclectic in their selection of methodologies.

In the next chapter theoretical perspectives on branding as a marketing approach will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BRANDING AS A MARKETING APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks extensively into the concept of "branding", what it means, and how it can impact on business in general as well as among institutions of higher learning.

Arguably the whole notion of branding is yet again another corporate buzz-word, like "change management", "strategy", "position statement", "team- building" and others. When one hears how absolutely fateful these corporate buzz-words are when introduced, one wonders how companies could have managed to survive without them in the past. A few years ago companies felt that they would die a certain death if they did not apply "change management"; where consultants informed (and impressed upon) employees that the only two things in life that one can be certain about, are death and change. "Team building" was another corporate buzz-word according to which the only beneficiaries were the consultants who took employees on expensive white river rafting exercises. Employees came back and spoke highly of the experience, only to be seen a month later doing exactly what they had been doing all along. The question can rightfully be asked if "branding" is not yet another corporate buzz-word that will eventually fade with no lasting impact.

Not according to Stewart (2004: 1 of 3), who states that "branding" is high on the agenda of business today. He further states that the reason is straightforward and underscores a clear business message in today's crowded marketplace: the brand defines the unique point of differentiation for the products and services and is, perhaps, the only real opportunity to stand out. Reis and Reis (2004: 2 – 3 of 4) agree when they mention that "… everyone knows that building your product or service into a bona fida brand is the only way to cut through the clutter in today's insanely crowded place."

The literature is reviewed to give a meaningful and current background on the entire matter of branding and mostly conceptualised based on the experience economy. This review also serves as benchmark in today's crowded branding world. It is then contextualised in a higher educational sense.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF BRANDING

There are numerous definitions of exactly what branding is. It is worth having a look at a few, not for the sake of defining branding, but rather for the sake of finding commonalities among the definitions. If one asks five marketing professionals or brand managers to define the word "brand", one very well may receive five different answers. Most of these answers will have at least, hopefully, some commonalities.

A great many definitions about branding exist and the real challenge here was to find one that captured the idea in a simple straightforward way. Any brand is clearly more than just a name. "Brands are the beliefs, values and service experiences that underpin them (the names)" (Stewart 2004: 1 of 3). A more descriptive and more complex definition is the one of Mariotti (2000: 14) when he maintains that "A brand or brand name, is a simplified, 'shorthand' description of a package of value upon which consumers and prospective purchasers can rely to be consistently the same (or better) over long periods of time." The researcher also favours this definition of a brand because the words "rely", "consistent" and "value" emerge. These concepts keep on surfacing in the hundreds of definitions that exist.

Rohlander (in Mariotti 2000: 14) is more unambiguous when he states: "A brand is just a word: Kleenex, Xerox, or Jell-O. It is the core of your strategy, your DNA. It embodies your image, determines your marketing from concept to execution, includes assets and liabilities, and influences internal and external customer… Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Your brand is who you are." It can hardly be put stronger than this. Nothing can be more YOU than your DNA. This definition brings to mind the meaning of ordinary names (like Jacob) in Biblical times. Back then a person's name was not only a name; it represented that person's character, his nature and everything around him, including his family. According to Dolak (2001: 6 of 7), "a brand is an identifiable entity that makes specific promises of value." Although very simple and straightforward, it does not touch on other issues of a brand which are equally important.

A more comprehensive definition of a brand comes from Roll (2004: 1 of 4) when he proclaims that a brand is a name, term, symbol, association, trademark or design and is intended to identify the products or services of one provider or group of providers, and to differentiate them from those of competitors. It has functional and emotional elements which create a relationship between customers and the product or service.

The last of the definitions of branding is a rather poetic one: “A brand is the most valuable real-estate in the world, a corner of the consumer’s mind” (Building Brands 2004: 1 of 2).

The latest explanation of branding and arguably the most appropriate, is uttered by Bedbury (2002: 1) when he states that: “these days the term ‘branding’ is being uttered in the same pious, reverential tones formerly reserved for buzz words like ‘synergy’, ‘leverage’, and ‘strategic planning’”. The same author continues by adding that the word “brand” has become part of the vernacular within every department of any progressive company. It is no longer confined to packaged consumer products. It is on everyone’s radar screen, but not everyone really knows what it means.

3.2.1 Brand and higher education

Moore (2004: 3 of 12) reiterates that the brand of higher education is in the eye of the beholder. It is the collective impression of the content, character, and quality of an institution and its service offerings. Where Dolak (2001: 6 of 7) regards branding as a promise, in other words coming from the “*Brander*”, Moore (2004: 3 of 12) regards it as an impression coming from the “*Brandee*” or the “*Branded*”. Sevier (2004: 1 of 2) agrees with Moore and maintains that branding of higher education is not just a look or a logo. It is a promise colleges and universities are making to alumni, prospective students, the general public, and themselves. A promise that, if applied effectively, can work to increase enrolment, boost giving, create awareness and deliver relevance. Sevier (2004: 1 of 2) tries to explain his idea of branding at higher education institutions rather than giving a definition.

3.2.2 Conceptualisation of branding concepts

If all the definitions and their messages can be bound together on the messages they wish to convey, it is a combination of the following:

Promises made to customers
based on multiple experiences over time
delivered with a consistently high level of quality and value
that are perceived to be unparallelled to the competition
ultimately resulting in deep, trust-based relationships
which, in turn, garner great amounts of loyalty and profits over time
(Davis & Dunn 2002: 15).

From the above one can deduct that a brand is indeed a promise, but most certainly not a promise in the traditional sense of the word, but rather an *implied* promise. It must be consistent and be able to stand the test of time; it must be better than the competition; and have a very strong relationship connotation.

From the researcher's own clarification on branding the following can be said: Branding is the conscious intervention by management and the marketing division in every function of an organisation that can have an effect on the organisation's customer base. This intervention includes committed employees; visual identity; relevance with regard to its offerings; and process management to name but a few. This would mean that higher education institutions should seriously focus inward and look at everything that can affect and have an effect on the brand. Processes like the registration of students and financial administrative effectiveness, to name but a few, are examples of inward focusing.

3.2.3 Concepts closely linked to brand

Other concepts closely related and sometimes synonymous to branding are, among others, the following:

3.2.3.1 *Brand attributes*

These are the functional and emotional associations which are assigned to a brand by its customers and prospects. They can be either positive or negative and can have different degrees of relevance and importance to different customer segments, markets and cultures. These attributes are the basic elements for establishing a brand identity (Roll 2004: 1 of 4). The experience economy mentioned throughout this study, but more specifically in paragraph 5.3, in addition to the notion of relevance in paragraph 5.4 are examples of brand attributes.

3.2.3.2 *Brand audit*

It is a comprehensive and systematic examination of a brand involving activities (both tangible and intangible) to assess the health of the brand; uncover its sources of equity; and suggest ways to improve and leverage that equity (Roll 2004: 1 of 4; see paragraph 3.13.1 on UNISA).

3.2.3.3 ***Brand awareness***

This is a common measure of marketing communications' effectiveness. It gets measured by two distinct measures; brand recognition and brand recall (Roll 2004: 1 of 4). Chandon (2004: 2 of 14) agrees when he states that brand awareness measures the accessibility of the brand in memory (see paragraph 5.5.1).

3.2.3.4 ***Brand culture***

Strong brands are managed by organisations characterised by strong internal brand cultures. A strong brand culture on the other hand is determined by the internal attitudes towards branding, management behaviour and practices of an organisation (Roll 2004: 1 of 4). Lowry (2005: 1 of 3) and Monaco (2004: 1 of 1) confirm that the employees are still the most important marketing that can be done. (The entrepreneurial university mentioned in Chapters 1, 4 and 5, has as one of its attributes a strong internal culture.) Employees know what is expected from them and they all work towards a common goal. Question 6 (see paragraph 4.5.6) during the empirical investigation refers directly to culture and brand. A strong emphasis is also put on the role of Human Resources in this study which is directly linked with an organisation's culture.

3.2.3.5 ***Brand equity***

Brand equity refers to a form of intangible wealth, also referred to as "reputational capital". According to

McDonald (2004: 1 of 4), an institution of higher learning with a large stock of reputational capital gains a competitive advantage because its reputation enables it to charge premium prices for its products. Chandon (2004: 7 of 14) takes the definition further when he states that brand equity is the differential effect that brand awareness and brand associations have on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. The two universities in the west (see paragraph 4.9.1), both felt that they had a reputational advantage compared to other institutions, but it was because of historical reasons.

3.2.3.6 *Brand image*

It is a unique set of associations within the minds of target customers which represent what the brand currently stands for and implies the current promise to customers (Roll 2004: 1 of 4). Chandon (2004: 3 of 14) agrees with the fact that it is about associations held in consumers' memory. Mention is made about taglines in paragraph 3.13.1 and its promise upfront. Very careful consideration must be given to create an image with words. It should rather be done by the principles of the experience economy (see paragraph 3.10) and be sealed by words.

3.2.3.7 *Brand loyalty*

Roll (2004: 1 of 4) reiterates that brand loyalty represents the strength of preference for a brand compared to other similar available brand options. It is measured through a range of different dimensions, for example repeat purchase behaviour and price sensitivity. Initially it seems as if this concept does not belong to the higher education terrain entirely, but if one considers outcomes 1, 3 and 14 of the NPHE (see paragraph 1.2.3), higher education also needs "repeat business". Added to this, alumni participation is extremely important, especially with the third-stream income potential it has. Loyalty, on another level, can also be linked to the matter of relevancy, (see paragraph 3.9).

3.2.3.8 ***Brand management***

This represents the process of managing an organisation's brand or portfolio of brands in order to maintain and increase long-term brand equity (see paragraph 3.2.3.5) and financial value. It is applied by the person or group responsible for designing brand identities, "aligning them for maximum effectiveness, ensuring that they are not compromised by tactical actions, evaluating effectiveness of brand communication programmes, valuing financial brand value, and designing appropriate brand crisis management plans among many other strategic and tactical tasks" (Roll 2004: 1 of 4). According to the *Wikipedia Encyclopaedia* (2005: 1 of 2), brand management is the application of marketing techniques to a specific product, product line or brand. The researcher views branding as a wilful intervention by management (see paragraph 3.2.2), among others, which emphasises management's role in the entire process.

3.2.3.9 ***Brand mapping***

Brand mapping refers to a research technique to identify and visualise the core positioning of a brand compared to competing brands on various dimensions (Roll 2004: 1 of 4).

3.2.3.10 *Brand positioning*

Brand positioning represents the "market space" which a brand is perceived to occupy in the minds of a target audience. Strong marketing communications programmes need to focus on only a few but strong messages to achieve better impact in an increasingly noisy environment (Roll 2004: 1 of 4).

3.2.3.11 *Brand architecture*

It defines how an organisation structures and names the brands within its portfolio. BrandChannel (2005: 1 of 10) identifies three types, namely monolithic where the corporate name is used on all products and services offered by the company; endorsed where all sub-brands are linked to the corporate brand by means of either visual endorsement; and freestanding, where the corporate brand merely operates as a holding company and each product or service is individually branded for its target market.

3.3 THE GENESIS OF BRANDING

The word "brand" comes from the Old Norse *brandr,* which means "to burn". From the earliest times the concept has been associated with proclaiming ownership of property (Van den Heever 1993). Johnson (2005: 1 of 3) confirms this when he states that the use of markings to establish who owns, or who made a certain product, appears to be ancient. Although the concept of branding has become considerably more complex during the last 100 years, ideas of ownership still lie at the heart of the brand.

According to Van den Heever (1993), in one particular sense branding is an old man's first artefacts. The artisan's mark was probably a means of distinguishing the creations of one workman from those of a colleague in shared production facilities. In time, these works of particularly good artisans became praised and were sought after by people wanting works of the above quality. Markers' inscriptions have been found on Egyptian, Chinese, Sumerian, Greek and Roman artefacts, from jewellery to bricks and foodstuffs. Evidence could be found that suggests that, in Roman times, producers wrote and displayed simple messages advertising the nature and quality of their products, as well as where they could be purchased. It was also a custom among merchants to display pictures of their wares on their store fronts and in time, these pictures became stylish symbols (Van den Heever 1993).

Branding formally came into widespread use only in the past century, but "brands" based on the reputations of craftsmen have existed over the centuries. Artisans marked their work with a symbol that was their unique brand. Later, farmers used brands to identify their cattle. At the time there were no fences. Thus, until barbed wire was invented, this was the only way to mark their valuable property (Mariotti 2000: 14-15). Following this, high quality cattle and art became identifiable in consumers' minds by particular symbols and marks. They would actually seek out certain marks because in their minds they had associated those marks with tastier beef, higher quality pottery, or furniture. Dolak (2001: 1 of 7) adds to this on the origin of brands when he confirms: "If the producer differentiated their [*sic*] product as superior in the mind of the consumer, then that producer’s mark or brand came to represent superiority.”

As retailing grew and spread, brands became the manufacturers’ way of marking their goods (and services) with a symbol of their reputation (Mariotti 2000: 14-15). However, well-known brands were still largely locally recognised. It was the rare potter whose goods were known outside of his geographical area. Time-consuming and expensive transport meant that only unique goods were moved large distances. International branding and brands as we know them today did not exist, although it is true that goods were traded and “branded” by geographical area, for example spices from India and good English wool and amber from the Baltic (Van den Heever 1993).

As time went by, the monopoly of certain trades by the Mediaeval Guilds provided a standard for the quality of goods and, in effect, initiated a form of branding as we know the term today. For a couple of centuries, the guilds were powerful forces with virtual strangleholds on their perspective trades, setting industry standards and, in some cases, constituting the sole channel through which goods could be marketed.

The Industrial Revolution (1750 – 1830) changed this. With mass production and new technology, the range and variety of available goods began to grow. It became increasingly important for producers to make their products readily identifiable, but in many cases it became impractical for the manufacturers’ names to be used. Effective names were needed and a brand name should be original, memorable, pronounceable and - above all - should be specific to a product. This has led to a problem that still exists today: counterfeiters in operation. There is evidence to suggest that the Belgae (now Belgium) developed a thriving trade in look-alikes, complete with fake Latin inscriptions of origin (Van der Heever 1993). This gave birth to the registration of trademarks.

Van den Heever (1993) adds that the first formal registration of trademarks to be established was in the 16th century by manufacturers of Sheffield cutlery to regulate the use of marks in their industry. An Act to formal registration of trademarks was passed by the British Parliament in 1875 and the very first trademark registered was the red triangular label of the beer brewers.

3.4 BRANDING VERSUS MARKETING

A key question and something which is in the minds of many people, is the difference between the more traditional concept of marketing as opposed to the more modern idea of branding. Isn't it the very same thing? Branding is almost synonymous with marketing. Marketing becomes the process by which companies satisfy customers' needs. It also forms the base of repeat business. The way in which a differential advantage might be achieved as well as sustained, is through the manipulation of the elements of the *marketing mix*. This mix has traditionally been seen to be the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place and promotion. Increasingly, however, it is being recognised that these four Ps are too limited in terms of providing a framework, both for thinking about marketing and for planning strategy. An expanded mix has three additional elements, namely people, physical evidence and process management (Koorts 2003: 6 of 113).

Branding is a device that telegraphically *communicates* those benefits to the customer, especially the first four Ps. "Communication" here must be seen in its broader context. It would also involve, among others, experiences and intended perceptions by customers about the product or service (Koorts 2003: 6 of 113).

Chapter 1 of this thesis made mention about strong government regulation on higher education matters and aspects like the product, which would entail the programme mix of an institution of higher learning, price (tuition fees); and place (physical location) which are rather fixed. These three Ps cannot be easily manipulated for a competitive advantage at institutions of higher learning, thus their value *in this sense* is rather limited. Branding, on the other hand, can be used to differentiate. Its close relatedness to reputation, value, quality, consistency, as well as (extremely important) "employee contributions", makes it more manoeuvrable and easier to manipulate.

The expanded mix mentioned in the previous paragraph, namely people, physical evidence and process management, is more manoeuvrable in the higher education sector. Strong emphasis has recently been put on process management as a very important branding tool by brand experts who realise its advantages, as well as its damaging effect if not in place. The researcher is of the opinion that in the higher education sector its potential is largely untapped.

It is these attributes than can make a difference in the higher education sector; that can clearly differentiate; that can promise; that can be consistent; and that can form lasting relationships. Chapter 5 will elaborate more on the role of process and people management as tools for purposeful branding.

3.5 BRANDING VERSUS REPUTATION

The notion of reputation and branding is included simply because of the fallacies that exist with regard to these concepts. In the researcher’s line of duties and in discussions with non-marketers, it has become evident that there are people who think that there could be no more to the idea of branding than it being a mere reputation. They are not completely wrong, because the two concepts influence and affect each other in a significant way.

Paradoxically, the more popular branding becomes, the fuzzier its boundaries seem to become, particularly in relation to reputation management. Obviously corporate reputation is related to brand; it is also intangible, in addition to suffusing all areas of the business. Bergstrom (2004: 1 of 3) maintains that reputation reflects not only the message *sent*, but the message *received*. Reputation and brand are strikingly similar. However, there are key differences. Brand success depends on accurate and consistent perception of a highly confined meaning by one’s various constituencies (for example, that higher education equals employability), as well as demand for that meaning. Extremely important is the fact that it must then be *experienced.* Reputation success depends on more broadly managing expectations.

Reputation success also has the tendency (but not always) to come more naturally. Some entrepreneur has a passion for what he does and, after a while, gains a good reputation. It was never intentionally meant to be like that.

There are a number of trends that affect the way organisations manage both their brands and reputations. According to Frost and Cooke (1999: 1 of 5), the following factors on managing brands and reputations must be taken into account:

- Market factors: Globalisation of markets has made them increasingly homogeneous and has encouraged organisations to restructure in response. Customers have become more knowledgeable and have greater access to information. They have higher expectations based on past promises from organisations competing for their patronage.

  This leads us to the fallacy that one can solely rely on one's reputation. Favouring it over brand is rather risky. Culture and brand, as well as financial success and brand, may go together.

- Work place factors: Organisations have become increasingly transparent because of technological advances. It has also become easier for customers and stakeholders to obtain information on companies, products and services.

- Organisational responsibilities: Society increasingly puts importance on business ethics, which means organisations need to consider their brand values. To have the cheapest or highest quality products is no longer the only thing that wins customers – "corporate citizenship" is now the buzz phrase.

It is important to note that, according to research done by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (2002: 4 of 5), of the factors listed which influence learners' choices of institution, *reputation* has emerged as the most important. Reputation and the role of the HR division are very closely linked. According to Hunt (2005: 1 of 4), reputation is a steady, determined, intelligent living out of certain fundamental values and having the governance structures (HR) to support them.

The dilemma facing merged and incorporated institutions of higher education in South Africa, is that they all of a sudden have no reputation. The term "Universities of Technology" is also new and it is up to institutions themselves to decide what reputation they are going to build up in the hearts and minds of stakeholders. Are stakeholders a few years from now going to say that universities of technology are glorified technikons or are they going to view this new institutional type to be the future of higher education?

3.6 HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) AND BRANDING

The varying definitions of brand in paragraph 3.2 show the importance that has been attributed to the internal, as well as the external role of branding. The notion of corporate reputation management which was mentioned earlier in this chapter (see paragraph 3.5), has increased the need for people management issues to be taken into account in the branding process.

The researcher is of the opinion that no amount of good marketing or branding and even public relations can "window-dress" the reputation of an organisation that is not investing effectively in its HR policies or really listening to its people. An area that is almost always forgotten in the planning phase when a new brand is engaged into, is the training of staff to understand and reflect the message or brand. Branding starts from the inside out, because there is no way a company can successfully brand itself if the employees do not believe in the product or service to be offered. This is where the idea of "living the brand" strongly comes to the fore.

Staff's behaviour concerning brand values needs to be aligned as a very important aspect of internal branding. This emerging paradigm of "brand thinking" only recently came to the fore as an enormous driving force to ensure satisfaction between both customers and employees (Vallaster & De Chernatony 2003: 1 of 35). They further confirm that clients find it difficult to access competing service brands and rely on favourable experiences and confidence resulting from clients delighting behaviour. Employees are a critical significant constituent of the brand and are ultimately responsible for delivering its promise (Vallaster & De Chernatony 2003: 4 of 35). The same authors further reiterate that employees need to develop a shared understanding of brand values which need to be anchored in their minds and hearts to manifest brand supporting behaviour.

Closely related to this notion of employees and branding is the view that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must drive and champion the brand. It is believed that only the CEO can express and shape the corporate brand and that only the CEO has the influence to lead the company in building a strong corporate identity (Garvey & Gramann 2001: 1 of 3). Lazarus (2003: 1 of 2), VentureRepublic (2002: 1 of 1) and The Brand Strategy Group (2005: 1 of 3) confirm this when they talk about the CEO as the brand manager and that the CEO drives the brand.

Linked to the above is why Lazarus (2003: 1 of 2) claims that today's CEOs have to deal with brand management in a way it has never been done. It can no longer be regarded as a task that can be handed to the marketing director or the head of advertising alone. In the evolution of business the brand has become the single most significant asset the CEO has to manage, which influences everything from sales to hiring to retention. Lazarus (2003: 1 of 2) continues by endorsing the findings of the Burson-Marsteller survey when he states that today's brands are inextricably linked to the CEO's image and behaviour. "Just as positive behaviour has the potential to halo a brand, every misstep is a potential blight on the brand, because consumers have a near impossible time distinguishing between the two" (Lazarus 2003: 1 of 2).

In an article by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) entitled "A strong brand needs a strong HR behind it" (CIPD Online Press Office 2003: 1 of 2), mention is made of four categories of organisations and the role of HR: Smaller newer companies see branding as a well-defined and protected signifier or logo for particular products, services or businesses, while HR plays little or no role in supporting the brand. The second category may have a master brand or logo, but also places more emphasis on the vision and values behind it, whereas the third category companies capitalise on the vision and values of a strong corporate brand to bring about organisational change, for example in bringing together previously disparate business operations. In the fourth category the corporate brand is now the centrepiece of the overall strategy and HR has a vital role in allowing employees to act as "brand ambassadors". Miles (2004: 65 of 87) calls this notion by its name when she notes that the behaviour of brand ambassadors and evangelists may include, among others, courtesy, responsiveness, reliability, helpfulness and empathy. She further states that the reason for this newfound reliance on HR stems from a decrease in the effectiveness of the traditional levers marketing organisations used to differentiate a firm and its products. Marketers have used the 4 Ps (product, price, position and promotion) to set the products apart from those of the competitor. Mention is made in paragraph 3.4 about the limitations of the 4 Ps and that they should be expanded.

Sullivan (2003: 1 of 4) feels much stronger about this when he notes that - in the new economy - product features, pricing, as well as positioning have become almost irrelevant, as competitors can now mimic and upstage anyone's efforts in very short periods of time. Billings (2005: 1 of 3), EuroNotes (2005: 1 of 2), as well as Fiksel, Axelrod and Russel (2005: 1 of 10) all agree (although in different ways) that serious, happy and committed collaboration is necessary between HR and marketing. However, the researcher is of the opinion that this needs to be (in the case of institutions of higher learning) an "arranged" collaboration. There must be a wilful intervention by management to strategically inform the process. Smith and Hansted (2004: 30) write about the notion of marketing and HR becoming “bedfellows”, which is not so strange when the mutual benefits are considered. They note that HR can help expand a brand’s influence beyond the marketing division, as its work is cross-functional and company wide. The marketing division, on the other hand, has limited influence on the employee.

Consistent with the theory that HR and the CEO should play a vital role in brand management is the concept of process management (as mentioned in paragraph 3.7) as a driving force to facilitate brand management.

3.7 PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND BRANDING

Process management is defined to be the pertinent techniques and tools applied to a process to implement and improve process effectiveness; hold the gains; and ensure process integrity in fulfilling customer requirements (Six Sigma 2005: 1 of 4). It is also seen to be the planning and administering of activities necessary to achieve a high level of performance in a process and identifying opportunities for improving quality, operational performance and, ultimately, customer satisfaction. It involves design, control and improvement of key business processes (Beech & Chadwick 2000: 9 of 13).

Numerous different activities are performed during a typical day in a higher education environment. They range from enquiries for admission, examination results, students’ accounts, different kinds of events, sport and student life, lecturing, research, high academic discourses, service learning and community engagement, receiving academics/scholars from abroad, to name but a few. From the researcher’s experience all these activities at institutions of higher learning in South Africa are loosely managed. They are managed individually by different heads of department and, of course, this would imply that their character and message will also be just as different from one another.

Process management should be the tool whereby managers can create better business processes and incorporate systems, thereby effectively integrating people, technology and procedures to deliver high quality services. Higher education institutions in South Africa are relatively large organisations where one easily finds 500 to 2 000 employees working for one institution at one campus or at multi-sites. These employees all come from different backgrounds, have different fields of expertise, and in no way will they drive a process as a branding exercise in the same way. The process must be managed. The larger and more fragmented (like institutions of higher learning) any organisation becomes, the more it becomes reliant on process management. However, process management should not be confused with set internal rules and policies. Process management is more concerned with external customers like students, donors, parents, business partners, and so forth. It is also directed to brand and to provide the “brandee” with one message. Thus the process of process management is closely linked to integrated branding.

3.8 INTEGRATED BRANDING

Integrated branding is a strategy to move an institution in an effective direction by integrating all actions and messages internally and externally. In paragraph 3.2 the idea of a promise comes to the fore. Integrated branding concerns itself with “the promise to keep”. Once again the fragmented nature of functions at higher education institutions not only necessitates this approach, it is the only way how effective branding can take shape. The concept of integrated branding puts a responsibility on staff, on the CEO and the entire institution to live up to expectations of the brand. No inconsistencies are allowed and whatever was preached, must be practised. Integrated branding as well as process management is closely linked to the role of human resources in the branding process. Integrated branding can only be effective throughout the organisation if all employees deem the product or service “important”, in other words there is a need for it and this organisation fulfils that need, which - in turn - makes that organisation relevant. Brand relevance is therefore extremely important for any organisation.

3.9 BRAND RELEVANCE

Certain sectors in any economy will be guided by the so-called bottom line as to whether they are relevant or not. A clothing retail store specialising in cotton shirts for men should not be thinking about relevancy, its sales figures will prove that. If there is a profitable market and its bottom line shows it, it is relevant. Very clever marketing and sales people create relevancy if its not there. They create a demand.

The cellular telephone industry very recently brilliantly succeeded in creating a demand for text messages in South Africa. In their introduction of text messages they offered the service for free for three months, including Christmas time. People then started to use text messages as a cheaper alternative to normal telephone calls. After the initial three months' free period, clients were charged for the service. Today there are people who cannot imagine their lives without cellular text messages, called "SMSs" in South Africa.

Different terminologies refer to relevancy. If a viability study is undertaken to establish whether or not to start a new business, it boils down to nothing else but answering the question on relevancy.

What about a non-profit organisation? Its relevancy cannot be measured in terms of profit margins. How does it establish relevancy? Simply by *being* relevant and by communicating it effectively. Think about cancer associations, organisations for the blind, and many more. If they were not relevant, they simply would not survive. They would receive no funding and they would have no members (clients). Higher education's relevancy is only visible five to 10 years later and even then it is not tangible. It is only then that students become leaders in society and show breakthroughs. It is not an overnight kind of investment.

A very keen observation is made by Al Ries and Laura Ries when they note that most products and services are bought and not sold (Sevier 2000: 2 of 12). They refer to the element of awareness and then the need to fill a need (relevance). According to Sevier (2000: 2 of 12), two ingredients - awareness and relevance – are absolutely essential for effective branding. If a target audience is not aware of your brand, you will never have a chance to be relevant and, at the same time, if the brand is noticed, but the relevance is not there, the target audience will respond with "So what"? The answer here could be a movement away from "interruption marketing" to "permission marketing" as successful branding strategy. With interruption marketing you force your way into the minds of your target audience. You send message after message and your strategy is inundation since you are not relevant, however, your only option is more. With permission marketing, research was done, the audience is segmented, the offer is refined and a relationship is built over time (Sevier 2000: 4 of 12).

The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) in South Africa and its winter school project is a good example. There is a need on secondary school level for extra tuition in science and mathematics (relevance) in South Africa. The CUT offers this during the winter vacation and has become a partner to schools, the DoE and business. From a very uncomplicated issue like the winter school project to a more strategic issue like the idea of an entrepreneurial university (mentioned in Chapter 1 and detailed in Chapters 4 and 5), relevancy is real in the branding of higher education. Relevancy and the concept of the experience economy are closely linked.

3.10 THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Van Gelder (2002: 1 of 1) reiterates that the traditional perception of branding is short-sighted and has cast brands as being cynically manipulative. This is because of an overly skewed attention to one group of stakeholders, namely shareholders. Brands should prove their worth to consumers, their guidance to employees and business partners and, as a result of these activities, their value to shareholders. This view is consistent with the experience economy, which will ultimately lead to brand enhancement.

Pine and Gilmore (2001: 1 of 4) note that commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible and experiences are *memorable.* This view becomes particularly appropriate for institutions of higher learning, considering that a student stays on average for three years; becomes an alumnus for the rest of his life; and is a potential donor whose children might seek service from the institution in future (become advocates for the institution); to name but a few aspects why this experience should be none other than memorable.

According to Leberecht (2005: 6 of 29), a shift away from product branding to corporate branding increased the need for people management issues to be taken into account in the branding process. He further states that this has led to the concept of "employer branding" which replaced that of "employer of choice" and established people management specialists as a critical part in managing the brand (Bose 2000; Frook 2001; Hatfield 1999; McDonald 2001; Ruch 2000; Walsh 1998; Woods 2001 in Leberecht 2005: 6 of 29). The concept of the internal brand recognises that the brand no longer lives with the consumers and marketers alone. In the experience economy the brand is the "nexus" of a new connectivity between employee and customer, organisation and stakeholders, evangelists and community. Czellar and Palazzo (2004: 3 of 19) also support this when they declare that corporate branding goes far beyond the established tradition of product branding. Corporate branding does not explicitly deal with product features, but rather transports a well-defined set of corporate values.

3.11 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Scheffer (2005: 28–30) postulates a very convincing and compelling account on what organisational communication should be. According to her, organisational communication is the display and interpretation of messages among units that are part of a particular organisation. The functional definition emphasises message-handling activities that are contained within the boundary of the organisation. From the interpretive perspective, however, organisational communication is defined as a meaning-generation process of interaction that constitutes the entire organisation. The interpretive definition emphasises the meaning-generation process which *characterises* the organisation. This shift from message-handling to meaning-generation activities reflects that organisational communication is no longer contained within the boundaries of the organisation.

The above description of Scheffer (2005: 28–30) gives a powerful, yet simple, account of the confusion that exists within a communication division. It also informs the connectivity to branding and organisational communication.

Higher education institutions are very unique in different ways (autonomy, academic freedom) and do not traditionally have a reputation for good internal communication. Internal communication should be closely linked to integrated marketing communication (IMC).

3.12 INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC)

IMC has evolved during the 1990s and has since developed its own approach to holistic communication. Something new and different was growing from the amalgamation of public relations, marketing, advertising and promotion and is becoming identifiable as a separate species with its own theories and practices.

Wikipedia (2005: 1 of 1) defines IMC as the name of academic and practical work centred on aligning organisational communications with the needs of the customers. This is of particular importance for institutions of higher learning and their stakeholders. Institutions of higher learning, for example, send annual reports to some of their stakeholders (donors, government), but are these reports read? Do the donors perceive this high quality glossy report a waste of money or does it enhance the institution's brand? As a matter of function, IMC often employs large datasets and advanced statistical analysis models to make branding more accurate and accountable. Heist (2005: 1 of 3) agrees with the alignment of Wikipedia when it states that IMC's basic principle lies in synergy: one voice speaking through various communication channels and all contributing to brand equity and building relationships with customers. This view of Heist, however, fails to recognise the all important aspect of thorough and scientific methods of research. An institution of higher learning (as well as other organisations) needs to do in-depth research on how their stakeholders want to be reached. Van Riel (in Scheffer 2005: 48) describes IMC as the integration of content and forms of all messages of an organisation, aimed at enlarging the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation’s total communication activity. Added to this Eagle and Kitchen (in Scheffer 2005: 48) have defined IMC as a concept of marketing communications planning that recognises the added value of comprehensive disciplines (advertising, public relations, sales promotion) and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact.

3.13 BRANDING IN ACTION

There are so many examples of and case studies of branding of companies, people and even rugby teams that, choosing the appropriate ones, has become a mission in itself. Obviously one tends to enjoy and is tempted to make mention of the interesting ones, but in the end the ones were chosen because of their specific role in this study.

3.13.1 Toyota

The first brand story is the one of Toyota South Africa. The researcher chose this one because of its vividness to him and his own experience with regard to the product (apart from its value to the study). Toyota South Africa was also chosen because of its astounding success in the country, as well as because almost everybody knows the product. The case of Toyota illustrates a very good David Goliath effect. Similarities can be drawn among well-established higher education institutions of South Africa and other relatively new ones, for example Tshwane University of Technology versus Witwatersrand University, the Central University of Technology, Free State versus the University of the Free State, to name but a few institutions of higher learning in South Africa. In England the University of Warwick against the Oxford University is also a good example of this David Goliath effect. Just like Toyota's slogan or tag line "Everything keeps going right, Toyota", institutions of higher learning also have this tendency to add a slogan or tag line.

Being a motor car enthusiast since childhood, the researcher dreamt of his own car since high school. This was during the late seventies. The Volkswagen Beetle was about to be replaced by the front wheel driven Volkswagen Golf. Then there were the "big three" Japanese manufacturers, namely Datsun (now Nissan), Toyota and Mazda. The one that stood out was undoubtedly Datsun (mid-to middle-late 1970s). Its different model line-up appealed widely to all age groups. The SSS (triple S) enjoyed iconic status among youngsters. Mazda came out strongly with its 323 range and recorded best sales in the small car category in 1979 and 1980. The underdog back then was none other than Toyota. One was perceived to be odd driving around with a Toyota Corona.

In 1980 Toyota embarked on a brand campaign during which it wanted to convince South Africa that it was the world's number one. The timing was perfect. Datsun had problems with its new Pulsar range (the successor to the iconic SSS) and could up till this day not recover. Volkswagen lost serious ground with the discontinuation of the Beetle and its successor (Golf 1) had teething problems. Mazda was the one to beat the rest. Toyota's claim was that it was the world's number one and, together with its slogan and its accompanying jingle "Everything keeps going right, Toyota" indeed made a very ambitious promise. It was a promise of *reliability*. What South Africans did not know at the time was that Toyota Japan had been preparing for that promise since 1973 (seven years earlier!). Extensive research was done and virtually every flaw that was identified, was rectified. The above-mentioned research and measures taken were done at a scale not known in the industry. Since then it has adopted the "Kaizen approach", meaning "If it's not broken, there is no need NOT to improve on it." There were very few brand loyalists at the time, because Datsun fell flat on its face, Volkswagen struggled to carry over brand loyalty from the Beetle to the Golf and Mazda was the new kid on the block. Hence, the timing was perfect.

Toyota Corolla has become the bestseller since 1980 and now, 25 years later, it still is and it is only Volkswagen that threatens this position. The reason why Toyota is still the bestseller in South Africa today? Simple, it could manage to live up to its promise. According to Dr Johan van Zyl, President and CEO of Toyota South Africa, "Everything keeps going right" guided their decisions and actions. It was an important "driver" in taking Toyota to leadership (Wheels24 2004a: 1 of 2). In other words, a brand promise became a strategy. Today Toyota is known for quality, reliability and durability (Wheels24 2004a: 1 of 2). Interestingly, Toyota has changed its slogan to "Lead the Way" late in 2004 (Penstone 2004: 1 of 2).

According to Cronje and De Coning (1998: 1 of 4), Toyota is in South Africa the most admired and recognised brand among car companies and fifth among all other brands. It has also been the best-known car brand in South Africa since 1995. Toyota (45%) has also widened the gap between itself and BMW (32%). Mercedes Benz occupies the third position (in *Business Times* of 25 October 1998: 1).

According to the results of the latest annual survey of the "Global Brands Scoreboard" by Business Week (Wheels24 2004b: 1 of 4), Toyota has overtaken Mercedes Benz internationally as the world's leading automotive brand. Toyota's brand value is rated at $32bn compared to that of Mercedes Benz at $23bn.

Interestingly, for the first time in South Africa in 2005, a brand valuation was done for a higher education institution, namely the University of South Africa (UNISA). The world-renowned Brand Metrics methodology was used to measure UNISA's brand equity, which was found to be R157.9 million (in *Bizcommunity* of 30 March 2005: 1). This brand equity in terms of its monetary value is world class according to Brand Leadership (in *Bizcommunity* of 30 March 2005: 1).

3.13.2 Virgin

The next case (Virgin) is chosen for what Richard Branson said during an interview with Vogue magazine in 1968, as well as for the strong influence leadership has on the brand (in Chapter 5 the issue of branding and the role of the CEO will be discussed in more detail). Today, more than 35 years later, higher education institutions can say the same thing and MEAN it. According to Gad (2001: 56), Branson said: "I want to create a company which will do all sorts of different things for different people, it doesn't matter what we're doing, it is the way we are going to do it that is going to matter. It is going to be all about doing things in a way that challenges markets". Also the fact that Virgin is a set of ideas, instead of being stamped with a product, the Virgin Brand has become stamped with personality and values (Gad 2001: 56).

Virgin is successful because it stands for something. According to Branson (in Gad 2001: 57) any new product or service must be or have the prospect of becoming one of the following in the future:

- The best quality.
- Innovative.
- Good value for money.
- Challenging the existing alternatives.
- Something that adds a sense of fun or cheekiness.

Interestingly enough, the Virgin website refers to these items above as *brand values,* whereas most organisations would engage linguistic experts to put it in such a way that it would adhere to the principles of vision and mission statements (Virgin Website 2005: 1 of 1).

All the aspects of the definitions of branding mentioned earlier in paragraph 3.2 come to the fore in how Branson sees his company. Quality, a promise, as well as being different are clear in Branson's mission. What comes out very strong, is Branson's belief that relationships play a key role in successful branding. People management and the new strategic role of HR (see Chapter 5) with regard to branding are two critical issues very relevant to this study.

Also worth mentioning is the fact that there are no tricky and nice sounding mission and vision statements. It is all a matter of *implementation.* Most organisations, and arguably higher education institutions are the biggest culprit here, are more interested in nice sounding vision and mission statements rather than implementing them.

According to Will Whitehorn, Director of Corporate Communications at Virgin, people associate Virgin with a set of ideas – fun, value and innovation (Gad 2001: 57). If one looks at what Branson wants his company to stand for and how people perceive the company, a match is found. This brings another aspect to the fore, namely: How strong is the influence the leadership has on an organisation’s brand? In some cases it is very strong indeed and the reason for success. Think about Branson and Virgin, and closer to home, Patricia de Lill and her Independent Democrats, as well as Nelson Mandela and South Africa, Jack Welch and General Electric.

Kotler (1997: 281) calls Richard Branson a master at publicising his airline. Certain Virgin flights from London to Hong Kong feature a tailor or beauty therapist. The tailor will fax the measurements of passengers to Hong Kong so that suits can be ready almost on arrival, whilst the beautician offers massages and manicures! The airline also makes special arrangements for birthday cakes, champagne for newly weds and mid-flight marriage announcements. It also offers motorcycle or limousine rides to Heathrow Airport for upper class passengers

(Kotler 1999: 281). A look at what Virgin stands for mentioned previously, will reveal exactly what Branson said, namely "challenging the existing alternatives", "innovative" and "something that adds a little fun or cheekiness".

Richard Branson's foreword in 4-D Branding (Gad 2001: 7-8) is also included here, because this is probably the best example one can find with regard to theory and practice. Branding gurus are mostly good at theorising branding, but have little or no back-up as far as practice is concerned.
In the foreword of *4-D Branding* (Gad 2001: 7-8) Branson says that brands are powerful weapons that change the entire landscape of industries. (Ironically, "The higher education *landscape*" has become the buzz terminology in South Africa over the past three years.) He goes further by saying that the trouble is that many organisations continue to think of brands in traditional terms and when they think of brands, they think one dimension; they think of commercial expediency. Branding that is done in four dimensions is concerned with building and sustaining relationships. Relationships are the key to success in a commercial way and brands are now pinned around a relationship rather than a product.

Branson continues by maintaining that building sensitive brands with strong, persuasive and lasting values, is far from easy. Relationships are not quickly or easily built and you cannot fake them. Values cannot be easily forgotten if it is inconvenient or commercially expedient. Branding demands commitment; the kind of commitment that relates to continual re-invention;

striking a chord with people to stir their emotions; and commitment to imagination.

If any organisation deems relationships very strong in its business, the role of people management and of HR is critical. Only people (employees) can foster relationships, which means that, in order to achieve this, the organisation needs the right employee with the right attitude and with very high levels of motivation. At the Virgin website (Virgin Website 2005: 1 of 1) under the sub-heading "About Virgin" there is a heading "Virgin = people" and underneath that an answer is given with regard to who the Virgin person is. "Virgin people are easy to spot. They act in unusual ways, as it is the only way they know how. But it is not forced - it is natural. They are honest, cheeky, questioning, amusing, disruptive, intelligent and restless … . Virgin people are smart (Virgin Website 2005: 1 of 1).

Any organisation which deems relationships important, must make a special effort towards its employees. The reason for Virgin's success is becoming clearer and one of the main reasons is quite simple: "We mean what we say and we do what we say". Put in more corporate jargon, one could say: *Implementation follows strategy*. If it does not, it becomes like an architect designed plan for a house, which unfortunately is never built.

The downside to the Branson/Virgin fairy tale? Virgin relies too heavily on Branson and without him it would really be a big battle to uphold the *status quo*. Competitors will also quickly exploit the situation and will most probably succeed. Strong leadership is important, but unfortunately not too strong.

Traditionally the brand’s responsibility was delegated to the marketing department. It was perceived to be solely a marketing issue, but in highly successful companies where the brand is the core of the business, top management regards the brand as the most important management tool (Gad 2001: 111). The role of top management with regard to branding will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

3.13.3 Nokia

The case of Nokia is included in this study for its David and Goliath element. Higher education institutions in South Africa and elsewhere in the world normally do not compete with traditional older institutions, because they feel that one cannot compete against tradition and a rich history. It is also of importance for the human element in its branding drive.

The mobile telephone is deemed predictable with Nokia, Motorola and Ericsson fighting it out at the top and several less successful brands like Samsung, Phillips, Siemens and Panasonic trying hard to make inroads into their top competitors’ market shares. In reply to the questions: “What makes the difference?” “What causes people to choose?” and “What is the difference between the most successful and the less successful brands?” BrandingAsia.com is of the opinion that the answer lies in what the brand means to them (BrandingAsia 2000: 1 of 3).

The Nokia Group is a Finland-based company (hence the David and Goliath analogy). It has steadily worked on its corporate brand, name and management of consumer perceptions over the last few years. It is now the number one brand in many markets around the world, effectively dislodging Motorola (USA-based) from that position.

It would seem that two issues clearly stand out, namely they could successfully manage people's perceptions and lending personality to its products. BrandingAsia (2000: 1 of 3) emphasises that Nokia could manage to succeed where other big brands have failed by putting across the human face technology and dominating emotional high ground.

The Nokia group has detailed many personality characteristics for its brand, but employees do not have to remember every characteristic. They do, however, need to remember the overall impression of the list of attributes, as you would when thinking about someone you have met. The focus is on customer relationships and the Nokia personality is like a trusted friend. Two key elements are at the heart of the Nokia brand, namely friendship and trust. As is the case with Virgin, relationship comes strongly to the fore in Nokia's winning brand model.

According to Reis and Reis (2003: 18), the Nokia brand is the example they would cite if asked for a success story. Nokia now owns 35% of the world's market. The company once made everything from tyres to personal computers, but then decided to focus on cell phones. The Nokia brand is the sixth most valuable brand in the world. Nokia is a good example of a company that has built a world class brand from Finland, which has only five million people (Reis & Reis 2003:18).

When the brand of Nokia was positioned in the crowded mobile phone market place, its message clearly had to bring out the technology and human side in a very powerful way. The message that is conveyed to consumers in every advertisement and market communication is: *"Only Nokia Human Technology enables you to get more out of life"* (Branding Asia 2000: 2 of 3).

Product design is very critical to the success of the brand. Therefore Nokia gives a great deal of thought to how the user of its phones will experience the brand and how it can make that experience reflect its brand character (Branding Asia 2000: 2 of 3).

Although the product and its features will always be a critical component in the cell phone industry, the case of Nokia illustrates quite clearly that the *human* element must never be underestimated. The company successfully combined the human side with technology, thereby creating the impression that these two elements can blend easily with its cell phones.

3.13.4 Polaroid

Reis and Reis (2003: 18 of 23) note that Polaroid stood for instant photography, but tried to take the Polaroid brand name into a number of different products unrelated to instant film photography and eventually went bankrupt.

Some products are simply difficult to be associated with anything else they had originally stood for. Polaroid is one of them. It will never be related to anything else but instant photography. Ditto for Nokia. A Nokia stove or fridge? No.

Although branding is far from new in the sectors described above (Toyota, Virgin, Nokia and Polaroid), it is fairly new in the higher education sector as a wilful intervention. Branding of two institutions where this intervention was made, will subsequently be discussed.

3.13.5 Branding of higher education in the United Kingdom (UK)

Chapleo (2001: 1 of 5) conducted research on the concept of branding in the United Kingdom (UK) higher education sector. As a former university marketing manager, he felt that the subject was of particular interest and one of rapid development. This study was conducted through qualitative research in the form of in-depth interviews with key staff in marketing/external relations departments. The UK higher education sector was segmented into three groupings, based on incorporation dates ("old" universities; 1950s – 1960s universities; and new universities) and random sampling was used within these segments.

The results thereof included the following facts: The respondents considered that they had a brand, but on closer examination there was variability in understanding and defining the concept of a brand. The key difference was between visual identity and the wider concept of branding. Some staff members expressed concern that the senior management of their institution viewed “brand” primarily in terms of visual identity. There was a general feeling that brands were not understood or valued throughout university management.

Added to this was the fact that there were problems concerning communicating a homogenous brand for a university. The respondents referred to in the previous paragraph clearly expressed great difficulty in defining a homogenous brand for the whole institution. Their main reasons were that brand values differed for target audiences. An important factor appeared to be the concept of sub-brands for schools and faculties (Chapleo 2001: 2 of 5). The accuracy of the brand was identified as a lesser issue; institutions expressed concerns that the brand values communicated at present by their brand were not true reflections of the reality of their institutions.

Key difficulties or obstacles in brand building in certain UK universities identified by the research, were a lack of differentiation which was a commonly cited barrier in building brands in UK universities. Respondents felt that there was little to differentiate the majority of UK universities in terms of the brand values they espoused. In the universities the brand values cited as points of differentiation were in actual fact often the same as those of many competing institutions. A lack of a marketing led approach from much of the university was also cited as an obstacle. The lack of understanding and embracing of marketing concepts (and therefore branding) at a senior management level, was likely to lead to a lack of marketing focus throughout the organisation. Lastly the fact that universities are by nature large and complex organisations was also mentioned by a number of the respondents. This led to all kinds of barriers, among others a strong pull to sub-brands was perceived as having higher visibility than the overall university brand. Contact points and internal communication were often difficult.

The way forward and implications for practice for UK universities include the following:

- Differentiation: There should be a very strong need to build strong brands so that institutions find real points of difference from their competitors.
- Marketing focus from top: To affect branding in its wider sense, the marketing focus must emanate from senior management.
- Assess and monitor brands: Some form of a brand audit is increasingly becoming common practice.
- Manage tension and sub-brands: This can lead to confusion in the minds of audiences and inefficient marketing communications (Heist 2001: 3-5).

The next example of Britain's newest university is cited for its striking resemblance to that of the current situation in the South African higher education sector.

3.13.5.1 ***University of Gloucestershire***

Formed in 1990 from a merger of higher education institutions in Gloucester, the University of Gloucestershire received Degree Awarding Powers in 1992. To re-brand the new university, the staff undertook a comprehensive research strategy to establish stakeholders' perceptions of Gloucestershire; of higher education in general; and of them as a college of higher education (Heist 2003: 1 of 4).

The branding process of Gloucestershire was done in very much the same way as the South African higher education institutions. Another striking resemblance was the fact that the merged institutions never really branded themselves individually. They merely continued in the old ways of advertising and informing. Although the value of informing through various media, for example the radio, television, the printed media, as well as a good re-launch to a predetermined target audience cannot be underestimated, other long- term aspects of branding do not form part of the branding strategy. Aspects like reputation and relevance are the obvious ones which should be included in any branding strategy of institutions of higher learning. More recent issues would include the HR department and its role in the branding process and, even more recent, the role of internal processes in the branding strategy. The expanded Ps, namely people management and process management, are missing. Branding is still restricted to visual identity and informing.

3.14 SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND BRANDING

A survey done by UNITECH, a body representing marketing and communication units of universities and former technikons in South Africa, (2004: 3-5 of 11) accentuates the fact that most, if not all, South African institutions of higher learning market and brand their institutions more or less the same way. The following examples are testimony on how South African higher education institutions view their challenges and limitations with regard to marketing and branding of their institutions. These institutions are clustered in regions. The report of UNITECH has established the following:

The KwaZulu-Natal region cited a lack of strategy and no integrated approach to marketing as part of its key challenges. The Northern region felt that there was a lack of communication from top management to communications and marketing departments; that the structures of divisions were not well defined; and that the executive management misunderstood the roles of marketing and communication. Apart from the challenges above, the Eastern Cape region identified the fact that there was a credibility gap between academic staff and support services. The Western and Central regions also noted that there was a misunderstanding of the roles of marketing and communication. What clearly emerged in the UNITECH Survey, was that all institutions of higher learning faced the same challenges in terms of marketing, branding and communication. It is just a matter of certain issues being accentuated and weighted more than others, but ultimately it results in the very same thing. From the survey, the following deductions can be made:

3.14.1 A lack of an integrated marketing approach

This means that the human resources department is not involved in marketing or branding. A lack of an integrated marketing approach is more serious than one would initially think. It means the marketing and communications divisions operate in an isolated environment, that is isolated in the sense that "making the institution sound nice" belong to the marketing and communications divisions. The admissions division is just expected to do its job, namely to enrol students. Telephonic enquiries are treated in the same way. One just needs to phone any higher education institution in South Africa with a simple enquiry and see what happens. Sometimes you even get the feeling that you are guilty of an offence, that you should know the answer or that you are a nuisance. In the cases where you are treated with respect, dignity and as a client, it seems to be the result of individual behaviour and not part of a strategy.

3.14.2 Executive management's lack of understanding of branding practices

They are generally of the opinion that the "selling" part of the institution is the responsibility of the marketing and communications divisions. If an institution of higher learning says it is an "institution of excellence", that "they are empowering people" or that they are "thinking beyond", the marketing and communications division must communicate (read "sell") that. This is unlike Toyota (see paragraph 3.13.1), where the tagline became a strategy, and is also in total contradiction of Virgin (see paragraph 3.13.2) where living the brand in itself is a strategy.

3.14.3 Lacking of strategies

This links up with the previous two deductions and is actually a natural effect thereof. There can be no real strategy if there is no integrated approach or if executive management does not understand the role of marketing officials.

3.14.4 Lacking of internal communication

Even this concern of marketing officials links up closely with the previous ones and is no surprise (UNITECH 2004: 3-5 of 11).

These concerns and challenges of marketing officials throughout South Africa are consistent with the researcher's own observations at workshops, seminars, meetings and during informal and in-depth discussions with colleagues all over the country. The following statement by a very senior academic colleague bears testimony to the kind of mindset that we harbour: "The recruitment division must see to it that we get good students next year. We are an institution of higher learning, not an institution of remedial learning." What about "We must be relevant; our people management as well as our process management be excellent; our learning and teaching component must be of high quality; our student experience on campus must be a memorable one; our leadership must be credible; our throughput rate must be high", to mention but a few, in order for our student recruitment unit to *attract* good students? The same principle applies for fundraising, image, and reputation.

3.15 CLOSING REMARKS ON BRANDING

From the researcher's position at a higher education institution, that is being a Senior Manager in the Marketing Division as well as his exposure to various national workshops, seminars and informal discussions with colleagues all over South Africa, it is evident that branding strategies of higher education institutions are generally restricted to informing and visual identity. These exercises are then evaluated on how original, how striking and how well these informative exercises were carried over to the target audience. Sevier (2004: 1 of 2) is of the same opinion when he reiterates that, when institutions of higher learning think branding, they think look, logo and letterhead. He further states that institutions of higher learning need to change their understanding of branding. He argues that, for brands to be really effective, they need to change their way of thinking and transition away from that "graphic" dimension of branding. They need to look at the concept of a brand in its totality.

In today's higher education arena, the leaders of higher education institutions may well consider principles of brand management to assure their positions *vis-à-vis* those of their competitors. Although differences between higher education and product brand exist, there are sufficient similarities to warrant a foray into issues of brand management. Leaders of higher education institutions may derive guidance to manage effectively what may be the most intangible asset an institution owns – its long-term image and bundle of core meaning (Herr 2004: 23 of 26). From the survey of UNITECH, the body in South Africa for marketing and communications officials, it is also evident that the branding exercise is generally restricted to informing. That is not to say that institutions are not reputable. Some institutions have excellent reputations in certain faculties, but it would seem as if these good reputations are the product of committed individuals, good deans of faculty, and in no way connected to a branding strategy. In many cases the rest of the campus just continue with their business as usual.

3.16 CONCLUSION

In the proposed model in Chapter 5, the researcher highlights which aspects can then be used very effectively to brand institutions of higher learning. It will be a big mindshift for CEOs of higher education institutions, but those who are bold and interested in the independent future of the institutions, will certainly benefit.

In the next chapter an in-depth look into the operations of the University of Warwick as well as of the University of Twente will be discussed and, more specifically, their entrepreneurial activities and how these activities afford them relevancy in their respective countries and communities. Relevancy has a great impact on their branding as well as the economic impact on the region as mentioned in Chapter 4. This is in order to provide an international perspective and to provide a benchmark to what higher education institutions should be striving for.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO ASPECTS RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION BRANDING INTERNATIONALLY, NATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in paragraph 1.1, internationally and nationally higher education institutions are under unprecedented pressure for change. These pressures also necessitate a whole new approach to higher education branding practices and strategies. This chapter provides an analysis of the empirical investigation into aspects closely related to higher education branding practices globally, nationally and regionally.

As outlined in paragraph 1.6.1, the aims of the research are as follows:

- Marketing and communications divisions of higher education institutions in conjunction with other units should re-visit their internal practices in order to grapple with the distinctive challenges facing higher education institutions (see Chapter 5).
- In addition to the above aim, marketing and communications divisions of higher education institutions, also in collaboration with management and other units, should - among other things - adopt a market orientation mindset (see paragraph 5.3.4) in order to be more successful with branding, recruiting the best possible students, as well as third-stream income.

Stemming from the above-mentioned aims, the objectives (see paragraph 1.6.2) of the research are the following:

- Creating an awareness of the intense needs for a new approach university-wide with regard to branding (see paragraph 3.2.1 and the empirical investigation in Chapter 4).
- A critical reflection by marketing and communications divisions of higher educations institutions with regard to the challenges facing them to develop new strategies (see introductions of Chapters 1 and 3).
- Creating a model for higher education institutions in South Africa which would ultimately result in branding practices that would face up to the challenges of a new and changing terrain in South Africa (see Chapter 5).
- Enhancing the quality of current branding practices (see Chapter 5).

The empirical investigation entailed the following:
Focus group interviews were conducted at two entrepreneurial universities abroad. Informal conversation interviews were conducted with seven South African institutions of higher learning. The choice of institutions was influenced by geographical locality. All the geographical regions in South Africa were targeted. Added to this, a case study at the same institution where the primary participant observation was done, was conducted. Participant observation, to a limited extent, to the seven institutions in South Africa, was also chosen as an investigative route to gain insight into the current situation at institutions of higher learning. The following table illustrates the manner in which the empirical investigation was conducted:

TABLE 4.1: Empirical investigation

Methodology	Institution(s)	Perspective
Focus group interviews	University of Warwick University of Twente	International
Informal conversation interviews Limited participant observation	Seven national higher education institutions	National
Case study Participant observation	One higher education institution	Regional

Internationally, aspects that advance branding - and aspects which the researcher is of the opinion that no real branding can go without - were investigated by the methods described above.

Prior to the research and its findings, an in-depth look at what an entrepreneurial university entails, is necessary. Branding is a very expensive exercise and millions of rand are invested and, at the same time, institutions of higher learning question the return on investment. Successes internationally in this regard are thus investigated.

The two international universities that are being discussed in paragraph 4.4 are known as entrepreneurial universities. It is thus important to discuss what entrepreneurial universities are all about in collaboration with paragraph 1.3.7 where the idea was mentioned. Certain literature aspects of the entrepreneurial university will consequently be discussed.

4.2 THE ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY

As was mentioned in paragraph 1.3.7, Clark (1998: 5) is of the opinion that an entrepreneurial university actively seeks to innovate how it goes about its "business". It also seeks to work out a substantial shift in organisational character so as to arrive at a more promising posture for the future. He continues by saying that the two terms "entrepreneurial" and "innovative" are used loosely as synonymous.

Van Aardt Smit (2003: 12 of 14) reiterates that entrepreneurship can be defined as "a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity obsessed, holistic in approach, and leadership balanced". Schulte (2004: 1 of 2) argues that an entrepreneurial university usually undertakes two tasks: First, it must train future entrepreneurs, persons who will start their own businesses, and also develop an entrepreneurial spirit in students in all programme areas. Second, it must operate in an entrepreneurial way itself, organising business incubators, technology parks and the like. Röpke (1998: 2 of 15) adds another element to that of Schulte, namely the interaction of the university with the environment, the "structural coupling" between the university and the region, which follows entrepreneurial patterns. Röpke (1998: 2 of 15) continues by emphasising that the test of entrepreneurial universities are the following:

- International competition changes the role and function of universities and research systems dramatically. If they do not become agents of innovation (entrepreneurial universities, technology driven, focused on science, engineering and technology (SET)), they hamper regional and national development and international competitiveness.

- The application of new scientifically-created knowledge has a strong regional component and, to make universities entrepreneurial, they must have a strong, positive impact on local/regional development. This will then lead to economic prosperity and job creation. This aspect is extremely important for the situation in South Africa nationally and, even more important, regionally.

In Röpke's (1998) criteria, the whole issue of relevance comes strongly to the fore. The researcher is of the opinion that relevance as brand is one of the key elements of higher education institutions. Added to these elements of Röpke and Schulte, the Burton Clark characteristics of an entrepreneurial university are the best known and widespread internationally accepted ones.

The Burton Clark characteristics are offered by the literature perspectives of Van Vught (2002: 6), West (2001: 12), and Van Aardt Smit (2003: 10-11 of 14) on entrepreneurial universities. These authors mention the following about entrepreneurial universities based on the Clark model:

- *A strong steering core*: Changing universities cannot depend on traditional weak control; they need to become quicker, more flexible and more focused in reacting to the demands from their environment. Clark (1998: 5) states that a strengthened core becomes a necessity and it must embrace central managerial groups as well as academic departments. The ability to offer continuous education, lifelong learning, short courses for re-skilling and retraining and to conduct contract research as well as industry required research are examples of a strong steering core.

- *A developmental periphery*: Universities should have mechanisms to relate to the outside world; they need to reach across their traditional boundaries and need to set up organisational units to do so. Innovative universities should reach across traditional boundaries to link up with outside organisations and groups (Clark 1998: 7). The implications include, among others, networking, co-operation regionally, nationally and internationally, as well as partnerships.

- *A diversified funding base*: Universities need resources to change; their financial bases have to be widened. The title of Van Aardt Smit's (2003: 1 of 14) paper is "Entrepreneurial Universities: A Financial Survival Perspective" in which he points out that universities in South Africa will have to become more entrepreneurial in order to survive financially due to declining budgets (see paragraph 1.3.4) and enrolment capping (see paragraph 1.3.8).

- *A strong academic heartland*: Universities need academic units that accept an entrepreneurial culture and these basic units have to be stimulated to react positively to change. Clark (1998:7) reiterates that each faculty and department need to become an entrepreneurial unit in itself, reaching out more strongly to the outside with new programmes and relationships and promoting third-stream income. The same author describes a heartland as a place where traditional academic values are firmly rooted.

- *An integrated entrepreneurial culture*: Universities need to have a culture that reacts positively to change. The researcher is of the opinion that much is being said about change and its worth in any organisation. Obviously if a "non"-entrepreneurial university does not embrace change, the notion of becoming innovative will die a certain and quick death. An in-depth look at entrepreneurial universities and their practices is therefore necessary.

The researcher deemed it necessary to research international examples in order to benchmark them with, and learn from, their lessons and success stories. For this reason the Universities of Warwick (England) and Twente (the Netherlands) were chosen.

The method of researching the two universities was done by means of a literature study on the successes of the two universities and thereafter focus group interviews were conducted to obtain relevant information for this study.

4.3 TWO ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITIES

The University of Warwick, England, and the University of Twente, the Netherlands, as entrepreneurial universities were chosen by the researcher as a result of the astounding successes they have achieved with their entrepreneurial activities. These activities afforded them relevancy in their respective communities and countries, as will be mentioned in paragraphs 4.4.1 and 4.4.2. Relevancy in this regard has a great impact on the branding practices of these universities as well as on the economic strengthening of their respective regions.

4.4 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE TWO ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITIES

The following background information on the two universities provides the context within which the investigation was conducted:

4.4.1 University of Warwick (England)

The establishment of the University of Warwick was given approval by its government in 1961 and it initially admitted a small intake of graduate students in 1964. In October 2003, the student population was over 15 500 of which a third were postgraduates. Twenty percent of the student body are foreign and over 114 countries are represented on the campus (University of Warwick Website 2005: 1 of 1). While the university has become increasingly popular for students (there are now nine applications for every available place), it has been a mark of Warwick's strategy to encourage and facilitate admission from those less well-advantaged and from poorer backgrounds as well as mature students (who often have no formal qualifications but can show the potential necessary for higher education). Warwick is also the only research-intensive university that was piloted by the UK government since 2001. According to Wikipedia (2005: 1 of 5), a recent survey was done by the *The Times* which resulted in the University of Warwick being voted the best in the UK by a national poll of students, leaving Oxford in the second place and Loughborough in the third.

From the beginning, the University of Warwick has sought to be excellent in both teaching and research. It has now secured its place as one of the UK's leading research universities based on its activities and research capacity. According to Wikipedia (2005: 2 of 5), Warwick was ranked fifth by the UK Funding Councils' 2001 Research Assessment Exercise. More than 90% of the university's academic staff are located in departments with top research ratings of 5 or 5*. Wikipedia (2005: 2 of 5) indicates that more than 20 out of 24 university academic departments which have been assessed under the Subject Review process conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education have been rated "excellent" (scored 21 or more points out of 24) for the quality of their teaching and seven departments have achieved the maximum score of 24 out of 24.

4.4.1.1 ***A brief history of the University of Warwick***

Warwick was a pioneer in seeking industrial-academic links, a key component of its strategy today. "Industry and Higher Education" became part of its strategy. The university marked its strategy with a wish to be enterprising and outward-looking from its foundation. It sought to match academic excellence with relevance, a policy which was not always popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but which has become one of its hallmarks (University of Warwick Website 2005: 1 of 1). According to Clark (1998: 14), the issue of relating to industry beyond a good academic base arose. The same author continues by noting that the Vice-Chancellor from 1961 – 1985, Jack Butterworth, was close to leading industrialists in the Coventry area and sought to instil a pro-industry attitude at the university. His vision was that it would be a relevant university as well as a discipline-led enterprise (Clark 1998: 15). It would be a relevant university in the sense that it could help as an economic resource in its own right and in promoting regional economic development.

With the same idea of relevancy, the university also began to develop relations with the local community. A merger with an adjacent college of education in 1978 gave the institution a teacher-education relationship to the local area. It was seen as a “service-job” that could help fill a long promised commitment to be relevant (Clark 1998: 15). In his address to the then President of the USA, Bill Clinton, the current Vice-Chancellor, Sir Brian K. Follet, mentioned that it was crucial to be excellent in teaching and research and, at the same time, to be relevant to society (Follet 2000: 1 of 1). Incidentally, Clinton chose the University of Warwick to deliver one of his last speeches as president (Wikipedia 2005: 1 of 5).

When the UK government decided to fund universities on a more differential basis in the 1980s, which led to sharp downward changes in centrally-provided grants, the University seized the opportunity to look at ways in which it could supplement public money with income generation through its own activities. These activities have included, among others, contract research, enterprises, hiring out of facilities, and fundraising. Many of these ventures are located in departments – thus exemplifying the point about combining academic excellence with enterprise – but they also include three thriving residential training centres, retail outlets and an award-winning vacation conference business. According

to the University of Warwick Website (2005: 1 of 1), the money generated in these ways has been a significant factor in the development of the University, both academically and physically.
In 1984, the University of Warwick Science Park was opened and has developed to become one of the UK's most successful Science Parks. The Park is now home to 85 high technology companies and has a turnover of 4.4 million pound per annum. More recently the University invested in and successfully won government support for a series of initiatives to develop a culture in which academic inventions can be exploited, either through licensing or in spin-off companies (University of Warwick Website 2005: 1 of 1).

The University has sought through its activities to play a significant role in the economic and social life of its region (West Midlands region of England). It has considerable linkages with local business and enterprise; works closely with local schools and further education colleges; and has attracted significant new investment in the Coventry area. Warwick has an immense economic, educational, cultural and social impact on the West Midlands region. Economically the University is the fourth largest employer in Coventry/Warwickshire and annually contributes around 1 billion pounds to the local and regional economy; educationally over 70 percent of Warwick-trained teachers obtain permanent jobs in West Midlands' schools; culturally the Warwick Arts Centre has 250 000 visitors to over 1 600 events every year; socially over 1 000 volunteers (students and staff) are actively engaged in community projects from working with refugees to homework clubs; and student charity work raised over 40 000 pounds in 2003, mainly for local charities. In 2004 the University opened new offices in Birmingham and London, strengthening its regional and national profile.

To conclude, the following quotes about the University of Warwick might shed extra light as to why it was chosen for this study:

"Warwick is a beacon among British universities for its dynamism, quality and entrepreneurial zeal" as observed by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, on 4 January 2001 (University of Warwick 2001: 1 of 5).

"Warwick is most notable for its independence from the state… Alongside this financial independence Warwick has built a reputation for working with industry. Few other places come so close to the government's model for universities as hubs of enterprise. On top of this financial platform, Warwick has a reputation as one of the UK's leading research-led universities for its teaching" (University of Warwick 2001: 2 of 5).

4.4.2 The University of Twente (the Netherlands)

The University of Twente (UT) is an internationally-oriented institute of scientific education and research. As an innovative and entrepreneurial research university, it has had an eye for the interconnectedness of technical and social sciences since its foundation in 1961. It was officially created by the Dutch government in 1961 and was called the Twente University of Technology. It was expected to take up a place alongside two previously established technological universities, Delft and Eindhoven. The UT was also conceived as a regional university with a view to help with the development of the region (Clark 1998: 40).

From the start enrolment was troublesome at the UT. It was supposed to grow to 4 000 students by 1970, but only reached 2 000 and, throughout the 1970s enrolment, this continued to be a problem. To exacerbate the situation and because of the oil crisis in the 1970s, the Dutch government indulged in the habit of cutting university budgets. The UT was relatively small in size, located in a depressed province, and was avoided rather than sought after by students. It was placed at the bottom of the totem pole in reputation and power among Dutch universities; it was vulnerable to financial crises from government budget cuts; and commonly subject to rumours that some of its faculties or even the university as a whole might be closed down. It faced a fundamental problem, namely how to escape from a weak, an even threatening institutional problem (Clark 1998: 41-45).

In what Clark (1998: 41-45) calls the "Twente Takeoff", he states that major change was instigated by a strengthened administrative core and soon problems were regarded as opportunities. Harry van den Kroonenberg, Rector and Professor of Mechanical Engineering, became the man with the idea and Erik Bolle, a mathematician, became the man who could plan and take the university onto a new financial footing. They were joined by Harry Fekkers and together they exercised central initiative, started a five-year plan, instituted a decentralised budget scheme and then - by the end of the eighties - moved into a second more sophisticated institutional plan for the 1990s. This institutional idea was the notion that Twente would become "the entrepreneurial university”. Van den Kroonenberg became the ambassador of the university and with his good public image and ability to speak, he took the case of the UT to the national government, business and the general public. According to Clark (1998), the UT would become aggressively proactive, initiating new forms of contact with industry, city and regional government and community groups. The concept was simple and Van den Kroonenberg used the idea of the entrepreneurial university to help create a new public image that would open windows to national industry and local government. Another Van den Kroonenberg idea was devising a structured relationship with small and medium companies, primarily in the local province. In 1979 this gave way to a “Transferpunt” office to explore ways to link up with industry and increase third-stream income.

Added to the above information, Van der Sijde, Vogelaar, Hoogeveen, Ligtenberg and Van Velzen (2002: 1 of 2) note that a consortium of regional partners, namely the UT, the Enschede Foundation Business and Science Park, the Regional Development agency, as well as the Municipality of Enschede carried out a project to attract new business to the area of Twente and to the Business and Science Park in particular. During that period, a well-functioning structure for co-operation among the partners was established in order to attract companies in sectors related to the principal research areas of the university. It also emerged that the four parties were complementary to one another.

In the Netherlands, the University of Twente is currently at the very forefront as an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) university. Internationally it participates in strategic alliances, among which is the

European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU). The University is the only university in the Netherlands with a campus in which studying, working, living, enterprise and relaxation are mostly concentrated in one location (the city of Enschede). According to the University of Twente: Facts and Figures Brochure (2005:1-8), the campus is also used as an instrument in the individual and academic development of students, as well as for the promotion of the spirit of enterprise. According to students and experts, Twente is in the top three of 13 Dutch universities in terms of quality of education.

The following are figures with regard to 2003 which indicate the immense impact that Twente as entrepreneurial university has: The number of patents amounted to 49; new companies allied to the University were 18; the percentage of graduates with a job within a year after completing their studies were 92, and the average time of unemployment after graduation was a mere two months. Financially the University created revenues to a total of 253.3 million Euro in 2003, while its general capital reserve was 117.2 million Euro (University of Twente: Facts and Figures Brochure 2005: 1-8).

Van Vught (2002: 13) mentioned in his address at the Entrepreneurial Higher Education Institutions Seminar in Johannesburg in 2002 that the UT shared similar characteristics with older and more established universities, for example a strong tradition of academic collegiality, professional autonomy, and strong organisational fragmentation. Unfortunately these kinds of universities lead to fragmented decision-making where it takes a long time to reach decisions, because everyone wants to talk about what is done; consequently, reaction capacity to the changing environment is slow and limited. A restructuring for innovation was the (successful) answer to this. This is consistent with the Clark model of an integrated entrepreneurial culture mentioned in paragraph 4.2.

Clark (1998: 40) added that the UT posted a strong reputation as a proactive university by the mid-1990s, which caused rectors in other European countries to seek its advice. As was mentioned in paragraph 4.2, the focus group interviews with respondents of the two universities will subsequently be discussed. Informed by the literature review on the two universities, the researcher deemed it necessary to visit them and conduct focus group interviews with a purposeful selection of key role players known for their expertise.

4.4.3 Focus group interviews

The interviews were done in June 2005 at the respective university settings of Warwick and Twente. The offices of international affairs at both institutions were contacted via electronic mail (see Appendix A) as well as telephonically, whereafter the researcher was directed to the interviewees. An interview guide (see Appendix B) was prepared and was sent out electronically to the participants two weeks prior to the date when the interviews were scheduled to take place. The questions of the interview guide were influenced by the literature study (see Chapters 1 and 3) and were directly related to the aims and objectives of the study (see paragraphs 1.6.1 and 1.6.2). The researcher decided that the interviewees of the focus group interviews should have the questions beforehand in order not only to decide whether they wanted to participate, but also as a time-saving device for them to think about and reflect on the answers prior to the interview. Another reason was that, because the universities was abroad, the travelling costs of the researcher had to be taken into account.

Intensive measuring with focus group interviews with respondents who had agreed to participate in the study was done by the researcher. Before the interviews were to start, the interviewer and the respondents became acquainted. Introductory comments with regard to the interviewer's and the respondents' job profiles at institutions of higher education as well as the interviews that were to take place, were made. Time was spent with the participants of the two higher education institutions abroad to gain in-depth insights into their views/perspectives of their strategies and processes impacting on entrepreneurial universities and to learn from their expertise. As such, the focal point of the focus group interviews revolved around the successes and challenges of their entrepreneurial focus at their universities. The duration of the focus group interviews ranged from 45 to 75 minutes.

Two different focus group interviews were done, that is one at the University of Warwick and one at the University of Twente (see paragraph 4.5 for the composition of the focus group interviews).

The main advantages of the focus group interviews were the richness in data collected, meaning the following:

- They led beyond the answers of single interviewees.

- The collective discussions of the entrepreneurial university and the probing into some of the answers thereof.
- The extent of consistency and shared views among the participants.

The main disadvantage of the focus group interviews was the following:

- Documenting the discussions while at the same time being involved in the discussions.

4.5 REPORT OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AT THE TWO ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITIES

The findings of the empirical investigation by the researcher in June 2005 are discussed according to the questions that were submitted to the respondents electronically (see Appendix B) of the University of Warwick and the University of Twente. For ease of reading, the questions asked during the focus group interviews are repeated here, whereafter the responses from the participants are elaborated on.

As already mentioned, a letter (see Appendix A) was written and sent via electronic mail to the Office of International Affairs to both universities requesting them to initiate the interviews after explaining what the objectives of the visit would be. The two universities then decided on who the appropriate staff members would be.

The respondents at the University of Warwick were Dr Paul Greatrix (Director of Academic and Student Affairs), Ms Sarah Patrick (Senior International Liaison Officer), and Ian Rowley (Director of Communication).

The respondents at the University of Twente were Dr A. Nimis (Director: Communication Department) and Dr F. Teeling (Communications Consultant).

The employees of both institutions were involved with the branding of their institutions operationally and they were delegated by their universities in response to the electronic mailed letter (see Appendix A). No answers were received in writing by these employees.

Joint sessions with these respondents were held and their responses are therefore jointly accounted for.

4.5.1 The establishment and proactiveness of a leading entrepreneurial university

Question 1:

You could manage to establish yourselves as a leading entrepreneurial university in Europe and has a strong reputation as being a <u>proactive</u> university. What do you think were the main reasons for this reputation of being proactive during the mid-1990s?

The purpose of this question was to determine how leading universities established themselves as entrepreneurial universities by being proactive. Both universities are considered to be proactive by Clark (1998: 40) for a number of reasons, the main reason being the fact that they did not respond to government legislation, to pressures from other universities to change, or to trends worldwide to be entrepreneurial universities. They had, however, taken the initiative in a proactive, leading way. In other words, they had sufficient time to position themselves and not become an institution that only acted in a reactive way and to do crisis management. This certainly had an impact on how they were perceived by stakeholders which, in turn, impacted on their brand.

The University of Warwick (UW): Strong management and a very clear vision on the "make a pound and save a pound" idea emerged during the discussion with regard to why the UW could have established itself as a proactive university. The then Vice-Chancellor, Butterworth (1961-1985), was committed to academic excellence and persuaded local business and union leaders to become involved in early discussions on the future of the university. He was willing to procure good staff members and then gave them freedom in their specialities. Butterworth also obtained staff with new ideas who felt suffocated at their institutions. The former registrar and the author of "Managing Successful Universities", Michael Shattock, was a key factor in this drive. He was regarded as the initiator of the change to entrepreneurialism at the university.

The University of Twente (UT): Visionary management and a very strong sense of being different from other universities were given as the main reasons for the success of the UT in achieving good results as a proactive university. Internally as well as externally its management wanted it to be perceived as different from traditional universities in the region. Because of its location (it was isolated), subsidy cuts, and dwindling student numbers, a possible closure was a reality in the 1970s, and the university was actually forced to bring another dimension to the university. If it had been perceived as just another university in the Netherlands, it would have been closed by the turn of the century. This forced drive to become different was initiating management’s thinking towards entrepreneurialism.

4.5.2 A strong message to business partners

Question 2:

Your communication to business partners must also have carried a very strong message. What message did you carry across and how was it done? In general, what was your brand message to all stakeholders? How did you manage to convey this message across?

The reason behind this question was to establish how the two universities had managed to communicate the idea of entrepreneurialism to stakeholders effectively, both internally and externally. A key element of this study is the very notion of processes and practices within the organisation that would lead to effective branding externally.

The UW: The communication was *real*, in other words, what was said to all stakeholders and business partners was the truth. They could sense it from what they experienced with the university, namely that the communication was indeed truthful (see paragraph 3.10 on experience economy). The brand message was relevancy, the kind of relevancy that non-academics could have identified with as well. The economic impact of the region, job creation, and the commercialisation of research are examples of the kind of relevancy. Added to this, they became the drivers in the planning of programme offerings, research projects, developmental research, dissemination of knowledge, community services, and engagement. The mission of the university was also communicated in such a way that stakeholders could experience it. The mission is the following: To become a world leader in research and teaching through research of international excellence; to increase significantly the range of human knowledge and understanding; to equip graduates to make an important contribution to economy and society; to serve the local region – academically, culturally and economically; and to continue to make Warwick education available to all those able to benefit from it, regardless of economic or social circumstances.

The UT: The UT felt that the culture that existed in conjunction with its entrepreneurial activities carried the strongest message. This was done with the "being different" communication. The matter of culture is further touched on in paragraph 4.5.6. In the university's profile it always comes to the fore that it is entrepreneurial. Communication of the profile of the university always stated that they saw themselves doing relevant research; they were entrepreneurial - that it is technology-driven - and that they transferred knowledge.

In Chapter 5 mention will be made of marketing and branding practices in *relation* to what is happening inside organisations. This aspect also forms one of the core aspects of this study, namely that there must be a match between what is communicated to the outside world and what is actually happening inside. If the institution promotes itself as being "entrepreneurial" to external stakeholders, internal activities need to adhere to that. Kotler (1997: 37) agrees with this when he notes that the best marketing department in the world cannot sell products that are poorly made or fail to meet anyone's need. He continues by saying that the marketing department can only be effective in companies whose various departments and employees have designed and implemented a competitively superior customer value-delivery system.

This response of the UT is consistent with the literature review. For example, Le Roux (2003: 63 of 185) agrees with the responses above when he describes the four models of public relations. They are the press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical modes. The first three are asymmetrical models which try to attempt to change the behaviour of the public without changing the behaviour of the organisation. The researcher is of the opinion that communication without the necessary internal excellence eventually leads to distrust which, in turn, has an immensely adverse effect on the image of the institution. Chapter 5 mentions that institutions of higher learning in South Africa are particularly guilty of grandiose promises to stakeholders, but fail to reflect these in internal activities. Particularly now that the HEQC is using institutions' mission and vision statements as points of departure in their quality audits, this aspect is of the utmost importance. Most South African higher education institutions currently refer to quality or excellence in their statements. The danger is that they are now being judged upfront in terms of quality performance indicators.

4.5.3 Challenges with regard to internal communicating

Question 3:

Closely linked to 4.5.2 are the communication and marketing division(s) and its interaction with the rest of your staff. What would you describe as your biggest challenge in this regard?

The rationale behind this question was to establish what challenges were experienced in communicating to staff members in order for them to "buy into" the concept of entrepreneurialism.

The UW mentioned that strong leadership from top management conveys the message. The staff members who had been uncomfortable with the idea of an innovative university had left the institution. They felt that an academic institution was not a business and should always portray its academic nature, which is learning and teaching, as well as research. A very special effort was then made to recruit the staff that would fit into the entrepreneurial culture. It was not easy. According to Clark (1998: 14), the Vice-Chancellor and his immediate staff came under severe attack from some faculty members and some militant students, the reasons being that Warwick became too businesslike and was referred to as Warwick University Ltd. According to the same author, there was a belief that, to relate to industry, was to be captured by industry and even dominated by capitalism. The appropriate members of staff had to be innovative in their thinking and have the ability to do relevant research that would lead to, among other things, patents and new technologies. This alerts universities to keep a good balance between being a business and still be true to the nature of universities, namely knowledge creation and dissemination. These two aspects are not in conflict but require a special kind of leadership, vision and knowledge of both worlds, namely academic and business.

At the UT a very special relationship between the Vice-Chancellor (VC) and the Director of Communications was the answer to this problematic issue. Between the two of them they could manage to induce academics to think differently. This was also done differently from what was regarded as normal communication. Academics were put in all sorts of "non-academic" situations and portrayed as such. The traditional portrayal of an academic, namely that of thick glasses, old suit, worn and old briefcase/satchel, extremely "clever", somewhat nutty, and not in touch with reality, made way for that of an academic who can have fun, dress in designer wear and be fashionable, in touch with his surroundings and, above all, who can relate to industry, its desires and aspirations.

The researcher is of the opinion that employees' "buy-in" is always important and they can derail any direction of any organisation if the issue is not properly dealt with. Once again this question is directed at the role of the HR division into the whole notion of branding (see paragraph 3.6). The traditional role of HR include - but are not limited to - organisational development, employee wellness and job satisfaction, which includes inducting them into the organisation, and engage them in staff development. The HR division plays a crucial role in employees' attitudes, commitment and, ultimately, in their culture. The issue of HR's role and its relatedness to branding is thoroughly discussed in paragraph 3.6.

Communication directed at staff members are often neglected in favour of external communication. The researcher, however, believes that internal communication should also form part of organisational strategy and does not receive its rightful position. Higher education specifically tends to neglect this aspect. Testa (in Le Roux 2003: 69 of 185) indicates that the relationship that develops between an organisation and its employees may be an indicator of its relationship with other stakeholders. The same author continues by arguing that if organisational leaders do not truly know how their internal stakeholders feel, they are probably not in touch with external stakeholders such as clients and partners. Added to this, the HEQC in South Africa emphasises surveys as a means to prove how institutions are performing in this regard.

4.5.4 Assisting with development in the region

Question 4:

You are conceived to be a regional university and to help with the development of the region. From literature and other sources, it seems that you have succeeded in uplifting the region substantially. Are there any specific activities that you can link to this?

The intention of this question was to establish whether the two universities had engaged in specific strategic actions to uplift their respective communities.

Both the UT and the UW felt that the very fact that they saw themselves as entrepreneurial and that it had become part of the very reason for their existence, was just a natural outflow from the idea of entrepreneurialism. The respondents felt that economic involvement in the region was one of the key issues they had to address. The university could then become involved in its region in a very positive way. The idea of entrepreneurialism can never receive its rightful position without becoming involved in the region (see paragraphs 4.4.1 and 4.4.2). In the case of the UW, the then Vice-Chancellor, Butterworth (1961-1985), had very good relationships with leading industrialists in the Coventry area and sought to instil a pro-industry attitude towards the university: it would be a "relevant" university as well as a disciplined-led enterprise (Clark 1998: 15). These leading industrialists were predominantly in the engineering sector. In recent years this has been leading the way for regional and local business partners, among others, partnerships called the following: Business in the Community; Advantage West Midlands; CBI West Midlands; Coventry Partnership; Coventry; Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership; Government Office for the West Midlands; and West Midlands Higher Education Partnership. The details of these partnerships are not within the sphere of this study.

Almost the same practice was initiated by Frans van den Kroonenberg (1979-1982; 1985-1988) at the UT when he wanted the university to become aggressively proactive, initiating new forms of contact with industry, city and regional development, as well as with community groups (Clark 1998: 45).

Consistent with the above, Prigge (2005: 1 of 2) notes that universities and industry have a long history of collaboration and there are numerous benefits in forming partnerships for universities and industry alike. Universities can benefit from these partnerships, since they can provide financial support for universities' educational, research and service missions; broaden the experiences of their students and faculty; as well as enhance regional economic development.

4.5.5 Relevance to society

Question 5:

"Relevance to society" comes very strong to the fore in literature with regard to what you stand for. Have you worked out a specific communication strategy to convey or "propagate" this message?

This question is linked with paragraph 4.5.2, namely the universities' message to business partners. The purpose of this question was to establish a link to the idea of relevance to society and a communication strategy. Relevance and entrepreneurial universities are almost synonymous (see paragraph 3.9). Partnerships of entrepreneurial universities and industry, their regional and societal impact, and their general entrepreneurial culture - to name but a few - are why these concepts gel. The issue of relevance and its connectivity to brand is touched on in paragraph 3.9 under the heading "Brand

Relevance". Relevance is also mentioned in paragraph 4.4.1 as well as in paragraph 4.4.2.

All the respondents did not make a connection between relevance and brand. It was as if they did not become relevant *in order* to brand, but rather to be relevant because of its vital role in higher education.

4.5.6 Institutional culture, branding and entrepreneurialism

Question 6:

To be regarded as one of the leading entrepreneurial universities in Europe, a very strong internal (employee) drive in terms of culture must have taken place to have achieved this. How did you achieve this?

The reason behind this question was to establish in which way the culture of both institutions had contributed to their success.

Both universities echoed the same sentiments in terms of culture: The entrepreneurial culture is there and it is real. The total effect thereof is more than the sum of the different parts. The UT reiterated that all its activities were not necessarily entrepreneurial, but all employees saw themselves as entrepreneurial and they wanted to be perceived as such. Even if a programme was a straightforward academic venture, the professor of that unit regarded himself as entrepreneurial. A strong entrepreneurial culture exists institutionally at both universities and they will not be successful without it. The entire notion of entrepreneurialism and what it entails was thoroughly discussed in paragraph 4.2.

The culture of any organisation and, arguably more so in the higher education sector, closely links up with the idea of integrated branding as mentioned in paragraph 3.8 as well as the role of the HR division as mentioned in paragraph 3.6. As a member of staff at a university of technology in South Africa and during discussions with staff members at other universities (see paragraph 4.9.1), the researcher is of the opinion that this kind of entrepreneurial culture is non-existent in South Africa.

4.5.7 The role of Human Resources (HR) in the culture of entrepreneurialism

Question 7:

What is the role of your Human Resources (HR) in inculcating the entrepreneurial culture of your university?

This question was also directed to establish what role the HR division played in establishing, enhancing and sustaining the culture of entrepreneurialism.

UW: The drive was initially an autocratic one, with not much input from HR. Owing to the initial feeling among certain academics that the university should stick to its core (learning and research), the move to entrepreneurialism had to be driven quite strongly.

UT: Different units embark on the whole notion of entrepreneurialism. There is not a strong central drive and even the staff at the UT sometimes find it strange that it works so well. The advantage of a decentralised approach is that one obtains ownership on an operational level, but the disadvantage is that it is sometimes difficult to monitor. Currently there is no real drive from management to enforce entrepreneurialism in a theoretical way. Everybody seems to be aligned in their actions and in their line of thinking. A "walk the talk" motto seems to be very effective.

The role of HR and its connectivity to contributing, enhancing and developing institutional culture are relatively new to higher education and other sectors and the researcher is of the opinion that it is only those leaders with a *market orientation* way of thinking who will see the connection. Traditionally HR does not see as one of its roles to contribute to the branding of an institution. The concept of *market orientation* and its value will also be dealt with in Chapter 5. It also forms one of the key elements of this study and of the model that will be developed.

4.5.8 The relation of Human Resources (HR) to other divisions

Question 8:

How, in terms of structure, is the relationship with HR to (1) your executive management; and (2) to your communication and marketing divisions?

This question was posed to establish whether a special structure was established between the relevant parties and also to establish lines of communication.

Both the UT's and the UW's communication and marketing divisions work very closely with executive management. They have joint regular sessions simply to discuss matters of common interest. Both institutions' marketing and communications directors report directly to the Vice-Chancellors. The UT does not focus strongly on a central office in terms of rules and regulations with regard to its corporate message, but everyone knows how it must be done in terms of regulations with logos, letterheads, typefaces, and so forth. A very special relationship exists between the UT's VC and the Director of Communications in the sense that the latter knows exactly what the VC would want. The UT does have a central communications office, but different divisions and faculties know exactly what is expected from them with regard to external messages. Thus policing is not necessary. The culture is embedded in them in such a way that external messages are uniform in their nature in terms of the values and mission of the university. Thus it is an underlying assumption that everyone is professional and acts accordingly.

4.5.9 Structures to promote entrepreneurialism

Question 9:

What structures did you put in place to promote entrepreneurialism, that is, any extra offices, staff that you would normally not find at your traditional universities?

The purpose of this question was to establish whether any special offices, centres, and units had been established specifically to promote entrepreneurialism.

The UT: It has what is called the Temporary Entrepreneurial Positions (TOP) programme; Business and Science Park; the Student Union; Nikos (Dutch Institute for Knowledge Intensive Entrepreneurship); as well as the Holding Technopolis Twente (HTT). The TOP programme involves the use of the UT facilities, housing, risk-bearing start-up funds, business management support and coaching by a UT expert. The Business and Science Park is a joint venture with the city of Enschede, and is directed at research and development; it is a mix of large- and small-/medium-size companies (including spin-offs) and diminishes distance as a barrier for collaboration. The Student Union engages itself with facilities for students starting their own businesses, creating a mindset for entrepreneurialism and creating future high technology starters. Thus far it has more than 100 companies. The core function of Nikos includes it being an expert centre for entrepreneurship. It also involves itself with research, education, and consultancy and is a mix of theory and best practices. The HTT is, among others, the body for a hotel, real-estate and internet exchange. These offices and activities will either be very limited or non-existent at "non-entrepreneurial universities".

UW: Conference Centres, the Warwick Science Park, the Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG), and The Business School at Warwick exist with specialised programmes to promote entrepreneurialism. The Conference Centres are closely related to the work of the manufacturing group and the business school. The Warwick Science Park began its operations in 1984 and embodies entrepreneurship. It is a combined effort of the university and the city of Coventry and is located next to the campus. The park is focused heavily on high-tech firms and expanded around start-up firms nourished by advice, as well as providing space for firms that want a presence in it. During the mid-1990s, some 65 firms with 1 300 employees were situated at the park. The business school undertook a wide range of MBA (Masters of Business Administration) and executive-training programmes.

The deduction can therefore be made that certain structures, as mentioned in the previous two paragraphs, need to be put into place for the promotion of entrepreneurialism at higher education institutions. It would become a futile exercise to promote entrepreneurialism if the necessary structures are not in place.

4.6 DISCUSSION ON FOCUS GROUPS CONDUCTED AT THE UT AND THE UW (INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES)

A few issues came to light during the visits to these two leading entrepreneurial universities in Europe. First, the essence of visionary leadership can never be underestimated. Both universities, although in different ways, have demonstrated their reliance and dependence on strong leadership (see paragraph 4.5.1), that is strong leadership in the sense that this executive position is centralised in a very uncompromising way. As was mentioned in paragraph 4.5.1, the key driver at the University of Warwick was the ex-Registrar and author of "Managing successful universities", Michael Shattock. Initially he was driving the idea of "making a pound and saving a pound” in a very autocratic, and sometimes controversial way.

At the UT the former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Frans van Vught, is perceived as a visionary leader. He was the one seeking university/industry partnerships aggressively for the quest to be relevant and who enhanced the brand of the institution externally as well with his exceptional public image and ability to speak extremely well when addressing stakeholders. Also in South Africa he is recognised as a higher education leader of stature and was one of the leading speakers at a seminar on Entrepreneurial Higher Education Institutions in Johannesburg in July 2002.

Strong leadership is consistent with Clark’s pathways of transformation with regard to entrepreneurial universities (1998: 5) (see paragraph 4.2). Clark (1998: 5) confirms this by saying that “universities have long exhibited a notoriously weak capacity to steer themselves”. In accord with this, Van Vught (2002: 5) reiterates that universities that want to change cannot depend on traditional (weak) control or steering. They need to become quicker, more flexible and much more focused in reacting to demands from their environments. This requires strong and visionary leadership to project future needs, trends, possibilities and developments.

Shattock (2003: 24) argues that in a strongly competitive environment there are close parallels with strategic management in the private sector, especially in relation to flexibility, bottom-up approaches and ensuring that strategy direction are distributed between the centre of operating units. It is significant that both Van Vught (former Vice-Chancellor of the UT) and Shattock (former Registrar of the UW) emphasise *flexibility*, among other things, in their management approach.

An integrated entrepreneurial culture (see paragraph 4.5.6) emerges at both institutions. Initially the researcher found it strange that both universities could operate so successfully without the involvement of a very strong HR division involvement (see paragraph 3.6), but he soon realised that the culture had already been established. There is no need to build or start an entrepreneurial culture; it already exists. As was mentioned in paragraph 4.5.1, this culture was the result of domineering behaviour from top management at certain times, but it worked. The researcher is of the opinion that this kind of autocracy will not be sensible at this stage in South Africa. Furthermore, the researcher is of the opinion that the nation is still fragile; still unsure after a history of oppression of Blacks and women. The more sensible route would be very strong HR involvement which should be the driver for organisational change. However, South African higher education institutions are sometimes so caught up in the concept of democracy that they hamper initiative.

In his address at the seminar on Entrepreneurial Higher Education Institutions in Johannesburg in July 2002, Van Vught commented that universities needed a culture "that embraced change"; and a work ethic and a set of beliefs that were university-wide and thus became the very base of the institution's identity (Van Vught 2002: 6). Mention was made in the introduction of Chapter 4 about, among other things, change management and exercises in this regard. The researcher would argue that it goes much deeper and will involve much more effort from the leadership of any organisation to promote the kind of change Van Vught is mentioning.

Also very significant is the united culture that exists at both universities. Mention is made in paragraph 4.8 about processes at South African universities that are loosely managed. Shattock (2003: 40) argues that individualised leadership is less critical to success than an organisational culture that encourages a sense of common purpose and welcomes the need for rigorous and disinterested debate. He further states that a central steering core may initiate policy, but is more important to coordinate and react to proposals that are fed to it from below. This might sound like a contradiction to earlier comments that a strong steering core (see paragraph 4.2) is needed at universities, but it is not. The researcher is of the opinion that the flexible leader who can react to proposals that are fed from below, the leader who can instil a culture of success, is a *strong* leader. What we thus need in higher education is new definitions of what higher education leadership is all about.

Another *initial* surprise for the researcher was the fact that communication, both internally and externally, works quite well given the fact that a strong centralised HR division was non-existent. However, this surprise was short-lived, because it made perfect sense that - if you have the *integrated culture* (see paragraph 4.2), which is the result of a *strong steering core* - effective communication will be a natural result. Everybody talks the same language, because everybody's terms of reference are the same. It is at institutions where a strong steering core is non-existent that communication is also haphazard.

In the introduction of Chapter 1 as well as the introduction to this chapter, mention was made of the realities and pressures facing higher education institutions in South Africa. Meeting the new challenges to realise the outcomes of the NPHE (see paragraph 1.2.3) and to operate more like entrepreneurial universities (see paragraphs 4.3 and 4.5), demand innovative strategic thinking.

As indicated in paragraph 1.7, aspects relating to branding were also investigated at certain South African higher education institutions (see "objective" in paragraph 1.6.2).

4.7 BACKGROUND TO SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY

As mentioned to the background of this study, the South African higher education arena is currently undergoing massive changes (see paragraph 1.1). Due to a new dispensation which started in 1994, a totally new landscape is currently unfolding. Where the immediate focus after 1994 was to open the doors of learning to all at all higher education institutions in South Africa, the focus has changed to institutions themselves. The quality drive by the HEQC audits focuses on enhancing the quality of offerings, teaching and learning, and student outputs, which confirms this change in focus.

Currently institutions are merged/incorporated, or are in the process of being merged/incorporated. The status of other institutions has been changed from technikons to universities of technology. Together with this, higher education institutions have changed their names or are in the process of doing so. The magnitude of these simultaneous changes currently is the first of its kind in South Africa and it is unlikely to be repeated in the future. Although some institutions experience tremendous pressure and staff members are uncertain about their future, it is also an opportune time for change in branding strategies. Institutions of higher learning currently have the scope to change any misconceptions about higher education in general and about specific institutions in particular. Never before have institutions of higher learning had this kind of opportunity to brand themselves in the minds and hearts of stakeholders. This all important aspect of branding, given the situation as discussed above, unfortunately is not emerging the way it should if one listens to discussions among marketing officials as well as among other members of staff. Research done in higher education confirms this. The findings of this research will subsequently be discussed.

4.8 RESEARCH FINDINGS (PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION)

Owing to his attendance of seminars, congresses, workshops as well as informal discussions with marketing officials around South Africa, the researcher could obtain a good background on common branding issues based on the principles of the participant observer research methodology. Consequently findings of this method are discussed *generally* involving higher education institutions of South Africa and *particularly* the researcher's own institution. Common practices involving the institutions are thus discussed.

As participant observer the researcher, very soon after taking up the responsibilities as a manager in the marketing division, became aware of sentiments from executive management that the marketing division is the "window" of the entire institution. Although this sounded like a very simple analogy, its implications are loaded. The researcher realised at a later stage that it was indeed *meant* to be loaded. This view was indicative of the notion that perceptions on quality, branding image and even relevance, were perceived to be the roles and responsibilities of the marketing division alone.

This was not only the view of the executive management, of staff during meetings and informal one-on-one or group discussions. This view was echoed even by junior staff and middle management. It was a matter of, if "the institution is perceived as a mediocre institution", or if "the institution does not obtain students with 'A' symbols", or if "the fundraising unit does not raise enough funds", the marketing division must deal with it; it is perceived to be its problem. Even if the content of academic programmes is questioned, the marketing and communications division must deal with it. The researcher is of the opinion that this view has a historic origin. As was mentioned in Chapter 1 and again in Chapter 5, higher education has always operated in a protected environment with sufficient resources. It was always an environment that was "sought-after" and never an environment that was "seeking". This gave way to the attitude mentioned as opposed to the marketing orientation attitude also mentioned in paragraph 5.3.4. These views were also emphasised during the informal conversation interviews held at seven South African higher education institutions.

Added to the above, the researcher also became aware of a "silo-operated" environment throughout institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Higher education institutions see the marketing divisions as *divisions.* Marketing is seen as a university-wide function, but is isolated in terms of its operations. At worst, no cross-functional teams exist and, at best, there is a member of the marketing division assigned to other divisions to assist them. This scenario of silos is, in the researcher's opinion, partly due to the lack of proper organisational communication. Where institutions in England, for example the UW, have offices strictly dealing with internal communication and are called "The Office for Internal Communications", internal communications are regarded as add-ons to "Communications" at best, and, at worst, are restricted to an internal magazine. More often than not, internal communications are not even defined and do not appear in institutions' lexicon.

Consistent with the above and, arguably the cause (or effect), is the non-involvement of the HR division in marketing in general, and branding in particular. Since the researcher's inception at an institution of higher learning four years ago, no collaborative efforts have been undertaken between the marketing and the HR sections. This, in the researcher's opinion, makes an effective branding campaign almost impossible. Neither the institutional behaviour, nor the culture to enhance the brand, exists (see paragraph 3.14).

The findings of the informal conversation interviews conducted at the seven South African higher education institutions confirm the findings of the UNITECH Report (see paragraph 3.14). If South African higher education institutions aspired to take the entrepreneurial route, as was the case with the Universities of Twente and Warwick, serious consideration should be given to their branding practices in order to be perceived as relevant.

Ironically, whilst dealing with process management and its interconnectedness to branding, the researcher learned from the regional director of the local Mercedes Benz dealer, a subsidiary of Barlow World, that his wife wanted to further her studies in a teaching direction by enrolling for a postgraduate programme. Her first choice was a local university, but she changed her mind after too much hassles during the enquiry and enrolment phases. She then opted for the other university in the same city and continued by obtaining her qualification *cum laude*. In addition, she was awarded a certificate as the best student in the B. Tech: postgraduate programme for 2004. No higher education institution in the world can afford to lose out on a student of this calibre simply because of poor processes.

The researcher also received numerous enquiries from acquaintances on how to enrol, where to obtain information, and how to go about matters in general at his institution. User-friendly processes *and* providing knowledge on them, will undoubtedly enhance the brand.

As a participant observer the researcher is of the opinion that higher education institutions in South Africa can do much more internally to enhance its brand and the best part hereof is that it does not have to have a monetary implication. However, it will be the CEO interested in the institution's independent long-term future who will take this route.

Added to the participant observation method to gain a meaningful insight into the operations of institutions of higher learning, was obtaining information from other institutions by way of informal conversation interviews.

4.9 RESEARCH FINDINGS (INFORMAL CONVERSATION INTERVIEWS)

As was mentioned in paragraph 2.10.2.2, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:438) refer to "informal conversation interviews", where interviews are more like a conversation/discussion. The researcher interviewed marketing officials at seven South African higher education institutions by making use of this technique. These included higher education institutions in the central, northern, eastern, south eastern and western parts of the country. These interviews took place in the participants' own settings, that is on their respective campuses. This was done over a two-year period spanning from 2004 to 2005. The purpose of these interviews was to allow the participants to discuss in detail their insights, perceptions and interpretations of their institutions' marketing and branding strategies with specific reference to the new higher education landscape.

The following aspects were discussed with participants from seven South African higher education institutions: branding strategies; challenges facing them; problems; the internalisation process; executive management on branding; as well as the structure in terms of alignment. The duration of the informal conversation interviews ranged from 15 to 120 minutes. The researcher's position at a higher education institution, as well as the sensitivity, especially with regard to the vagueness of sensitive information at institutions of higher learning and the nature of the information required, was the main reason why this kind of investigation was done. Also due to the reasons noted here, it was decided that no tape recordings were to be used and that institutions would be named in a regional context only.

What hampered this exercise was the fact that most institutions which took part in the investigation were experiencing an extremely uncertain time – probably the most uncertain time in their history – due to merging/incorporation mentioned in paragraph 1.1. Even though it was decided that institutions would only be referred to in a regional context, the researcher could still feel some sense of caution in the responses. This exercise would have had much more value if it were to be undertaken during another time, for example a period of time well after merging and incorporations. However, the investigation revealed issues that are consistent with the researcher's opinions as a participant observer as well as the UNITECH Report mentioned in paragraph 3.14. This includes, among others, the perception that the marketing division is responsible for an institution's image, "silo-operated" practices and the non-involvement of the HR division. It also disclosed information and practices that are very useful to this study. The advantage of this exercise currently is that institutions can evaluate how proactive and re-active they are to a changing environment. To shed more light on this, the research findings of specific institutions are consequently discussed.

4.9.1 Current branding practices

The three universities in the northern region echoed very different responses to questions on their branding practices on certain issues. However, most of the branding and marketing issues were consistent with the researcher's own observation, as well as with the findings of the UNITECH Report referred to in paragraph 3.14. There is a general lack of understanding of the role marketing and communications units ought to play. The misconceptions about the roles range from poor communication between executive management and marketing units to a complete misunderstanding of their existence. Marketing units are seen to be the quick-fix solutions on branding-related issues. If the press, for example, obtains negative news, the marketing unit must not only deal with it, the unit must also change those negative perceptions.

In the northern region marketing units also operate in isolation and the rest of the workforce does not regard themselves as marketers in any way. A lecturer does not see him-/herself as having to perform a marketing function. It is not his/her job. The marketing division has their jobs, so do the rest of the staff. A more detailed account on the participating institutions' responses and branding approaches follows.

University A (one interviewee)

University A is the largest of South Africa's contact universities and has more than 55 000 contact and distance education students. One of the employees was interviewed. This university has nine faculties and offers courses in both Afrikaans and in English. University A has approximately 3 000 permanent staff members and 44% of the academic staff members have doctorates.

University A in particular established a client services centre which aims at dealing with 80% of all enquiries by stakeholders. This university has a sophisticated management information system (MIS) which records all enquiries, for example telephonic conversations, walk-in clients, written correspondence and e-mail, among others. It captures data like the name of the enquirer; what he/she was enquiring about; if the response was to his/her satisfaction; if the enquiry had to be diverted to someone else; etcetera. These data can then be grouped in order for management to see how many enquiries the university had received in a specific area as well as at what time of the year. If, for example, many enquiries about admission requirements had come from grade 12 learners from specific schools in the region, proactive steps are taken to see that those schools receive better information on admission requirements the following year. This is an extremely useful method and part of process management (see paragraph 3.7). It should also be expanded to all institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

University B (two interviewees)

University B is a northern residential university of technology with about 51 000 students. This university of technology was born after the merger of three technikons. The institution employs 6 384 permanent and part-time staff members.

This university in the northern region has a limited "cross-functional team" idea. It assigned staff members of the marketing and communications division to other sections of the university. Their task is to help other sections to align with the university's overall brand message. This task is limited in the sense that it does not perform a true cross-functional duty as opposed to what a Branding Committee would have done (see Chapter 5). It merely provides guidelines with regard to what practices must be followed. However, they do have a central marketing and communications office overseeing their branding practices.

University C (one interviewee)

University C became a comprehensive institution in January 2005 after the merging of a technikon and a university. It offers both academic and technology degrees. During 2004 final meetings and preparations took place to ensure that all operational structures would be in place in 2005 and that everything would run smoothly when the "new" university opened its doors. However, from an outside observer's point of view, a great deal of work must still be done for this institution to shake off the merger's effects and move forward. The respondent reiterated that staff are still in many ways uncertain and that necessary structures still need to be defined. The comment made by a university respondent in the western region became real when she noted that the higher education environment took very long to reach consensus on certain issues because its nature was one of debate, criticising, questioning and even interrogation. If two private or public corporate enterprises were to merge, the process would take three months to complete after the decision had been made. The researcher agrees based on his previous employment and being part of a merging process whilst he was there. Also stemming from one of his KPA's, namely project fundraising in a higher education setting, he deals much with private and public enterprises. A decision is made to merge, a project leader is appointed and the roll-out phase starts immediately. Severance packages are offered, staff members are re-assigned, redeployed and transferred and receive very little time to decide. Whilst this is done, a visual identity is worked on and soon a new company is born.

However, it needs to be said that the process does not involve inputs from all sectors, like in higher education, and can therefore be much quicker. Added to this, there is a huge monetary implication during the merging of public and private enterprises and, if the merging is not done within an agreed time frame, the organisation could lose millions in revenue. Project leaders are also incentivised substantially to complete their task within a set time frame. They therefore work around the clock to complete their task in time. They are usually highly-skilled employees who have quite a substantial budget to be used at their own discretion and, added to this, receive bonuses if savings on this budget can be orchestrated.

This university also (like a university of technology in central South Africa) made use of an international branding company to roll out their visual identity.

University C in the north has a true feeling of the importance of the internal process and its connectedness to brand (see paragraph 3.7) thanks to a professor of communication who is highly experienced in HR-related issues. Unfortunately this university is troubled by merging and the effects thereof. Due to the immense trauma of the members of staff caused by uncertainty, branding and its internal component are not priority now. The internalisation process is ongoing, but the researcher also gained the impression that the visual identity phase was the important one, the one that would brand the institution. The deeper discussion on aspects that should change, has not yet been done and the visual identity phase seems to have been phase 1. Now that this is done, other elements are discussed and in the process of being rolled out.

University D (two interviewees)
University D in the south-eastern part of South Africa still operates as a "technikon" and has not yet changed its name, or its status, to that of a university of technology. Although this institution is by law a university of technology, it still operates as a "technikon" as far as its name and visual identity are concerned. They must, however, adhere to national criteria as far as accreditation is concerned.

University D echoed the same feelings with regard to its branding as stated in the UNITECH Report (see paragraph 3.14). The marketing and communications unit also reported in isolation and there is no integrated approach. This university, however, places strong emphasis on process management and the head of the unit tries his utmost to sell this idea to the rest of the staff as an integral part of branding. Process management (see paragraph 3.7) forms the key to the university's branding and marketing long-term strategy and it is in the process of taking shape. This institution's challenge is to adhere to a changing higher education landscape in South Africa very soon.

University E (one interviewee)

University E is situated in the eastern part of the country and is the result of a merger of a technikon and two universities. It has more than 20 000 students and approximately 2 000 staff members based on eight campuses or delivery sites. The merger process was completed, but many issues still need to be resolved. Even its website has not yet been finalised and web browsers are referred to the old websites for some information.

University E is arguably the university that was the hardest hit by the merging process. The immense uncertainty of staff members and the effect thereof on their operational outputs seem to be quite significant. Unlike other institutions that have gone through this process, it seems as if this institution is plagued by personal interests at this stage. The researcher is of the opinion that it will soon settle down once all positions have been filled.

This university currently has three CEOs of the previous institutions all competing for the position of the new CEO. These CEOs have their followers from their old institutions and most staff members feel extremely uncertain about their positions. The positions junior to those of the CEO also need to be filled. One of the "old" CEOs mentioned at one stage that, if staff members had an option to go to another institution in the same area, most of them would have resigned. It was only because there was no other institution of higher learning in the city that they were still there. No meaningful branding, internally or externally, takes place at this point in time.

The university went through the process of a name change after the merger. It also went through the process of the visual identity and concluded that aspect. Visionary management (see paragraph 4.5.1) seems to be lacking at this stage, but it is not surprising, given the circumstances described above. This institution's challenge at this point in time is to settle down very quickly, otherwise the process of merging will have a much longer than expected effect on the institution.

University F (one interviewee)

University F in the western part of South Africa is one of the universities that did not have to go through a process of merging or incorporation. It employs 4 300 people, 56% of whom are administrative staff and 44% academic and research staff. This university hosts about 20 000 national and 3 000 international students.

University F, like University G, is also situated in the western part and totally different with regard to what it had encountered as far as branding was concerned. However, it quite strongly agreed on one issue: The university did have an advantage as far as their image was concerned, but it had historical reasons. It was perceived to be among the best South African higher education could offer, but this perception was purely based on its rich history. It had a “reputational” advantage. It certainly used this aspect to its advantage. University F felt very strongly that the gap between academic and support services staff was too wide in terms of operations. The issue of branding should be dealt with in the same way that other enterprises engage in. However, it still struggles to make quick decisions and to act quickly to market needs. This university feels that the environment of higher education is one of “debate, questioning, criticising and interrogation”. This might be good at times, but more often than not, it hampers them when quick reactions are needed. The decision-making process takes much longer than in the corporate for-profit sector. The ideal would be for the academic enterprise to collaborate with business processes, but the marketing and communications units could not succeed in this respect.

A very interesting remark was made by the head of the marketing and communications unit, namely that its research was aimed at relevancy, as well as at the perception of being relevant. It has as its objective to make an impact on the environment in the Western Cape by partnerships and research. Added to this is the notion of becoming involved in government initiatives. This involvement with government and the region, as well as the university’s direct connection with relevancy and brand, are positive indicators of a move towards entrepreneurialism (see paragraphs 4.2; 4.3 and 4.4).

Another element which this university maintains in adding to its brand, is its beautiful and historic buildings and environment.

The same university feels, however, that its processes are too complex and extremely user-unfriendly. The reason could be that it can enrol only 25% of all applicants. When an organisation is in a position like this, its administrative staff tends to become arrogant and are not aligned with the brand promise. Interestingly, the University of Warwick with no historical advantage, takes in one student for every 10 applications it receives (see paragraph 4.4.1).

University F also feels that its CEO is highly regarded in the higher education fraternity and that it contributes to its image and brand. He is the chair of the South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA), and is regarded as a strong leader who communicates regularly with his staff through weekly internal mail.

University G (two interviewees)
University G is also situated in the western part of South Africa, and has also been left untouched by the mergers and incorporations. However, it maintains at this point in time that the pain and trauma other universities go through at this stage will long be forgotten, but it will still grapple with transformational issues. University G is plagued (at this point) by transformational issues. It feels as if it affects just about everything it does. The negative publicity it had recently, as well as its language policy, clouds

everything. The “for” and “against” groupings of staff members exacerbate the situation.

University G also has just more than 20 000 students. The size of the corps of personnel is about 2 430, of which 787 are academic personnel, 1 293 administrative/technical personnel, and 350 service workers.
The two respondents also felt that the university was plagued by administrative staff – most have been employed by the university for a very long time – who were not aligned with the new thinking that students are clients. This has often led to racial conflict, even if there were no racial intentions. A Black student would regard rudeness and arrogance from administrative staff as racist, but - according to them - that was their normal way of treating enquiries and dealing with other administrative assistance. The respondents also felt that their institution’s administrative sphere needed a serious wake-up call, because they did not have a wide pool of students to pick from, since the numbers of Afrikaans students were limited. They felt management was aligned with the new thinking mentioned above, but not the staff.

In addition to the above, the institution is currently working on an internal communication policy and hopes to have it functional very soon. Internal communication does not seem to get through; hence the gap. This was also cited as the reason why there were three different groups with regard to transformational goals: One group was of the opinion that transformation did take place and that it was managed responsibly; the other group maintained that it was managed irresponsibly; while for the third group transformation was taking place too slowly.

The above are all aspects that give the university’s brand a pounding, despite its historical advantage. However, there seems to be a general perception among all that their core business, namely teaching and learning, is of a high quality. To most, this is what matters the most.

4.10 CASE STUDY

4.10.1 Background of the institution

University H

University H is located in the centre of South Africa and, as an institution, is currently 25 years old. It was previously known as a technikon, but its status was elevated along with those of other institutions in 2004 to that of a university of technology. This university had been aspiring for this status for a couple of years and was marketing itself during these years as the “future university of technology”.

University H focuses on vocational training and competes with historical “traditional” universities for resources and programmes. It has numerous ideas and is very ambitious, but implementation, more often than not, was troublesome. Its vocational training focuses on SET programmes.

After a small university campus in a city nearby was incorporated by this institution, its numbers grew to more than 10 000. It employs about 800 permanent staff members. They strive to be politically correct to the outside, but to the inside it is not necessarily the case. The institution has gone through branding consultation during 2004 and in 2005 the roll-out phase of this process came to light. The entire branding process is of particular importance to this study, since it contains elements that are indicative of a process to the outside consistent with the three asymmetrical models mentioned in paragraph 4.5.2 which try to attempt to change the behaviour of the public without changing the behaviour of the organisation. This branding process will subsequently be discussed.

4.10.2 The branding process

As part of the branding process mentioned above, the institution appointed a multi-national brand company to "brand" the institution. The following information was obtained from non-confidential minutes of meetings, working groups, discussions, and strategic planning sessions. The title of the project was called University H, Branding Programme. A brief description of the project mentions that "to arrive at a basic visual identity is extremely tight" and therefore will not allow the programme to run sequentially in all aspects.

Different stages of the brand development were identified. It involved the following:

- Stage 1: Brand discovery (information gathering).
- Stage 2: Brand strategy (defining the vision, mission, values and core brand positioning).
- Stage 3: Visual identity development (defining the logo, typeface, letterheads, and so forth).
- Stage 4: Brand implementation.

The brand implementation stage needs to be further deliberated upon. It consisted of a sensitisation process whereby buy-in and understanding of the process of all stakeholders were sought. Interviews were conducted with the staff, students, the university council, alumni, community and donors. It also consisted of a communications programme where internal and external audiences were targeted to create an awareness of the impending new brand and visual identity. Stakeholders were also invited to participate in the brand development through various means. The internalisation stage involved a changed management style that was seeking to actively engage all stakeholder groups in the process. It was felt that groups needed to feel part of the process. The last part of the brand implementation stage was the skills audit. This refers to an audit where a process was followed to establish which department and which staff members were capacitated to deliver the required results.

4.10.2.1 *The methodology*

The methodology used in the project involved three phases. This methodology followed the same sequence as the different stages mentioned in the previous paragraph.

1. The *brand discovery* stage (see paragraph 3.2.3) was done first. This stage involved different audits involving the following participants:
   - Strategy audit (five interviews with management; seven interviews with senior staff).
   - Student audit (60 students in focus groups).

- Internal alignment audit (staff members of different faculties in focus groups).
- Prospective student audit (four most targeted high schools consisting of 12 learners each).
- Public perception audit – external (community, schools, parents, alumni).

These groups above were used to "discover" the brand and lead the way forward. The audits were meant to obtain a feeling of what the brand should be like. This process was done in the space of approximately one month.

2. The *brand strategy* development involved the following:

- Opportunity modelling session

  An analysis of audit findings was done and used as a directive for the brand. Furthermore an exploration of possible avenues for bringing the new brand to life, along with recommendations for the opportunities with great potential was to be done. A clear point of view as to the best strategic direction to pursue, was important.

- Brand platform

  Documentation of the words and images that form the tone and manner of the new Brand Platform was done. In addition, an articulation of the core brand idea and how it translates into key messages by target audiences, was also done.

- Brand architecture

  The intended expression across the organisation was communicated. A hierarchical model on how to link the various faculties, campuses, academic offerings, products and services, and alliance relationships to the university, was established to drive the brand value.

- Brand naming

A coherent structure for names across the broader institution, that are relevant, meaningful and protectable, was done.

3. The *visual identity* development phase involved the following:

- Creative strategy

The university and the branding company discussed an array of concepts that reflect the brand platform and two concepts were chosen for refinement. The result was the final concept that established a visual identity upon which all the university's brand communications can be built, from printed materials to designed environments. To ensure that this process was effective, the branding company developed and facilitated three workshops to ensure that students and staff were involved in the process and play a role in the development of the new visual identity

- Sonic identity

An aural environment for the brand, allowing it to be recognised without visual stimulation was developed.

- Corporate identity guidelines

A comprehensive guideline manual that contains holistic rules and guidance for the application of the brand was also outlined.

- Digital brand management

  A fully interactive online brand management system was defined.

4. The *brand implementation* phase entailed the following:

   The plan proposed here was that once the brand strategy and visual identity had been developed, the brand company would take the university to its ultimate destination. It was unclear what this "ultimate destination" would be.

4.10.2.2 *The introduction of the new brand*

A media event, in close collaboration with the marketing unit of the university, was held. The objective was to thank the media for their assistance and inform them of corporate identity launches to follow. An internal launch of the visual identity was done in combination with the annual year-end staff function. The visual identity was then launched. Afterwards a flagship function was held with top level external stakeholders. The objective thereof was also to launch the visual identity and to celebrate the institution's new university status. Finally new marketing material, banners and signs replaced the existing visual elements of the old institution.

4.10.2.3 *Comments on the "Branding Programme" of University H*

Thorough investigative exercises were done and a very wide array of stakeholders was involved in a very short space of time. On 27 August 2004 a final decision was taken to appoint the branding company and on 1 December 2004 the institution proudly announced that it had been branded.

The branding plan mentions internalisation methods and brand architecture, but in retrospect it seems that this was mere informative exercises directed at staff on the unfolding of the "branding programme". The exercise also lived up to a truly South African way of thinking, that is involving every possible stakeholder, even those who could be regarded as "recipients" of the brand. It was mentioned earlier that the "brander" is the entity who wants to convey a message, among others, to the "brandee" or the recipients of that message. In South Africa no process will be legitimised without the inputs of as many stakeholders as one can possibly find. The branding company needs to be commended on this issue. However, in the researcher's opinion, there are a few shortcomings as regards the "Branding Programme" of the institution. These shortcomings are not unique and are found at other institutions as well, although at different levels.

The internalisation aspects of the branding programme were narrowed to information only, although the programme initially gave the impression that it was more than that. The implementation phase (phase four) was evidence thereof, when it focused strongly on external outward exercises. Brand implementation was mostly regarded as the roll-out of visual identity. The investigative phases now seem to have been to obtain information on how the visual identity should be and look like. It also seemed as if the process was now "handed over" to the marketing division. Everybody has made their inputs and the "brandees" should be informed accordingly (by the marketing and the communications unit). Internal messages at the university, for example, "We are now branded!" confirm this. Branding was theoretically done within three months. Unfortunately only the visual identity has changed.

Added to the above, no mention is made of internal processes in line with either the brand message; or an integrated marketing communications strategy (see paragraph 3.12); or organisational change in line with what is said; or with the vital role of HR (see paragraph 3.6), among others. In short, neither the experience economy (see paragraph 3.10) nor the relevance of the brand (see paragraph 3.9) is featured. These are exactly what this model is proposing, namely internal practices based on the fundamental principles of the experience economy. Relevance should be adhered to and sequentially the visual and symbolic visual identity should seal the branding process.

The researcher is of the opinion that this "branding exercise" should have been the other way round. Organise everything internally to a point where services are excellent, then base research on the outcome thereof, and then build a branding message. The name, the logo, the tagline, as well as every other symbolic visual and sonic exercise are then based on the outcome of the research done.

4.11 CLOSING REMARKS ON THE INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

It is clear from the empirical research of the two international universities, that is the Universities of

Warwick and Twente that they "walk the talk" and, more often than not, the "talk" is inspired by the "walk". They became relevant first and then confirmed their relevancy by outward branding exercises. They made sure that their internal processes were aligned with what they strived to be and did not only afterwards confirm it by talk. The researcher deliberately makes use of the term "confirmed" in his referral to brand messages outwardly, because that is exactly what it is. It is as if they merely "affirmed" who and what they are in their brand messages.

Conversely, the researcher is of the opinion that South African higher education institutions are using branding messages as a strategy to "convince" stakeholders of their "excellence" without vital internal strategies. There is nothing wrong with convincing, however, as long as it is reflective.

4.12 CONCLUSION

The researcher agrees with the UNITECH Survey (see paragraph 3.14) that all institutions of higher learning face the same challenges and that it is just a matter of certain branding issues, or the lack thereof, being accentuated and weighted more than others. In addition to the UNITECH Survey, the following aspects were mentioned by respondents:

- One university shows good promise with its MIS and how it tries to deal with process management.
- A limited cross-functional team exists at another university which is indicative of the fact the theory is known, but unfortunately that is all.

- Decisions are not taken easily and in a branding environment it can be to the detriment of the institution.
- Another university realises the importance of the internal branding process, but fails to roll it out effectively.
- At another institution of higher learning it was stated quite categorically that no meaningful branding – internally or externally – takes place at this stage.
- A very big gap exists between academics and support services staff.
- It was very promising to learn that there is at least one university who champions the brand.
- Processes are too complex and user-unfriendly.
- Transformational issues are a real weakness at one particular university.

Discussions among colleagues in marketing divisions are sometimes not very stimulating, neither because of the level of the discussion, nor because the staff members are not knowledgeable, but simply because of the fact that they echo the same issues. The differences in marketing practices are very limited. The northern-based institutions (see paragraph 4.9.1) do, however, show very promising signs on certain matters in view of this study's proposal.

Unfortunately the discussions at some institutions were clouded by uncertainty about their future. The researcher agrees with one particular marketing official when she pointed out that currently you cannot think branding; members of staff are more concerned about keeping their positions. Personal positioning is priority number one and everything that is being suggested, it does not matter how irrelevant, is clouded by possible ulterior motives. These institutions should settle in first and only then meaningful strides can be made with their branding. Unfortunately, they are losing serious ground in the meantime.

A particular institution is currently undergoing a very emotional transformational phase. This unfortunately clouds brand initiatives and almost everything is viewed with transformational motives.

In general, pockets of good branding practices were found at institutions of higher learning in South Africa. If these "pockets" can be done jointly, taking the proposed model into consideration (see Chapter 5), the researcher is of the opinion that it could take institutions of higher learning to the levels of the Universities of Twente and Warwick. In the north a certain university clearly demonstrated its commitment to processes with its client service centre (see paragraph 4.9.1). The institution in the south-east (see paragraph 4.9.1) also recognises process management as a key area to drive a meaningful brand. Combine this with the perception of excellence with regard to learning and teaching (an institution in the Western Cape), good leadership, relevance, and an effective internal communications strategy – also evident in the Western Cape - then South African institutions can live up to societal expectations and even beyond. However, branding of higher education institutions should be dealt with in a more scholarly way.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, will deal with the proposed model for the branding of South African higher education institutions.

CHAPTER 5

PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE BRANDING OF SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a proposed model on how branding should be viewed at institutions of higher learning, is provided. It describes internal practices that have a profound impact on branding of higher education institutions and thus overall reputation and image. In addition, it has a strong internal focus before a meaningful brand experience can be embarked upon which could ultimately result in unprecedented benefits, even for relatively new institutions (see paragraph 3.5).

Mention was made in paragraph 1.1 about pressures and realities in South African higher education and the challenges facing it. These are, among others, a history of being plagued by inequalities; new policies directed at eradicating the very same inequalities; private higher education; increased diversity in types of institutions; increased reliance on partnerships and alliances; simultaneous increases in competition and cooperation among institutions; increasing reliance on private funding for public higher education; a demand for quality; pressure to find solutions to the growing financial problems faced by institutions; and the current merging and incorporation of higher education institutions, to mention but a few.

It was also mentioned in Chapter 1 that it was critical that institutions of higher education had to rethink and re-visit their branding strategies in line with new thinking, the communication revolution, and the new experience economy. The higher education landscape and aspects influencing it, especially in a branding context, were also thoroughly discussed in Chapter 1 and briefly mentioned in Chapter 3.

Considering the literature findings (see Chapters 1 and 3), the findings of the empirical investigation (see Chapter 4), and, above all, the nature of higher education in South Africa, this proposed model is based on two overarching fundamentals, namely the experience economy and its relatedness to brand, as well as relevance and branding, which should be an integrated approach that could ultimately lead to successful external branding.

5.2 PROPOSED MODEL FOR BRANDING PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

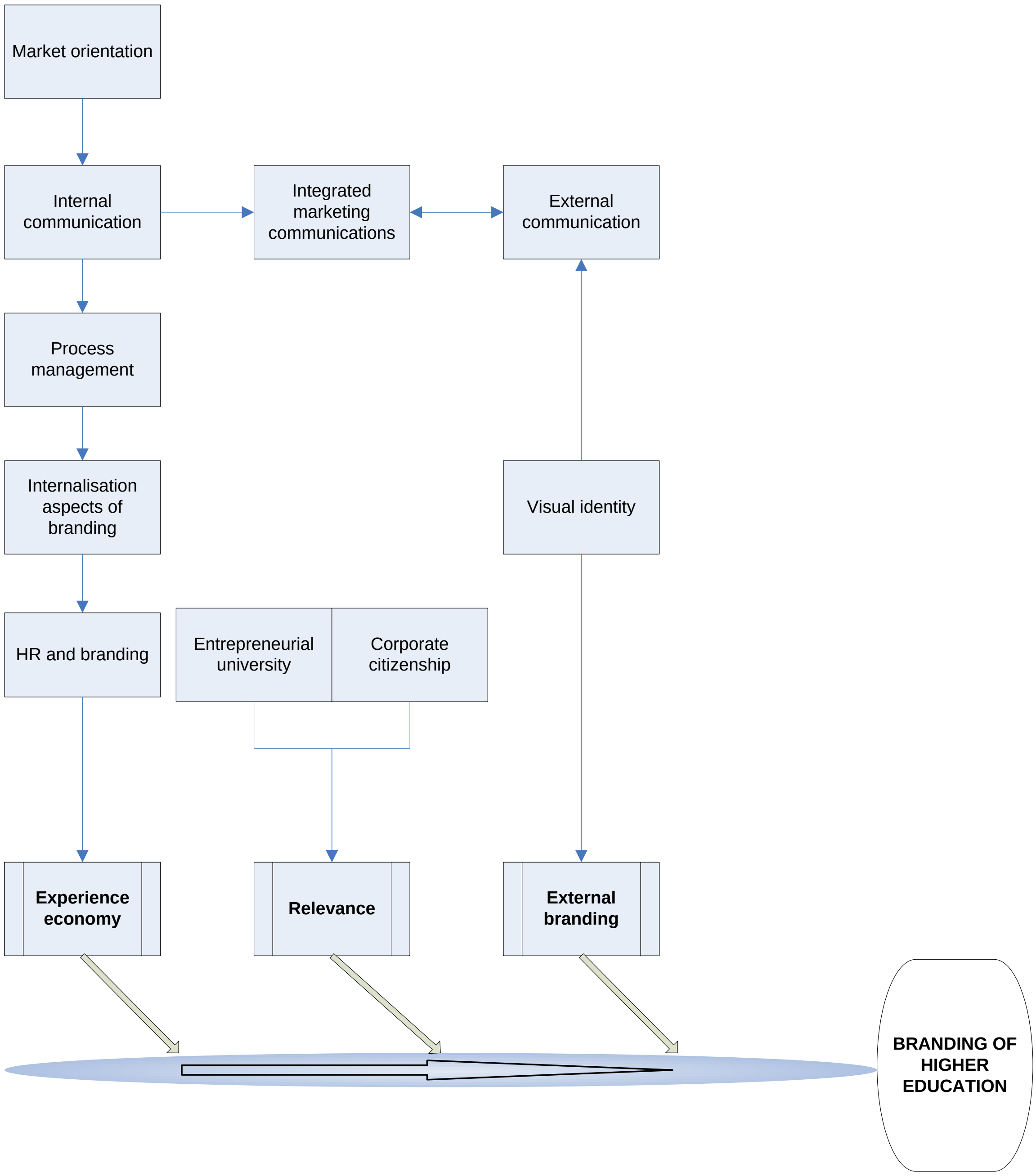
The main aim of the proposed model is for South African higher education institutions to re-visit their branding strategies (see paragraph 1.6.1) in order to address the distinctive challenges facing these institutions. In addition to the above aim, higher educations institutions should, among other things, adopt new branding strategies in order to be more successful with marketing, recruiting the best possible students, as well as third-stream income.

Critical to the above is what kind of strategies, given the higher education scenario in South Africa, should be adopted in order for institutions to make meaningful inroads in what is deemed to be an institution's most valuable asset, namely its brand. The model is a combination and an integration of elements which serve as guidance to how institutions of higher learning can take their institutions to another level of competitiveness. The benefits such as increased graduate outputs, increased equity in access and success rate, increased graduate enrolments as well as outputs at the M. and D. levels (see paragraph 1.2.3), could then be reaped. The sum total of these elements will brand the institution, which should then be enhanced by visual identity.

The proposed model for branding practices at South African higher education institutions is not meant to be rigid and should hopefully be adopted to be practically implementable at various institutions for higher education. Considering the current higher education landscape with institutions that were not involved in mergers or incorporations, as well as those institutions that were either merged or incorporated with other institutions, the model attempts to take all these implied imperatives into consideration.

The proposed model is outlined in Figure 5.1. This figure implies that branding practices at South African higher education institutions should entail an integrated approach, focusing primarily on the experience economy and relevance, which could ultimately lead to successful external branding.

FIGURE 5.1: Proposed model for branding practices



5.3 THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Since this model is proposing an ultimate alignment with internal excellence and organisational alignment in order to enhance the brand, internal and external elements are not discussed in isolation and are sometimes blurred, simply because of their connectivity and their relatedness. Some aspects will not cover the experience in a direct way, but will be a focus on issues as a means to an experience, like the concept of internal branding.

The following story about the fallacies about marketing gives a very powerful, yet simple account what this thesis is *not* trying to do. It is chosen and told not because it is original; not because it is mind-blowing; and certainly not because it is authentic. It is rather related here because of the powerful, but simple way of clarifying what this thesis is trying to propose as a brand model for higher education institutions in South Africa:

A man reaches the gates of heaven and because of his relatively good life on earth, receives the opportunity to enter heaven. As he was about to enter heaven, he saw a cloud passing by with numerous people on it. It was clear that the people on the cloud were having a real good time. It was dance, women and song. Upon investigating who those people were, he learnt that they were in hell and that it was actually hell passing them. He hesitated for a moment and a little bit uncertainly, he asked whether he could join them, in other words, he wanted to go to hell based on what he saw. His wish was granted and off he went to hell. Upon reaching hell, he experienced hell the way he was told it would be whilst on earth. People were burning in huge fires, others were *screaming with pain and fear. Very surprised he then asked somebody close to him what was going on and informed this person about his experience at the gates of heaven and the cloud passing by, causing him to ask to be part of hell rather than go to heaven. The person next to him then informed him that the cloud with the beautiful women and the guys having the time of their lives, was the marketing division of hell. He was now a client and what he saw now was what he was going to get.*

The story above has a great deal of truth in it. At times the researcher finds it surprising that organisations still engage in scenarios like the above, for example the visual identity/logo of a higher education institution promoting excellence, while at times a number of stakeholders from the institution experience a chunk/chunks of excellence and poor service delivery, which is all but excellent. In this regard Leberecht (2005: 10 of 29) reiterates that a disconnection between the external marketing message and the realities within the company will be detrimental. On another level, but consistent with this story about hell, is Grassl's (1999: 1 of 36) ontological theory where he proclaims that idealists about brands see perceptual or cognitive acts of consumers being grouped under the headings "brand image" (see paragraph 3.2.3.6) and "brand awareness" (see paragraph 3.2.3.3) as constitutive for the existence of brands so that, in their view, tools of the marketing mix (see paragraph 3.4) can influence relevant mental dispositions and attitudes. Idealists see brand value as being anchored in customer awareness, as well as intangible assets which are constructed in consumers' minds by the function of brand management (Leberecht 2005: 4 of 29).

Brand materialists, on the other hand, oppose this idealistic concept of branding as “the creation of human meaning” and reject the idea of branding as an added psychological value to a product (Lepla & Parker in Leberecht 2005: 4 of 29). Brand materialists also argue that companies make the mistake of developing a grandiose brand promise that they cannot keep [Aaker & Joachimsthalter, De Chernatony, Keller, Tosti & Stoz (quoted in Leberecht 2005: 4 of 29)], as they are more concerned about the external reality of a brand.

The researcher is of the opinion that a combination of the idealistic view of branding and the materialistic view with the emphasis on the latter should be the ideal for institutions of higher learning in South Africa. The researcher argues that branding *can* form an added psychological element of a product or service the idealistic way, *given* that the materialistic view of branding was prioritised.

Even “knowledgeable” organisations like institutions of higher learning still think of the branding division as the quick fix solution to issues relating to branding. The now famous words of David Packard of Hewlett Packard come to mind when he said: “Marketing is too important to be left to the marketing department.” Fanning (2003: 1 of 3) agrees with this when he notes that more and more businesses recognise that their brands are their most valuable assets and there is a growing movement which argues that branding is far too important to be left to the marketers alone. Bedbury (2003: s.p.) takes this notion further when he argues that brand building is much more than the responsibility of the marketing department or even the CEO, although both functions must participate actively in championing and protecting the brand from within for the effort to succeed. “Building and supporting a great brand is everyone’s job, from the CEO on down” (Bedbury 2003: xiv).

What this model tries to achieve is providing guidelines for institutions of higher learning to follow, *based* on the current scenario at institutions of higher learning in South Africa and happenings in other parts of the world.

The experience economy cannot be meaningful without one of its key fundamentals, that is the role of the HR.

5.3.1 Human Resources (HR) and branding

As mentioned in paragraph 3.6, branding starts from the “inside out” and staff’s behaviour with brand values needs to be aligned as a very important aspect of internal branding.

However, as was mentioned in paragraph 3.6, it is going to be the CEO that looks beyond his own personal short-term gains to long-term institutional excellence (similar to the case of Toyota mentioned in paragraph 3.13.1).

Based on the UNITECH Report in paragraph 3.14 as well as on the empirical investigation done referred to in Chapter 4, institutions of higher learning are much more concerned about the external element of the branding process. For years there has been intense debate about what a brand is and how it can be established in the hearts and minds of consumers. This is the viewpoint of

Vallaster and De Chernatony (2003: 6 of 35). This strong external focus of organisations who tell their consumers what great organisations they are, has been challenged by authors. Institutions of higher learning in South Africa and elsewhere particularly are culprits here and the researcher is of the opinion that institutions that regard themselves as "excellent", for example, exploit the immeasurability and vagueness of concepts like these by the stakeholders.

Concepts like "living the brand", "branding from the inside out", "united we brand", "employer brand", "branding and people management", "the CEO as brand" and "the experience economy" in the literature (see Chapter 3) give a clear and unambiguous message: branding and HR are some of the most important elements in companies' successes. The ability to operate effectively within the "Experience Economy" is one of the key differentiators distinguishing winning brands from others (Idea Engineers 2005: 1 of 4). In this regard the HEQC is busy with national reviews at higher education institutions in order to measure the quality of programmes (see paragraph 4.7). Some of the programmes that are not viable and relevant are even phased out at institutions. Currently the HEQC is also focusing on teacher education programmes, taking into account that the quality of these programmes varies from institution to institution. Some higher education institutions are even accused of being money spinners, because customers are being exploited.

The discrepancies between the marketing material and what is really happening with some of these programmes, is huge. The same group continues by saying that two of the most common failure issues for internal brand programmes are a lack of top level commitment to the process, where the brand programme becomes an enforced self-congratulatory session and not a meaningful intervention that connects marketing and HR practices to drive the change. The researcher is of the opinion that very few organisations make this all important connection and arguably not institutions of higher learning in South Africa, because they do not have a good track record in this regard due to being relaxing in a comfort zone. From the researcher's position as a senior member of staff in a marketing division at an institution of higher learning, as well as through informal discussions with colleagues from other institutions, it is clear that this "connection" (HR and brand) and its value has not yet been made. This connection is inextricably linked with the notion of internal branding.

If staff's behaviour and brand values (mentioned in paragraph 3.5) are not aligned, what message eventually goes out? External stakeholders of higher education will receive a different message every time and no meaningful image or association can be formed this way. McGloughlin (2001: 1 of 3) points out that your people are your brand; your brand is your culture; and your customers will ultimately "buy in" to that culture. He further states that the marketing division may "own" how the brand promise is made, but it is all of the organisation's people and their leaders that must uphold that promise. In accord with this Johnson (2002: 1 of 2) agrees in stating that the organisation needs to align culture, aspirations, values and brand promise. The same author and Schneider (2005: 1 of 2) label this as "branding from the inside out". For institutions of higher learning this is essential, given the fact that these institutions are, generally speaking, very user-unfriendly. Terms like "institutional regulatory codes", "convocation" and "Swedish scales", to name but a few, are not concepts used every day by stakeholders and they need brand ambassadors with empathy. This is further aggravated by multi-campuses and confusing buildings because of insufficient directions on campuses. The chances of a stakeholder coming to campus for the first time and not be lost, are very slim.

The researcher is of the opinion that HR and branding at institutions of higher learning are undoubtedly so interconnected that regular brainstorming sessions, strategy and feedback meetings and, most of all, joint ownership should be part of their daily activities. Idea Engineers (2005: 1 of 4) agrees with this when it notes that "Ensuring an on-brand experience for all your customers, regardless of where or how they interact with your company, means ensuring that the company itself – its people, its systems, its products – is always on-brand". This notion is also shared by Sullivan (2003: 1 of 4) when he states that the importance of mastering the concepts and skills behind branding have much greater implications for HR professionals in the "new economy".

How can good and lasting collaboration between HR and marketing be "arranged" at institutions of higher learning? Some of the practices of brand champions by Idea Engineers (2005: 1 – 4) discussed in the next heading, can be implemented with great success at institutions of higher learning, taking into consideration that top level commitment, for example the CEO and executive management, is essential and a connection/collaboration between marketing and HR practices drives the brand.

Interlinked with the aspect of HR and branding, are the internalisation aspects of branding.

5.3.2 Internalisation aspects of branding

For institutions of higher learning to improve employees' behaviour to that of brand ambassadors and eventually obtain this kind of culture, a few practices internally are proposed:

5.3.2.1 *Collaboration between HR and marketing divisions*

As indicated in paragraph 3.6, collaboration between HR and marketing divisions at institutions of higher learning is imperative for the success of internal branding.

According to Martin, Beaumont, Doig and Pate (2005: 77 of 88), there is a growing realisation by companies and HR professional bodies that aligning the external, corporate image of organisations should be aligned with internal employee identity, despite the historically weak links between HR and branding.

The brand promise must be linked to performance management in order to create brand champions across the organisation. It is a fact that not everybody at institutions of higher learning – and elsewhere - is committed employees. Harvey Nash Research Insight (2005: 1 of 2) estimates that only one-third of staff act as “brand champions”; one-third add no value to the brand, because they do not engage with it; and one-third act as “brand saboteurs”. Why would all employees at higher education institutions become brand ambassadors when they are of the opinion that it is not their job, but that of the marketing division? Idea Engineers (2005: 2 of 4) notes that roles and responsibilities within an organisation must be brand-led to create a vehicle for long-term sustainability. Brand infusion, education, and alignment have to be underpinned by brand-led HR practices and change management interventions, also at higher education institutions. If this does not happen, the brand remains an abstract, largely theoretical concept and not a fundamental element of these institutions.

5.3.2.2 ***Having a clear purpose and identity***

Before looking at inducing the higher education institution to work, living and interacting “on-brand”, it is rather critical that the brand is clearly articulated. Unfortunately many organisations try to develop an internal dynamic around a brand that does not have a clear identity. Sullivan (2003: 2 of 4) reiterates that companies spend millions of rands crafting corporate branding or “identity” strategies to update their mission and value statements. Thereafter they work with marketers and advertisers to fine-tune and communicate the new perspective to customers – in the case of institutions of higher learning, their stakeholders such as donors, the community, government, parents as well as students. The same author continues by noting that, in all organisations, employees serve as the primary “channel” used to characterise the brand during direct contact with the customer, but in most companies employees do not understand the corporate brand elements or what is needed from them to help customers experience the difference. It becomes even more challenging when Vallaster and De Chernatony's (2003: 4 of 35) view is considered. They maintain that the process of developing a shared brand understanding among staff becomes more problematic as service brands expand internationally and need to draw on multicultural workforces in different parts of the world. This is particularly true for institutions of higher learning in South Africa and is exacerbated by multicultural staff members. The same authors continue by noting that the way people think and interpret their environment, how they feel, and how they communicate with one another are often divergent, inhibiting the development of a shared brand understanding. They believe that effective leadership is a key factor in dealing with this complex issue. The researcher agrees with this view. The role of management is therefore extremely important.

Thus it is important that employees of institutions of higher learning in South Africa be made aware of the institutions' real positions, their real aspired positions, and their strategies to achieve these positions.

5.3.2.3 ***The CEO as institutional advocate***

Mention was made in paragraphs 3.4 and 4.5 about the CEO's involvement in branding. Idea Engineers (2005: 2 of 4) constitutes that without "top level evangelists" who clearly articulate the significance of "Living the Brand", internal brand mobilisation will defuse. The one thing all successful brands have in common is passionate

CEOs who understand the meaning of the brand experience, internally and externally.

At institutions of higher education the CEO's role should be more of a strategic, outward management. The researcher is of the opinion that this kind of role cannot be more easy than at higher education institutions. Where else would you find so many managers in one organisation? Examples are Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Deans of Faculty, and Directors of Schools, to name but a few. These people are normally highly qualified and highly skilled managers who do not need a CEO to watch what they are doing.

Research findings of the "CEO Reputation Survey 2001" carried out by internationally-active communications consultants Burson-Marsteller (2001: 1 of 2) reveals that the reputation of a company as a whole depends 48% on the reputation of its CEO. These results clearly demonstrate that, in the final analysis, the impression created by the CEO is by no means a "soft" factor, but that the CEO evaluation has a definite impact on the behaviour patterns of a variety of interest groups. The study which polled 1 100 CEOs, managers, financial analysts, institutional investors, business journalists and government representatives in the USA, also found that the three principal factors on which those surveyed based their evaluation of reputation were – in order of importance – personal credibility, setting high ethical standards, and the communication of a clear vision within the company. Interestingly enough, the significance of CEO reputation for the image of the company as a whole in Germany was a staggering 64% (Burson-Marsteller 2001: 1 of 2)!

As mentioned in paragraph 3.6, the CEO of a company has to deal with brand management in a way it was never done before. Also closely linked to this is the name of Harry van den Kroonenberg (see paragraph 4.4.2), former Rector of the University of Twente, that keeps surfacing as somebody who was very much concerned with "outward" activities that eventually helped led the university to one of Europe's best.

Given the CEO's role above and the leadership capacity an institution of higher learning has, it is astounding and beyond belief that many CEOs of higher learning have not yet engaged in this way of thinking.

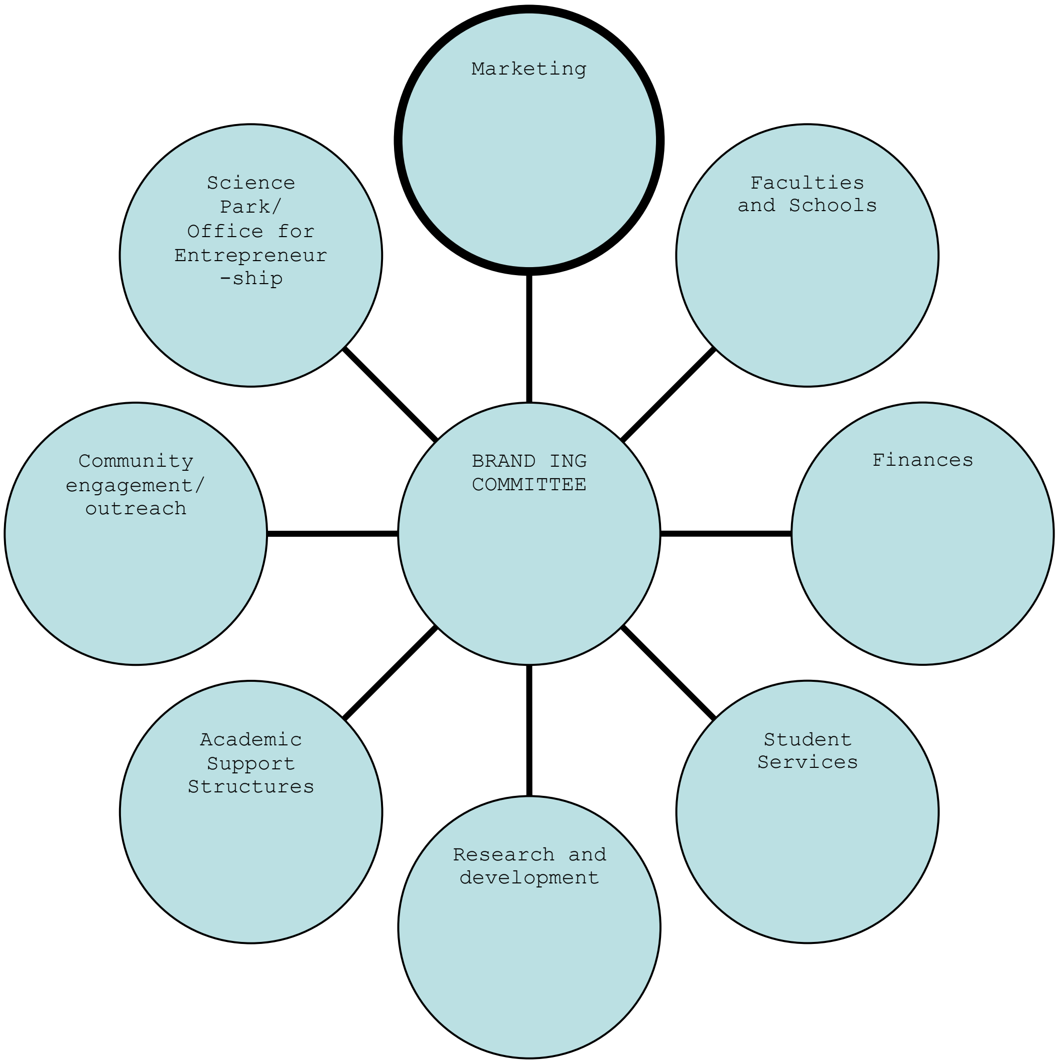
To conclude the role a CEO ought to play at institutions of higher learning, the researcher would like to note the comments made by Lazarus (2003: 1 of 2) where he states that business news has become general news and people have developed a "voracious appetite" for information about companies and their leaders. Thanks to the Internet, if you have a problem, the news is instantaneous and the CEO had better be there with the answer. Worse still, if the CEO is the problem – indictments always obtain good ratings – the brand will take a pounding.

Complementary to the CEO as institutional advocate, the establishment of a branding committee at a higher education institution could enhance "Living the Brand".

5.3.2.4 ***A branding committee***

Another role that cannot be executed without HR planning and driving it, is the organisational structure of the institution of higher learning. Mention was made in paragraph 4.9 of processes and activities being loosely managed at institutions of higher learning. Like all large organisations, institutions of higher learning consist of various departments ranging from student recruitment to finances. A cross-functional team structure is essential if the institution is going to orientate itself around an "on-brand" ideology. Cross-functional in this regard is described by Robbins (1998: 289) as teams made up of different employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas who come together to accomplish a task. Incidentally, such a cross-functional team was part of the Toyota's success during the 1980s (Robbins 1998: 289). These teams should consist of staff members from across the internal hierarchy and thus become the only method through which to place the brand itself at the heart of the business. Such a Branding Committee can work through internal dynamics and power plays inherent in any institution and focus on the health, relevance and role of the brand itself within the company (Idea Engineers 2005: 2 of 4). Martin *et al.* (2005:81) agree to this when they state that a branding message, which will effectively result in external and internal identity, should be facilitated through the establishment of a comprehensive and coherent cross-functional branding team. Figure 5.2 indicates how this cross-functional team can operate within an institution of higher learning. (The elements included are examples of different divisions that can be included at institutions of higher learning.)

FIGURE 5.2: How a cross-functional team can operate



The Branding Committee can be assisted in its tasks if the "touch point analysis" is used by institutions of higher learning.

5.3.2.5 ***The touch point analysis***

Internal brand programmes must always be designed around an understanding of where, how and when customers are coming into contact with the institution. There is a belief that the marketing division is the window of an institution of higher learning. The researcher strongly disagrees with this, because stakeholders/clients/students/parents can communicate, contact and require a service from almost anyone at an institution of higher learning.

If the higher education institution understands each point of interface of all the stakeholders, it means that an impact can be made at each point of contact from the stakeholders - consistently. HR, in very close collaboration with the marketing division, can and should perform this function of establishing the touch points and how to deal with it to enhance the brand. This is referred to as the "touch point analysis" and requires a different approach to each point of interface with the higher education institution.

Closely linked to the "touch point analysis" is a "living the brand" programme.

5.3.2.6 ***Evaluation***

True to the nature of higher education, namely evaluating, debating, questioning and reflecting, among others, internal practices which could enhance the brand should also be evaluated and measured. The University of Warwick was accused of this as well (see paragraph 4.5.3). However, the researcher is of the opinion that this kind of exercise might be considered by some as too "sales-orientated" and industries involved in selling should embark on it. However, there is a belief that if you cannot measure something, it is non-existent. Although highly debatable, there is some truth in this. A "living the brand" programme should be a dynamic intervention and as such the brand needs to clearly define its position before the programme can start and clear sets of goals should be set. This programme can be measured and managed by the Branding Committee (see paragraph 5.3.2.4).

Closely linked to the above notion of measuring and evaluating is the service-profit chain.

5.3.2.7 ***The service-profit chain***

Although public higher education is not in the "for-profit" industry, this key business dynamic can be conceptualised at institutions of higher learning. Every different division or faculty at institutions of higher learning exists to serve someone else, be it the external stakeholder or another department. In the same belief every division or faculty consists of an interdependent chain of individuals and functional units, each taking inputs from one another and converting them into external stakeholder services. The basic assumption is that if all members of the organisation work to provide their internal customers with better service, then the end customer will receive high quality service, thus leading to brand enhancement. Excellent service delivery of staff members to one another internally automatically leads to excellent service delivery externally.

The service-profit chain was identified by Rhey and McMurrian (in Scheffer 2005: 58 of 273) as "a chain of relationships involving customer loyalty; customer satisfaction; the value of goods and services delivered; the quality of the process; and employee loyalty, satisfaction and support".
Institutions of higher learning gain competitive advantage through their unique combination of resources – which cannot be copied – with people being their most important asset. According to the CIPD (2005: 3 of 5), work in this field has focused on core competencies and the balanced score card approach which has stressed the need to balance the satisfaction of external demands and the management of internal processes and people. This undoubtedly illustrates the importance of linking external marketing needs with people management and development. Employee behaviour is thus shown to play a critical role in promoting brand.

Employment behaviour is closely linked to "*Employment Branding*" which is a concept that became popular in the 1990s as the "war for talent" hit the headlines (CIPD 2005: 3 of 5). It is centred on engaging employee loyalty to the brand and developing commitment to the organisation. Institutions of higher learning with their diverse outputs – some employees might not even know the core functions thereof – will have no choice but to get on the bandwagon if they ever hope to make meaningful inroads into the "brand wagon".

To conclude on the role of HR and branding, Management Centre Europe (MCE) Knowledge Network (2004: 1 of 5) emphasise that the new economy is not a technical revolution, but a people revolution. The technology is merely an enabler that allows people to interact in faster and smarter ways. The new economy is giving a totally new role to management professionals – none more so than the HR function.

Added to this the model of Martin *et al.* (2005:81) needs to be looked at. They propose that the internal identity should be established through the achievement of a positive psychological contract and the existence of sophisticated HR policies. This psychological contract they describe as what employees expect, what is on offer, and what is actually delivered.

The management of processes is also extremely important.

5.3.3 Process management

From the empirical investigation (see Chapter 4), it is clear that process management at institutions of higher learning is not always a priority. In addition, process management, branding, and HR are traditionally not disciplines which have a natural gel. But consider the following: A key KPA of a secretary to a senior manager states that he/she must answer the telephone and channel that call to the manager if needs be. An organisation with a market orientation will change that KPA to another level where the secretary must *delight* in answering any person who calls and convey this delight, answer the call within three rings and then channel the call to the manager if needs be. With the first KPA described a secretary can be neutral, unfriendly and even rude, but he/she is still doing his/her job. With the second KPA, however, it is a different story where an unfriendly and reluctant to help secretary can be developed or reprimanded, based on a KPA. Institutions with a market orientation will most definitely go for the second KPA as described and be serious about it. That relatively small difference in the two KPAs can make a very significant difference and, if the second KPA forms part of institutions' overall brand strategy, it may work very well with regard to image and reputation.

The above example of the KPA of a secretary would normally be a HR related issue, but not if a secretary's role is seen as part of a process - a human element process.

The Boston University (2005: 1 of 1) remarks that, because competition is global, managers must create better business processes and incorporate systems that effectively integrate people, technology and systems to deliver high quality services. This could be done at institutions of higher learning and could enhance the brand.

5.3.3.1 *The conceptual linkages of process management and branding*

To align organisational competencies around a few vital core competencies has become a competitive strategy and, by doing so, most visionary business leaders are recognising that it is processes - not functions or departments - that deliver customer value and satisfaction.

Mention was made about ambitious taglines of organisations in paragraph 3.13.1. These taglines make a promise upfront. The organisation tells the customer upfront how it wants to be perceived. Some of these taglines refer directly to a process. Standard Bank in South Africa with their "Simpler, faster, better" tagline makes the promise upfront that their processes (every single one) are better than what is known to be the norm. This tagline of Standard Bank is a direct referral to processes. An institution of higher learning in the central part of South Africa's tagline is "Thinking beyond" which would promise, by implication, that its processes, among others, are also of such a nature that the "beyond" element clearly comes to the fore.

During a typical day several different activities are being performed in a higher education environment. These range from enquiries for admission, examination results, students accounts, different kinds of events, sport and student life, to name but a few. From the researcher's experience as well as from the empirical investigation, all these activities at institutions of higher learning in South Africa are loosely managed (see paragraph 4.9). They are managed individually by different heads of departments and this would, of course, imply that their character and messages would also be just as different from one another as the activities.

Process management should be the tool whereby managers can create better business processes and incorporate systems and thus effectively integrate people, technology and procedures to deliver high-quality services. Higher education institutions in South Africa are relatively large organisations where one can easily find 500 to 2 000 employees working for one institution at one venue. These employees all come from different backgrounds, have different fields of expertise, and in no way will they drive a process as a branding exercise in the same way. The process must be managed. The larger and more fragmented (like institutions of higher learning) any organisation becomes, the more it becomes reliant on process management. However, process management should not be confused with set internal rules and policies. Process management is more concerned with external customers like students, donors, parents, and business partners. It is also directed at branding and providing the "brandee" one message.

The following facets at institutions of higher learning can, among others, be "processionalised":

- General enquiries.
- Residences.
- Applications.
- Payments.
- Study financing.
- Student accounts.
- Student cards.
- Programme consultation.
- Facilitation of career placement of students.

The concept of "processionalisation" also moves individualism to organisationalism at organisations. In the same way a customer feels that he/she deals with an employee of an institution of higher learning rather than with an individual, that is, deals with the organisation and not with an individual, the same applies for processes. If a process is effective and consistent in the minds of the consumer, you perceive that you are dealing with the organisation and not with the individual. This aspect, in return, leaves the feeling that the organisation knows what it is doing, which leads to the enhancement of the brand. Individualism is taken completely out of the process. Organisationalism kicks in, which leaves the clientele with a sense of trust, consistency and safety. It also leaves the impression of well- trained staff, management that knows what it is doing, which again leads to the very important asset, namely brand. Conversely, if the process is inconsistent or ineffective, it leads to distrust and a serious doubt with regard to management capabilities.

Processes at institutions of higher learning, because of their nature, need to be streamlined and user-friendly. Even the answering of a telephone needs to be processionalised. This aspect, how insignificant it might be to some, reveals a great deal about organisationalism as opposed to individualism. If the receptionist answers the phone in the same way he/she answers her own personal phone, run! If the members of management cannot control how a phone should be answered, they do not have the slightest idea what is going on in the lecture room. This conception of process management links closely with the idea of total quality service (TQS).

TQS in its most basic form is a true commitment of operationalising the concept of customer focus; establishing service performance standards; measuring performance against benchmarks; recognising and rewarding exemplary behaviour; and maintaining enthusiasm for the customer at all times. Quality in a traditional higher education sense refers to accreditation and validation as referred to in paragraph 1.3.2.

Process management linked to quality assurance in the higher education sector will result in a positive experience and will be in line with the concept of the (new) experience economy, which would result in the building but, more importantly, in sustaining the promised brand. Furthermore, to make this connection between processes, quality assurance and its connectedness to the brand, the institution of higher learning should have a market orientation.

5.3.4 Market orientation

Market-orientation is an "attitude" pervasive throughout an organisation where involvement from the customer in the service production process means that administration, academic and support staff work effectively together (Shoemaker & Muston 1999: 1 of 17). This attitude Shoemaker and Muston are talking about, may well be one of the main thrusts against the idea of a market orientation in the higher education sector. For years higher education institutions operated in a regulated, controlled market. Each year employees of higher education institutions were greeted with long lines of students who wanted to register. Students were selected and others were turned away. In any sector, this inevitably leads to an "attitude"; an attitude which indicates a relationship of service seekers (students, in need, powerless, their fate resting in the hands of others) and providers (the higher education institution, being powerful, can decide on the fate of the weak).

It was a matter of the "old" notion of supply and demand. The higher education sector operated in an environment where the demand was exceeding the supply. Many employees at higher education institutions still have this view and it will only be a wilful intervention by management that will change this. Shoemaker and Muston (1999: 1 of 17) continue by saying that it is unlikely that any organisation will become market-orientated with a bottom-up approach. It requires commitment and power of those at the top. Employees in the administrative sector must understand the concept of "market competitiveness".

So, despite the sometimes complex definitions of the marketing concept, its message has always been straightforward: higher education institutions' success depends upon their capacity to match organisational capabilities with market needs and a thorough understanding of, as well as an approach to, the market will contribute to the institutions' matching ability (Van Raaij 2001: 16 of 345). Understanding of the market also means the ability, but - more important - the will to be relevant.

The experience economy and its dimensions bring us to another dimension, namely that of proper communication.

5.3.5 Internal communication

Based on the strong emphasis on the internal dimension of branding on this thesis - with the external dimension as a sealant - internal or organisational communication plays a pivotal role in the branding exercise. Higher education institutions might want to refer to this as institutional communication. The diverse nature of institutions of higher learning also necessitates a very strong element of alignment. But what exactly is communication in an organisational sense?

The field of communication is undoubtedly large and unformulated because of its different disciplines, which in many cases overlap. Scheffer (2005: 26 of 273) postulates that some of the main communications' disciplines are public relations, internal communication, direct marketing, advertising, and branding.

Every one of the above is aimed at different audiences and uses different tools and activities to convey a message. The same author further reiterates that organisational communication, and specifically the integrated component of organisational communication, can be seen as a tool that communication management can use to re-organise an organisation out of an atmosphere of disorder and chaos by facilitating diversity and encouraging internal communication and participation (Scheffer 2005: 26 of 273).

Organisational communication is considered a vital tool for binding an organisation, enhancing employee morale, and promoting transparency. Everybody seems to understand the significance of organisational communication, but very few institutions of higher learning in South Africa seem to manage it effectively (see UNITECH Report in paragraph 3.14 as well as paragraph 4.8). Express Computer (2001: 1 of 4) is of the opinion that both the long-term and the short-term fallout of ineffective organisational communication can be damaging to an organisation. It may start from the spread of rumours to disillusionment among employees to a gradual destruction of the organisation's brand image. Internal communication ultimately influences the organisation's interaction with the external environment. This organisational communication is also aimed at influencing employees and motivates behaviour.

The fact that higher education institutions operate in the so-called silos and the fact that no meaningful branding exercise can be undertaken without a very strong internal dimension, organisational communications as part of the broader branding process are extremely important.

Gróf (in Scheffer 2005: 29) reiterates that the aims of organisational communicative interaction should be the following:

- To absorb environmental values into organisational strategy and culture.
- To harmonise activities within the organisation.
- To communicate organisational strategy.
- To establish alliances and loyalties.
- To prevent the organisation from becoming incapable of activity, namely control the organisation's attitude towards the values of the environment and protect the flexibility of the organisation's strategy.

Employees at institutions of higher learning are increasingly bombarded with hundreds of messages and pieces of information on a daily basis. This is an indication that the volume of communication is increasing and all messages seem to demand attention and response.

Organisational communication is also the tool that will ultimately be used to make sense of process management (see paragraph 3.7), quality assurance (see paragraph 1.3.2.1), and is inextricably linked to internal branding. Organisational communication is also closely linked to the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC).

5.3.6 Integrated marketing communications (IMC)

In order to grasp the concept of integrated marketing communications, a look at traditional communications methods is necessary. Based on the researcher's participant experience (see paragraph 4.8); the UNITECH Report (see 3.14); and informal discussions with marketing and communication officials at other institutions of higher learning (see paragraph 4.9); this traditional approach is also evident at institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

The common communication platforms are built on the following foundations:

- Advertising, for example print and broadcast advertisements, brochures, posters and leaflets, billboards, display signs, audio-visual material, symbols and logos and videotapes.
- Sales promotion, for example open days, financial assistance and entertainment.
- Public relations, for example speeches, seminars, annual reports, publications, community relations, external magazines and events.
- Personal selling, for example visits to schools, incentive programmes (for example bursaries).
- Direct marketing, which is very limited in higher education.

The researcher agrees with Kotler (1997: 605) when he states that this kind of communication focuses on overcoming an awareness, an image, or a preference gap in the target market. There is a shift from the inside-out approach towards an outside-in approach. Due to the nature of higher education (loosely managed faculties, divisions), as well as its unusual combination of its stakeholders, an IMC approach is proposed where the outside-in approach is one of its elements. Schultz (in Scheffer 2005: 49) proclaims that in IMC, an outside-in perspective scenario determines the communication implemented, whereby what services stakeholders want to receive takes precedence over what marketers want to sell. Therefore marketing communication becomes a dialogue between the buyer and the seller, instead of a monologue by the seller. Stakeholders of higher education may include, but are not limited to the following:

- The community.
- Government.
- Students and parents.
- Commerce and industry.
- Partners.
- Alumni.
- Opinion leaders.
- International stakeholders.
- Professional boards.

5.3.6.1 *Integrated marketing communications (IMC) defined*

The IMC marketing theory is consistent to the experience economy and, moreover, to what this thesis is proposing: An integrated and uniform branding enhancement practice based on the experience economy. Added to this Duncan's Message Typology (Moriarty 1994: 2 of 8) identifies four types of messages that organisations need to control or influence: First, the planned messages which are similar to the traditional communication mentioned earlier in this section. Second, the inferred messages are the ones sent through the impressions the company or brand makes on people. Third, maintenance messages are communicated primarily through service – how a company and its employees initiate and respond to customer contact. This includes such a thing as attitudes of secretaries or the ease of being served. Fourth, the unplanned messages include such things as investigations, announcements by consumer advocate groups, employee gossip, and disasters.

The strategic focus of communication is highlighted in this definition. Three fundamental aspects come strongly to the fore in the above definitions:

- Outside-in approach.
- Research.
- Alignment of activities.

The outside-in approach is different from the inside-out approach of internal branding mentioned in paragraphs 3.6 and 5.3.1. This communicative outside-in approach, although it seems like a contradiction to the branding inside-out approach, actually shares the same sentiments where the stakeholder takes precedence and not the organisation. One brands inside-out to meet the needs of the experience economy - stakeholder focused. The communicative research is outside-in for exactly the same reason, a memorable experience. "You tell us how you would like us to communicate with you."

Moriarty (1994: 1 of 8) recognises the touch point analysis raised in paragraph 5.3.2.5 when she points out a totally integrated communication programme that accounts for all types of messages delivered by an organisation at every point where a stakeholder comes into contact with the company. Every contact point that a stakeholder has with the organisation is a communication opportunity. Combine this with the touch point analysis mentioned in paragraph 5.3.2.5, as well as the experience economy (see paragraphs 5.3 and 3.10), and the branding enhancement could grow.

- **World wide web (www)**

Since the approach to IMC was generated and it came to light in the 1990s, at that time the originators thereof were not aware of the impact that web-based integrated communications would have on this approach in 2005. Online IMC has the same purpose as traditional public relations but utilises the www as a communication channel. It signifies a key paradigmatic shift in normal communications that is changing the way some public relations companies operate. In general, institutions of higher learning became fully aware of this powerful medium. Higher education institutions have developed online content, organised online promotions, tracked students as well as competitors, managed public relations and the corporate image and have developed complementary sites. However, this message should always be part of the IMC strategy and, moreover, reflect the institution’s offerings and service delivery in a just way.

This necessitates another issue which was mentioned in paragraph 3.9, namely the issue of brand and relevance.

5.4 BRAND AND RELEVANCE

In her professorial inaugural lecture Professor Magda Fourie from the University of the Free State (UFS) in South Africa reiterated that phrases like "university in the ruins" and "will universities become relics?", are symptomatic of the fact that universities suddenly have to justify their existence, not only in scientific journals, but also in newspapers and popular literature (Fourie 2004: 1 of 10). Newspapers in South Africa have launched attacks on South African higher education. Even the current Minister of Education in South Africa launched a scathing attack on higher education institutions where she was concerned about the skills mismatch. Fourie (2004: 1 of 10) is further concerned about why there are questions about the effectiveness and relevance of higher education. Why is the criticism by government, employers, students and the general public increasingly harsh?

A simple question was posed on the issue of how a non-profit organisation can be relevant and the answer was even simpler: By *being* relevant and by communicating it effectively.

Any branding issue, any business principle, and any organisation or higher education institution has to be relevant for survival. If customers are not interested in a product, it means that there is no demand and thus no relevance to the market. The same goes for the service sector. No demand for a service, no relevancy. However, there are two other elements which make the above more complicated: an organisation can make itself relevant, even if it is not. Clever marketing strategies actually force the customer to think that they cannot go without a product or service. The other element of relevancy and the market, and thus brand, is the issue of *keeping on being relevant.* Some service or product simply did not change with the demands of the time, consequently becoming irrelevant and extinct. In order for institutions of higher learning in South Africa to be relevant or "keeping on being relevant", the institutions have to be guided by the NPHE (see paragraph 1.2.3). The issue of relevance should further be emphasised by South African higher education institutions in taking the entrepreneurial route.

5.4.1 The entrepreneurial university

This thesis has repeatedly mentioned the challenges facing higher education in South Africa (see paragraphs 1.1, 1.2.2, 1.5, 1.6 and 4.1). One of these challenges is the very idea of relevancy. This is the reason why the idea of an entrepreneurial university was mentioned and an empirical investigation done with this specific possibility of relevance in mind (see Chapter 4). The connectedness of brand to relevance cannot be treated lightly and the connectedness of relevance to the entrepreneurial university forms a key element of this study. This also links up closely with the experience economy (see paragraphs 3.10 and 5.3), because the whole nature of the entrepreneurial university is real; it can be seen; it can be experienced.

The partnerships with industry in the entrepreneurial concept will also lead to a very wide range of benefits to higher education institutions. This thesis wants to add the concept of the entrepreneurial university to the issue of branding of higher education. It stems from the fact that no brand can be successful without the product or service being relevant. The pathways of an entrepreneurial university of Clark (1998: 5)(see paragraph 4.2) should be encouraged in South African higher education, at least in a limited sense. They are the following: a strong steering core; a developmental periphery; a diversified funding base; a strong academic heartland and an integrated entrepreneurial culture (see paragraph 4.2). Obviously, if a "non"-entrepreneurial university does not embrace change, the notion of becoming innovative will die a certain and quick death. Gibbons, Carmille, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow (1994), Mode 1 (basic research) and Mode 2 knowledge (applied research) can be added in this regard. In addition, Boyer's (1990) scholarship of discovery and integrated learning is most relevant in higher education.

The argument is simple - no (traditional) external branding can be effective without a very strongly focused internal drive. Added to the conceptualisation of the link of relevancy and brand is the idea of corporate citizenship to brand.

5.4.2 Corporate citizenship

It is important for the institutions of higher learning in South Africa and elsewhere to recognise pathways for relevancy as well as perceptions of relevancy in order to fulfil all the elements of branding. The issue of relevancy and its connectedness to branding was mentioned in Chapter 3.9. The researcher is of the opinion that no meaningful branding can be done without a strong connection to relevancy, to which corporate citizenship could be added.

During the past few years there has been a growing interest in issues relating to corporate citizenship. Stakeholders are increasingly expecting institutions of higher learning to be economically, environmentally and sociably sustainable; to be accountable and transparent; to be inclusive; to be ethical; and to be more equitable. In South Africa, with its history of inequitable distribution of wealth and a backlog of the majority of South Africans with regard to education, and other social issues, the case of corporate citizenship is even more compelling and should be part of an institution's thinking about branding.

Institutions of higher learning in South Africa are not in a position to choose whether they will engage in corporate citizenship. They are compelled to do it based on the core functions of higher education, that is teaching and learning, research, and community service. It became clear to institutions of higher learning that the social wellness of the community has to be incorporated, not as an add-on to its other activities, but as an essential, integral, more social redefinition of higher education, in order for the imbalances of the past to be addressed (see paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2.1).

Although institutions of higher learning engage in community outreach programmes, it is still seen as an add-on, something they must do to satisfy government who strongly emphasises the well-being of the masses. Institutions of higher learning should take the lead in issues relating to the well-being of society, and whilst doing so, creating effective partnerships with industry and commerce which would lead to relevance to society. This, in turn, would lead to brand enhancement of the institution - not just between commerce and industry, but among all its stakeholders.

Rethinking business strategy along these lines will require a change in the culture of the higher education institution, but - according to Birch (2001:2) - will also open up new opportunities to reassess other aspects of higher education and to mention for example but one, more funds flowing into higher education which, in turn, will pave the way for innovative new activities.

5.5 EXTERNAL BRANDING

The concept of the external branding of an organisation and its connectedness to brand as a whole is a highly contentious one. Many view this external branding as the brand – at worst – of itself, or - at best – as the manifestation of the brand. The concept of external branding in the context of this proposed model cannot be viewed in isolation. This model proposes that there is no such a concept as external branding in view of what should be done *internally*. The elements of internalisation in order to brand, outweighs any "external" activity and the researcher would thus prefer to use concepts like "outward communicative activities" or "external communication".

In the higher education sector in South Africa, little or no connection is made to "external branding" and internalisation. From the formal and informal discussions undertaken by the researcher (see paragraphs 4.4.3 and 4.9), from his role as participant observer (see paragraph 4.8), as well as from the investigation done by UNITECH (see paragraph 3.14), it became clear that the “external branding” aspect is regarded by many at institutions of higher learning as *the* branding exercise itself.

Based on the above, the researcher purposefully decided to place this part at the end of the proposed model, because that is where it belongs. It should be a sealant on the branding exercise and can only enhance the branding of higher education institutions.
Most “non” Toyota owners will tell you that they perceive a Toyota to be a good car. What they do not realise is that this image they might have of Toyota is not *caused* by the external dimension of Toyota’s brand campaign, but is merely *enhanced* by it. If there were tons of unhappy Toyota owners, this image of Toyota being a good car would not have existed. Toyota is perceived to be a good car, <u>because of it being a good car</u>, not because Toyota says so (see paragraph 3.13.1).

Most higher education institutions in South Africa, along with their merging/incorporations and new status of universities or universities of technology have fallen into the trap of first developing a visual identity and thereafter some of them will embark on aligning the external visual identity with their values. It should be the other way around.

The elements of outward communicative elements would be the visual identity as well as the traditional external communications. The latter is being mentioned merely for the sake of completeness.

5.5.1 Visual identity

The creation of a visual identity for a company's brand is crucial for competing and surviving in today's global market place. This is the opinion of the Bellevue University (2005: 1 of 2).

Individuals, organisations and companies or brands have their own identity. This distinct identity differentiates an organisation from its competitors and allows customers, suppliers and staff to recognise, understand and clearly describe the organisation concerned. It is, however, a complex issue as was indicated previously in paragraph 4.10.2.3. The visual appearance will naturally play a role in the overall image of an institution. The visual identity manifests itself in many ways, ranging from the logo, typeface, stationery, marketing literature, buildings signage, customer information, vehicles and all promotional aspects.

The University of Warwick (2005: 1 of 1) is of the opinion that a detailed management of a visual identity is equally important as the management of other business assets such as finances and HR. However, the researcher is of the opinion that visual identity management should be the logical sequence to internal branding and should not be put alongside it, but rather in sequential order. It must be seen as the physical manifestation of something already in existence and familiar. When all elements of a visual identity work together in unity, the investment in its identity is protected and the overall image becomes one of quality and strength. The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) (UMDNJ Visual Identity Guidelines 2005: 1 of 6) emphasises that a strong visual identity programme helps reinforce the central brand through consistent use of graphics, typefaces and messages. This kind of identification is a significant force in improving recognition and in advancing the capabilities of the university and its many components. They also recognise that adherence to such a programme conveys a visual impression of cohesiveness and coherence; helps eliminate visual confusion; and unifies and strengthens the visual recognition and understanding of the university.

Visual identity should be regarded as a sealant on other internal brand- related issues. The very same principle applies to external communications, which are also linked with internal communications and IMC.

5.5.2 External communications

Traditionally communication with the outside world in a higher education institution context normally entails the following:

- Logo, typeface and colours, stationery, marketing literature, buildings signage, customer information, vehicles and every aspect of promotional activity from a high profile advertising campaign to the design of a promotional pen.
- Media releases.
- Public relations.

The media releases and public relations matters were proposed as concepts which should form part of IMC. As indicated throughout this study, conceptual linkages with other elements which form part of the total brand experience are necessary.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on what institutions of higher learning should be doing internally *before* they spend millions on external branding. These internal aspects should be embedded in such a way that they become behaviours, the institutional culture of institutions of higher learning. Whilst turning internalisation into employee behaviours, an external focus can be operationalised. The ethically and truly honest approach hereof will help tremendously with a "buy-in" by employees and, moreover, it will make all the employees proud of the institution and will convert them from "brand saboteurs" or being neutral to "brand ambassadors". Conversely, no effective branding can take place without a total commitment by executive management - first to recognise institutional *processes* that may effect branding; second, to recognise *concepts*, for example relevance, that may effect branding; and third, to *deal* with processes and concepts vigorously to enhance branding.

There is a saying that if management turn to the inside of the organisation, they turn their back to the outside (stakeholders). This is true, but sometimes it is necessary to do just that in order to turn to all stakeholders with a much more convincing branding message at a later stage.

The last chapter will summarise the main findings of the literature and empirical investigation and signpost future research in this area.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRANDING PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this study was to develop a model for higher education institutions in South Africa which would ultimately result in brand enhancement of institutions that would be perceived as relevant and society-minded to live up to the challenges of a new and changing landscape in South Africa (see paragraph 1.6 as well as Chapter 5).

This primary purpose was supplemented with the following aims and objectives:

6.1.1 Aims

- The marketing and communications divisions of higher educations institutions in conjunction with other units should re-visit their internal practices in order to grapple with the distinctive challenges facing higher education institutions (see Chapter 5; also see paragraphs 1.6.1 and 4.1).
- In addition to the above aim, marketing and communications divisions of higher educations institutions, also in collaboration with management and other units, should, among other things, adopt a market orientation mindset in order to be more successful with branding, recruiting the best possible students, as

well as third-stream income (see paragraphs 5.3.4 and 5.4).

6.1.2 Objectives

- Creating an awareness of the intense needs for a new approach university-wide with regard to branding (see the empirical investigation in Chapter 4).
- A critical reflection by marketing and communications divisions of higher educations institutions on the challenges facing them to develop new strategies (see paragraphs 1.1; 3.2.1 and the empirical investigation in Chapter 4).
- Creating a model for higher education institutions in South Africa which would ultimately result in branding practices that would face up to the challenges of a new and changing terrain in South Africa (see Chapter 5).
- Enhancing the quality of current branding practices (see Chapter 5).

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aims and objectives, the following aspects were examined:

- A background on the South African higher education systems (Chapter 1).
- Theoretical perspectives on branding as a marketing approach (Chapter 3).
- An empirical investigation into aspects relating to higher education branding internationally, nationally and regionally (Chapter 4).

The main findings of the research will accordingly be discussed.

6.2 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The main findings of the research, which included a thorough literature study involving current and relevant literature on branding and branding practices (see Chapter 3) were disclosed. Qualitative research was conducted in focus group interviews (see paragraph 4.4.3), at two entrepreneurial universities abroad, informal conversation interviews were held at seven South African higher education institutions, while a case study was also done. Participant observation in the workplace was also used, as well as at other institutions at a limited scale.

6.2.1 Main findings of the literature study

The main findings of the literature study in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 will subsequently be discussed.

6.2.1.1 *The findings of Chapter 1*

In Chapter 1 the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) as well as other policies and legislation of South African higher education was highlighted. These policies and legislation impact on how institutions of higher learning in South Africa should go about in general and their marketing and branding practices in particular.

Mention was also made of other forces impacting on South African higher education – the emergence of private higher education; the notion of quality assurance; mergers and incorporations; funding; globalisation; the idea of an entrepreneurial university as an alternative; enrolment capping; as well as the PQM.

Chapter 1 also mentioned that branding of higher education in South Africa was not an area of priority because it operated in a protected, regulated market with a steady income. In the problem statement, a lack of proper marketing and branding strategies at institutions of higher learning in view of a new unfolding national and international landscape was identified (see paragraph 1.1). This statement was also echoed by most of the participants of South African higher education institutions during the informal conversation interviews (see paragraph 4.9). This necessitates higher education institutions in South Africa to re-visit their strategies as a means to grapple with the distinctive challenges facing them with the purpose of enhancing quality, delivering graduates to the world of work, being responsive to society and the economic needs of the country, in order to adhere to the outcomes of the NPHE (see 1.2.3).

6.2.1.2 ***The findings of Chapter 2***

Two main paradigms have dominated educational research over the past 100 years, namely the quantitative and the qualitative research paradigms (see paragraph 2.1). The assumption that the qualitative and the quantitative research paradigms represent two opposed approaches to the study of the social world, is being challenged and has led to a fierce debate on these research methodologies by various writers. Pring (2000: 43) referred to these opposed approaches as the "False Dualism" of educational research (see paragraph 2.2). The debate on this "False Dualism" has led to a much more balanced perspective regarding the two research paradigms.

Various differences (see paragraph 2.6) as well as similarities (see paragraph 2.5) exist between these two methodologies. Both methodologies, or some of the characteristics of these methods may be combined (see paragraph 2.7) in a single study. This does not imply that the combination of these methods is in conflict or incompatible.

The methods of data collection in this study, namely document analysis, interviews (focus group interviews and informal discussion interviews), as well as case studies were discussed in more detail (see paragraph 2.10). Methods of data analysis (see paragraph 2.12) were also discussed.

6.2.1.3 *The findings of Chapter 3*

The concept of branding and various definitions were discussed in this chapter. From the researcher's clarification on branding related to higher education institutions, the following conceptualisation captures the concept: Branding is the conscious intervention by management and the marketing division in every function of an organisation that can have an effect on the organisation's customer base. This intervention includes, among other things, committed employees; relevance with regard to its offerings; process management and visual identity (see paragraph 3.2.2).

Different examples of and case studies of branding were elaborated on. Examples in this regard were Toyota (see paragraph 3.13.1), Virgin (see paragraph 3.13.2), Nokia (see paragraph 3.13.3), and Polaroid (see paragraph

3.13.4). Although branding is not a new concept to these companies, it is fairly new in the higher education sector. Branding of higher education institutions where branding as a *wilful intervention* was made, were discussed (see paragraph 3.13.5).

The results of a survey done by UNITECH in 2004, a body representing marketing and communication units of universities and former technikons (currently Universities of Technology) in South Africa, were quite significant for this study. The following deductions regarding marketing and communications practices at South African higher education institutions could be made from this survey (see paragraph 3.14):

- There is a lack of an integrated marketing approach.
- Executive management lacks understanding of branding practices.
- There is a lack of strategy.
- There is a lack of internal communication.

These deductions were consistent with the researcher's own observations at workshops, seminars, meetings, as well as during informal and in-depth discussions with colleagues in the different regions in South Africa. The deductions are also confirmed by the informal conversation interviews, held at seven South African higher education institutions as part of the empirical investigation (see paragraph 4.9.9).

What became evident from the literature was that branding strategies of higher education institutions are generally restricted to *informing* and *visual identity*. It is imperative that South African institutions of higher learning change their understanding of branding in order to effectively brand these institutions.

6.2.2 Main findings of the empirical investigation

6.2.2.1 *Internationally*

The Universities of Warwick (England) and Twente (the Netherlands) were selected for the study as a result of the astounding successes they have achieved with their entrepreneurial activities.

According to the respondents from both universities, the following aspects are extremely important in their successes:

- Visionary leadership: Both universities, although in different ways, have demonstrated their reliance on strong leadership to be proactive. This is confirmed by the literature that universities need to become more flexible and focused in reaction to the demands faced by them. In order to achieve this, strong leadership is essential (see paragraphs 4.2 and 4.5.1).
- An integrated entrepreneurial culture (see paragraph 4.2): Universities need an integrated culture to embrace change. There has to be a common purpose among staff members to contribute to this culture. The role of HR is of specific importance in this regard (see paragraph 4.5.8).
- Communication: Focus should not only be placed on external communication, but on internal communication as well. Staff members have to "buy into" a concept in order for that concept to be successful.
- Relevance: Successful partnerships with industry could lead to societal and regional upliftment (see paragraph 4.5.5). As indicated in paragraph 4.5.4, the idea of

entrepreneurialism can never receive its rightful position without involvement in regional development.

6.2.2.2 ***Nationally***

"Informal conversation interviews" were done at seven South African higher education institutions. The purpose of these interviews was to allow the respondents to discuss in detail their insights, perceptions, and interpretations of their institutions' marketing and branding strategies with specific reference to the new higher education landscape.

Not only were most of the branding and marketing issues consistent with the researcher's own observations, but also with the UNITECH Survey (see paragraph 3.14). The following aspects (as in the UNITECH Report) again became evident:

- A lack of an integrated marketing approach.
- Executive management lack understanding of branding practices.
- A lack of strategy with regard to marketing and branding.
- A lack of internal communication.

These aspects are an indication that South African higher education institutions need to re-visit their internal practices in order to grapple with the distinctive challenges facing them (see paragraphs 4.1 and 1.6.1). A market orientation mindset (see paragraphs 1.6.1 and 5.3.4) is of crucial importance for higher education institutions in South Africa to move towards an entrepreneurial mindset. Although chunks of this mindset are experienced at a few institutions, there is still a long way to go to achieve these outcomes.

6.2.2.3 *Regionally*

A case study (see paragraph 4.10) to highlight the branding practices of a higher education institution was done in the central region. As indicated in paragraph 3.9, a wide number of stakeholders were involved in the branding process of this institution. The internalisation aspects of the branding programme at this institution were narrowed to information only and the implementation phase which focused very strongly on external/outward exercises, provided evidence thereof. The new visual identity of the institution was emphasised, whilst the internal processes remained the same as usual. Neither the experience economy (see paragraph 3.10) nor relevancy (see paragraph 3.9) was part of the internalisation processes which is of the utmost importance.

6.2.2.4 *Participant observation*

The researcher observed that the general perception at South African higher education institutions was that branding image and brand relevance, among others, are the sole responsibility of the marketing division. This was the view from the level of junior staff up till the executive management (see paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9.1). A "silo-operated" environment throughout institutions of higher learning also exists. No collaborative efforts have yet been undertaken to move towards an integrated approach.

6.2.3 Proposed model for branding practices

The main aim of the proposed model is the development of brand practices at South African higher education institutions that could lead to brand enhancement of institutions, in order for these institutions to be perceived as relevant and society-minded to live up to the challenges of a new and changing landscape in South Africa (see Chapter 5).

Considering the literature findings (see Chapters 1 and 3), the findings of the empirical investigation (see Chapter 4) and, above all, the nature of higher education in South Africa, this proposed model is based on two overarching fundamentals, namely the experience economy and its relatedness to brand, as well as relevance and branding, which should be an integrated approach that could ultimately lead to successful external branding (see Chapter 5).

6.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The researcher is of the opinion that the study could contribute towards improving the branding practices at South African higher education institutions in order to face the challenges of a new and changing landscape. This, in turn, could lead to more relevancy in South African institutions of higher learning in order to adhere to the outcomes of the NPHE (see paragraph 1.2.3). Institutions of higher learning should, at least in a limited way, aspire to become more entrepreneurial and thus becoming more relevant. Higher education institutions should also seriously look into the matter of branding through experience. This study should also be seen as a wake-up call for institutions of higher learning.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following aspects are indicators of the demarcations of this research:

- Only acts and policies in terms of the South African context are regarded as directive, although the international tendencies that pertain to the South African context should not be ignored.
- Although the target group is adherent to eight higher education institutions (case study included) in the current higher education landscape in South Africa, the researcher interviewed 10 participants (see paragraph 1.8).

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In terms of future research, the researcher would like to recommend the following:

- Determining the internal branding practices of merged and incorporated higher education institutions in the future.
- Implementation of new branding strategies at higher education institutions for effective branding.
- Evaluating the impact of branding on the perceptions of student communities in higher education institutions.

6.6 CONCLUSION

Taking into account the very demanding current scenario of the South African higher education landscape with regard to mergers and incorporations, huge challenges are facing these institutions. The current branding practices also have to be seriously questioned in this higher education context. One of the most pressing challenges is to effectively brand institutions in order to contribute to more effective and efficient higher education practices. These practices include a focus on the experience economy as well as relevancy that could ultimately enhance the current branding practices in order to challenge the pressures and realities (see paragraph 1.1) facing South African higher education.

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APPENDIX A: Letter of request

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently occupying the position of Senior Director: Advancement and Marketing at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), in Bloemfontein, South Africa. My main functions are related to the title of my research: A MODEL FOR BRANDING PRACTICES IN A NEW SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE, which I am writing to obtain the D. Tech degree in Higher Education at the CUT (Student number: 99 545 38). My promoter is Prof. H.R. (Driekie) Hay.

As indicated by the title, the **overall goal** of this research is to create a model for branding practices in a new South African higher education landscape. The **value** and **relevance** of the model can only be enhanced through the contribution of experts in the fields of marketing and entrepreneurial universities.

I am fully aware of the fact that you have an extremely busy schedule, but I would like to enquire whether it would be possible for you to assist me in arranging meetings with 2 or 3 experts at your university in the fields of marketing and entrepreneurial universities **during the week of 20 – 24 June 2005.**

If you could not assist me, I would appreciate it if you could assist me in identifying a person to help me in this regard.

Your help and co-operation will be highly appreciated. I also wish to thank you for your time spent in reading this communication. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

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APPENDIX B: Interview Guide

Question 1:

You could manage to establish yourselves as a leading entrepreneurial university in Europe and has a strong reputation as a proactive university.

What do you think the main reasons were for this reputation of being proactive during the mid-1990s?

Question 2:

Your communication to business partners must also have carried a very strong message. What message did you carry across and how was it done?

In general, what was your brand message to all stakeholders?

How did you manage to convey this message across?

Question 3:

Closely linked to 2 are the communication and marketing division(s) and its interaction with the rest of your staff. What would you describe as your biggest challenge in this regard?

Question 4:

You are conceived to be a regional university and to help with the development of the region. From literature and other sources, it seems that you have succeeded in uplifting the region substantially. Are there any specific activities that you can link to this?

Question 5:

"Relevance to society" comes very strong to the fore in literature with regard to what you stand for. Have you worked out a specific communication strategy to convey or "propagate" this message?

Question 6:

To be regarded as one of the leading entrepreneurial universities in Europe, a very strong internal (employee) drive in terms of culture must have taken place to have achieved this. How did you achieve this?

Question 7:

What is the role of your Human Resources (HR) in inculcating the entrepreneurial culture of your university?

Question 8:

How, in terms of structure, is the relationship with HR to (1) your executive management; and (2) to your communication and marketing divisions?

Question 9:

What structures did you put in place to promote entrepreneurialism, that is, any extra offices, staff that you would normally not find at your traditional universities?