Creating a visual brand identity

The case of Charles Picard's Company

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Abstract

This Bachelor thesis is about the set up of a visual brand identity by a company, confronted to a growing competition due to globalization and proliferation of the offer on the market. Its stake is to explore and analyze the creation process of the visual identity, in order to permit entrepreneurs who wish to create small companies to design it by themselves. Thanks to this work, such firms can obtain a result that allows them differentiating themselves from their competitors and leaving their mark on customers’ mind. The practical application of this process is done through collaboration with a French entrepreneur, Charles Picard, who is about to create his luxury men shoes company.

We have created our own model, explaining the key steps of the execution process of the visual identity, to allow the entrepreneurs having an efficient understanding of each component that are part of it. Based on several theories that deal with the different elements composing the visual identity and with the elements to consider before and after its formulation, this generic model aims at helping every company who wants to create its visual identity by its own means. By working on the case of Charles Picard, we wanted to demonstrate the relevance of the theories on which we have founded our model as well as proving its efficiency. About the methodology, this thesis is based on a qualitative approach, more appropriate to deal with our subject. The use of interviews and of the focus group has been chosen, according to the selected approach.

The practical application combined with the theories on which we built our own model allow us contributing to the creation of Charles Picard’s company by proposing him a visual identity that fits with the spirit of his future brand and with its values. It also provides help to entrepreneurs in general, in the formulation of the visual identity of their brand.
Résumé

Cette thèse de Bachelor porte sur la mise en place d’une identité visuelle de marque par une entreprise, confrontée à une concurrence croissante du fait de la mondialisation et de la prolifération de l’offre sur le marché. Son enjeu est d’explorer et d’analyser le processus de création de l’identité visuelle, afin de permettre à des entrepreneurs souhaitant fonder de petites entreprises de concevoir cette dernière eux-mêmes. De telles structures peuvent ainsi obtenir un résultat leur permettant de se différencier de leurs concurrents et de marquer l’esprit des consommateurs. L’application pratique de ce processus est faite par le biais d’une collaboration avec un jeune entrepreneur français, Charles Picard, désirant créer son entreprise de chaussures haut de gamme pour hommes.

Nous avons souhaité élaborer notre propre modèle, expliquant les étapes clefs du processus de réalisation de l’identité visuelle, pour permettre aux entrepreneurs une compréhension efficace de chacun des éléments qui le constitue. Basé sur une multitude de théories traitant des différents composants de l’identité visuelle ainsi que des éléments à prendre en considération en amont et en aval, ce modèle générique vise à aider toute entreprise cherchant à se créer une identité visuelle pertinente par ses propres moyens. En prenant le cas de Charles Picard, nous avons voulu démontrer la pertinence des théories sur lesquelles nous nous sommes basées pour construire notre modèle ainsi que son efficacité. Concernant la méthodologie, cette thèse se base sur une démarche qualitative, plus indiquée pour traiter ce sujet. L’usage des interviews et du groupe de discussion a ainsi été privilégié, en accord avec la démarche sélectionnée.

L’application pratique combinée aux théories sur lesquelles nous avons construit notre propre modèle nous permet de contribuer à la création de l’entreprise de Charles Picard, en lui proposant une identité visuelle correspondant à l’esprit de sa future marque et à ses valeurs, ainsi que d’aider les entrepreneurs, de manière plus générale, dans la formulation de l’identité visuelle de leur marque.
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Marine Ballias and Julie Miridjanian
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1 Introduction

In this introduction, we explain the importance of the visual brand identity and the difficulty for a small future company to establish a relevant visual identity. Then, we present the purpose of our thesis, which is: How can a small entrepreneurial company develop a strong visual brand identity and what are the steps in its development? Finally, we expose the audience and describe the structure of our study.

1.1 Background

The first definition of Marketing appears in 1935 and is now given as “a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others” (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders, 2008, p.7). Today, Marketing is the keystone of a company, influencing at the same time the product, the price, the place and the promotion. Before focusing on the actual situation of Marketing, it is necessary to look through the historical background, in order to understand the changes that this essential function of companies has known throughout the years.

In the Western World, the rural depopulation of the early XIX\textsuperscript{th} century generates a huge flood of workers in the cities. The term “rural depopulation” appears to classify this change from the country to the city (Caselli, Wunsch & Vallin, 2006, p.525). In addition to the raise of life expectation and to improvement of living conditions, this phenomenon creates a gigantic amount of available labor force. This environment facilitates the multiplication of numerous technical progresses, leading to the period known as Industrial Revolution and to the advent of capitalism. The demand is consistently raising and it is the start of the “mass culture”. Industrialization engenders mass production; the first goal of the companies is to produce, in order to reduce the production costs and to realize economies of scale (Greer & Lewis, 2005). To sum up, it is an era of “transaction-based marketing”, which involves that “buyers and sellers exchanges are characterized by limited communications and little or no ongoing relationships” (Kurtz, Mackenzie & Snow, 2007, p.290).

The post-war economic boom is “the greatest production boom in history” (Messina, 2007, p.20). Also called “The Golden Age”, this period between 1950 and 1973 is a time of “unprecedented expansion of production and consumption” and of “full employment” (Bianchi, Cowling & Sugden, 1994, p.41). These changes added to the phenomenon of “baby-boom” (Spielvogel, 2009) and to the increase of women employment (Shaeffer, 2005), lead customers to become more and more demanding and different. Companies need to persuade customers to buy their products and then become “sales oriented” by focusing on an “aggressive sales effort” to aim at target customers (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p.39).

With the opening of borders, the competition becomes more intense. The term “Globalization” appears in the vocabulary, referring to “the diminution or elimination of
state-enforced restrictions on exchanges across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a result” (Palmer, 2009, p.350). Due to this phenomenon, there are more companies concentrated on the same markets. For the first time, the consumer can choose between thousands of different ranges of products. In the same period, the slowdown of the economic growth leads to more unemployment and to a decrease of the purchasing power (Schaeffer, 2005). This opening to the entire world and these economic changes are the starting point of a substantial change: the offer becomes higher than the demand. It is the start of the relationship marketing, which is “a move away from a focus on one-off transactions to an emphasis on customer retention” (Masterman & Wood, 2006, p.194).

1.2 Research problem

In the actual context of global competition, companies need to have a well-defined brand environment, “which includes the brand itself, expression, recognition and perception” (Storch, 2007, p.8) and a strong brand image that is discussed by Drewniany and Jewler (2005, p.37) as “the public’s perception of the company or brand”, which will allow them being known and recognized by the customers. Moreover, the move from transaction-based marketing to relationship marketing “is reflected in the changing nature of the interactions between customers and sellers” (Kurtz, Mackenzie & Snow, 2007, p.291). It involves for companies to care more about customers’ perception and ways of thinking in designing their brand image. So, it appears that marketing relationship and brand are strongly linked.

Nevertheless, it can be difficult for a future company to find the good elements to create itself a brand identity, which is “the total perception of a brand in the marketplace” (Upshaw, 1995, p.14) that the customer will distinguish from the competitors. This is mainly the case for small firms, launched by entrepreneurs, who are “those who may be founders or owners of new businesses or managers of existing firms” (Peng, 2009, p.254), and which are not supported by larger companies. Another complementary definition of the entrepreneur describes him/her as “an undertaker-someone who undertakes to make things happen and does” (Fayolle & Klandt, 2006, p.36). The term “entrepreneurial firm” is used to describe a company which employs less than 500 people and can be referred as a SME (Small and Medium sized Enterprises) (Peng, 2009, p.254). Finding relevant elements to create an efficient visual brand language, that is to say visual components that allow customers distinguishing the brand or the company and the associated products (Lendrevie, Lévy & Lindon, 2009), are essential to succeed on a market but difficult for such firms, which do not have the same financial resources and marketing abilities as large companies.
1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and analyze the process of the brand visual identity’s creation, in order to find an efficient way, for a future small entrepreneurial firm, to occupy a distinctive place in customers’ mind and to be distinguished on a specific market.

1.4 Research questions

How can a small entrepreneurial company develop a strong visual brand identity?
What are the different steps that have to be developed in its process?

1.5 Audience

This thesis aims at helping entrepreneurs to develop an efficient brand visual identity for their companies with few financial resources but an accurate study of each element composing this identity and a developed sense of observation of target customers’ attitudes. Entrepreneurs will find in this thesis all the elements that they need to consider and to focus on in order to create by themselves a brand identity corresponding to their expectations and objectives. The collaboration with a young entrepreneur on the particular market segment of luxury shoes makes this Bachelor thesis particularly relevant for potential entrepreneurs in this field, but all the developed and explained theories are also appropriate to every company on any market segment. In the thesis, the theories encompass the general aspects and interpretations to consider, not only the ones fitting with goods of the luxury market.

1.1 Structure

This thesis is divided in six chapters. The first one is the introduction. The second one is the theoretical framework of reference of our dissertation, which presents the theories linked to our subject: the design of a visual brand identity. Chapter three explains the methods used to realize the thesis and the reasons why we select them. Chapter four is the compilation of the empirical data collected. In chapter five, there is the analysis of the previous data gathered. Chapter six concludes the thesis, presenting the final answer to the purpose and a specific proposition of application.
2 The theoretical frame of reference

In this chapter we describe the main theories that we need to answer our purpose and we develop our own theoretical framework. Even if these theories are used for every kind of business and so also for big firms, it seems interesting to study which elements an entrepreneurial firm has to take into account by exploring the most important steps in the visual brand identity’s design. To create a brand visual identity, it is needed to follow a specific process: the company has to define its positioning and to select a brand name. Taking into account these two elements allow defining the visual brand identity, which is a part of the brand, and its components. After choosing each element of the visual identity, the firm summarizes them in a guideline in order to develop its own promotional materials to set up the brand on the market. In this part, we will explain each of these notions.

2.1 Brand and brand management

The brand is viewed “as the major enduring asset of a company, outlasting the company’s specific products and facilities” (Kotler et al., 2008, p.521). For the customer, it is the best way to recognize and identify a firm in the whole market. Representing the company and its values, the brand has to be developed and maintained with a special consideration. The figure 1 presents the major decisions to be taken into account to create a new brand successfully:

![Figure 1: Major brand strategy decisions (Kotler et al., 2008, p.525)]

To create a visual brand identity, only the two first steps are useful, that is why we will develop and explain only these two elements. The brand positioning and the brand name allow finding a logical and relevant visual identity. The two other steps are focused on the brand once its visual identity is chosen. Our work being to define a visual brand identity, the brand sponsorship and the brand development are not useful for our purpose.

2.1.1 Brand positioning

A new company, before its market launch, has to determine a unique value, a unique position that will be associated with the brand. Nevertheless, brand positioning is a complicated concept, and finding an agreement on what is or is not taken into account in this definition appears not to be so easy (Sengupta, 2005). For Kotler et al. (2008, p.410), the act of
positioning is “arranging for a product a clear, distinctive and desirable place relative to competing products in the mind of target customers”. For Sengupta (2005, p.17), positioning can be defined as “the perception it brings about in the mind of a target customer”. He also explains in his book Brand positioning: Strategies for competitive advantage (Sengupta, 2005) that the main positioning elements are:

- **Product class**: it is “the set of products and brands which are perceived as substitutes to satisfy some specific consumer need” (Sengupta, 2005, p.23).

- **Consumer segmentation**: it is “identifying the consumers’ characteristics, needs and expectations” (Sengupta, 2005, p.26).

- **Perceptual mapping**: it helps to “identify the underlying dimensions that differentiate consumer perceptions of products and the positions of existing products on the dimension” (Sengupta, 2005, p.33).

- **Brand benefits and attributes**: it is the “consumer’s perceptual space” (Sengupta, 2005, p.41).

According to Kotler et al. (2008, p.523), a brand can be positioned at four levels. The first one is the **attributes**, that is to say “the least desirable level for brand positioning”, because customers have to understand what the attributes of the brand “will do for them”, they do not care about the attributes if they do not understand why they are interesting. The second one is the **benefits**, because “attributes must be translated into functional and emotional benefits” (Kotler et al., 2008, p.523). The third one is the **beliefs and values**; in this case, the brand is positioned upon emotions, which is even stronger than benefits because it appeals to customer’s personality. The last level is the **personality**. A brand can be considered as a person, as a human being with a proper identity and personality. It will attract people who feel in line with the image proposed. (Kotler et al., 2008)

In order to select which level the company will choose to position its brand; the table 1, adapted from Kapferer (1997, p.97), enlights the four questions to be asked:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Questions to ask</th>
<th>Explanations</th>
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<td><strong>Why?</strong></td>
<td>A company needs to define its purpose, its goal and its objectives. A brand is always created in a specific perspective and the company has to be aware of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When?</strong></td>
<td>Timing is a major aspect in brand creation. A brand’s launch in December will not have the same effect that a brand’s launch in July because people’s mood are not the same at these different times of the year.</td>
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</table>
Depending on the product and the brand image, the timing will not be the same.

**For whom?**

The target customers have to be defined in order to decide on the brand’s positioning. The positioning of a luxury brand is very different from the one of a low cost brand; so knowing the target is essential to decide on an effective positioning.

**Against whom?**

A company has to be aware of the competition when deciding of its brand positioning. Indeed, knowing the positioning and the strategy of the competitors allows the company to distinguish the market opportunities and the way of differentiation for its brand.

*Source: Created by the authors, based on Kapferer (1997, p.97)*

Once answering these questions, it is possible to start the next step, which is the process of the brand name selection and brand identity creation that are essential aspects to develop an efficient brand.

### 2.1.2 Brand name selection

Riezbos (2003) explains that the brand is a concept that allows the consumers and the market actors recognizing and identifying the brand from the company’s competitors. The choice of a name can be a decisive factor of the firm’s success (Shimp, 2007). A brand name is “a name given by the maker to a product or range of products, especially a trademark” (oxford dictionaries, 2011). According to Kapferer (2008, p.193), a brand name is “one of the most powerful sources of identity”. Therefore, the brand name plays an important role for the company but it is not an easy task to find a significant one. To create the best brand name, the company has to concentrate its efforts on this important step. To define an efficient name that gives a push-start to the brand, six qualities are required (Kotler et al., 2008). The name should:

- **Suggest something about the product**: the name has to evoke or to refer to the qualities and benefits offered by the product or the company.

- **Be easy to pronounce, recognize and remember**: the name has to stay in the memory. In order to allow the consumer remembering by himself/herself the brand for a long time, the name has to arouse emotions, feelings, smiling, something that stays in mind. A short name is often more effective than a long one but a long name can be more meaningful.

- **Be distinctive**: The main objective for a firm is that the consumer can easily identify the products and compare them with those of competitors. So, the brand name has to
be unique and allows the company creating its own personality. There are many similar products on the market and the name is one of the most important ways to differentiate a company from others.

- **Be extendable**: if the company wants to extend its brand and add more products, the name has to include these potential expansions.

- **Translate easily**: By choosing a name, it is really necessary to verify if translated in other languages, it will have the same meaning or at least an attractive one. Sometimes it happens that the brand has different or negative connotations, depending on the cultures or the languages in which the product is implanted. So the company has to choose a name that can be translated into foreign language with the same meaning and without any modification.

- **Be capable of registration and legal protection**: the brand name should be available, that is to say the name must not be used by another brand or must not remember the name of an existing brand. In France, to know if a name is available, it is recommended to contact the National Institute of Industrial Property. After choosing the brand name, it is necessary to protect it. If this step is not carried out, other companies can use this name and it will not be a differentiating element for the firm.

After choosing the brand name, the company has to focus on the specific elements of the visual brand identity.

### 2.2 Brand identity and visual identity concepts

The appreciation of the characteristics of the brand and its management allow us having solid basis to understand the two next concepts. The brand identity and the brand visual identity are key notions in this thesis. The second concept, the brand visual identity, is part of the first one, the brand identity (Pinson & Jinnett, 2006), so both are linked and it is very important to have a clear idea about their meanings and their implications.

#### 2.2.1 Brand identity

A brand identity is defined as "...a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the members’ organization. Brand identity should help to establish a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a valuable proposition involving functional, emotional, or self-expressive benefits" (Aaker, 1996, p.68).

The brand identity concept is necessary to create an efficient brand. To explain this term in a more simple approach, the brand identity is the way that the brand wants to be perceived by the public. Unlike the brand image, which is how customers perceived a brand (Kapferer,
2008), represents of a reception notion, the brand identity refers to an emission concept (Kapferer, 1998). It is what the company transmits to the market place (Randall, 2000). The brand identity is strongly linked to the corporate identity, especially when company and brand names coincide. According to Kapferer (1997), a company wants to transmit its values throughout its brand name.

In order to make the brand identity relevant and to make the consumer recognizing the brand among its competitors, the brand identity has to be built according to some characteristics. It has to be “memorable, authentic, meaningful, differentiated, sustainable, flexible and add value” (Wheeler, 2006, p.6). The identity has also “… to be simple. You must be able to enlarge it and apply it to the side of a truck or a building; it has to emboss beautifully on a business card; work well on uniforms; and service a wide range of applications.” (Haig & Harper, 1997, foreword).

In the book Corporate identity: making business strategy visible through design, Olins (1998) explains that brand identity is defined by four main characteristics. The first element is the product or service, that is to say the kind of things the company produces or sells. The second characteristic of the brand identity is the environment, which represents the place where the firm produces or sells its products or services. The third one is the information and allows describing and communicating what the company does. The last main characteristic is the behaviour, that is to say how the employees and other company’s members behave with each other and with the market actors.

2.2.2 Brand visual identity
The above description allows noticing that the visual identity, which is part of the information area (Olins, 1998), represents a distinctive segment of the brand identity (Pinson & Jinnett, 2006). The visual brand identity or corporate design can be explained as “the graphic components that all together provide a system for identifying and representing a brand. The basic elements of a brand’s visual identity might comprise distinctive versions of the following” (Clifton et al., 2009, p.113):

- “Logotypes
- Symbols
- Colors
- Typefaces”

The definition previously given does not include the company’s slogan. Nevertheless, for Bassani, Sbalchiero, Ben Youssef and Magne, (2008) the slogan can be considered as a graphic element and so can be added to the visual identity components.

Since the middle of the 1960s, the graphic design is used as a “marketing tool and its role has steadily gained ground”, becoming a marketing mix element (Haig & Harper, 1997, foreword). Being fully integrated to the company’s communication strategy, the visual
identity is present on all communication materials, allowing the consumer to recognize the brand (Joannès, 2008). Thanks to this pictorial component, a firm can diffuse its brand and its characteristics on the market and on the consumer’s mind. Representing the firm and diffusing a message, the visual personality is an intermediate between the company and the market actors (Haig & Harper, 1997). The role of the visual identity is explained by two authors, Heilbrunn (2006) and Joannès (2008).

First, Heilbrunn (2006) explains the visual identity’s purposes and the importance of its interaction based on the classic communication concept as pointed in figure 2:

![Figure 2: The logo in the visual communication’s process (Heilbrunn, 2006, p.54)](image)

The sender transmits a message to the recipients thanks to the visual identity and particularly to the logo. This communication process involves an answer from the recipients. The message is confronted with noise disturbing the message’s reception. This confusion is made by other messages propagated by the competitors. In order to make the communication favorable for the company, the sender has to define a clear message (encoding) in the intention to allow the recipients decoding the message in the right and wished way and responding to it positively (Heilbrunn, 2006).
Second, according to Joannès (2008), the visual identity, represented intensely by the logo, is in constant interaction with the brand image, in order to spread the relationship between the brand and its customers, the offer and the positioning of the company. The three visual identity’s functions can be represented by figure 3:

![Visual communication system](image)

Figure 3: Visual communication system (Joannès, 2008, p.35)

The visual identity allows creating a brand image in the customer’s mind. This image diffuses the positioning of the brand, creates a relation between the brand and its consumers and conveys the offer of the brand on the market. The visual identity influences the brand image, allowing the transmission of the positioning as well as the offer of the brand and the relationship with the customers (Joannès, 2008).

The definition of the visual identity indicates that it is composed by different elements and according to figures 2 and 3, one of these components is the logo. The elements of the visual identity are presented in the next session.

### 2.3 Elements of the visual brand identity

The logo is the major part of the visual brand identity (Haig & Harper, 1997); nevertheless other elements are fundamental in the corporate visual design (Hart & Murphy, 1998). According to the visual brand identity definition (Clifton et al., 2009, p. 113) and to Bassani et al. (2008), the following characteristics have to be taken into account:

- The Logo
- The Color combination
- The Sign, Symbol
- The typography
- The slogan
2.3.1 The logo
According to Egan (2007, p.83), a logo is “an emblem or device used to distinguish an organization or brand”. A logo is a representation of the brand, which does not have to be confused with the brand itself. Even if the logo is nothing less than the visual embodiment of the brand, it is only a part of it. Quoting Glaser, a famous designer mentioned by DiMarco (2010, p.121), “the logo is the entry point to the brand”. For Silver (2001) an effective logo is even able to generate emotion and desire.

In their book, *The power of logo*, Haig and Harper (1997) define three main categories of logos that can be used by a company:

- **Acronyms and Monograms**: “the first letters of each word in the company name” forms the logo. It often brings confusion because the message transmitted with letters is limited.

- **Name-Only Logos**: The name represents the company’s logo. The advantage to use this kind of logo is that the consumer does not need to relate the logo with the name. Nevertheless, it is really hard to design a name that conveys the company’s values.

- **Name/Symbol combination**: The logo is a combination of the company’s name and one symbol. This type is often the best solution to create an efficient logo. The symbol imparts the firm’s attributes and the name is highlighted.

According to Joannès (2008), a logo requires to have particular properties to be effective:

- **Consistency**: the logo has to represent a unified view of the company; it has to give a consistent image of it. So, all the present elements in the logo need to be linked together.

- **Semantic and emotional richness**: a logo has to enkindle several feelings and sensations. In spite of its apparent easiness, it has to generate in people’s mind a lot of cognitive answers.

- **Durability**: the average shelf life for a company logo is around 10 to 15 years. For products logo, it used to be shorter, around 5 years most of the time. It is needed to change the logo, or at least modify it, when its meaning or references are becoming obsolete or when it is not reflecting anymore the company’s purpose or philosophy.

- **Adaptability**: a logo has to be always adaptable and recognizable, even on different supports, in black and white and in smaller size. The customer has to be able to recognize it in all situations.
- **Possibility to decline**: if the company decides to enter a new market, to move abroad or to open subsidiaries, the logo has to be declinable, in order to represent each different part of the organization.

- **Reproducibility**: a company often needs to reproduce its logo, for example on official papers or invoices. These operations do not have to change the meaning of the logo or to reduce its impact.

  (Joannès, 2008)

The previous properties presented for a good logo reflect an academic point of view, formulated by Joannès (2008), an author who realized studies and theories to support his thesis. It could also be interesting to have a practical point of view about logos, from a designer, in order to understand what the concrete process in logo design is. The opinion of a professional, working in the logo design field, can be complementary to the one of a published author. Cass (2008), a young designer specialized in the field of corporate design, presents in figure 4 the basic and indispensable principles that a designer needs to use to design a logo:

![5 Principles of Effective Logo Design](http://justcreativdesign.com/2008/01/08/how-to-design-a-logo/)

Figure 4: The five principles of effective logo design


The five principles expressed before can help to organize the reflection about a logo’s creation and so can lead to an effective logo (Cass, 2008):

- **Simple**: The logo’s design has to be simple, so the customer will remember it easily. This leads to the second principle.

- **Memorable**: The more simple is a logo, the easier the customer will keep it in mind. At the same time, the logo has to be attractive; it has to catch the eyes. To sum up, a logo is a complex combination of simplicity and originality.

- **Timeless**: When creating a logo, the designer has to think about it in ten years or in twenty years. Of course, it will still be possible to make a logo evolved, but to change it entirely will lose the customer. The logo represents the brand; it is not supposed to
change every year. So, it includes that the creation process of a logo has already thought about it in the future.

- **Versatile**: A logo has to be adaptable to different supports; it also has to be recognizable even in only one color.

- **Appropriate**: A logo has to be linked with the company; it has to represent itself. So, the purpose of the company has to be translated in the design of the logo.
  (Cass, 2008)

### 2.3.2 The colors

The logo being the visual representation of the brand, it needs to be designed with caution to transmit the desired brand image. Colors are a fundamental part in a logo design (Bottomley and Doyle, 2006); they are the vectors of the feelings that the customers are supposed to perceive and “communicate corporate position” (De Mooij, 2010, p.186). Finding one or more colors matching perfectly with the company and its brand identity appears to be a complex process, because “color is personal and universal, sending messages full of endless variations” (Marks, Mine, Origin & Sutton, 2009, p.13).

In his book “Theory of Colors” published in 1810, Goethe is one of the first authors to develop a theory about the perception of colors and their meaning in people’s mind. Nowadays, his work is still used as one of the main references (Kacha, 2009) in the understanding of consumers’ behavior. The theory is based on the contrast between light and dark. Colors are divided into two sides: the positive side, with the yellow as the “leading color” and the negative side, with the blue leading (Holtsmark, NA). Yellow is linked to knowledge, strength, warmth and closeness. Blue is associated with shadow, weakness and disaffection. Colors on the positive side conjure up to an atmosphere of life, whereas colors on the negative side generate feelings of anxiety and weakness (Kacha, 2009). Goethe has drawn the wheel in 1808 to represent the frame of colors and the opposition between the two sides of colors (Gurney, 2010). This wheel is presented in figure 5, in its original version:

Figure 5: Goethe’s Color Wheel (Gurney, 2010, p.142)
Newton, also recognized as one of the pioneer in colors’ research, has drawn another color wheel, based on his research, in the 18th century (Lee & Fraser, 2001). The wheel “represents pure and undiluted hues, and is arranged by value” (Gildow & Benedetti Newton, 2000, p.56). Colors are belonging to different categories: they can be primary (red, yellow and blue), secondary (result of the mix between two primary colors) or tertiary (mix of primary and secondary colors). It appears that primary colors are the basis of every other color (Gildow & Benedetti Newton, 2000). Newton’s wheel, presented by figure 6, is still quoted in numerous books, as a basis in colors’ theory, and is still used nowadays, notably by Pantone, a world-famous company that has imposed its color guides as references in colors’ selection (Corporate website: http://www.pantone.com/pages/pantone/pantone.aspx?pg=19306&ca=10).

![Newton's Color Wheel](image.png)

**Figure 6: Newton’s Color Wheel (Anderson Feisner, 2006, p.14)**

After Newton’s and Goethe’s studies, which are considered as the starting point of colors’ understanding (Zuppiroli, NA), other researchers, like Marks et al. (2009) have worked on the subject and designed other complementary color wheels, reaching a global consensus on the meaning of each color depending on people and countries. It has to be remembered that there are some differences of meaning for a same color between the Eastern and the Western part of the world; it is mainly the case for the black and the white. Table 2, based on the data of “The Incredible Art Department”, the second educational website in Indiana, used notably by the Art School of Indianapolis, details the symbolism of colors and points out the difference of perception of black and white between the Eastern and the Western cultures (http://www.princetnonol.com/groups/idad/).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colors</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Excitement, energy, passion, love, desire, speed, strength, power, heat, aggression, danger, fire, blood, war, violence, all things intense and passionate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Love, romance, and excitement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beige and Ivory</td>
<td>Beige and ivory symbolize unification. Ivory symbolizes quiet and pleasantness. Beige symbolizes calm and simplicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Joy, happiness, betrayal, optimism, idealism, imagination, hope, sunshine, summer, gold, philosophy, dishonesty, cowardice, jealousy, covetousness, deceit, illness, hazard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Peace, tranquility, cold, calm, stability, harmony, unity, trust, truth, confidence, conservatism, security, cleanliness, order, loyalty, sky, water, technology, depression, appetite suppressant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turquoise, Teal and Aquamarine</td>
<td>Turquoise symbolizes calm. Teal symbolizes sophistication. Aquamarine symbolizes water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Royalty, nobility, spirituality, ceremony, mysterious, transformation, cruelty, arrogance, mourning, wisdom, enlightenment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>Femininity, grace and elegance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Energy, balance, enthusiasm, warmth, vibrant, expansive, flamboyant, demanding of attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Nature, environment, healthy, good luck, renewal, youth, spring, generosity, fertility, jealousy, inexperience, envy, misfortune, vigor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Earth, stability, hearth, home, outdoors, reliability, comfort, endurance, simplicity, and comfort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>Security, reliability, intelligence, staid, modesty, dignity, maturity, solid, conservative, practical, old age, sadness, boring. Silver symbolizes calm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As table 2 shows it, a same color can express different feelings, sometimes contradictory or really different. The range of feelings linked to each color has to be carefully studied before starting to select the colors used to represent a brand.

Going further, it is interesting to focus on the impact of colors on everyday’s life. It appears that how people are dressed, and the colors they wear, are the most representative part of their personality (Kargere, 1979). Johnson (NA), an expert in color psychology, has developed a theory about the effect produced by colors on people’s mood and their meaning in fashion:

- **Black**: wearing black usually makes people look thinner and elegant. It is a timeless color, which can be used to show authority and power, but also submission.

- **White**: it reflects light and is considered as neutral. White can be easily worn, as it goes with every other color. It is classified as summer color and means purity.

- **Red**: it is an intense and extreme color, meaning at the same time love, anger and excitement. Red generates a lot of emotion, and has to be worn with caution.

- **Blue**: it is one of the most popular colors, perceived as peaceful and distressing. Wearing blue can signify that people are trustworthy, which explains why, with the black color, dark blue is really appreciated in suits styling. Indeed, in a company, being loyal is essential.

- **Green**: it is a relaxing color, but it is also seen as a very masculine and traditionalist color when darker, implying wealth.

- **Yellow**: people’s attention is always attracted by this color and wearing it means that you want to be spotted. It is a warm and optimistic color, but too much yellow results in stress and agitation.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Reverence, purity, birth, simplicity, cleanliness, peace, humility, precision, innocence, youth, winter, snow, good, sterility, marriage (Western cultures), death (Eastern cultures), cold, clinical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Power, sexuality, sophistication, formality, elegance, wealth, mystery, fear, evil, unhappiness, depth, style, evil, sadness, remorse, anger, anonymity, underground, good technical color, mourning, death (Western cultures).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from The Incredible Art Department, 2011, http://www.princetonol.com/groups/ia/lessons/middle/color2.htm*
- **Purple**: often used in luxury companies, it shows prosperity, style and sophistication. It is often associated to the idea of extreme femininity and romanticism.

- **Brown**: it is more a “men color”, showing manliness and representing the strength of nature. (Johnson, NA)

Concerning the gold color, Carsetti (2004) associates this color with yellow, explaining that for most of people it is approximately the same. Zakia (2002), another author explains that it transcends yellow and can express both the sublime and the infamous.

### 2.3.3 The signs and symbols

To find the logo that better represents the brand, the firm has to study and know the character of basic signs. By table 3, Joannès (2008) explains that each sign has one or more meanings that can be explicit or not depending on the company environment. All shapes impact the consumer’s perception of the brand (Haig & Harper, 1997) so, the sign and its meanings have to be in adequacy with the firm’s values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruler, imperious, prestigious, sharp</td>
<td>Vertical line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credible, positive, global, calm</td>
<td>Horizontal line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionist, daring, idealist, ambitious</td>
<td>Ascending oblique line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining, depressive</td>
<td>Downward oblique line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalable, open, accommodating, rippling</td>
<td>Curved line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable, strong, stable</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blooming, communicative</td>
<td>Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature, serene, self-confident</td>
<td>Oval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demanding, conquering, sociable</td>
<td>Rhombus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert, curious, discreet</td>
<td>Triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful, attentive, ambitious</td>
<td>Pentagon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: adapted from Joannès, (2008, p.22)*
The person who is responsible of the design of the brand visual identity has to be creative in order to reinforce and to stress the meanings of the sign or the chosen symbol (Joannès, 2008).

2.3.4 The typography
“Typography is the process of arranging letters, words, and text for almost any context you can imagine: it is everywhere”, (Dabner, Calvert & Case, 2009, p.62). The lettering style helps to establish and identify the company; it “can denote high quality, high price or a bargain” (Hart & Murphy, 1998, p.53). If the typography matches with the target market and is fully part of the brand visual identity, it represents a “valuable visual equity” (Hart & Murphy, 1998, p.53). Three main elements, the typeface, the spacing and the layout, are included in the typography term (McCarthy & Mothersbaugh, 2002):

First, the typeface combines the following aspects:

- The character style: corresponds to the choice of the typeface. Consuegra (2004) presents the Thibaudeau’s classification, which is the first typeface categorization. Its grading is done according to the serif of construction. A more common classification described in table 4, distinguishes tree basic typefaces (Jenkins, Price & Straker, 1998, p.195):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serif</td>
<td>Short lines or curves projecting from the ends of certain letterforms</td>
<td>Palatino, Times, Century Schoolbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sans serif</td>
<td>Not finished strokes at the end of the letterforms</td>
<td>Arial, Geneva, Helvetica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script</td>
<td></td>
<td>Monotype corsiva</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: The tree basic typefaces

Source: adapted from Jenkins et al., (1998, p.195)

- The weight and the slant: characterize the choice to put the font in bold, italic, lowercase or capital letters (Dabner, Calvert & Case, 2009).

- The size: is measured in points. Usually, the size includes 72 points (Jenkins et al., 1998).

- The height: is expressed vertically, from the top of the capital letter to the bottom (Jenkins et al., 1998).
Second, the spacing, which is the space between letters, words and lines, can be more or less important. It allows facilitating the comprehension of the reader (Jury, 2004). “The best spacing is invisible”, that is to say the reader is not disturbed by this space and does not notice that the text has a specific spacing (White, 2007, p.158).

Third, the layout signifies “the positioning of print and all the other visual elements of the work”(Peterson, 2005, p.64). The creation of different paragraphs, columns or the addition of headlines or borders represent the layout. Making connections between text and graphical elements, the layout influences and facilitates the interpretation of the page.

In her academic research, Amar (NA) explains in a table the connotations that exist for each typeface. Table 5 includes the thoughts of several authors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Connotations</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non serif type face</td>
<td>Modernity, objectivity, virility</td>
<td>Tantillo, Di-Lorenzo Aiss and Mathisen, (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script typeface</td>
<td>Elegance, feminity</td>
<td>Rowe (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Davies (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italic</td>
<td>Dynamism, velocity</td>
<td>Tannenbaum, Jacobson and Norris (1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rowe (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lewis and Walekr (1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Force, heaviness, slowness</td>
<td>Rowe (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lewis and Walekr (1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITAL</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Tannenbaum, Jacobson and Norris (1964)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Amar, (NA)

2.3.5 The slogan
In his book Creative Advertising, written in 1955 and mentioned by Foster (2001, p.2), Whittier defines a slogan as “a statement of such merit about a product or service that it is worthy of continuous repetition in advertising, is worthwhile for the public to remember, and is phrased in such a way that the public is likely to remember it”. A more actual definition describes slogans as “phrases that sum up important characteristics of the brand” (Egan, 2007, p.83).
According to Foster (2001), a slogan has to:

- **Be memorable**: people have to keep the slogan in mind. It is possible to use alliterations and coined words to make it successfully unforgettable.
- **Recall the brand name**
- **Include a key benefit**
- **Differentiate the brand**
- **Communicate positive feelings for the brand**
- **Reflect the brand's personality**: in creating a slogan, it is needed to think to the brand as a person, and so to express its character and personality.
- **Be strategic**: the slogan has to express the business strategy.
- **Be “campaignable”**: it means that it should be easy to use the slogan in several advertising campaigns; it has to be the common point between all the different company’s advertisements.
- **Be competitive**: a competitor should not be able to use the same slogan; it has to differentiate strongly the brand from others.
- **Be original**
- **Be simple**
- **Be neat**: linked to the idea of simplicity, it means that the slogan has to be a sentence, with a start and an end.
- **Be believable**
- **Help in ordering the brand**: when talking about the slogan to a salesperson or even someone external to the company, the slogan has to be associated directly to the brand.
- **Not be in current use by other**
- **Not be insipid, generic or hackneyed**
- **Not incite a sarcastic or negative response**
- **Not be pretentious**
- **Not be negative**
- **Not be corporate waffle**: if is perceived as being corporate waffle, the slogan will be unreal.
- **Not make people say “so what?” or "ho hum”**: people have to understand the point of the slogan.
- **Not make people say "oh yeah??”**: it means the slogan should not spark off mocking reactions.
- **Not be meaningless**: people have to understand what are the ideas and emotions that the slogan is supposed to transmit.
- **Not be complicated or clumsy**
- **Be liked by the slogan’s designers themselves**
  (Foster, 2001)

To sum up, numerous fundamental elements are required for the creation of an entire brand identity: logo, colors, signs and symbols, typography and finally slogan. We are now going to
explain how to design a visual style guideline, in order to have a concrete expression of the previously mentioned elements.

2.4 Visual style guideline

Dhénin (2004) explains that a visual style guideline is a document containing the entire graphic elements to use on all communication materials. This graphical charter allows the brand declining and reproducing all its visual aspects with some rules in order to give “coherence and unity” to its communication (Dhénin, 2004, p.183).

Dhénin (2004, p.183) specifies the different elements, which have to be included in the visual style guidelines:

- **Company’s background**: to name the firm’s founders and to explain its past.
- **Company’s objectives and vocations**: to clarify its values and its purpose.
- **User guide of the graphic charter**: to present the charter and its objectives.
- **Graphic charter’s recipients**: to detail who can use this charter.
- **Logo’s presentation**: graphical representation of the logo.
- **Logo’s role**: to explain the meaning and objectives of the logo.
- **Client’s expectations**: to explain the demand.
- **Application of the logo in various supports**: to list the possible versions of the logo in various communication’s supports.
- **Logo’s adaptation**: to choose the possible logo’s declension (photocopy, black and white, etc.).
- **Graphical and typographical norms**: to define the font’s choice, size, etc.
- **Logo’s colors**: to present the different colors those compose the logo.
- **Colors ‘references**: to list all colors’ references to know exactly which colours are used.
Joannès (2008, p.37) suggests a similar way to create a graphical charter; nevertheless his approach is simpler and combines the information into more distinct categories. Even if this method is less detailed than the previous one, it allows being more accessible to non-designer:

- **Logo design**: each brand has its own specific logo.

- **Typography**: the choice of typographical characters has to be specified.

- **Colors**: the different colors used for the visual identity must be listed.

- **Size and proportions**: the size and the proportions of the visual identity are detailed for each communication’s supports.

- **Connection between graphical elements**: the logo has to be placed always in the same way and the same distance with regard to the brand name.

Once the visual style guideline drawn up, it is used on all promotional materials of the company.

### 2.5 Promotional materials

The promotional materials are the concretisation of the visual style guideline and thus of the visual brand identity. The visual identity has to be present on all communication tools (Joannès 2008). Dhénin (2004) as well as Pinson and Jinnett (2006) give different but complementary classifications of communication materials where the brand visual identity should appear. Dhénin’s classification (2004) is made by categories and is more marketing based than Pinson and Jinnett (2006). Nevertheless, being more central and more accessible to small companies, it is useful to describe Pinson and Jinnett’s list (2006). Table 6 details these two classifications:
Table 6: Two promotional materials classifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- “Administrative and commercial documents: letterhead, business card, direct-mail...”</td>
<td>- “Brochures/Rack cards”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Presentation of the company and its products: brochure, instructions...</td>
<td>- Building signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Products packaging and wrapping</td>
<td>- Business cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interior and exterior fitting: urban architecture, descriptive, decoration.</td>
<td>- Business reply envelopes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Internal communication supports: newspapers, corporate films, seminars...</td>
<td>- Checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advertising supports: billposting, radio, movies, promotional objects, advertising on the sale’s place.</td>
<td>- Contracts/agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promotional material</td>
<td>- Display signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sound identity supports: welcome telephone message, background music...</td>
<td>- Envelopes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Informatics aid: websites/intranet, Word or Power point presentation...</td>
<td>- Flyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Others visual identity supports”: employees’ clothes, vehicles...”</td>
<td>- Invoices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: created by the authors based on Dhénin (2004, p. 184) and on Pinson and Jinnett (2006, p.74)

The main and first promotional tools built by a company are the business card, the letterhead and the brochure or rack card (Pinson & Jinnett 2006). The business card gives credibility to the company and the person who represents it but it is also a way for customers to remember the firm. “A business card is like a minibillboard. It should tell the what, why, who, how, when and where of your business” (Pinson & Jinnett 2006, p.73). The letterhead characterizes “the business stationery” and has to be used for each company’s correspondence. The brochure is a business document that stipulates information to potential customers about the company (products, services and so on) (Pinson & Jinnett 2006, p.74). The brochure containing a lot of text, companies often prefer using a rack card. This paper more condensed is printed on both sides and has an envelope size in order to be easily sent by mail (Pinson & Jinnett, 2006).
2.6 The steps to design a relevant visual brand identity

The above review allows us noticing that there is a major link between the positioning, the brand name, the elements of the visual brand identity, the visual style guideline and promotional materials. The elements of the visual brand identity are the components of the guideline, which is used to decide on the promotional policy and on the implementation of the brand on the different promotional materials. We are now going to see that the visual identity’s elements interact with each other in order to generate a brand visual identity.

2.6.1 The interaction between the elements of the visual brand identity

The visual identity is created by five different elements: the logo, the colors, the slogan, the typography and the signs and symbols. Each component is in interaction with the others, that is to say that one element depends on the rest of the elements and also impacts on them, creating a situation of mutual enrichment. For example, colors, typography, signs and symbols are used in a logo design, and a particular color, having a specific meaning, affects the other elements, in order to design a coherent brand visual identity. A brand can develop these five elements to create its identity but can also use only one or two of them depending on its expectations, target and budget. The interaction between the five elements creating the brand visual identity is represented in figure 7.

![Figure 7: The interaction between the five visual identity components, created by the authors](image)

Each of this element can be used separately or not to create a distinctive sign. According to the authors of this thesis, the distinctive sign is an element that the customer can see directly on the product and which represents the brand. It is different from the logo and can be a shape, a color, a letter…It exists a wide range of possible distinctive signs, which have to be chosen according to the brand positioning and values. The company can decide to implement a distinctive sign on its products if it wants them to be quickly recognized and differentiated.
from the competitor’s products. It is a sort of mark presents on each good, striking on a single
look.

2.6.2 The brand positioning affects the visual brand identity
The positioning strongly impacts the definition of the brand visual identity, as we already
mentioned in theoretical part about brand visual identity (Joannès, 2008). Depending on the
position that the company wants to occupy on the market, it will not emphasize on the same
elements and values. Different markets involve different types of target customers, who do
not have the same references and the same wants and needs. Attracting them imply for the
company to ask itself relevant questions about its positionning and then to design its visual
identity depending on the answers to these questions. If the company fails to realize such an
introspection, it will be difficult to occupy a clear and unique place in target customers’
minds. There is an apparent link between brand positioning and visual identity, because the
second one cannot be done before the first one.

2.6.3 The brand name is linked to the visual identity
As previously mentioned in part 2.1.2 about brand name selection, a brand name is “one of
the most powerful sources of identity” (Kapferer, 2008, p.193). It is associated, in customers’
mind, to the entire brand, its products and its personality and plays an essential role in the
differentiation of the brand from others. The brand name “merges” with the visual identity, it
is a part of the entire image given by the brand, a part of the perception that the customers
have about the brand. By being represented with specific colors, typography, signs and
symbols and being part of the logo, the brand name is more than strongly associated to the
visual identity.

2.6.4 The graphic guideline and promotional materials allow the implementation of the
visual brand identity
In order to have a harmonized visual identity and communication, the company has to develop
a graphic guideline. This document explains each element of the visual identity and indicates
the relation between them. This guideline influences the elaboration of the brand commercial
materials. The term includes the overall communication tools used by the company, upon
which the visual identity has to appear to promote the brand. The commercial materials have
to be developed respecting several rules described in the company graphic guideline. Each
brand documents or communication instruments have to use the same or similar brand visual
identity. It is really important for a company to have a unique and homogeneous visual
identity in order to make the customers remind and recognize the brand thanks to its identity.
So, after choosing the visual identity elements, the brand guideline has to be created thinking
of the future promotional materials and the promotional materials have to take into account
the brand guideline. The guideline and the promotional materials are in interaction and put
together they allow the brand identity having a tangible existence on the market, as
enlightened in figure 8.
2.6.5 The associations of every concept in a global process

To design and implement a brand visual identity, a company has to take into account all these concepts: brand positioning, brand name, brand visual identity’s elements, graphical guideline and commercial materials. They all have an impact on each other following a specific order, which has to be respected. Defining the brand positioning allows knowing the brand’s values and consequently selecting a relevant brand name. Both impact on the creation of the brand visual identity, which enable the designers to develop a graphic guideline and to choose the commercial materials. After following this process, the company will be able to give a tangible existence to its brand. This global process is clarified by figure 9.
For a small entrepreneurial firm, it is sometimes difficult to respect all the components included in each step due to a lack of time or capabilities. In that case, the company has to focus on the most important elements: its positioning, its brand name and its logo. Nevertheless, at some point, the other components will have to be developed if the firm wants to ensure its success and its notoriety on the market.
3 Methodology and method

In this part, we explain the methodology and the method we have used to collect data and how we analyse them to realize our study. Firstly, we describe the methodology, that is to say the principles we have chosen that fit to our purpose in order to lead our research. Secondly, we talk about the company selection. In a third part, we present the procedure of data collection, which includes the process of interview, the methods used to analyse data and we conclude with the reliability, validity and ethical considerations of our research.

3.1 Methodology

The methodology presented below includes three sub parts, which are the research method, the qualitative and quantitative approach and our research design. It has allowed us defining a relevant way of collecting data.

3.1.1 Research method

Before starting to collect data, it is needed to know the type of researchers that we are, depending on our objectives. This knowledge influences the choice of a subject and the formulation of the purpose and is useful to decide on the type of research required to answer to this purpose in the most efficient way. According to Berman Brown (2006), three different types of researcher exist:

- **Detectives**: When the researchers are confronted to a problem, they try to find efficient ways to solve it. In that situation, the researchers are looking for solutions; this is why they are called detectives.

- **Doctors**: In front of an initial situation, where improvements are required, the researchers realize a diagnostic in order to detect the problems and to explain their reasons and origins. They try to find the origin of the troubles, the symptoms of the situation.

- **Explorers**: The researchers are looking for new areas to explore; they create a new field of research, which has never been considered before. The researchers do not know the final result of their study because there are no previous findings about it. To sum up, they start from zero.

According to our purpose, two research attitudes seem to be appropriate. The detective approach matches with our objectives, because we need to find solutions by considering what has already been done in our field of research. The explorer attitude is also compatible with our research, as we want to create a new model allowing entrepreneurial firms to differentiate
themselves with few resources by a careful study of their market environment and of their target customers.

### 3.1.2 Qualitative and quantitative approach

The **qualitative** method “involves a researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurement or amount” (Murray Thomas, 2003, p.1). This method is focused on a specific subject, issue, case or event and tries to study it in depth (Patton, 2002) and uses interview data, observation data, document data and audiovisual data (Creswell, 2003). The interpretation is made through text and image analysis (Creswell, 2003). The goal is to understand, which explains that it is based on the subjective point of view of the researcher. These characteristics clarify why such an approach can be categorized as process oriented (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005).

On the opposite side, the **quantitative** method focuses “attention on measurements or amounts of the characteristics displayed by the people and events that the researcher studies” (Murray Thomas, 2003, p.1). This approach is based on performance data, attitude data, observational data and census data and on statistical analysis (Creswell, 2003). It is generally a large-scale measurement, which allows producing findings that can be applicable to several cases or situations (Patton, 2002). The emphasis is on verification and testing, it is a logical approach which is result oriented (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005).

Table 7 gives an overview of the existing differences in features between the qualitative and quantitative methods. It is a useful tool to understand what the approach that fits better to the purpose of a research is, but also shows the difficulty to clearly define distinctively both methods (Miller & Dingwall, 1997, p.13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soft</strong></td>
<td>The major aspects of the study are expression, words and feelings.</td>
<td>Hard The data collected are mathematics (numbers, percentages...).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexible</strong></td>
<td>There is a possibility of adaptation or change when realizing the study, because of the “human interaction” between the researcher and the persons interviewed.</td>
<td>Fixed The questions are fixed and, because the “human interaction” component does not have to infer in this case, there is no possibility to change them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subjective</strong></td>
<td>The interpretation of the collected data depends on the person who realizes this operation.</td>
<td>Objective The data collected can only be interpreted in a single way; there is no possibility of different views about them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political
It is possible to judge the answers and their value, to be agree or not with them.

Value-free
There is no judgement about the answers and their value.

Case study
The research is about a particular situation and cannot be used in another case.

Survey
Data are collected from a representative sample corresponding to the research purpose. The conclusion of the research can be used for other purposes.

Speculative
The starting point of the research is imagination. The researchers want to anticipate the reaction of the public.

Hypothesis-testing
The researchers want to confirm a previous idea.

Grounded
The data correspond to points of view or attitudes

Abstract
The data are numbers, which do not mean anything outside of their context.

Source: created by the authors, adapted from the original version of Halfpenny (1979), used by Miller & Dingwall (1997, p.13)

Two different considerations exist in a research: the **epistemological** and the **ontological** consideration. According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p.16), “the epistemological issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline”. It can be based on positivism, which is founded on the use of “natural sciences to the study of the social reality and beyond” or by interpretivism. Interpretivism is used by researchers who are critical with previous studies realized with scientific model and who distinguish the natural science from the social science, contrary to the positivist view (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The ontological considerations are about “the nature of social entities” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.22). They can be based on objectivism, which considers that “social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors”, or on constructionism, a position that asserts that social phenomena are in a permanent evolution because they are realized through social interactions (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Epistemology and ontology are both inductive approaches, because they try to formulate global laws thanks to the observation of particular facts. They are part of the qualitative research, since they are based on the subjective analysis of the researchers.

### 3.1.3 Our research design

Our purpose is to find an efficient way, for a future small entrepreneurial company, to differentiate itself on a specific market. This purpose requires a detailed study of the target consumers’ attitudes and reactions, in order to decide on an efficient proposition. We need to know what their feelings in front of different stimuli are and to see their reactions “in live”. Such a research involves a qualitative approach, to have a detailed idea of the core customers ‘perception. Moreover, our epistemological consideration can be categorized as
interpretivism, because we need to consider what has already been done in that field and to be critical with the findings of the previous studies. We want to create a differentiated visual identity based on former researches but actualised to our particular context. Our ontological consideration is constructionism, since we work on a subject dealing with perception, which constantly evolves. Both interpretivism and constructionism belong to the qualitative side of research, which consolidates us in our opinion that the qualitative approach is the most relevant for our purpose.

3.2 Company selection

The choice of our subject for the Bachelor thesis is the result of a common interest for the different factors influencing the customers’ perception of companies and products as well as the purchasing decisions. We were also aware that it may be really complicated for new companies, launched by entrepreneurs having limited financial means and little knowledge in marketing, to decide on a relevant brand identity, which will represent efficiently the brand’s personality, positioning and values. With the will to offer a useful help to these small companies, we have decided to look for an entrepreneur about to create his/her company and to offer him/her to collaborate on the definition of an efficient brand identity for his/her future firm. Thanks to a common friend, one of the group members has heard about Charles Picard’s situation and has decided to contact him, in order to offer him to collaborate on his project in the frame of the Bachelor thesis.

Charles Picard is a young French man of 24 years old; living in Clermont-Ferrand, France, who has just resigned from “Les Compagnons du devoir”, a French association of craftsmen specialized in many different fields, from confectionery to painting. The members of this association form a wide-ranging community where the seniors help the juniors to acquire professional experience through various short-term job placements at the start of their career. Charles Picard worked in this association as a fine leather craftsman for two years, and thanks to that was employed as a trainee in several luxury shoes companies. After a personal disagreement with the association members, Charles Picard has decided to quit “Les Compagnons” and to launch his own shoes brand on the French market. Nevertheless, he has quickly realized that he did not have the right knowledge in marketing to design a visual brand identity that will express his values and positioning, and that will attract his target customers. Moreover, due to limited financial means, he could not afford to employ a specialist to realize this work, even if he was strongly looking for help, in order to have a fresh point of view on his company, which could leads to the generation of new ideas.

We sent to Charles Picard an e-mail explaining who we were and what we were looking for. He appeared to be highly interested by such a partnership and asked us for more information about our project. After a long conversation, where we explained him what type of work we wanted to realize and where he confirmed that it was matching with his expectations, he accepted to collaborate with us, saying it was the occasion for him to have a new perspective
on his project and to bring new validity. A few weeks later, a meeting in Clermont-Ferrand, France, with one of the group member has allowed every member of the project to agree on the exact goal of the thesis and to clarify its objectives. According to Johnson & Christensen (2010), Charles Picard can be called a convenience sample. Indeed, convenience sampling is made thanks to “people who are available, volunteer or can be easily recruited”, which is the case of Charles Picard, who has rapidly accepted the collaboration with our group.

Thanks to this partnership, we wished to offer a comprehensive generic solution for small entrepreneurial companies, illustrated with a real example, in order to show them that it is possible to create an efficient brand identity without employing an external provider.

3.3 Data collection

To be able to answer to our purpose, we have to realize a research by collecting data. It exists two categories of data: secondary data and primary data (Boone, Kurtz, MacKenzie &Snow, 2007, p.235). Secondary data “come from reading what others have experienced and observed” (Guffey, 2010, p.259). They are the data collected from “previously published” and which can be analysed for the research project (Boone et al., 2007, p.235). Primary data “result from first-hand experience and observation” (Guffey, 2010, p.259). These data represent information collected primarily and especially to answer to a problem or purpose. (Boone et al., 2007).

3.3.1 Secondary data

Secondary data are always studied before collecting primary data. If the secondary data give enough information, it is not necessary to spend money and time to collect primary data (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). Since the secondary data are already available, they are less expensive to collect than primary data (Guffey, 2010). Moreover, by using secondary data, the researcher saves much time and effort. It is easier to locate existing data than to have to collect new data (Beri, 2008). The secondary data collection permits to analyse the studies already realized about the subject and to examine “the deficiencies and gaps” allowing the researcher to orient its primary data on these weaknesses (Beri, 2008, p.80). Nevertheless, by using secondary data, the researcher has to exploit them with caution and to insure that these data are reliable (“who collected the data? At what time? What where the sources of data?”), suitable (“the object, scope and nature of the search is available or not?”) and in adequacy (“correspondence with the actual subject”) with its subject (Kothari, 2004, p.111).

According to Kothari (2004, p.111), many sources can provide secondary data:
- “Publications from the local governments
- Publications from foreign governments, international bodies, subsidiary organisations
- Technical an trade journal
- Books, magazines and newspapers
- Reports and publications of various associations connected with business and industry
- Reports prepared by research scholars, universities, economists
- Public records and statistics, historical documents
- Others sources of published information”

As said in the list reported by Kothari (2004), to write our thesis we have collected secondary data from several sources depending on the parts. First, in the introduction and the theoretical parts, we have read many books that we have bought or found in the Halmstad University Library or online (Google books). We have collected data from reports and academic journals prepared by research scholars or Universities available on Internet (Google scholar and academic database). When we have used Internet sources, we have determined several key words. The words we have used are the ones that allow us finding information about each visual identity’s element. For instance, some of them were “the elements of the visual identity”, “create relevant logo”, “meanings of colors”, “meanings of sign and symbols”, “find an efficient slogan”, “connotations of typography”. In these parts, we have also used authors as Kotler or Doyle studied in Marketing and Strategic Marketing literatures at Halmstad University, which correspond to others sources of published information’s.

Second, in the methodology and method’s part we have found all information in books of authors like Bryman and Bell (2007) available at the Halmstad University Library and on Internet. Third, to have information about the visual identities already present on the market of the French luxury shoes for men, we have used competitors’ websites in the empirical data’s parts.

Books and academic reports being considered as relevant sources, we have privileged their use to collect our data. Authors of these sources have appropriate skills on the subject, allowing us to gather trustworthy information. For the rest of our sources, we have tried to find at least two sources of information, especially from website sources. Our goal is to compare them with each other and to link them together in order to maximize the reliability of our data.

3.3.2 Primary data

As it is said above, primary data are gathered for the first time and specifically for the purpose of the research (Wilson, 2010). The main advantage of primary data is that they are totally in accordance with the subject and the research needs (Ferrell & Hartline, 2008). The research is also “based on study-specific tools” since the researcher decides by himself which data need to be collected and which specific tools will be used (Houser, 2008, p.272). Finally, primary data collection allows using a “consistent protocol” to gather new information and having complete and accurate data (Houser, 2008, p.272). However, primary data collection is “very expensive and time consuming” (Ferrell & Hartline, 2008, p.112). It exists two main forms to collect qualitative data in line with our purpose, the observation and the interview. The observation consists in transcribing and analysing the person’s behaviour (customers, competitors, suppliers) in a natural setting (Ferrell & Hartline, 2008). The interview involves
to converse with one or several people about the research subject. It “allows the researcher to gain an insight into a person’s beliefs and attitudes towards a particular subject” (Wilson, 2010, p.138).

According to our purpose, we have decided to collect qualitative data by interviewing people. The detail of our interview with the entrepreneur and the competitors is presented in the next part and the focus group procedure is explained in part 3.5.

### 3.4 Interviews process

To analyse the important elements of a visual brand identity and to create a relevant visual identity for the chosen company, we have to collect deep information about behaviours and attitudes of three main actors: the future company, the competitors and the potential customers. In order to know and to understand the company for which we have to define a visual identity, we have decided to interview the firm’s entrepreneur: Charles Picard. To collect the visual identities of the companies present on the market and to know how they established their identity, we wished to interview two competitors: Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan. These companies are two very famous brands of luxury shoes and both have a brand visual identity well known by the consumers. To know the customers’ opinion about the visual identity’s elements, we have interviewed several potential customers by realizing a focus group, which will be presented in the next part.

#### 3.4.1 The elements to lead an interview

According to several authors like Bryman and Bell (2007) and Fisher (2010), three main elements have to be considered to conduct an interview: the format of the interview, the structure and the person to interview.

##### 3.4.1.1 The person

As regards to the person to interview, the researcher has to choose the most appropriate and important person to be questioned according to him/her research purpose (Fisher, 2010). For the researcher, the essential aspect is to identify and select people who are knowledgeable about the subject studied. It is usual to appeal to personal contacts to find relevant respondents (Fisher, 2010).

According to Johnson and Christensen (2010), our interviewees can be defined as being convenience sample. Indeed, for the entrepreneur interview and for both competitors, Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan, the interviewees have accepted easily and with pleasure to be questioned since one of the group members knew them very well. Concerning the two persons that we have interviewed and who represent two different competitors, it was relevant to question them because they were working in companies that we wanted to study for our thesis since they are well-known on the luxury shoes market and have successfully managed to create a particular brand identity. So, these interviews were matching with the
objectives of our work, that is to say that they were a good opportunity for us to obtain information about the creation process and the implementation of the brand identity of famous companies.

Louboutin is one of the most famous and fashion luxury brand of shoes. Founded in 1992 in Paris by a French shoes designer, Christian Louboutin, the company has become in less than 20 years a world emblem of femininity and glamour. Now implemented in 46 countries, the brand differentiates itself by a red tread presents on every pair of shoes. This particularity is highly interesting for our project, because this is a relevant example of an efficient distinctive brand sign in a luxury shoes company. Flavie Montoro worked during two years at Louboutin as an assistant in the “special orders and custom made” service of the company. During these two years, she had been involved in many different tasks and projects. Louboutin is still a rather small entrepreneurial company, even if it is famous worldwide. All the employees are involved in and devolved to the company; they know the story of the brand and of its creator and are informed of all the taken decisions. Christian Louboutin is close to his employees; he wants them to feel like members of a same family. One of the group members knowing Flavie Montoro, the group has seized the occasion to interview her. As a former member of the Louboutin “family”, Flavie Montoro was absolutely able to answer to our question about the company, its image and its values. The interview has been very useful to understand better the success factors for an entrepreneurial company on a specific market. (Personal interview with Flavie Montoro and www.christianlouboutin.com)

In 1921 Charles Jourdan founded his own shoes factory in Romans, France, and created Charles Jourdan, a luxury brand of shoes, which became really famous. Worn by celebrities, the brand became a luxury symbol and at the end of the fifties, Charles Jourdan’s stores opened all around the world. Charles Jourdan was one of the most famous brand shoes during the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the company has closed its factories in 2008 and Royer group bought the brand (a group that owns several brands of shoes and which is specialized in the importation and the sale of shoes). The brand has a very simple visual identity but being recognized by its customers, it seems interesting to study the visual identity of this brand. Philippe Rebatel worked during thirty-six years as a production manager in the cutting/sewing up service. He worked in collaboration with all the other services and more particularly the fashion designer department, research department and the methods department, so he knows the history and the functioning of the Charles Jourdan’s company. Even if the Royer group wishes to rework some brand elements, for now, the group does not change the brand characteristics. Consequently it is still relevant to interrogate Philippe Rebatel. (Personal interview with Philippe Rebatel, the Charles’ Jourdan book and www.grouperoyer.com)

3.4.1.2 The format
Concerning the format of the interview, four different types can be chosen. First, the researcher can realise a face-to-face interview by organising a direct meeting with the interviewee to converse with him/her. This personal interview allows engaging easily the discussion. The interviewer can analyse the verbal communication but also the non-verbal
communication. He can be flexible and in real interaction with the respondent. Nevertheless this kind of interview requires some time to realize and analyse it (Wilson, 2010). Second, the researcher can interview the people by mail or e-mail. To interview by mail allows reaching large sample of respondents and they have time to answer rightly. However, the interviewer has no control on the questions and there is no interaction with the interviewee (Stevens, Wrenn, Sherwood & Ruddick, 2006). Third, the interviewer can contact the interviewee via the phone. This format provides quick results and the sample of respondents can be more important than for a personal interview. However, it is difficult to establish friendly and confident relationships with the interviewee. The interview cannot be long and the questions have to be short and easy to understand (Webb, 2002). Fourth, the interviewer can realise a focus group, which is a “simultaneous personal interview of a small group of individuals that relies on group discussion about a certain topic” (Boone & Kurtz, 2008, p.253).

As described in tables 8 and 9, we have decided to realize face-to-face interviews in order to make easier the discussion and to be able to interact with the respondent. For the entrepreneur’s interview, we have also used the phone (Skype) and e-mails to communicate with him. The distance between Sweden and France did not always allow us organising direct meeting with Charles Picard. This element had not been a problem since the most important meeting with him was done in face-to-face interview and for the others conversations he was very understanding and answered us with specific attention. Concerning the competitors, Flavie Montoro was interviewed in France directly by one of the group member and Philippe Rebate was contacted and questioned a first time by e-mail and interviewed in face-to-face for the second time when the other member of the group came back to France.

3.4.1.3 The structure
Regarding the structure to conduct an interview, three different techniques can be used. The researcher can make a structured interview, semi-structured interview or unstructured interview. In the structured interview, the questions and their order are prepared in advance. The answers are often short, it is easy to analyse them but sometimes it is not enough to enhance data (Wilson, 2010). For the semi-structured interview, a list of subjects to explore and global questions help to create more detailed questions during the interview. By using this method, the interviewer can be flexible bounce on the interviewee’s answers. At the same time he/she can ask questions and can guide the respondent on a specific theme (Wilson, 2010). Finally, the unstructured interview is more like a conversation and the questions are open-ended (Merriam, 2009). The interviewer puts a general question to begin the discussion with and then the interviewee speaks freely on the subject (Wilson, 2010). The respondent can discuss themes that are important to him. However, the answers are not really useful for the current subject (Merriam, 2009).

In our case, the interviews have to inform us about the entrepreneur’s project and the visual brand identities present on the luxury shoe market. To stay centred around the purpose and to have qualitative and deep answers, we have realized semi-structured interviews as expressed in tables 8 and 9. To conduct our interviews, we have prepared two guides with some subjects to tackle. The first guide was for the entrepreneur interview (cf. Appendix 1) and the second
one for the competitors’ interviews (cf. Appendix 2). The discussions being semi-structured, in each interview guide, we have asked more open questions than closed questions. Open questions allow the interviewee to be free to answer in the way she/he wants. Nevertheless, we have used some closed questions to have precise answers oriented to our final purpose. This choice allows us adapting our questions to the situation and to the respondent in both interviews, with the entrepreneur and with the competitors. First, the interview with Charles Picard starts with a presentation of his project: description of his future company, his actual situation, his wants and his marketing mix. These questions have to give us an insight into the global situation of the company in order to understand his activity and his needs. Then, the interview is oriented on the luxury shoe market by questions about his competitors and the actual market trends to understand the environment. At last, the interview has to deal with the visual brand identity’s concepts: his brand positioning and its values, his idea of a brand name and a brand visual identity, his wishes for the promotional materials. To be able to make some recommendations for this future company, we have to know the entrepreneur’s expectations. Second, the competitors’ interviews guide covers three main areas. The interview starts with a presentation of the respondent to know his/her place in the company. Then, the interviewee has to present the company: the target customers, the actual situation, the marketing mix and the key success factors of the brand. Finally, the interview is oriented on the visual brand identity concept by an explanation of the brand positioning and values, the brand name, the elements of the brand visual identity, the visual style guideline and the promotional materials. These questions allow us being able to analyse the visual brand identity of two competitors and to examine the visual identity trends.

3.4.2 The interviews in this research
Based on the three elements to lead an interview, the format, the structure and the person, we have used a variation of interviews for our data collection as presented in the tables 8 and 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Picard, the entrepreneur</td>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>To improve our knowledge about the entrepreneur’s project. To know his company and his expectations for the visual identity creation.</td>
<td>The 27th of January 2011</td>
<td>Halmstad and Clermont-Ferrand</td>
<td>One hour and half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face interview</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td></td>
<td>To have deeper information and to collect more data about the company. To not miss</td>
<td>The 19th of February 2011</td>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td>One hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
information about the Charles’ project.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>Structured questions</td>
<td>When we have specific questions about his project.</td>
<td>Every time we had requests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: The competitors interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitor</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Why this company</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian Louboutin</td>
<td>Flavie Montoro, an assistant in the “special orders and custom made” service.</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>To know its visual identity’s elements and how the company sets up its identity</td>
<td>Convenient sample. Efficient distinctive brand sign in a luxury shoes company.</td>
<td>The 19\textsuperscript{th} of February 2011</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>Two hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Jourdan</td>
<td>Philippe Rebatel, a production manager</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>To know its visual identity’s elements and how the company sets up its identity</td>
<td>Convenient sample. Very simple visual brand identity for a famous international company.</td>
<td>The 8\textsuperscript{th} of March 2011</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td>To have deeper information about the company</td>
<td></td>
<td>The 29\textsuperscript{th} of March 2011</td>
<td>Valence</td>
<td>One hour and half</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: created by the authors
3.5 Focus group process

To identify the customers’ views about the brand and its visual identity’s elements, we have undertaken a focus group by putting together potential customers. We present this process by expressing the general properties of a focus group in order to be able to explain our own focus group.

3.5.1 The focus group characteristics

By using the focus group, the researcher can analyse the interaction and the discussion between each participant. The aim is also to obtain several views, feelings and behaviours about the subject. To organize the focus group session, the researcher has to determine how many focus groups are needed, the number and the characteristics of participants and then, to recruit them (Bryman & Bell, 2007). A basic focus group includes between 6 to 10 people (Litosseliti, 2003). A date and a place have to be chosen and an interview guide has to be drawn up to prepare the discussion (Bailey, 1994). Once these elements are completed, the meeting can take place. The focus group is led by a moderator (or a facilitator) who knows the subject and the purpose of the session and the communication rules (Blankenship, Breen & Dutka, 1998). The moderator has to maintain the interaction between participants and to animate the discussion of different subjects during one or two hours (Boone & Kurtz, 2008). A tape recording is strongly advised to facilitate the transcription and the analysis of the discussion. Thanks to this record the researcher can watch and re-watch the session allowing him/her to identify the dynamics of the group and the participants’ attitudes (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

In our case, we have chosen to realize a focus group with the potential customers in order to know how they perceive the visual identity’s elements, to identify the existence of stimuli and the interaction between them. Thanks to the help of Charles Picard, we have been able to gather people that were matching with the target and were disposed to participate to the focus group. These persons can be classified as a convenience sample, since we have received some help to contact them. They are all friends or contacts of the future entrepreneur or of us and we knew that they could potentially become Charles Picard’s customers.

3.5.2 Writing the focus group

To lead our focus group, we have prepared an interview guide (cf. Appendix 3) and a Power Point in order to have a visual aid (cf. Appendix 4). The focus group has to talk about four main subjects. The participants have to define what a brand identity represents for them. Once the moderator has listed the five elements of the brand visual identity, the members are required to define and explain which of these elements are the most important for them. By analysing several pictures of each visual identity element (logo, colors, typography, signs and symbols, slogan), the participants are asked to choose between different propositions and explain their choice. To conclude the focus group, the members have to relate these elements with a luxury brand of shoes.
In order to record the focus group, which has lasted one hour, we have used a web-camera with a microphone linked to a laptop, which has allowed us recording directly it on a computer. Then, we watched the meeting twice, and wrote the dialogues between the attendees in the same time on another computer to be sure we did not miss any important element in the conversation. The “watching work” allowed us understanding the interaction between the attendees, whereas the writing work permitted us analyzing clearly the content of the conversations between the participants. This complementary work was necessary to have a complete understanding of the focus group.

3.5.3 The focus group in this research

The focus group brought together six people matching with the potential customers of the Charles Picard’s company. Each participant was a French active man between 25 and 35 years old and interested in actual trends. The entrepreneur helped us to find these people since he already knew some men corresponding to his target customers. To gather participants together, we set a date and a meeting place. The study being on the French market, one of the group members came back to France to realize the focus group. This member played the moderator’s role leading the interview. Filming the meeting allowed us to watch it and to analyze the interaction between the participants. Table 10 summarizes our focus group process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 men between 25 and 35 years old: - Romain Gay, 26 years old - Julien Aymard, 23 years old - Alexandre Riquier, 25 years old - Remi Colin, 32 years old - Yohan Boucheix, 31 years old - Romain Gracz, 24 years old</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>To know how the customers perceive the visual identity’s elements and to identify the existence of stimuli</td>
<td>The 16th of April 2011</td>
<td>Clermont-Ferrand</td>
<td>One hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: created by the authors*
3.6 Methods to analyze the data

To analyse our primary data, we used written guides and took notes on it for each personal interview in order to have a written record of the information given during meetings. Moreover, some information has been given by e-mail. For the focus group, we had decided to film the meeting to be able to analyse the behaviours of the participants and to identify the interaction between them.

After collecting all the data needed, we transcribed the information gathered during each interview and watched the entire recording of the focus group together twice, so as to be sure we did not miss important facts or sentences. During each view, we came back several times on parts that we did not understand entirely, sometimes because the attendees were all talking at the same time or because they did not really speak clearly. While one of the group members was transcribing again the conversation between the participants on a personal computer, the other was controlling the film, in order to rewind or to put in pause some sequences. To communicate quickly with each other, we had decided to give a letter to each attendee, to know who-is-who. This letter was corresponding to the first letter of the first name of the attendees and allowed us winning time in telling and writing their names, because we had to follow the quick rhythm of the recorded conversation.

Our research being on the French market, all the interviews were conducted in French, so we had to translate all the information in English. The analysis being a detailed examination and interpretation of the elements (oxford dictionary, 2011), each of us wrote her own analysis in order to pool our evaluations and in a second time to compare our results. When we disagreed about a subject, we watched again together the recording of the focus group or read the interviews one more time to find the correct interpretation.

3.7 Reliability, validity and ethical consideration

The validity and reliability are two notions that indicate the quality and the credibility of the research (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). In order to give value and importance to a study, the results have to be valid and reliable. Nevertheless, reliability and validity can be inapplicable to a qualitative research and in that case the term trustworthiness can be used (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The trustworthiness contents four criterions: the credibility that is linked with the internal validity, the transferability that corresponds to the external validity, the dependability that matches the reliability and the conformability that equals to objectivity of the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Each element of the trustworthiness has a link with the reliability and validity, which are studied below. The results can also be measured by the respect of the ethics (Babbie, 2010).
3.7.1 Reliability
Two different properties express the reliability of a research: the external reliability and the internal validity (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The external validity represents “the degree to which a study can be replicated” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.410) and more precisely it is the possibility to obtain the same result if other researchers using the same conditions repeat the study (Taylor, Sinha & Ghoshal, 2006). To insure the reliability of the results it is possible to test and retest the method (Babbie, 2010). The internal reliability exists “when there is more than one observer, members of the research team agree about what they see and hear” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.410). As said previously, to insure the reliability of data, the researcher has to check who has collected the data, when and who was interviewed (Kothari, 2004).

By following the Kothari’s list (2004) expresses above, we think the results of our analysis are reliable. We have collected the data by ourselves so we know that they have been collected in a good way and always in relation our purpose. The interviews were made in the same time period in order to have the same market conditions. The interviewees were always people able to answer our questions and concerned by our study, ensuring the relevance of their answers. To improve and insure the reliability of the study, we have always used written guides during the interviews in order to have a connecting thread in link to our subject. The focus group being more complex since several people are interviewed at the same time, we have filmed the meeting to be able to transcribe and prove our data. Moreover, if the personal interviews and the focus group would be repeated in the same conditions (same environment and same questions) the results would be identical or really similar. However, this external reliability is restricted since, if the same study would be realized in several years, the result would have probably changed due to trends’ evolutions and expectations’ changes. Finally, the two authors of this thesis have agreed about the research, allowing this study to be reliable in an internal aspect. Indeed, they had the same opinion during the analysis of the interviews and the focus group and have agreed about the final results.

3.7.2 Validity
The validity of a study is about the meaning, credibility and rigour of the study and its results (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). It allows determining if the results correspond to the reality. When we use a qualitative approach, the validity is more subjective that for a quantitative research. It is possible to distinguish two kind of validity: the internal and external one (Bryman & Bell, 2007). First, internal validity means, “the findings are only valid for that particular research setting” (Taylor et al., 2006, p.3) and “there is a good match between researchers’ observations and the theoretical ideas they develop” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.410). Secondly, external validity or generalizability “exists when your findings and conclusions are applicable to others contexts, settings or a larger research population” (Daymon & Holloway, 2011, p.80). It is the degree to generalize the results of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In a qualitative research, the external validity is difficult to obtain since specific case studies are often used to apply or to observe the theories (Bryman & Bell, 2007).
In our thesis, we think one part of our results can be applied to other situations and the other part is only effective for our report. Our theoretical ideas are confirmed by the actual situation of the market, allowing our conclusions about the process of the visual brand identity creation and its elements to be relevant and transferable to others contexts or companies. The key elements and the steps to take into account to create a brand visual identity stay always the same for every kind of business and could be used by other entrepreneurs. However, our recommendations for Charles Picard concerning the brand visual identity are available only for his project and could not be used to another firm. These findings are a particular application of theories and take into account the characteristics and specificities of the Charles Picard’s company. So the theoretical part and our own process model are valid in an external aspect whereas our results about the entrepreneur’s project are valid in internal properties and could not be transferable.

3.7.3 Ethics

“Ethics is made up of norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others. The goal of ethics in research is to ensure that no one is harmed or suffers adverse consequences from research activities” (Cooper & Schindler, 2001 used by Herbst & Coldwell, 2004, p.18). To have a moral guideline, it is necessary to respect components below (Baker & Hart, 2008, pp.153, 154):

- **Goodwill**: the goodwill of the respondents is necessary to collect accurate information.

- **Trust**: a mutual trust has to exist between the interviewer and the interviewee.

- **Professionalism**: when the respondents participate to an interview, they have to feel that the results will be used in a professional approach.

- **Confidentiality**: In order to make the respondents feel confident, the information gathered during the interviews has to be confidential. It is important to remind it to the interviewees.

- **Transparency**: The respondents have to know why their data are collected and for what purpose they are used.

- **Consent**: The interviewees have to give their consent for the use of their data. They also have to know that they can change their mind and opt out at any time.

For our thesis, we have respected these six elements of ethical consideration in order to respect the respondent’s privacy and to have honestly acceptable research. To ensure the goodwill of the respondents, each interviewee was voluntary. To create a mutual trust between the interviewer and the interviewee, we tried to create a specific relationship with each respondent by contacting or speaking with them several times before the interview. To
improve the professionalism and the transparency, we explained many times to the participants the purpose of our research and how the results will be used. When making contact with each person, we always added that all information given during the interview would be strictly confidential. We have reminded it to the interviewee just before realizing the interview, for respondent feels confident. Finally, all the respondents gave their consent and we have specified to them that they could change their mind at any time. They have our email address and our phone number to contact us in case of questions or doubts. We also have the e-mail address of all interviewees to keep contact with them until the end of our research.
4 Empirical data

In this chapter, we present the entrepreneur’s project, the two competitors’ description and their visual brand identity and finally the customers’ point of view. As detailed in chapter 3, all information transcribed in this part is collected thanks to our interviews with the entrepreneur, the two competitors and the potential customers. We have completed our data by gathering secondary data on the competitors’ websites or on competitors’ documentation.

4.1 Company’s project

Charles Picard, a young French man, is about to create his own brand of luxury shoes for men. To be able to give him advice for the creation of his brand visual identity, we have to explain his positioning, his target market and customers. A description of the marketing mix will allow having an overall view of the entrepreneur’s project. Then, a detailed explanation about his ideas of a brand name and visual identity will help understanding his whishes and needs.

4.1.1 Positioning, target market and target customers

The luxury shoe market for men represents a tiny part of the entire shoes market and is trusted by a small number of companies. There are very few new brands created every year and the customers usually remain loyal to one brand if they are satisfied with it. The style and design of the luxury shoes, particularly for men, have known few evolutions and are considered as rather classic, using mainly black and brown leather and traditional techniques of manufacture. Nevertheless, some companies try to design more fashion shoes in order to attract the young and rich people, but, according to Charles Picard, “there is always a gap in quality between fashion luxury shoes and classic luxury shoes, because it is impossible to use the same high quality techniques for the first type of shoes”.

Charles Picard aims at positioning his brand on the more classic part of the market; he wants to use traditional techniques of manufacture that will please customers wishing shoes that last a long time. At the same time, he would like his brand to have a distinctive sign, in order to differentiate it from other brands and to give a small touch of originality to its products. Thanks to this proposition, he hopes to seduce the upwardly mobile young executives, between 25 and 35 years old, who entered on the labour market some time ago and have to wear formal dress, but wish to keep a detail, a personal touch that make them different. This target is willing to pay between € 300 and € 400 for a high quality pair of shoes; they can afford to spend this amount of money in a good and reliable product. Moreover, they are interested in fashion and refuse to look like everybody else; they try to be elegant and original at the same time. Charles Picard’s shoes will offer to these young executives the possibility to wear apparently classic shoes but with “something more”, a sign that is not obvious but which will be noticed and appreciated by attentive observers. These shoes will be a way, for them, to
express their personality and to be discreetly informal; they will represent a small act of rebellion against conformism.

4.1.2 Marketing mix of the company
In order to explain his company’s project, Charles Picard developed the different elements of the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion):

- **Product**: Charles Picard’s company will design and trade men luxury shoes. To implement his brand on the shoes’ market, the entrepreneur has already created thirteen different models of shoes. All brand’s shoes will be exclusively for men and will have a moccasin’s style. Each model will be in calf leather and will be available in a panel of colors: black, brown and other dark colors. The collection will be in a classical character with a touch of eccentricity to attract dynamic young men (25-35 years old).

- **Price**: A pair of Charles Picard’s shoes will cost around € 300. Even if Charles Picard’s models are luxury products, on the luxury shoe market it is possible to find much more expensive shoes than these ones. So these shoes can be considered as the bottom of the range products in the luxury shoe market.

- **Place**: The products of his brand will be distributed throughout the French market. For the moment, the entrepreneur does not think to sell his shoes in other countries. At the beginning, the products will be presented in only one distribution channel: the shoes resellers. These resellers propose several brands of shoes at the same place. They are able to advise the customers and create a specific relationship with them, so it is the best way to enter on the shoe market without an important budget. After having launched his brand and build his brand image on the market, Charles Picard would like to create his own store. In the long run, two distribution channels will distribute the brand: The resellers and the brand’s store.

- **Promotion**: The entrepreneur does not have a high budget for the promotion of his company. No advertising will be made to launch his brand. In the luxury market, a useful communication is very expensive and only the huge companies can do this. However, the entrepreneur plans to use two kinds of promotion. He will create a brand’s website to present the company: shoes’ collection, brand’s values and a link to have a contact with him. In order to have a presence on the reseller shops and to be recognizable among the other brands of shoes, Charles Picard whishes to use the point of sale advertisement (POS-A). This kind of promotion will consist in creating display shelf or stand with the brand name and the brand visual identity. These supports will be in metal and/or leather to remind the luxury and the masculinity of the brand.
4.1.3 Ideas of brand name and visual identity

Not having huge competences in marketing, Charles Picard has not really thought about the brand name and the brand visual identity but he has some ideas about these subjects. With regard to the brand name, he thinks to choose his first name, surname and another attribute. The brand name has to be very simple and to express the luxury of the brand. Concerning the visual brand identity, Charles Picard wishes a specific logo and distinctive sign. He would like finding a brand typical element to include on each pair of shoes. He has thought to put a bow tie, maybe with a specific design or color. This differentiator component has to allow the customer recognizing the brand when he sees a pair of Charles Picard’s shoes. The entrepreneur also desires a sober and simple logo but an efficient one. He would like a logo that transmits the brand values and the brand style: classic revisited. This distinctive sign and the logo can be complementary or similar but they have to allow the brand’s differentiation from its competitors.

4.2 Competitors’ review

Charles Picard’s company will be positioned in a particular market segment that includes a relatively small number of direct competitors, but more indirect competitors. Charles Picard helped us to define the direct and indirect competitors, knowing well the market and the companies implemented on it. The direct competitors are the companies selling the same type of classic shoes in the same range of prices, but only one of them as a distinctive sign. The indirect competitors are also selling classic types of shoes, some of them have a distinctive sign, but their ranges of prices are inferior or superior to the price of Charles Picard’s shoes. According to him, the main criteria to differentiate direct and indirect competitors in the luxury shoe market are the style and the price. In the case of classic luxury shoes, price is even more important, because, Charles Picard told us that, contrary to fashion luxury shoes, which can be highly different from each other, the classic ones often have a relatively similar design. Even if there are differences between them, it is not as important as for the fashion shoes. Charles Picard does not consider that the more “fashion positioned” companies are direct competitors, because the target is absolutely not the same, they are selling shoes which cannot be worn on a formal professional context. Below, tables 11 and 12 present the direct and indirect competitors of Charles Picard’s company:
4.2.1 Direct competitors

Table 11: Direct competitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Average price</th>
<th>Distinctive sign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraboot</td>
<td>350€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heschung</td>
<td>390€</td>
<td>Norwegian dressmaking: more waterproof and strong dressmaking than the classic one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church’s</td>
<td>400€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altan</td>
<td>360€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmina</td>
<td>350€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: created by the authors, based on Charles Picard’s market knowledge and on secondary data, 4th of April 2011.

Paraboot is a French company created in 1908 and implemented in numerous countries of all the continents. It focuses mainly on the solidity of its shoes, designed for men and women, made to last a long time and to allow the owner walking a lot with them. The design of the shoes is classic and the confection is still traditional, in spite of a world-wide distribution. There is no distinctive sign on the shoes. The color code of the company is green and white and the logo presented on figure 10, is simple: just the name of the brand written in plain words (white in a green background). The brand name does not refer to the name of its founder, Rémy Richard-Pontvert, but to the “boots”, an American type of shoes that he discovered during a trip in the United States and to the harbour of Para, in Amazon, where he found a new and innovative product, the latex. (http://www.paraboot.com/home.asp?lang=fr)

Heschung is also a French company, created in 1934 by Eugène Heschung, specialized in the Norwegian dressmaking, a particular type of dressmaking that improves the waterproof qualities of the shoes and is stronger than the classic techniques. This specialization is the distinctive sign that allows differentiating the brand’s products from the competitors’ ones. The company offers shoes for men and women. The visual identity is classic, using only black and white, with a logo showed in figure 11, presenting the name of the brand, inspired by the

Figure 10: Logo of Paraboot
(Source: http://www.paraboot.com/images/etiquette.gif)

Figure 11: Logo of Heschung
(Source: http://www.heschung.com/images/heschung_1934.gif)
name of its founder, in black capital letters and the date of the company’s creation just under.


Figure 12: Logo of Church’s
(Source: http://www.church-footwear.com/churchs.html)

Church’s is an English company from Northampton, founded in 1873 by the three brothers Church, which designs and sells shoes for both men and women in nine countries including France. The visual identity aims at representing the age of the brand, using white and sepia. The logo represents the name of the brand, inspired from the name of its three founders, the heraldry of the city of Northampton and underlines the fact that the shoes are from England, as it is possible to notice in figure 12. There is no distinctive sign on the shoes.

(http://www.church-footwear.com/churchs.html)

Figure 13: Logo of Altan
(Source: http://www.altanbottier.com/1.aspx)

Altan is a French “bottier” (shoes designer) founded in 1973 by Altan Sensoszlu and creating shoes for men. The brand is only sold in Paris and the shoes are realized in a traditional way. The customers can choose among a wide range of colors for every part of the shoe, from the leather to the laces. The brand visual identity plays with brown and red, and we can notice the particular typography of the logo presented in figure 13, which distinguishes it from the others.

(http://www.altanbottier.com/1.aspx)

Figure 14: Logo of Carmina
(Source: http://www.carminashoemaker.com/img_index/logo.jpg)
Carmina is a Spanish firm founded in 1866 by Jose Albaladejo Pujadas and implemented in Europe, Japan and USA. It creates shoes for men and women, respecting high quality standards and realized by craftsmen. There is no official explanation about the choice of the brand name, but it is possible to assume that it comes from the Spanish word “Carmina”, which means carmine. It uses mainly brown and a wood print in its visual identity and the logo, presented in figure 14, expresses the brand name written in gold on a brown wood print background, with the date of creation and a small abstract form on the top of it, and the name of the founder below. (http://www.carminashoemaker.com/index.html)

4.2.2 Indirect competitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Average price</th>
<th>Distinctive sign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian Louboutin</td>
<td>700€</td>
<td>Red tread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Jourdan</td>
<td>210€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weston</td>
<td>600€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen</td>
<td>250€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crockett &amp; Jones</td>
<td>500€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Green</td>
<td>650€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaziano &amp; Girling</td>
<td>800€</td>
<td>Pattern under the tread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corthay</td>
<td>850€</td>
<td>Unique shapes of the shoes, particularly on the toe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlutti</td>
<td>900€</td>
<td>Unique work on the colors and possibility to add tattoos and piercing on the shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Lobb</td>
<td>900€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santoni</td>
<td>450€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George’s</td>
<td>230€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emling</td>
<td>250€</td>
<td>Coloured laces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerard Sené</td>
<td>580€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Guyot</td>
<td>450€</td>
<td>Red triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Santos</td>
<td>280€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aubercy</td>
<td>700€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markowski</td>
<td>175€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexley</td>
<td>130€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loding</td>
<td>150€</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: created by the authors, based on Charles Picard’s market knowledge and on secondary data, 4th of April 2011
4.2.3 Specific focus on two competitors

As said before in the method’s part, we have focused our research on two famous competitors: Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan, to have deeper information about the competition. For each of them, we report the information collected during the interviews completed by secondary data. First, we explain the situation of the company and the marketing mix to have a global view of these companies. Second, we define their values and their target customers to know their positioning on the market. Third, their brand names, their visual identities and their visual style guidelines and promotional materials are detailed to be able to analyse the market’s trends. Finally, we explain their brand image.

We have been able to contact these firms thanks to some acquaintances that we have and that have allowed us realizing the interviews. So, on one side, we have to say that it was a convenience choice to interview people from the companies Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan. On another side, it is really important to know that this choice was also fitting very well with the subject of our thesis and consequently was highly relevant. Indeed, these two potential competitors are successful companies and so it is interesting to focus on them, in order to understand the reason of their success and the strategy about their brand identity.

4.2.3.1 Christian Louboutin Company

Actual situation of the company

Christian Louboutin has founded his company in 1992 in Paris. Less than 20 years later, the firm has become one of the most fashionable and successful luxury shoes brands, easily differentiable thanks to the red tread presents on each pair of shoes. Despite its huge success, Louboutin is still a medium-sized company, without any marketing department. The general direction is based in Paris, France, but there are branch offices located in other countries.

Marketing mix

Presents almost everywhere in the world, the company is very often mentioned in the fashion press for both its eccentric shoes and its classic pumps, considered as real emblems of femininity. Formerly specialized only in shoes for women, Louboutin has started some years ago to design shoes for men and bags for women. These two new ranges of products, still not as famous as the shoes for women, have increasing sales, which proves the dynamism of the company. The shoes for men are, as the shoes for women, either classic or very eccentric. The customer can choose the style that fits better to its personality, which allows the brand attracting a wider range of customers. The price for a pair of shoes for women is around € 500 but there is a huge gap between the price of the simplest pair of shoes, sold at € 300, and the most expansive one, sold around € 5 000. For men, shoes are sold at an average price of € 700, with a much smaller gap in prices, which are from € 600 to € 800. The products are distributed only in the Louboutin’s stores, which are located worldwide. It is also possible to order custom-made shoes, realized specifically for one customer. The absence of marketing department strongly limits the communication of the brand. The only type of communication used is the indirect communication in fashion magazines, as we mentioned before. The company never pays for this promotion but receives high benefits of it, because it has a strong impact on people who read this type of press and who care about fashion.
Target customers
The company targets women between 25 and 45 years old and men from 25 to 35 years old. In both case, the customers targeted have a strong purchasing power and care about fashion.

Values and positioning
The starting value of the brand is supreme femininity, which is still the case nowadays, even if Louboutin tries to attract male customers. Originality is the other main value of the brand, represented by the red tread presents on each shoe. Louboutin wishes to be considered as an eccentric brand and in the same time is recognized as a “maison” and not only as a brand; that is to say as a luxury entity which creates unique shoes of the highest quality. The term “maison” is actually much stronger than “brand”; it only describes few luxury companies, which have managed to reach an ideal of perfection in their product design and production. This mix between originality and tradition allows the brand occupying a unique position on the luxury shoes market.

Brand name
The brand name corresponds to the name of its founder, Christian Louboutin, who decided to give his own name to his brand. Indeed, it is often the case of luxury brands, because their creators define and represent the brand identity, they “embody” their brand.

Visual identity
The visual identity results from the desire of its founder to represent the world of “cabaret” in its stores and to illustrate his perception of the “femme fatale”, that is to say the supreme femininity, in its creation. The color mainly used to describe Louboutin is red, color of excitement and glamour, which is present in every aspect of the brand, from the tread of the shoes to the stores. This color is the ultimate representation of Louboutin. The logo presented in figure 15, contains the name of the founder written in black in a white background. The typography used to write his first name is classic, but the one used for his family name remembers the spirit of music hall. There is no slogan used to differentiate the brand.

Figure 15: Logo of Christian Louboutin
(Source: http://www.logodesignworks.com/blog/top-10-luxury-brand-logos)
**Elements of differentiation**
The scarlet tread on every pair of shoes is the world-famous element of differentiation of the brand. The history of the famous red tread is actually really amusing: At the start of the company, the shoes had a black tread, as the majority of the existing shoes on the market. One day, Christian Louboutin saw that his assistant was wearing a scarlet nail polish and though that this colour was highly feminine. Consequently, he tried to put some scarlet nail polish on the tread of a pair of shoes and decided that it would become the distinctive sign of his brand.

**Graphic guideline and promotional materials**
The graphic guideline of the brand indicates the characteristics of the logo, the typography and the precise red color used to represent the brand. The company does not use many promotional materials and it is very rare to see the logo elsewhere than in the stores, on display stands, on brochures or on the shoeboxes. Indeed, the logo is not the main promotional tool of the brand, contrary to the red tread, which distinguishes Louboutin from all its competitors. Nevertheless, the logo is also used on formal papers, such as administrative papers and commercial documents.

**Brand image**
The customers perceive the brand Louboutin as a very eccentric and unique luxury brand. In customers’ minds, the brand is very different from all the market competitors, thanks to its original positioning.

**4.2.3.2 Charles Jourdan Company**

**Actual situation of the company**
The Charles Jourdan’s company knew a significant success during the twentieth century and begun to decline in 1980 with the departure of René Jourdan, one of Charles Jourdan’s sons. The group Charles Jourdan was bought out on several occasions by various corporations that failed to manage the brand and that closed little by little the brand factories. Since the 15th of March 2008, Charles Jourdan closed all its branches and the Royer group bought out the brand, allowing the brand Charles Jourdan continuing to exist. The Royer group is a French company firstly specialized in importation of footwear products. Recently, this group has positioned the luxury market as a strategic line development in buying and launching several luxury brands like Paul & Joe Sister and Stephane Kélian.

**Marketing mix**
The brand Charles Jourdan offers contemporary luxury shoes for both men and women. Its products represent a large choice of models, colors and textures in order to fit to the customers’ tastes. The women collection is very stylish and original whereas the men collection is more sober but always very elegant. The brand sells also some accessories like bags, wallets... Pairs of Charles Jourdan’s shoes cost between € 170 and € 250 and are distributed by luxury shoes resellers and by the brand’s stores. To communicate on its brand, Charles Jourdan creates advertising campaigns in fashion magazines and sponsors fashion and luxury events (fashion show, golf and sail events). At the beginning of the twentieth century, many celebrities like Marylyn Monroe, Edith Piaf and Jackie Kennedy wore the Charles Jourdan’s shoes, which allowed the brand to create a positive brand image.
Target customers
The targeted customers are active woman and man between 30 and 50 years old who care about fashion and form a superior social and professional group with strong purchasing power.

Values and positioning
The value of the brand is the elegance, originality and quality of the shoes by representing the French know-how. To match with its values, the shoes are produced with a specific attention and with a high quality standard. Charles Jourdan wants to be considered as a fashion supplement allowing its customers to be classy and in the actual trends.

Brand name
The brand name is “Charles Jourdan” and represents the name of the brand founder. The word “Paris” has been added after “Charles Jourdan”, representing the luxury capital and the French creation. So, the real brand name is “Charles Jourdan Paris”. The brand name is encrusted on each sock lining shoes (inside the shoes).

Visual identity
The Charles Jourdan’s logo showed in figure 16, is a symbol representing the initial letter of the founder: “CJ”. Although the logo has evolved with the market trends, it has always kept a similar appearance. The brand uses only the signs and symbols to form its logo. The logo’s shape is very simple and uses a curved line to unite the two letters “C” and “J”. Regarding the colors, three colors represent the brand: black, bright red and white. Nevertheless only two colors are used at the same time: red and black, red and white or black and white. Every shoe box is red and black. The box is red and the logo and the brand name are written in black. It is also possible to find some promotional materials written in black and white or in white and red. Concerning the typography, the brand name is expressed with a very basic and straight-line typeface. “Charles Jourdan” is always written in capital letters and “Paris” in lower case letters. No slogan has been created to recognize the brand.

Figure 16: Logo of Charles Jourdan
(http://www.logotypes101.com/free_vector_logo/86033/Charles_Jourdan_Watches.aspx)
Elements of differentiation
The brand does not have any specific element of differentiation on its shoes. Nevertheless, a Charles Jourdan’s pair of shoes can be differentiated from others by its quality, its colors and its textures. The quality of these shoes is very high and each model is available in a large choice of colors. The company also uses original and unique textures to create its collections, like leather, snakeskin, alligator-skin and ostrich-skin.

Graphic guideline and promotional materials
The promotional tools use always the same logo, typography and a variation of three colors (black, red and white), which are specified in the brand graphic guideline. In accordance to this guideline, the visual brand identity is positioned on each promotional material like packaging (box shoes and bags), commercial documents, brochures to present the products, administrative papers (invoices, envelopes), display stands and on the entire brand communication.

Brand image
The consumers perceive Charles Jourdan as a very original, elegant and a high quality brand.

4.3 Focus group
The focus group that has been held in Clermont-Ferrand, France, allowed us gathering the points of view on the brand visual identity of a representative sample of potential customers for Charles Picard’s shoes. Here, we analyze their reactions and opinions about the questions that have been put to them and we link them with our theoretical framework.

4.3.1 Company’s differentiation
According to the potential customers and so to the focus group participants, a company can distinguish itself on its market by using several strategies. The notoriety and the brand image are two essential elements to differentiate a firm from its competitors. The company also has to focus on the price or on the quality depending on its market and its targets to have a competitive advantage. Another solution of differentiation is the creation of a distinctive sign allowing the company to have its own identity. Finally, a firm can use celebrities to communicate on its brand and its values. The brand will be related to the celebrity, creating a differentiation on the market. Nevertheless, it is often difficult to find some people agreeing to be linked with a brand and it is very expensive.
4.3.2 The visual identity and its elements

According to the participants, the visual identity is the personality of the company and allows the customer identifying himself or herself to it. The visual identity has to be **simple, sober** and to always keep the same spirit. The logo and the colors are the most important elements to create a visual identity, like Apple with the bitten apple and Louboutin with the red sole. For them, the companies’ buildings seem to be an important element to identify the firm, like Ikea, which always has blue and yellow stores. Nevertheless, the quality and the design of the buildings are not essential in all sectors and most of all for small companies. The brand name is a component of the visual identity and has to be chosen with a specific attention, in order to be easily pronounced in English if the name is in French and to avoid any kind of connotations. The attendees think that the company has to find a **distinctive sign**, not necessarily the logo, but an element that reminds and allows identifying the brand to confront its competitors. The employees can also represent an element of the brand identity; they have to match with the brand values. So, according to the participants, the visual identity is created thanks to the logo, the colors, the company’s buildings, the distinctive sign, the brand name and the employees.

After giving them the definition and the five components of the brand visual identity, the participants see the logo as the most important element of the visual identity. The slogan seems not to be necessary and especially in a luxury and niche market since several successful companies do not use a slogan to communicate on their brand. Nevertheless, they identify the brand visual identity as an overall process in which it is difficult to differentiate each element from others. Depending on the business of the company, some elements will appear to be more important than others.

4.3.3 The visual brand identity on the luxury shoe market

According to the attendees, a luxury brand of shoes has to focus on **typography** and **colors** in designing its visual identity. They do not consider the logo as an important aspect of the visual identity for this type of company; they explain that it is not necessary and that they perceive a logo on a shoe as ugly.

4.3.4 Characteristics of a logo

According to the participants, a logo has to be easily and quickly **recognizable** and **different** from others. It also has to be **simple** and **original** at the same time, allowing the customers to understand immediately the type of products the company is selling. The final goals of a logo are to be memorable and to arouse envy. It has to represent the entire company and cannot be easily changed, it can only evolve.
4.3.5 Characteristics of a slogan
For the attendees, a good slogan has to be short and relevant. It is an important element because it allows the company creating a link with its customers by carrying messages corresponding to a certain period of time or ideas present on the founder’s mind. It is possible to change it regularly, in opposition to the logo, which has to remain similar. Nevertheless, a slogan is not considered as essential for a brand: it is useful for products of mass consumption only, in order to allow the brand distinguishing itself on a highly competitive market. It is a tool used to reinforce the logo, less subjective than it and which is used in advertisements. Moreover, the slogan is more linked to a specific product, whereas the logo represents the entire company.

4.3.6 Meaning of colors
Black is considered as an elegant tint, representing luxury and sobriety. It is the color of the night and is really easy to wear.
White represents purity, design and reminds the winter and the snow. It is also seen as a non-color, expressing nothing.
Red expresses many different feelings at the same time. It is seen as a hot, aggressive, provocative and ambitious color. It also evokes desire and positive feelings.
Green is said to represent hope and nature, and to arouse reflection. Some attendees link it to the ecological movement, new trends and youth, whereas another connects it with dishonesty and masculinity.
Blue evokes the sea, the sky and the dream. The participants think of trips and escapism. They also mention the fact that it is a masculine color, which is easy to wear.
Yellow represents the sun and the light, but also the monarchy. It is considered as a difficult but very original color to wear.
Orange is not inspiring the attendees; they say that it is not an elegant color.
Pink is seen as a feminine and a sensual color. On another side, the participants describe it as a childlike tint.
Brown is related to chocolate and is seen as a very warm color. It is a very masculine tint, which looks serious and sturdy and which is an alternative to black. The attendees also associate it with leather.
Grey is discussed as a drab color, which cannot be worn alone. It is sober and encourages the reflexion. It is also linked to cement.
Beige is seen as an elegant color, an alternative to black but which can only be worn during the summer. It is a voluptuous tint.
Gold is perceived as show-off and bourgeois. It expresses wealth and success but can easily be “too much”. It has to be used in very small quantities. One attendee also explains that it evokes the origin, the source and the truth, that it is related to Enlightenment.
4.3.7 Choice of colors
For a luxury company, the attendees prefer the black by majority. One of them would appreciate gold and another thinks that brown and blue are relevant.
For a shoes company for men, white is advised as well as gold, but only in very small touches.
For a luxury shoes company, black is said to be essential. Brown and white could also be used, to reinforce the black. Gold is controversial, some would appreciate a majority of it, others only a tiny touch of it and one member does not like this color at all. Finally, green is mentioned by them as a potentially interesting color for this kind of company since it refers to the youth and new trends.

4.3.8 Choice of typography
Four members of the group prefer the typography without serif and more particularly the typeface Arial Narrow, which is clear, chic and simple. They suggest putting the font in italic to emphasize the dynamism of the brand. The two other participants prefer the Copperplate Gothic Bold typeface, which is a bold serif typeface. Nevertheless, this typeface does not have lower caste and that is why they think it could be a weakness to use this typeface, which has only capital letters.

4.3.9 Choice of signs and symbols
The attendees’ opinions are mixed between three signs: the oval, the triangle and the oblong. For them, the oval represents the openness and the trust. The triangle and the rectangle with their angles claim the brand positioning. They advise writing the brand name inside or outside the sign in order to create a simple logo. Nevertheless, these three choices being very classical on the participants’ point of view, they think that is not compulsory to use this kind of signs.
Regarding the symbols, the attendees like several kind of symbols. The black spade, being a mixture of curves and points, is seen as very chic and has a small sexual aspect adding an original touch. The participants also appreciate the ampersand but they think that many companies already use this symbol and that it could be confusing for the customers. Even if the bow tie reminds the company “Eden Park”, this symbol, representing luxury, attracts the participants. To be used and distinguished from the Eden Park’s logo, the design of the bow tie has to be worked. To prevent to be too classical, the participants think that the bow tie must not be black. Finally, the four-leaf clover marks the contrast between the casual and the luxury and can be relevant for a luxury brand of shoes, which aims at having a quirky touch.
5 Analysis

In this chapter, we analyze our data in the light of our framework. We link the theories with the empirical material in order to see if these theories are confirmed by the different actors we analyzed, that is to say the entrepreneur Charles Picard, the competitors and the potential customers brought together in the focus group. First, we analyze the interviews we had with Charles Picard, then we focus on the collected data about the competitors and finally we interpret the results of our focus group.

5.1 Entrepreneur

Here, we compare the theories with the requirements and ideas of Charles Picard, in order to understand clearly what he wishes and what is appropriate according to our theoretical framework. To do so, we focus on the positioning, the brand name, the visual identity and distinctive sign and finally the promotional materials.

5.1.1 Positioning

According to Kotler et al. (2008, p.410), Charles Picard’s company has to arrange a “clear, distinctive and desirable place” for its products on potential customers’ mind. To do this, it is important to decide on the four elements of positioning defined by Sengupta (2005) in part 2.1.1, which are the product class, the consumer segmentation, the perceptual mapping and finally the brand benefits and attributes. Following Charles Picard’ explanations about its project, the product class can be viewed as classic luxury shoes and the consumer segmentation is young executives between 25 and 35 years old, who can afford to pay a high price for high quality shoes. These customers wish luxury and elegant shoes, which have a small detail that differentiate them from the really classic ones. The perceptual mapping is represented below in figure 17. It places the Charles Picard’s shoes as classic but not so far from being trendy thanks to a small touch of originality, and as expensive shoes, even if they are not the most expensive on the luxury shoe market.
Following Sengupta’s theory (2005), the brand benefits and attributes are high quality shoes with a classic design and a small visual element, called distinctive sign, which will be present on each product and will allow the brand to differentiate its goods from those of competitors.

According to Kotler et al. (2008), there are four levels on a brand positioning: the brand’s attributes, the benefits, the beliefs and values and the brand personality. Charles Picard defines the brand’s attributes as high quality manufacture and products (leather, sole, sewing...), a classic design and a small touch of originality placed on each shoe thanks to a distinctive sign that has to be defined. The benefits are elegant and reliable shoes that will provide their owners the possibility to wear them on a professional context and to keep at the same time a personal touch by a different and unique element presents on the shoes. The beliefs and values are the possibility to care about fashion and to be classic at the same time, and that an executive can wear formal clothes without losing his personality and being like everybody else. Finally, the brand personality is classic, elegant, original and a little bit impertinent.

Based on Kapferer’s theory (1997), it is needed to answer to four questions in order to decide on a brand positioning: Why? When? For whom? Against whom? Charles Picard’s answers to these questions are:

- Why? To offer customers a new proposition; the possibility of wearing classic but original shoes of a high quality.
- **When?** The brand’s launch has to be realized at the same time as the fall-winter or spring-summer new collection launch, which are the two fashion periods where new products are put on the market.

- **For whom?** The target customers are the young dynamic executives between 25 and 35 years old who need to wear formal clothes to go to office but who are interested in fashion and want to be original.

- **Against whom?** There are five main competitors, which are Paraboot, Heschung, Church’s, Altan and Carmina. They all produce and sell classic luxury shoes, but only one of them, Heschung, has a distinctive sign.

### 5.1.2 Brand name

The choice of a brand name is a capital part in a brand creation. According to Kotler et al. (2008), six qualities are required to define an efficient brand name, which are mentioned in part 2.1.2: the name has to suggest something about the product; it must be easy to pronounce, recognise and remember, be distinctive as well as extendable, be easily translated and be capable of registration and legal protection. Charles Picard explained us that the name will probably be his own name, because in the luxury market it is common and normal that a creator gives his or her name to the brand. Following Kotler et al.’s requirements for a good brand name, the name “Charles Picard” suggests that it is a luxury product, it is easy to pronounce, recognize and remember because it is a typical French name, it is distinctive because it is the entrepreneur’s name so there is no other brand named “Charles Picard” and it is capable of registration and legal protection. About the translation in another language, Charles Picard is a French name that cannot be translated but that is rather easy to pronounce in other languages, like English or Spanish for example. The last point, about the extensibility, does not concern the brand because even if Charles Picard decides to enlarge its range of products, they will always keep his name, as it is usual in the luxury market.

### 5.1.3 Visual identity and distinctive sign

According to Clifton et al. (2009), mentioned in part 2.2.2, a brand visual identity comprises the following elements: a logotype, symbols, colors and typefaces. Bassani et al. (2008) add that the slogan can also be said as a part of the visual identity. Charles Picard needs us to help him defining the visual identity of his brand; this is why he does not know exactly what the elements that he wants to use are, in order to design it. Nevertheless, several conversations with him have allowed us understanding his requirements: the young entrepreneur would like his brand to have a simple and elegant visual identity, using the codes of luxury firms as the black or blue **colors**. The **logo** has to represent his name and maybe a symbol as well. About the **symbol**, this is a highly important element for him, which will allow differentiating the brand on the market and which at least will be used as a distinctive sign on each pair of shoes, even if it is not present on the logo. Concerning the **typeface**, he would like it to be elegant but has no more idea about it. The **distinctive sign** has to be small and original and has to
represent the spirit of the brand. Finally, Charles Picard does not desire a **slogan**, which, in his mind, is used mainly for low price products.

### 5.1.4 Promotional materials

The entrepreneur wishes to develop only two promotional materials: the **brand’s website** and the **point of sale advertisement**. These communication tools are both included in Dhénin’s classification (2004), which is explained in part 2.5. The website represents an advertising support and the point of sale advertisement like display shelves and stands are interior and exterior fitting. Following Pinson and Jinnett’s theory (2006), only the points of sale advertisement, which are display signs, are comprised in their list. The entrepreneur does not think about creating a business card, a letterhead and a brochure or rack card, which are the main promotional tools that a company has to build (Pinson & Jinnett, 2006).

### 5.2 Competitors analysis

To analyse the visual brand identity of the competitors, we have to detail each component needed in the process of the brand visual identity’s creation: the positioning, the brand name, the elements of the visual identity, the visual style guidelines and the promotional materials.

#### 5.2.1 Positioning

For the positioning we will analyse only the two companies on which we focused: Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan. According to Sengupta’s theory (2005) expressed in part 2.1, four elements are needed to position a company: the product class, the consumer segmentation, the perceptual mapping and the brand benefits and attributes. Concerning the **product class**, both companies are selling luxury shoes for men and women. The **target customers** of Christian Louboutin are women between 25 and 45 years old and men from 25 to 35 years old. Charles Jourdan has slightly older customers by targeting active women and men between 30 and 50 years old. Both companies target people belonging to the superior social and professional group, who have a strong purchasing power and who care about fashion. The **perceptual mapping** of Charles Jourdan and Christian Louboutin is represented in the figure 18, which places these competitors and Charles Picard’s company in the same map in order to perceive the situation of each firm compared with others. This map places Charles Jourdan as classic but not so far from fashion since some of its shoes are original and follow the trends and as expensive shoes since the price is rather high. The Christian Louboutin’s company is placed between fashion and classic but more in the trendy part since the brand has few classical models and many original shoes. The perceptual mapping places this company as very expensive on the luxury shoe market.
Finally the last point of Sengupta’s theory (2005) is to define the **brand benefits and attributes**. For both companies, these elements are quite similar: they are elegance, modernity and very high quality shoes. Louboutin is considered as an original brand with the red tread presents on each shoe. Even if Jourdan is a trendy brand, it is more classical and emphasize on its French know-how.

Based on Kotler et al.’s theory (2008) four levels of a brand positioning have to be expressed: the brand attributes, the benefits, the beliefs and values and the brand personality. The **attributes** of Louboutin and Jourdan’s shoes are a high quality manufacture and components such as leather, sole and sewing, as well as a specific design. The **benefits** of these brands are to be elegant and to have unique shoes, allowing the customers to wear a fashion supplement establishing their identity. For Louboutin, the customer can also benefit of an unconventional aspect. The **beliefs and values** of these competitors are to create top of the range shoes with a specific style. The **Louboutin’s personality** is both eccentric with the red tread and classic with a traditional know-how. The **Jourdan’s personality** is elegant and classic by using a French know-how with a touch of novelty with original textures.

According to Kapferer (1997), four questions are needed to decide on a brand positioning: Why? When? For whom? Against whom? The table 13 showed the two competitors’ positioning.
Table 13: The four questions that need to be asked to position a company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Christian Louboutin</th>
<th>Charles Jourdan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>To offer original and luxury shoes with unique style.</td>
<td>To offer a French-know how and high quality shoes matching with the market trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For whom</td>
<td>Women between 25 and 45 years old and men from 25 to 35 years old who care about fashion with a strong purchase power belonging to the superior social and professional group</td>
<td>Active woman and man between 30 and 50 years old who care about fashion with a strong purchase power belonging to the superior social and professional group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against whom</td>
<td>Paraboot, Heschung, Church’s, Altan Carmina, Heschung and Jourdan</td>
<td>Paraboot, Heschung, Church’s, Altan Carmina, Heschung and Louboutin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: created by the authors based on Kapferer theory (2005)

5.2.2 Brand name selection

In part 2.1.2, we have explained the six qualities required to have an efficient brand name. The brand name should suggest something about the product, be easy to pronounce, recognise and remember, be distinctive, be extendable, translate easily and be capable of registration and legal protection (Kotler et al., 2008).

By comparing the competitors’ names with this theory, we can analyse that these six qualities are not always respected. The direct competitors Carmina, Altan, Church’s, Heschung, Paraboot and the competitors Charles Jourdan and Christian Louboutin suggest nothing about the product. These names do not evoke and do not refer to the benefits offered by the product or the brand. When the customers hear these names for the first time they are not able to know in which market these brands are established. These names are easy to pronounce, recognize and remember. The brand name Heschung is rather difficult to pronounce but the other names are quite fluent. They are more or less short and easy to keep in mind for the customers, allowing them to remember and recognize these names. All competitors’ names are distinctive and can be differentiated from each other. Indeed, each name is unique and cannot be confused with those of its competitors. Suggesting nothing about the product, the competitors’ names are easily extendable. If these companies want to add new products to their brand, the names will remain the same. On the French market, all the competitors’ names have no specific connotation and could be easily translated in other languages. Used in other cultures or languages, these names have the same meaning or at least they do not have a negative
aspect. However, the English brand Church’s can have a strange connotation and can make reference to the religion on its home market. All competitors’ names are capable of registration and legal protection since another brand does not use these names and they do not remember the name of an existing brand.

The competitors do not take into account only one element of the brand name, which is to suggest something about the product since the majority of the brand names is simply the founder’s name. Nevertheless the other five qualities are respected and allow the brand names being relevant and efficient.

5.2.3 Brand visual identity elements
Each element of the visual identity expressed in part 2.3 will be analysed for the competitors in order to identify the current market trends and to evaluate if these components match to the theories.

5.2.3.1 The logo
As said in part 2.3.1, a company can use three different categories of logo: acronyms and monograms, name-only logos and name/symbol combination (Haig and Harper, 1997). Only one brand has an acronym and monogram logo. Indeed, Charles Jourdan’s logo is represented by the first letters of the brand name, which are “CJ”. The majority of the competitors use a name-only logo: Paraboot, Altan and Christian Louboutin have their name as a brand’s logo. The brands Carmina and Heschung have added some elements like the date of the creation or “Shoes maker” to represent their companies but their logos can also be considered as a name-only logo. The name/symbol combination is used only by the Church’s brand, which wants to represent the heraldry of the city of Northampton on its logo in order to underline the fact that the shoes are from England.

According to Joannès (2008), to be effective, a logo has to include six specific properties. A relevant logo has to be consistent, semantic and emotional richness, durable, adaptable, possible to decline and reproducible. All competitors have a consistent logo, which represents the brand. Being very simple, these logos evoke the elegance and the refinement, giving a semantic and emotional aspect to the brands. Nevertheless, these logos could be more explicit by linking the brand name with the luxury shoe market. By watching the competitors’ logos, the customers cannot guess the products selling by these brands. Each competitor’s logo is durable and easy to adapt with the time. Their logos can be modified only with the colors or the typeface since the majority of them represent only the brand name. This characteristic also allows these logos coming in different versions easily if the competitors want to enter a new market and extend their brands. The competitors’ logos can be recognizable on all kinds of supports and in different sizes. This adaptability allows the customers recognizing them in all situations. Finally, these logos can be reproduced and presented on all companies’ papers without changing their meanings.
In the point of view of the designer Cass (2008), only **five principles** have to be respected to create an effective logo. The logo has to be simple, memorable, timeless, versatile and appropriate. Nevertheless, these characteristics are similar to those previously outlined. All competitors have a simple logo which can be easily remembered and which is recognizable by the customers, allowing the logo to be memorable. Each logo can stay the same with the years or can easily evolve with the trends. It is also possible to adapt it to different supports and in only one colour. Represented by the brand name, all competitors’ logos are appropriate with the companies even if they could be more linked with the firms’ purposes.

By being very simple, the competitor’s logos take into account the six properties of an effective logo giving by Joannès (2008) and the five principles enounced by Cass (2008). However, all the logos do not really help the customer to understand what the products offered by the companies are. This drawback could be explained by the fact that the companies are luxury firms, which want to keep their elegance and their sobriety.

These two models being very similar, a company is allowed to use only one of them to create its own logo.

**5.2.3.2 The colors**

The comparison between the theories about colors presented in section 2.3.2 and the colors that are actually used by the companies present on the market is interesting to see if there is a correlation between them and if the theories are implemented in reality. **White** and **black** are the most used colors by the luxury shoes companies competing with Charles Picard’s future brand. This is relevant with the theory of Johnson (NA), who explains that black is perceived as an elegant color and that white is seen as a pure and luminous one, which can be easily combined with others. It is also important to notice that every brand uses at least two colors in its visual identity and in some cases even three. Heschung combines black and white, as well as Church’s. Both succeeded in finding a combination of the strength of black with the delicacy of white to design a well-balanced visual identity that represents efficiently the luxury image of the company. In the case of Paraboot, white is combined with **green**, described by the Incredible Art Department as a healthy and generous color, which evokes the renewal. Carmina uses **brown** and **gold** in its visual identity: brown is said to be a color of reliability, comfort and endurance, which is highly qualitative for a shoes brand and relevant with the positioning of the brand, but Johnson says that it is more a “men color” representing masculinity whereas Carmina also creates shoes for women. According to Zakia (2002), gold transcends yellow and can be described as a sublime color. Using gold allows balancing the masculinity of brown with a touch of “shining” which can attract women. Concerning Altan, the colors utilized are **brown**, **red** and **beige**. Red is said to be an exciting and passionate color linked to intensity. On the opposite, beige evokes calm and simplicity. The combination of these three colors creates a balanced mix of feelings that arouse the interest of customers. About Christian Louboutin, **black**, **white** and above all **red** are used in its visual identity. The combination of two “classic” colors with a really sensual one used in majority allows the brand being noticed by customers and raising strong emotions and reactions. Charles Jourdan deals with the same combination of colors, but does not use the red as much as Louboutin,
which produces a very different effect on customers’ mind. As red generates many emotions, it is a controversial color, which fits well with Louboutin’s original brand image. Charles Jourdan is a more classic brand, so it is logic that it uses less the red color.

All the competitors use a combination of different colors that allows them generating different kinds of reactions and emotions. In every case, the colors chosen fit with the top of the range positioning of these companies. According to the theories, the feelings associated with the colors present on their visual identity are compatible with such a positioning and are a good way to give a particular identity to the brand, giving it its own personality and carrying its values.

5.2.3.3 The sign and symbols

Being represented by the brand name, the competitor’s logos do not really use specific signs and symbols to characterize their brands. Nevertheless, we can find some implicit shapes that can be studied following the explanation of Joannès (2008) described in part 2.3.3. Each competitor uses a different sign so we are going to analyze the competitors one by one.

The brand Paraboot underlines its brand name by an ascending oblique line, which represents perfection, boldness, idealism and ambition. These explanations are in adequacy with the brand values. The competitor Church’s uses an oval around its brand name. On this oval we can find the heraldry of the city of Northampton. The meaning of oval is maturity, serenity and self-confidence, which is useful to success on the luxury men shoes market. The brand Carmina uses two horizontal lines, one over and one under its brand name. This sign, representing credibility, calm, global and positiveness, allows reassuring the customers. Christian Louboutin underlines its brand name with horizontal curved lines, which are a mix between credibility, calm, global, positive and openness, adaptation and scalability. These meanings allow the brand being perceived as reliable on the market and adding a touch of originality and eccentricity corresponding to the brand values. The logo Charles Jourdan uses curved lines and reminds a circle. The curved lines represent progress, opening, hospitality and the circle signifies bloom and communication. These connotations match with this international brand. Finally, Heschung and Altan do not use a specific sign but the typeface of these two companies is formed by vertical and horizontal lines and can be considered as a sign. The horizontal lines characterize credibility, calm, global and positiveness whereas the vertical lines express imperialism, prestige, sharp; the ruler allowing the brands to affirm their position on the market.

All competitors have chosen different signs to represent their brand but always in a way that expresses their values. Even if the signs are not always explicit for the customers, they have impacts on their perception of the brand (Haig & Harper, 1997).
5.2.3.4 The slogan
Enunciated by Foster (2001) in part 2.3.5, the characteristics of a slogan cannot be confirmed by the slogans of the Charles Picard’s competitors since none of them use a slogan to differentiate themselves from each other. On this market, the firms seldom create a slogan, esteeming this component of the brand visual identity as a non-appropriate element in the luxury industry.

5.2.3.5 The typography
All the competitors use a different kind of typography to be distinguished from each other. As previously explained by McCarthy and Mothersbaugh (2002) in part 2.3.4, three main elements are included in the typography: the typeface, the spacing and the layout. Concerning the typeface, the classic and traditional firms like Altan have written their name in serif typeface whereas modern companies like Christian Louboutin have chosen sans serif typeface. The bold typeface, which represents heaviness, force and slowness, is not really used. Being the symbol of dynamism, some competitors use italics. The height varies from competitor to competitor; some of them have a brand name in capital letter to underline their power and others have lower cost. For all competitors, the spacing is not visible, allowing the customers to read and to identify easily the name. The layout is very simple and the name is always at the centre since only the brand name represents the logo. The typography is very specific to each competitor and varies depending on the values the company wants to highlight.

5.2.4 Visual style guideline and promotional materials
Concerning the visual style guideline and promotional materials, we analyse only the two companies on which we have focused: Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan.

The visual style guideline of each competitor explains the characteristics of the brand’s logo, the typography elements and the variation of colors used by the company. These three categories are included in the lists of Dhénin (2004) and Joannès (2008), which explain the components of a graphic guideline in part 2.4. Nevertheless, in comparison with the Dhénin’s classification (2004), the competitors’ visual style guidelines do not present the company, its objectives and its values, the users of the chart and the client’s expectations. In link with the Joannès’ description (2008), only two elements are missing, the size and proportions and the connection between graphical elements. Consequently, the most important parts of a graphic guideline are the logo, the typography and the colours. The missing elements are certainly used by the companies but this charter being very confidential, the competitors did not explain these other parts.

Concerning the promotional material, the Dhénin’s classification (2004) in part 2.5 describes ten types of promotional materials. Following this list, the two competitors Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan use only four of these promotional materials. Their visual identities appear on all administrative and commercial documents, on the brochures which present the company and its products, on interior and exterior fitting by using display stands
and on products packaging and wrapping like shoeboxes and bags. By taking into account the Pinson and Jinnett’s classification (2006), which is also explained in part 2.5, the competitors use only some promotional materials. Christian Louboutin and Charles Jourdan have display stands, which are integrated in the display signs category. Moreover, the commercial materials developed by these companies include business cards, business reply envelopes, contracts/agreements, envelopes, invoices, letterhead, mailing labels and purchase orders. Consequently, these two competitors have developed the main promotional tools, which are the business card, the letterhead and the brochure (Pinson & Jinnett 2006).

5.3 Potential customers analysis

In this part, we link the answers and comments of the participants to the focus group with the theories presented in the theoretical framework. To do so, we compare each subject that has been discussed with the attendees with the theories, in order to see if there is a correlation between them or not. First, we analyze the brand identity and second the five elements of the brand visual identity.

5.3.1 Brand identity

According to Aaker (1996, p.68), mentioned in part 2.2.1, the “brand identity should help to establish a relationship between the brand and the customer”. For the participants, this is possible by differentiating the brand from its competitors, through several strategies, from a focus on the price to a focus on reputation. Nevertheless, we notice that they describe the brand image as a part of the brand identity, whereas Kapferer (1998, 2008) explains that these two concepts are different, the first one being a reception notion and the second one an emission concept.

5.3.2 Elements of the visual brand identity

The attendees to the focus group have been questioned about all the elements composing the brand visual identity. Their answers are analysed in relation to the theories previously explained.

5.3.2.1 The logo

The characteristics of a good logo that have been mentioned by the participants are rather similar to the ones developed by the young corporate designer Cass (2008) on his website and presented in part 2.3.1. For Cass (2008), a logo has to be simple, memorable, timeless, versatile and appropriate. For the participants, it has to be simple but original and memorable. It cannot be changed once defined; it is only possible to make it evolve, which means that it is timeless. It has to represent efficiently the type of products sold by the company; that means it has to be appropriate. It is interesting to notice that the attendees are
closer to the theory of a designer, that practices in his every-day life the art of designing concrete corporate identity, than to the one of an academic author, Joannès (2008), also mentioned in the theoretical part and who explains that the properties of a logo have to be: consistency, semantic and emotional richness, durability, adaptability, possibility to decline and reproducibility. Even if some of the elements that he develops, such as durability and consistency, can be linked with the answers of the participants, many others have not been mentioned by them, which prove that the practical approach of the designer fits better to the ideas of the target customers about the logo.

5.3.2.2 The colors
It is interesting to link the representations that the participants have about the different colors which have been shown to them to the theory existing about colors and their meaning, presented in part 2.3.2. Concerning black, white, red, green, pink, brown and grey, the answers are relatively similar to the theory. Nevertheless, for some colors, there are some differences between the participants’ perception and the theory. In the case of blue, the theory does not associate it with masculinity whereas the attendees think that it is. For orange, the focus group members did not feel inspired about this color, just saying that it is not elegant. In the theory, orange is linked with energy and enthusiasm. About beige, the theory does not describe it as an elegant color, contrary to the participants. Finally, gold is said in the theories to transcend yellow and to express the sublime and the attendees said that it expresses wealth and success and that it can be perceived as “too much” by a part of the potential customers.

In the case of a luxury shoes company, it is possible to compare the attendees’ answers with the theory developed by Johnson (NA) about the meaning of colors in fashion. We notice that the focus group members place black as an essential color for this type of company and also recommend using classic colors, such as white or brown. If the company wants to be more distinctive, it can use green and potentially gold in small touch, which are said to be actual and young colors. Johnson explains that black is an elegant and timeless color, white is a pure and neutral color and brown is a masculine color. The Incredible Art Department describes green as a symbol of youth and renewal. Gold is said by Zakia (2002) to represent the sublime. These explanations fit perfectly with the remarks of the participants, which prove the validity of the theory, its relevance and its compatibility with potential customers’ perceptions.

5.3.2.3 The sign and symbols
The triangle, which is one of the three signs preferred by the attendees, is said by Joannès (2008) in part 2.3.3 to carry values of discretion, curiosity and expertise. The oblong, the second sign mentioned by them, is not explained in the theory but is made of vertical lines, said to be prestigious, and horizontal lines, considered by Joannès (2008) as positive, credible and calm. The attendees do not mention the same characteristic for these two signs; they say that both the triangle and the rectangle declare the brand positioning. The last sign mentioned as relevant by the members is the oval, which is said by the theory and the participants to represent thrust or self-confidence.
Concerning the symbols, we notice that the attendees have a preference for those that are classy and original at the same time. They appreciate symbols that exist, that they can see in their daily-life, on objects or worn by someone, such as the spade or the bow tie, but that are not common. Despite the differences between the four symbols that they have mentioned, they all have a common point, which is the fact that they all exist but are original for a brand. Even the bow tie and the ampersand, already used by other brands, remain original because the customers are not used to see them often.

5.3.2.4 The slogan
In comparison with the theory of Foster (2001), presented in part 2.3.5, the participants have not developed as much the required qualities of a slogan. Nevertheless, we notice three common points between the 25 different characteristics developed by Foster (2001) and the answers of the attendees: they agree on the fact that a slogan has to be simple and relevant, as well as “campaignable”. The participants have not much developed this part because they thought it was not an essential element in a brand visual identity.

5.3.2.5 The typography
The majority of the focus group members have expressed their preference for the typeface Arial Narrow, which is typography without serif. In part 2.3.4, Tantillo, Di-Lorenzo Aiss and Mathisen, mention by Amar (NA), explain that this type of typography expresses modernity and virility, relevant with the identity of Charles Picard’s brand, which will be classic but modern thanks to a touch of originality and will sell shoes for men only. The attendees add that it could be better to use this typeface in italic, said by Tannenbaum, Jacobson and Norris, Rowe as well as Lewis and Walekr, used by Amar (NA). The two other participants prefer the bold serif typeface Copperplate Gothic Bold, which is also suitable for the future brand. The serif typeface conveys values of traditionalism, classicism and elegance, three components of Charles Picard’s brand identity, whereas the bold typeface has a connotation of force and heaviness, which are rather masculine values, also compatible with the identity of the brand. The two propositions made by the attendees are relevant considering the theories and both have to be considered seriously.
6 Conclusions

This part concludes our Bachelor’s dissertation and the study we have realized. The work that we did and explained in the previous parts of this thesis allows us answering to our purpose, explaining our contributions and suggesting ideas for further researches.

6.1 Answer to the purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and analyze the process of the brand visual identity’s creation, with the will to help a future small entrepreneurial firm to occupy a distinctive place in customers’ mind and to be distinguished on a specific market. To guide our research, we wonder how a small entrepreneurial company can develop a strong visual brand identity and what steps have to be followed in its creation. First, such a firm has to be aware of the five components of the brand visual identity, that is to say the logo, the colors, the signs and symbols, the typography and the slogan. Some of these elements, and mainly the slogan, are more or less developed depending on the company and its market. It has to have the necessary knowledge about them and to know exactly their meanings and their characteristics, in order to choose them efficiently. Moreover, it is important to know the entire environment that exists around it or that is involved by the visual identity: the brand positioning, the brand name, the graphic guideline and the promotional materials. Each of these elements has to be taken into account, to have a relevant brand identity that fits with the firm’s personality and its objectives.

Second, a company has to follow the different steps of the creation process: the first step is the analysis of the brand positioning, the second is the selection of the brand name, the next one is the visual identity creation, by choosing the five elements which interact with each other and the last step is the development of the graphic guideline and the choice of the promotional materials. The specific order of these elements has to be respected, each of us having a particular impact on the next step and so on the final result, which is the tangible existence of the brand. This process is especially useful for small entrepreneurial firms. Every entrepreneur knows the positioning of his/her brand and in small firms it is really easy to contact the CEO and to know his/her wants and values. Moreover, in these companies, it is often the entrepreneur who is in charge of the creation of his/her visual brand identity. So, the positioning of the brand is very easy to understand since it is the entrepreneur himself/herself who defines it. This process, presented in part 1.6.5, has been drawn up thanks to theories and then confronted with a practical application. To have a concrete view of the use of the visual identity and its elements, we chose to collaborate with a French entrepreneur about to create his or her own company and wanting to design its visual identity. This partnership has implied to realize a study of the competition in order to know the current situation of the market. Each of the elements defined in our process appears to exist on the French market and to be clearly defined by the competitors, allowing us to confirm our model by our findings and to prove the relevance of its practice.
6.2 Contributions

We have collaborated with Charles Picard, who wants to create a luxury men shoes company on the French market. As he had already well-defined the positioning, we did not work on it. He thought about putting his own name to represent his brand and our study confirms the relevance of this choice. Concerning the global visual identity, we notice that it is generally very simple on the luxury shoe market. About the logo, the name/symbol combination is the most appropriate since it allows the customers assimilating the name with the symbol, which will be also used as a distinctive sign on the shoes. The name not suggesting something about the product, it is better to complete the logo with a symbol. The spade being perceived as an elegant symbol, we choose it to represent the brand. Moreover, in French, spade is said “pique”, which makes reference to Picard, the surname of the entrepreneur, so, the logo will easily be linked with the brand name. This symbol being also the distinctive sign, it will be present on each pair of shoes, allowing the customers to recognize the brand. Concerning the colors, most of the luxury men shoes companies using a combination of two or three, we recommend to Charles Picard to use the same strategy. The brand name should be written in black, a color said as essential by the focus group participants and explained as an elegant color in the theories. The second color used should be a more original and young color, in order to distinguish the brand. This color should be green, which represents exactly these values. Using a “flashy” green would be a good way to be really different from the competitors, since it is rather unusual on the targeted market. About the typography, we advise to use sans serif typeface, which is perceived as modern and virile. The font Arial Narrow is representative of this sort of typography and is also classical, matching with the brand values. A normal spacing is recommended that makes the typeface easy to read. Charles Picard should not use a slogan, since it is never used on the luxury shoe market. The entrepreneur will have to realize a visual style guideline comprising all the elements of the visual identity creation process with the aim to have harmonious promotional materials. At the beginning of the company life, the entrepreneur should focus on the creation of the five essential promotional tools, on which the visual identity will be present: administrative and commercial documents, shoes boxes, corporate website, brochures and display stands. Once he will have done all these actions, the visual identity will be tangible and ready to be launched on the market.

This thesis provides a useful competitors’ analysis on the luxury shoe industry for potential entrepreneurs who could want to create their own company on the same market. In a more general consideration, entrepreneurs can find here the description of the visual identity concept and of each of its elements. People who do not have skills on this subject can have a complete view of the actions to do and of the steps to respect in order to design an effective brand visual identity. Moreover, a small entrepreneurial firm about to be launched has usually few financial means and does not have enough budgets to appeal to a specialist. It leads this type of companies to often neglect this aspect, which is fundamental to succeed. This thesis aims at giving an overall view of the most important theories about the visual identity and its
practice, allowing the entrepreneurs to design it by themselves, without employing a professional in this field.

Our Bachelor dissertation contributes to the research by giving an overall view of the theories linked to the visual brand identity creation. It provides a unique and comprehensive implementation process of this concept, with different steps to follow in order to facilitate the action. This process is applicable to every sort of business.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

This study allowed us creating our own model and also helping an entrepreneur to design his original and relevant visual brand identity. Nevertheless, the subject of the visual identity is a wide research area and many other aspects can be studied:

- The evolution of the visual identity is a complex subject that could be studied. First, on a theoretical point of view, we wonder how it is possible to bring about some change on the visual identity over the years, to match with the evolution of the market and of the company. Second, on a practical point of view, it would be interesting to study the case of a firm that is present on the market since a long time to see how it has handled its evolution.

- A comparison between all the different fields of activity present in France would be interesting in order to see the differences that exist between them in the visual identity. Moreover, it would allow seeing if the five elements composing the brand visual identity are all developed in the same way or not depending on the market. This work concerns only the practical application, since the theoretical framework presented in this thesis is applicable to every market.

- Studying the differences between the Western and the Eastern World in the design of the five elements of the visual identity would be an interesting work to identify the possible cultural differences.
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Appendix

1  Charles Picard interview guide (French and English) ................................................. i

2  Personal interviews guide (French and English) ........................................................ ii

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4  Extract of the Power Point used during the focus group: ........................................ vi
1 Charles Picard interview guide (French and English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French guide</th>
<th>English guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Quel est exactement le type d'entreprise que tu souhaites créer ? Sur quel marché te placeras-tu ?</td>
<td>- What is exactly the type of company that you want to create? On which market will it be implemented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Où en es-tu dans l’avancement de ton projet ?</td>
<td>- What is the current situation of your project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quels sont les problèmes que tu rencontres dans la construction de ce projet ?</td>
<td>- What are the problems that you face in the construction of this project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peux-tu nous dire quel sera l’esprit de ta marque ? Ses valeurs ?</td>
<td>- Can you tell us what the spirit of your brand will be? Its values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peux-tu nous dire quel sera le positionnement de ta marque ?</td>
<td>- Can you tell us what the positioning of your brand will be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peux-tu nous parler de ta clientèle cible ? (âge, CSP, budget…)</td>
<td>- Can you give us information about your target customers? (Age, socio-professional category, budget…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- As-tu déjà des idées pour l’identité visuelle de ta marque ?</td>
<td>- Do you already have any idea for the visual identity of your brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A quel prix comptes-tu vendre les chaussures de ta marque ?</td>
<td>- What will be the selling price of the shoes of your brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Par quel(s) moyen(s) de distribution penses-tu vendre les chaussures de ta marque ?</td>
<td>- Which channels of distribution do you think that you will use to sell the shoes of your brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- As-tu une idée des entreprises qui seront concurrentes de ta marque ?</td>
<td>- Do you have any idea of the companies that will compete with your future brand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quelles sont tes attentes vis-à-vis de notre collaboration ?</td>
<td>- What do you expect of our collaboration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quel résultat final attends-tu de cette collaboration ?</td>
<td>- What is the final result of this collaboration that you expect?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Personal interviews guide (French and English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French guide</th>
<th>English guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Quelle était exactement votre fonction chez Charles Jourdan/Christian</td>
<td>- What was exactly your post at Charles Jourdan/Christian Louboutin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louboutin ? Durant combien de temps avez-vous exercé dans l’entreprise ?</td>
<td>How long did you work for the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quels ont été les facteurs du succès de la marque à ses débuts ?</td>
<td>- What have been the factors of the brand success at its start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pouvez-vous nous parler de la situation actuelle de l’entreprise ?</td>
<td>- What can you tell us about the current situation of the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pour Philippe Rebatel (Charles Jourdan) uniquement : Quelles sont les</td>
<td>- For Philippe Rebatel (Charles Jourdan) only: What are the reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raisons de sa restructuration? A-t-elle été défavorable à l’image de marque ?</td>
<td>of the corporate overhaul? Has it been unfavorable to the brand image?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pouvez-vous nous parler de la politique de l’entreprise? (Points de vente,</td>
<td>- What can you tell us about the policy of the company? (Retail outlets,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>production…)</td>
<td>production…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quel est le prix moyen d’une paire de chaussures Charles Jourdan/Christian</td>
<td>- What is the average price of a pair of shoes Charles Jourdan/Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louboutin ?</td>
<td>Louboutin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pouvez-vous nous expliquer l’esprit de la marque ? Ses valeurs ?</td>
<td>- Can you explain us the spirit of the brand? Its values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Comment peut-on reconnaître une chaussure de la marque ? Qu’est ce qui la</td>
<td>- How is it possible to recognize a shoe of the brand? What makes it so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rend si unique ?</td>
<td>unique?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pour Flavie Montoro (Christian Louboutin) uniquement : Quelle est l’histoire</td>
<td>- For Flavie Montoro (Christian Louboutin) only: What is the story of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de la semelle rouge sur toutes les chaussures ? Comment est venue cette idée ?</td>
<td>red tread presents on each shoe? How this idea did come?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Comment la marque réussit-elle à se différencier sur le marché de la chaussure ?</td>
<td>- How does the brand manage to differentiate itself on the shoes market?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quel est le client type (sexe, CSP, budget, âge …) de la société?</td>
<td>What is the typical customer (sex, age, socio-professional category, budget…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pouvez-vous nous parler de l’image la marque souhaite communiquer au public ?</td>
<td>Can you tell us what the image that the brand wants to communicate to the customers is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pouvez-vous nous dire quelle était la stratégie de communication de la marque à ses débuts ? Qu’en est-il aujourd’hui ?</td>
<td>Can you tell is what the communication strategy of the brand at its start had been? What is it now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pour Philippe Rebatel (Charles Jourdan) uniquement : Quelles sont les raisons pour lesquelles la marque ne possède pas de site internet ?</td>
<td>For Philippe Rebatel (Charles Jourdan) only: Why does the company do not have a brand’s website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment le logo de la marque a-t-il été choisi ? Pourquoi avoir choisi cette forme et ces couleurs ?</td>
<td>How have the logo of the brand been chosen? What are the reasons of the choice of these form and colors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le logo de l’entreprise a-t-il évolué au cours des années ? Si oui, comment et pourquoi ?</td>
<td>Has the logo evolved throughout the years? If yes, why and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quelles sont les couleurs qui représentent la marque ? Pouvez-vous nous dire si elles ont une signification particulière ?</td>
<td>What are the colors that represent the brand? Can you tell us if they have a particular meaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sur quels supports (produits, magasins, affichage, …) l’identité visuelle (logo, nom de marque, …) de la marque est-elle présente ?</td>
<td>On which mediums (products, stores, posters…) is the visual brand identity present?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3 Focus group guide (French and English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French guide</th>
<th>English guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Selon vous, comment une entreprise peut-elle se distinguer sur le marché par rapport à ses concurrents ?</td>
<td>- From your point of view, how a company can differentiate itself from its competitors on the market?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pour vous, à quoi correspond l’identité visuelle d’une entreprise ? <em>(Donner ensuite les vrais éléments)</em></td>
<td>- For you, what is the visual identity of a company? <em>(Then, the moderator gives the “real” components of the visual identity)</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pour vous, quels sont les éléments les plus importants parmi ceux cités dans la définition ? Et pourquoi ?</td>
<td>- From your point of view, what are the elements, among those mentioned in the definition, that are the most important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pour vous, qu’est ce qu’un bon logo ?</td>
<td>- What do you think is a good logo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pour vous, qu’est ce qu’un bon slogan ?</td>
<td>- What do you think is a good slogan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>(Montrer des couleurs une par une)</em> Que vous évoque cette couleur ? <em>Couleurs présentées aux participants : noir, blanc, rouge, vert, bleu, jaune, orange, rose, marron, gris, beige et or.</em></td>
<td>- <em>(Show colors one by one)</em> What does this color evoke to you? <em>Colors presented to the attendees: black, white, red, green, blue, yellow, orange, pink, brown, grey, beige and gold.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Si vous deviez choisir une ou plusieurs couleurs pour une marque de chaussures haut de gamme, lesquels choisiriez-vous et pourquoi ?</td>
<td>- If you had to choose one or several colors for a luxury shoes brand, which ones will you choose and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>(Montrer différents types de typographies : voir page suivante)</em> Que vous évoque ces écritures ?</td>
<td>- <em>(Show different types of typography: see on next page)</em> What do these typographies evoke to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Si vous deviez choisir une typographie pour une marque de chaussures haut de gamme, laquelle choisiriez-vous et pourquoi ?</td>
<td>- If you had to choose one or several typographies for a luxury shoes brand, which ones will you choose and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>(Montrer des signes et des symboles : voir page suivante)</em> Que vous évoque ces formes et symboles ?</td>
<td>- <em>(Show different signs and symbols: see on next page)</em> What do these signs and symbols evoke to you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maintenant que vous avez vu ces différents éléments, quels sont ceux qui vont ont le plus marqué ? Quels sont ceux qui vous semblent le plus approprié pour une marque de chaussures haut de gamme ayant un côté décalé ?

- Now that you have seen these different elements, which ones leave more their marks on you? What are the ones which seem to you the most appropriate for a luxury shoes brand having an original touch?
4 Extract of the Power Point used during the focus group

- For question about typography:

**TYPOGRAPHIES**

- ABCDEFG abc
- ABCDEFG abc
- ABCDEFG abc
- ABCDEFG abc
- ABCDEFG abc
- ABCDEFG abc
- ABCDEFG abc
- ABCDEFG abc

- For question about signs and symbols:

**FORMES**

- Shapes and symbols
SYMBOLES

- Étoile
- Cœur
- Nuage
- Soleil
- Éclair
- Interdit
- Œil de bouclier
- Cœur de carreau
- &
- Main
- Colombe
- Palmier
- Bouteille
SYMBOLES