Berntson, Annie  
Jarnemo, Christina  
Philipson, Minna  

Branding and Gender  
- How adidas communicate gender values  

Business administration  
Master’s Thesis  

Term: Spring 2006  
Supervisor: Patrik Gottfridsson
FOREWORD

We would like to thank the people who have contributed with support during the writing of our thesis.

A special thank to our supervisor Patrik Gottfridsson and also Ulrika Jansson, for their stimulating insights and discussions that have enriched our thesis.

We should also like to thank our respondents Pernilla Molander, Jonas Carlström from adidas, and also Janne Svensson at Clara advertising agency for their input of valuable information and material.

Finally, our thanks to everyone who had to endure our weekends of toil.

We wish you all pleasant reading!

Karlstad, 2006

Annie Berntson  Christina Jarnemo  Minna Philipson
ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses how adidas differentiate their communication to reach women and make the adidas brand more appealing to females. The adidas brand has always had their main focus on sportswear for men. This has led to the brand being perceived as masculine and it makes it hard for the female consumer to identify with adidas. We have analysed six adidas adverts from the last five years to see what adidas have communicated to women. The main purpose of this thesis is to understand why adidas have not succeeded in communicating with women in the last five years.

The theoretical chapter is divided into three parts; Brands, Communication and Consumer Behaviour. The first part describes what a brand is, how it is built and continues with how a brand can be gendered. A brand is not very likely to keep a strong position if the values connected with the brand are not reinforced through communication. When forming a communication strategy, companies have to understand how consumers behave. When selling a gendered product, companies have to understand the distinction between men and women and how they differ in consumption.

Our discussion is based on the qualitative method of collecting data. The qualitative method was carried out through two panel interviews and one personal interview, and we also performed picture analysis on adidas’ advertisements. Ten open-individual interviews with ten different women were conducted; to get their opinions on the six adverts.

Adidas have presented five different identities over five years, each with diverse focus and with different brand associations. This has led to a lack of consistency and therein lies a part of the reason why adidas have not been successful in appealing to women.

Since 2005 adidas have a collaboration with Stella McCartney. This is an attempt to add design to adidas functional clothes and to make their brand more appealing to women. This collaboration will continue until 2010 and this could provide adidas with the uniformity they need.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD .................................................................................................................. 1
ABSTRACT ..................................................................................................................... 3
TABLE OF CONTENTS .................................................................................................. 4

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 6
   1.1 Problem background ......................................................................................... 6
   1.2 Problem ............................................................................................................. 7
   1.3 Delimitation ...................................................................................................... 8
   1.4 Disposition ....................................................................................................... 8

2. ADIDAS .................................................................................................................... 9
   2.1 Company history ............................................................................................. 9
   2.2 Adidas today .................................................................................................... 10
   2.3 Company segments ....................................................................................... 10

3. THEORY .................................................................................................................. 12
   3.1 Brands ............................................................................................................. 12
      3.1.2 What is a brand? ...................................................................................... 13
      3.1.3 Building and managing a brand .............................................................. 13
      3.1.4 Gendering a brand ................................................................................. 14
   3.2 Communication ............................................................................................... 16
      3.2.1 Advertising ............................................................................................... 16
      3.2.2 Sponsoring ............................................................................................... 18
   3.3 Consumer behaviour ....................................................................................... 18
      3.3.1 Gender in consumer behaviour ............................................................... 19
      3.3.2 Contemporary gender roles ..................................................................... 20

4. METHOD .................................................................................................................. 23
   4.1. Choice of method ......................................................................................... 23
   4.2 Collection of information ............................................................................... 24
   4.3 Photo and advertising interpretation ............................................................. 25
      4.3.1 Analytical tools ....................................................................................... 26

5. EMPIRICAL CONTEXT ......................................................................................... 28
   5.1 Brands ............................................................................................................. 28
   5.2 Communication ............................................................................................... 29
      5.2.1 Adidas by Stella McCartney ................................................................. 31
   5.3 Consumer behaviour ..................................................................................... 31

6. PICTURE ANALYSIS ............................................................................................. 33
   6.1 Picture 1: ....................................................................................................... 34
# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Picture 2:</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Picture 3:</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Picture 4:</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Picture 5:</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Picture 6:</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Conclusion</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## APPENDIX

**Appendix 1**  
*Interview with Pernilla Molander, Lifestyle Communication Manager, adidas*

**Appendix 2**  
*Interview with Jonas Carlström, Sports Marketing Manager, adidas*

**Appendix 3**  
*Interview with Janne Svensson, Project leader, Clara advertising agency*

**Appendix 4**  
*Sports Marketing Sweden 2006*
1. INTRODUCTION

This first chapter begins with problem background and continues with our posed problem. This is followed by our chosen delimitations and the disposition of the thesis completes the chapter.

1.1 Problem background

Brands have become increasingly important for companies. A strong brand is an invaluable advantage for a company, and can be seen as an eternal asset. It is one of the most effective ways to compete in a market (Holger & Holmberg, 2002). According Rooney (1995) brands have the ability to distinguish one company from another. Brands are important to companies since they have the ability to bring certain attributes and associations to a consumer’s mind and add value to the producer and the product. (Kotler, 2003) Strong values connected to a brand, makes the brand stay in the consumer’s awareness and gain commercial power (Nilsson, 2000). A problem that can occur is when a brand has many different products is that they try to tie a wide variety of values to the brand. Too many values can confuse the consumer and result in a lack of identity, especially if the values are contradicting each other (Keller, 2003).

An example of such a brand is Adidas that has, apart from a difficult patch in the 1980’s, been strong and successful in the sport industry ever since the 1950’s. Adidas covers many spectrums of the sport and lifestyle markets. They have three different brand categories, *adidas Sport Performance*, *adidas Sport Heritage* and *adidas Sport Style*. The two latter are lifestyle, fashion and street wear collections and the former is the most known, the actual sportswear lines. Our focus is on Sports Performance; this brand category includes sportswear for five different sport segments, football, running, basketball, tennis and training. This brand category (Sports Performance) includes all sports equipment that adidas sell, both for professional athletes and regular people exercising. This poses a problem since it makes it hard for adidas to fully communicate and add values to all segments. If the communication is directed only to certain segments then the consumer is likely to associate the brand with only these segments. Gender can enable companies to differentiate their brand from their competition and through this achieve brand equity. To gender a new brand requires only minor modifications in the physical attributes of the goods rather than advanced changes in the production process. In some cases it can be done just by changing the gender association of the packaging, advertising and sales promotion. (Alreck, 1994) Adidas is mainly associated with football, and is first and foremost known to be a sport for men (Molander, interview). Women have not been a priority communication-wise, which has resulted in the lack of feminine values associated with adidas.

In our modern society many women are just as involved in sports as men are, and the female sportswear market is growing rapidly. The different gender roles and stereotypes have gone through dramatically changes since the 1970’s. (Alreck, 1994) These changes
Introduction

has led to that women nowadays have a greater access to, and involvement, in organized sports (Costa, 1994). There is also a new trend in consumer behaviour and women are getting a bigger influence in all buying decisions and more and more companies realize this and redirect their advertising towards women. This, as well as their increased interest for sports, should make women an obvious target for adidas and their advertising. (Svensson, interview) Women are responsible for about 80% of individual consumer spending (Cohan, 2003) and they can therefore no longer be ignored by a brand of adidas size. If adidas wants to attract women to buy their products they have to make sure that their brand is appealing to women as well.

An already existing brand can be harder to gender since the consumer might have preconceived notions. Therefore the customer needs to be convinced and learn to connect certain values with the brand and even change already set values. Communication and advertising have the power to create associations with a brand and make the brand more interesting to the consumer (Nilsson, 2000). Women are more susceptible to advertising than men are and this makes advertising an excellent tool when trying to change the values of a brand. What women want and find attractive have changed enormously during the last decades. To reach out to women and to achieve success, adidas have to understand these changes and follow the market development so that their communication can be adapted to the “modern” woman (Alreck, 1994).

1.2 Problem

As mentioned in the problem background, Adidas is a brand that covers many sports, many segments and several markets. This makes it hard for adidas to fully communicate, and add values to all segments. Women are becoming an increasingly influential target group and they can therefore no longer be ignored by a brand, of adidas size. Our aim is to answer the main question:

- Why have adidas not succeeded with their communication towards women in the last five years?

We also intend to answer the following questions:

- How do adidas form their communication to reach women and make the adidas brand appealing to females?

- What message are they trying to convey, who is the typical adidas woman?
1.3 Delimitation

We have delimited our thesis to adidas Sport Performance brand category, and not to include the lifestyle- and the street wear categories. We have chosen to mainly focus on adidas Nordic, but because the advertising campaigns often are performed internationally it is difficult draw limitations only to Nordic material. We have chosen to analyse printed advertisement within a five-year period, 2000-2005, and only the advertising that is focused on women.

1.4 Disposition
2. ADIDAS

In our second chapter we go through basic facts about adidas. We start off with describing the history of the company and continue with adidas today. We are finishing the chapter with an explanation of different brand segments of the company.

2.1 Company history

Adidas was created in 1924 in Herzogenaurach just outside Nürnberg in Germany. This is still the location for the Adidas head office. Adidas was founded by two brothers, Adolf and Rudolf Dassler. The two brothers started their company in 1924 called Gebrüder Dassler OHG, and began to manufacture shoes for athletes (www.adidas.com). They did however decide to part ways, and Rudolf Dassler started the competing company Puma whilst Adolf in 1948 named his company Adidas. The name Adidas was a play on word with the founders name Adolf “Adi” Dassler (Aaker och Joachimstaler, 2000).

A year later Adi registered the “3 stripes” as a trademark and so they have been ever since (Mollerup, 1999; Melin, 2002). Adi Dassler had a huge interest in sports and valued quality and function, he is known for his close collaborations with important athletes to gain insight in their wants and needs. This strategy led to that Adidas at an early stage earned a reputation for being innovative and creative (Aaker and Joachimstaler, 2000). The big breakthrough for Adi Dassler and Adidas came when the German football team won the World Cup in 1954 with the new technology screw-in-studs (www.adidas.com). Adidas was also one of the first companies to use professional athletes to promote their brand by sponsoring them and giving them free shoes (Aaker and Joachimstaler, 2000). They used the concept sport promotion to develop better products but also in advertising were they used stars like Mohammad Ali and Franz Beckenbauer. They have a history of sponsoring the Olympics and other competitions and sporting events and since 1979 they design and manufacture the official World Cup football (www.adidas.com). Adidas was listed on the stock market in 1989 as a measure to save the company who went through a difficult time financially in the late 1980’s and the early 1990’s. (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)

In the early 1980s Adidas model began to lose power, they missed out on the explosive growth of jogging among casual users, the “ordinary people”. In 1993 Adidas changed
and cut the bloated product line; they developed a new brand identity, and came up with brand-building initiatives, such as refreshed advertising and a refocused sponsorship program. Key words in this new strategy were emotions, performance and active participation. (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)

2.2 Adidas today

As mentioned before Adidas’ headquarters are still located in Herzogenaurach in Germany but Adidas has subsidiaries in 60 countries including adidas USA. The company employs over 14,000 employees worldwide. They export athletic equipment to 160 different countries and produce 120,000 pairs of shoes and 50,000 metres of fabric every day. They strive to have a uniform profile of their brand and all marketing campaigns are globally coordinated. Their advertising agency is called Leagas Delaney and is located in London. Adidas has clothes, shoes and accessories for men, women and children and for almost all sports available. Adidas have three main age and gender based target groups that they focus on, children 7-15 years old, girls/women 15-35 years old and boys/men 15-35 years old. Today, adidas is Europe’s largest supplier of sports apparel and athletic footwear.

Even though Adidas is sponsoring top athletes like tennis player Anna Kournikova, the soccer player Zinedine Zidane and L.A Lakers’ basketball player Kobe Bryant, the focus for the company is nowadays towards teams, global sports events and sport associations. Adidas can this way connect itself with emotional events in sport; they sponsor the European football championship, the soccer World Cup and the Olympics as mentioned before. They also sponsor national and local teams around the globe. Adidas has changed their image from just targeting elite athletes and is now more about participation. (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)

2.3 Company segments

The adidas group own several different brands, we will mainly focus on adidas performance in this thesis but we will give a short presentation of the other brands as well. Adidas has quite recently bought Reebok International and the adidas group is also in possession of the golf brand Taylor Made, adidas Golf and Maxfli. The main adidas brands are however adidas sport performance, adidas heritage and adidas style.

Adidas Sport Performance

This brand is aimed at meeting the sport-specific needs of athletes at all performance levels. This line of sportswear is focused on offering functional and innovative products that are designed for sports. The top five priorities are football, running, basketball, tennis and training.
Adidas Heritage

This line targets trendsetters who seek sport-inspired street wear with an authentic origin. This division, started in 2000, has become a more than € 1 billion segment for adidas. Selective distribution to prevent dilution of the brand plays a major role in the development of this division. Sports Heritage includes lines designed by Missy Elliott, Ian Brown and remakes of vintage adidas clothes.

Adidas Sport Style

Sport Style focuses on young cosmopolitan consumers who look for exclusive, fashion-oriented sportswear products. This division is entering its fourth year in 2006. The brand is created because of the increased importance of niche marketing and that successful brands are those that can reach not only larger audiences but also small and influential ones. The Y-3 collection, developed with designer Yohji Yamamoto, is influential designs combined with the highest quality standards, in other words haute couture by adidas.
3. THEORY

This chapter will present literature that was found to be central for the chosen subject. It will focus on three main topics; Brands, Communication and Consumer behaviour. These theory sections will help us analyse the information that we have gathered and support us in finding the answers to our posed questions.

3.1 Brands

To be able to reach a wanted target group, companies need to understand the importance brands have to the consumer. Below we describe what a brand is, how it is built and continue with how companies are able to gender a brand.

Today, brands exist everywhere in our society and during the last couple of years the interest for brands and the values they bring to the consumer have become more and more important to both companies and for consumers (Nilson, 2000). The 1980s can be seen as the defining time in the formation of brands and 1988 was named “the year of the brand” by Forbes Magazine. This year was the culmination when the importance and the value of a strong brand was not realized but also financially recognized. (Kapferer, 1997) Many companies with well-known brands were suddenly valued several times higher than just years before simply because of the brands they owned. (Rooney, 1995) Before “the year of the brand”, the value of a company was measured in terms of its tangible assets, and after, brands had become accepted valuable assets that played an important part in many companies’ strategies. (Nilson, 2000) Since then the trend has continued and the importance of a strong brands has become much more prominent. The continuous increase of manufacturers and the number of products leads to more intense competition and the brand is one very successful way to distinguish the company from others. (Rooney, 1995)
3.1.2 What is a brand?

Kotler (2003, p.418) defines a brand as:

"A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors."

Kotler’s (2003) definition points out a brand’s distinguishing ability. Håkansson and Wahlund (1996) also include a psychological aspect in the definition. The authors used Graham and Peroff’s definition that also contain goodwill; which means that a brand can give goodwill to a product even if the consumer never tried the product before. In other words, consumers value more aspects of a brand than recognition and reliability. Brands have the ability to bring certain attributes to mind and create value to the product and the buyer (Kotler, 2003). It is essential to note that a good product is not necessarily enough for success. A good product can be seen as a mere collection of its physical attributes and advantages, while a brand is the understanding of these attributes and advantages. The main difference between a product and a brand is that a product is concrete and physical and a brand is intangible and associated with values. A product can be copied by a competitor but a brand is unique. Consumers are often buying a brand rather than just buying the product itself. If the consumer has knowledge of the brand that knowledge can be transferred on to a product without collecting information about the specific product. (Nilson, 2000)

A brand is a long-term competitive advantage; that can, if managed correctly be an eternal asset. Therefore many companies have realized the importance of creating a strong brand that gives consumers clear and positive associations (Holger and Holmberg, 2002). If there are strong values connected to a brand it helps to stay in the consumer’s awareness and through that the brand gets commercial power. (Nilson, 2000)

3.1.3 Building and managing a brand

This process of building and managing a brand is often referred to as branding. Most companies share their customers with their competitors; since different brands compete in the same market for the same customers. It is therefore important to have a clear strategy for your brand so that it can be differentiated from your competitors (Nilson, 2000).

When forming a strategy for your brand, the first step is to identify who the target audience is. This is generally known as segmentation. Market segmentation is the process of splitting customers or potential customers into different groups or segments, where customers have similar requirements that can be satisfied by a certain marketing mix. (McDonald and Dunbar, 1998) Segmentation is done because consumers control their self-identity through the use and purchase of branded goods that matches with their personalities.

Ellwood (2002) claims that:
“Brands should protect your identity, to make you feel comfortable about whom you are”.

Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran (1991) claim that women process information in a different way than men. Therefore gender can be ground for segmentation.

According to Aaker (1996) there are four key elements to have in mind when managing a brand. The elements are in many ways dependent on and they can have consequences for each other, which is why they are all important. These elements are;

Brand name awareness means the strength of a brand’s presence in the consumers mind. Companies want their brand to be “top on the consumers mind” in other words, the first brand that the consumers will recall. The brand awareness is built through advertising and media.

Brand loyalty is when consumers continuously turn to a company to buy their brand. Loyalty is a barrier to competitors, one reason is that it is costly for the consumer to change supplier. It is not always costly in financial terms but costly in form of a psychological risk, the customer is not longer sure of what it is going to get. Loyalty is achieved through good perceived quality and the brand associations.

Perceived quality is how the consumers think that the quality of the brands products really is (Aaker, 1996). The consumers think that the company’s products are better than the competitors (Nilson, 2000). Brands can have different strategic positions, some are price brands and others prestige brands. Many brands use the perceived quality as a strategic differentiation position.

Brand associations include all the thoughts and associations that a brand gives a consumer. These thoughts and associations can for example include product attributes, a celebrity spokesperson or a particular symbol or a personal image.

A brand can be associated by more than one value. Successful brands should be a combination of product advantages, concrete value dimensions and positive feelings. (Nilson, 2000) All these brand associations are driven by brand identity. Brand identity is how the organization wants the consumer to experience the brand. To develop and implement a brand identity is a good way to build a strong brand. (Aaker, 1996)

3.1.4 Gendering a brand
To gender a product or a brand means associating its image with a sex-role stereotype in the minds of consumers, or imbuing the product or brand with a masculine or a feminine image and identity, (Costa, 1994). Two steps can be taken in order to gender a product; the first step is to design or modify the product or brand so it is appealing to the stereotypical man or woman. Secondly, the product or brand is given a gender image, which means it is strongly associated with the masculine or feminine sex role stereotype, through advertising and promotion. Advertising has the power to change a set of values
Theory

held by the collective majority. It can influence people to switch their attitude regarding things, even things that they feel strongly about. (Cohan, 2001)

It is very important for marketers to understand how consumers learn and a lot of strategic decisions are based on the thought that consumers actually can be taught to prefer some brands and products before others. In order to achieve this, a target market has to be identified and the marketer has to “get to know” the consumer in question in order to be able to reach the consumer in the most effective way. This often requires a considerable commitment of resources for production design or modification so it becomes appealing to one sex. In order to succeed to appeal to another sex requires quite a lot advertising and promotion during a longer period of time. For example; when the target group is women and the products are tools; the manufacturers have to modify the products so they are more appealing and easy to use for women. (Alreck, 1994)

The modifications of the tools are based on the anatomical differences between the sexes but also that women in general are attracted to different things than men. To advertise and promote these tools it requires that the products are identifying the feminine characteristics of the product. Ways of doing this is to exclusively use feminine models, modify the distribution and striving to obtain outlets that are popular by women. A brand can be made distinctive by changing the product or changing the image of the brand, or a combination of both. (ibid)

Gender can enable companies to differentiate their brand from their competition and through this achieve brand equity. Brand equity is defined as “the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or service” (Kotler, 2003 p. 422). It occurs when a brand has strong positive associations in a consumer’s memory and it leads to loyalty as a result. A product with positive brand equity holds a remarkable advantage in the market. (Solomon et al 1999) It is easier to gender a new brand by giving it a masculine or a feminine image, since the consumers have no preconceived expectations. To gender a new brand requires only minor modifications in the physical attributes of the goods rather than advanced changes in the production process. In some cases it can be done just by changing the gender association of the packaging, advertising and sales promotion. (Alreck, 1994) An already existing brand might be harder to gender since the consumer since there are lots of preconceived notions. Therefore the customer needs to be convinced and learn to connect certain values with the brand and in even change set values.
3.2 Communication

A brand is not very likely to keep a strong position if the values connected with the brand are not reinforced through communication. It is vital to our purpose to find out how and why companies choose to communicate their brands.

3.2.1 Advertising

Brand communication has two main challenges; to draw attention to the brand and to build the brand profile. (Nilsson, 2000) Advertising often involve both images and words, and most of the time it is a combination of the two. Advertising slogans are often quite straightforward whilst the images presented in advertisements are much more complex. (Nordström, 1986) The aim of advertising is to attach values to a product and through this make the product more desirable to the consumer. Advertising is paid announcements, usually targeting a specific market group, designed to influence the purchase of goods or services. Advertising can come in many forms, for example: television ads, radio, magazines and newspapers. (Cohan, 2001) In advertising, Hansson et al (2006) claims that the demographic segments age, gender, education etcetera is not enough. The concept lifestyles is used to describe groups from the psychological and social factors and it can describe how people consume products and services, dress and uses their spare time.

Advertising is a system of representation; this system produces a meaning and a message to the consumer far beyond the promoted products, service or even the brand itself. Adverts are used to express identities in cultural discourses. By handling and treating the adverts and the images as cultural artefacts, it makes it easier to connect them to more overall thorough and meaningful cultural codes and understand what message and what image the company is trying to convey to the consumer. (Aspers et al, 2004) Advertising is a company’s message to the potential consumer and the goal for the company is to sell products and services. The most important task for the picture in the advertising is to persuade the consumer, to relate the product/service with positive value. (Nordström, 1986)

Advertising in our modern society has developed into a science where the consumer is thoroughly investigated, and the advertising is constructed to desensitise the viewer and push all the right buttons to make the consumer act as desired. Various subliminal techniques are used to influence the behaviour of the consumer. These techniques are based on the idea that human beings are influenced by, among other things, impressions that the brain gathers through our senses. (Cohan, 2001) A picture can attract and captivate a person more than text can ever do and can spellbind us by only its external appearance. Colours, shapes and lighting are carefully chosen to send the right message and have the expected impact on the consumer. When we look at a picture we tend to think that we only register what is seen, but we experience a message that we either like, dislike or identify with. The viewer has a tendency to forget the complex and concrete reality and the picture’s background, why it is made and what purpose it serves.
Theory

(Nordström, 1986) Advertising often focuses on our physical appetites and basic instincts, the body, the avoidance of pain, the pursuit of pleasure, (Cohan, 2001).

Advertising for women
Women are responsible for about 80% of individual consumer spending; they are therefore very interesting targets for advertisers everywhere (ibid).

Many ads present gender stereotypes focusing on the weak role of the woman, showing women as submissive, and suggesting that women are in constant need of alteration and improvement. Women are often portrayed as confused, childish and contradictory. The message conveyed is that sexy women, the kind of women that men want is women who are vulnerable, weak, mindless and needy. This image influence women to think that they are just this and they identify with the picture painted. Even though women are still being depicted in these “traditional” roles, advertisers are nowadays trying to catch up with reality. (Ibid)

Advertising directed to women redefines attractiveness from something natural to something unattainable. Airbrushing, lighting and make-up create ideals that are impossible to live up to for a woman in everyday life. The advertising sends the message that if you achieve this beauty and perfection, then you will also attain happiness and bliss. (Jacobson and Mazur, 1995) The female consumer seems however to be turning on the “ideal woman”. Garner (1997) performed a survey on women and media and found that women are not only affected by images in the media, they also want to see themselves represented differently. They are clamoring for change and willing to put their money on their predilections. The overwhelming majority of all respondents, 93 percent want models in magazines to represent the natural range of body shapes. 82 percent assert they are willing to buy magazines containing heavier models. Garner (1997) sees this trend as an eminent threat for companies depicting women in an unnatural way and he is certain that “the resentment will be unleashed full force on the fashion industry and/or the media, the only question is in what form.” (Garner, 1997, p 39)

Women respond differently to advertisements than men, for example are women known to elaborate more. Catterall et al (2000) and Myers-Levy and Sternthal (1991) claim that women have a lower threshold for elaborate processing of a message and make greater use of the cues in making judgments. They also found that women’s processing often involved important elaboration of message content and in some cases greater sensitivity to details in the message. On the contrary, females dig deeper into the message and uses an effortful strategy to search for inconsistency and to examine all the relevant information. They are therefore more likely to have increased compassion and sensitivity to the details of the message. (Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran, 1991) Women were also found to be more focused on the body language in printed ads (Catterall et al, 2000).
3.2.2 Sponsoring

“Sponsorship is a business method for communication and marketing in long and short term, has the aim of contributing to the sponsor’s brand awareness and image, as well as increasing the sponsor’s sales. Sponsorship should benefit all those involved, and lead to a result that can be measured against pre-defined objectivities”. (Roos and Algotsson, 1996, p. 16)

Over the years has approaches to sponsorship changed. Sponsorship was previously a matter of personal interest and charity; nowadays more and more companies see sponsorship as marketing with a focus on benefits and profitable opportunities. Sponsorship consists of both the demand for something in return and the expectation of results from the sponsor. (Jiffer and Roos, 1999) Since brand building is more than advertising, the mission is to create an integrated assortment of communication and association building media, with brand identity and brand position as guidelines. (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)

The primary goal with sponsorship is generally to create publicity for the brand and to develop associations. There are more benefits with sponsoring, such as becoming a part of an event /customer union, providing an experience to customers and be able to demonstrate new products and technologies. The Olympics is the ideal sponsorship for a lot of companies, and especially for sport brands, since the competition is very prestigious and displays the best athletes. (Ibid)

3.3 Consumer behaviour

When forming a communication strategy, companies have to understand how consumers behave. The company can only satisfy their target group once they know how the consumer thinks and react to the conveyed message. When selling a gendered product, companies have to understand the distinction between men and women and how they differ in consumption.

When studying consumer behaviour Peter and Olson (2005) claims there are three main approaches. All three of them bring value and insights to marketing strategy and consumer behaviour, but in different ways and levels of analysis. The first one; the traditional approach, is based on theories and methods from sociology, cognitive, behavioural and social psychology. The traditional approach seeks to develop methods and theories to describe and understand the consumer’s behaviour, decision making and information processing etcetera. The second approach is the marketing science approach and it is based on theories and methods from economics and statistics. This method deals with large data and solves marketing problems in that way. The third and last approach is the interpretive approach which is quite new but very influential. This approach seeks to develop a deeper understanding for consumption. Several studies in the interpretive approach concerns how advertising depicts women and the differences between men’s and women’s behaviours. (Peter and Olson, 2005)
Behaviours that are associated to consumption can also be gendered. The marketing activities are different depending on who the target is. The customer response is also different between men and women. (Costa, 1994)

3.3.1 Gender in consumer behaviour

Gender exists everywhere in society and can be described as “the way members of the two sexes are perceived, evaluated and expected to behave” (Costa, 1994 p. 5). This definition can include many things, from stereotypes to different abilities.

The content of the definition is depending on the general gender role in society and culture. People are in general very affected by their cultures and gender roles are often very diverse in different cultures. Words and symbols have very different meanings depending on culture and they will be interpreted differently by the target. Culture and society are therefore largely influential in deciding whether the product or brand should have a masculine or feminine image and what is socially accepted. (Alreck, 1994) Our thesis is first and foremost directed to the Swedish market. According to Hofstede (2001) and his cultural dimension describing and comparing equality and gender perceptions in different cultures, Sweden is the most feminine country in the world. This means that Swedes are very liberal when it comes to gender roles and have a big tolerance when it comes to crossing gender barriers.

In consumer behaviour the differences between men and women are evident. A lot of products can be associated with a specific sex. (Costa, 1994) As we have mentioned before, to gender a product or brand means giving the consumer an association with a sex role stereotype, or imbuing the product or brand with a masculine or a feminine image and identity. These products or brands can most of the time be purchased and used by both sexes. The function is not necessarily gendered, but the visible design features, advertising, promotion and sometimes the distribution are modified to include attributes that helps identify it mainly or exclusively with one sex. (Alreck, 1994)

Alreck (1994) have listed key issues for companies to consider when examining the market potential of a gendered product:

*Basic Gender Attributes* – masculine strength and feminine gentleness are the two most basic psychological generalisations of gender. A gendered product or promotion built on these is not sure to be effective, but suggestions of masculine weakness or feminine harshness could turn out to be problematic.

*Sex Role Requirements and Prohibitions* – The traditional gender stereotypes in society are quite clear. Women place home, family and acting ladylike first. Men are strong, independent decision makers and capable, reliable breadwinners. The traditional gender stereotypes and prohibitions are only valid if the target market culturally is likely to live by traditional values and traditional sex roles. Demographic factors can help determine this. Women are however more inclined to cross over than men are.
Theory

**Negative Reactions** – The market for a gendered product sometimes cross over different socioeconomic areas. This can be problematic if the different areas have different approaches to traditional gender roles. A more liberal culture might take offence by the traditional values presented and this could even lead to boycott.

**Opposite Sex Rejection** – Men are open to using certain products even though the generic product class has a feminine identity for example hair gel, but if a company are giving a brand a feminine gender this will most likely exclude the masculine market. However, a brand given a masculine identity does not discourage women in the same way.

**The Age Threshold** – The older the buyer, the more likely they are to ascribe to traditional sex roles. People who believe in traditional sex roles more often find gendered products attractive. Below the age threshold of 45 years, the majority of consumers respond only to the requirements of the traditional role, but not to the prohibitions.

**Social Class Effects** - The social class of the consumer has strong influence on sex role adherence and acceptance of gendered brands. Blue-collar families often divide privileges, responsibilities and tasks into masculine and feminine categories. They are therefore more susceptible to gendered products. White-collar consumers, and especially well-educated professionals, are often less attached to sex roles and will not be as inclined to buy a product with only a masculine or feminine image.

**Subtle Gender Symbols** – Contradictions between words and phrases that gender a product should be avoided. Colours, textures, patterns, shapes and sizes, they all have gender connotations. Differential for women products are lighter colours and pastels; blended or natural patterns; smooth, rounded shapes; smaller sizes; and lighter weights. And for men it is the reverse. The subtle cues include not just the product, but also to the container, packaging, and promotion of the brand.

**Gender Credibility** – Whether the brand is successful in convincing the consumers that there is something truly masculine or feminine about the brand. Even those who believe in traditional sex roles will shy away from a gendered brand if the claims are not credible. It is very difficult to un-gender a brand once the gendered choice has been introduced. Failed efforts at product gendering usually result in the necessity to withdraw the brand completely from the market and start afresh with a new, un-gendered brand.

### 3.3.2 Contemporary gender roles

The traditional gender stereotypes have changed dramatically in the last 30-40 years and new contemporary gender roles have emerged. This is due to changes in our society, both economical and technological. From these changes new consumers have surfaced and it is vital for companies to understand the new consumers so that advertising and brands are adjusted to appeal to the modern consumers. (Alreck, 1994)

Sex roles seem to have broadened significantly and the masculine and feminine sex roles have overlapped with each other. Earlier it was more “black or white”, meaning that if it
was masculine it could not at the same time be feminine, and vice versa. This change has led to an important question for the product and brand managers and also for the promoters, what symbols and models should they associate the product or brand with, if they want to gender it. (Ibid)

Our thesis concerns a company that first and foremost operates in the sports industry and men have traditionally dominated sports consumption. Studies performed in sports history have documented that organized sports have seen differences between colonial, class and racial power relations. They noted that the biggest difference was between men and women. Ever since the early forms of modern organized sports in 1800’s, male sports have been compared to struggles over power. The general opinion suggested that men might become delicate and feminine without rigorous, disciplined physical exercise. Men had to prove their manhood, and sports were one way to do this. These thoughts helped to justify that early modern sports was exclusively for men. It was rarely encouraged for women to participate in these kinds of sports. It is said that no real women should be as aggressive as men in sports or games and it is not appropriate for a women to defeat a male opponent in sports or athletics. (Ibid)

The different sex roles and stereotypes of both women and men that exist in our world have experienced dramatically changes since the 1970’s. This transformation is a result of sweeping social, economic and technical changes. As a consequence of changes, women nowadays have greater involvement and access to organized sports. It is important to understand these changes, so that promotions that are appealing the “modern” women can be created in an effective way. (Ibid)
What is a brand?
Building and managing a brand
Gendering a brand

Advertising
Sponsoring

Gender in Consumer behaviour
Contemporary gender roles
4. METHOD

The purpose with this chapter is to explain the process and the methodological approach used in this study. First, our choice of method is described and justified both theoretically and practically. Thereafter, we present the different ways through which we have obtained information, followed by the photo and advertising interpretation.

4.1. Choice of method

Our thesis is aiming to understand how adidas communicate with women and how this affects their brand. The information we want to analyse is primarily based on words, symbols and pictures. We have gone through different steps in our study; first we sought out information about adidas. We gained this information partly through personal interviews, with two adidas employees, and partly from written sources. To further study the adidas communication strategy, we chose to do a picture analysis of six adidas adverts, and complemented this with an interview with an authority on advertising. To get the consumer perspective we performed ten personal interviews with different women, who gave their opinions on what they think adidas is trying to communicate and how they experience the adverts. According to Christensen et al, (2001) the qualitative method is the best option to collect this kind of data. This method enables us to get a deeper and more complete understanding for the phenomenon we are studying (Holme and Solvang, 1997). The underlying meaning is in focus and the overall understanding is more important than the details. (Christensen et al, 2001) To get this understanding we performed qualitative interviews and picture analysis and supported these on secondary data.

The qualitative method has enabled us to complement our interviews and update our information throughout the writing process. This gave us the opportunity to steer over and supplement the sources of theory and facts that were of importance to our problem.
4.2 Collection of information

To better understand and analyse our problem we wanted to create a theoretical frame. We did this through the gathering of secondary data. The secondary information increased our knowledge of our selected subject area and this was also a prerequisite for formulating our problem. Secondary data is the information that already is available, that has been collected and put together for other purposes than our thesis. We found it easier to delimit and understand the problem when using secondary data. (Christensen et al, 2001) Secondary data was also used for our method section and the previously mentioned theory section. We received information from adidas itself, which gave us an overall understanding of the company. Except the information we received from adidas, databases such as Libris, Business Source Elite and Emerald were used to find information. We also used literature from the University library in Karlstad.

The secondary data however needed to be complemented by primary data, which is data that we ourselves gathered and concluded. We collected our data through interviews that were constructed with the help of the assembled secondary data.

In-depth, open-ended interviews were chosen for our collection of the primary data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) interviews are one of the most powerful ways to understand other people and this is why we have chosen to use them. We contacted all respondents at an early stage, to set up appointments for the interviews. All three respondents were positive to the interview.

We performed semi-structured interviews this is done with a list of themes and questions for support and direction but the interviewee is given a lot of free range. This means that the content and the order might differ between interviews (Christensen et al, 2001). Our purpose with this examination is to go deep, and not wide, because our problem is specified (Holme and Solvang, 1997).

Two panel interviews were performed, which mean that the interview consisted of the three of us and the interviewee. We were all part of the interview because we believed that all three of us could contribute with different approaches. According to Trost (2005), several interviewers could make the interviewee feel unpleasant and intimidated. This problem was avoided since this was an informative interview, and not an aggressive questioning where the respondents would not feel the need to defend themselves.

Before both of the panel interviews took place, we asked the respondent for permission to record the meeting so that we would be able to focus properly and still have accurate transcripts of the interview.

One of the panel interviews was with Pernilla Molander, Lifestyle Communication Manager for adidas Nordic office in Stockholm. The interview itself took about one hour; the respondent also helped us find material that could be of importance for our study. The second panel interview was with Janne Svensson, project manager at Clara advertising
agency in Karlstad. This interview took approximately 90 minutes. This respondent gave us increased understanding of the thoughts behind advertisements.

The personal interview was a telephone interview with Jonas Carlström, Sports Marketing Manager at adidas Nordic. Telephone interviews are a quick and cost effective way to do an interview (Krag Jacobsen, 1993). Despite these advantages we would have preferred to have all three interviews during personal meetings, because it gives all three of us more understanding. A negative aspect of telephone interviews is that it can be difficult to connect with the respondent and also a certain lack of information. Lack of information could for example have been that gestures and other kind of body expressions emphasize a lot of what is said (Krag Jacobsen, 1993). We do not think that this has influenced our interview negatively since the main reason for our interview was to gain information and not to analyse the interviewee.

4.3 Photo and advertising interpretation

We have chosen to use pictures in our analysis. Pictures are an essential part of advertising; they talk directly to our emotional life and can often involve our subconscious. Pictures also tend to make statements; they show what is offered and what it looks like. (Hansson et al, 1999) We think that they are vital for our purpose.

A reception analysis is performed, which means we put the receiver of the picture in focus. We want to analyse how the consumer perceive adidas and their commercials. When performing a reception analysis it is essential not to forget other concepts. In this case these concepts are genre, comparisons, material and form; concepts that surround the receiver when seeing the picture. To ensure that we got the consumer perspective, we interviewed ten women. We used Jacobsen’s (2002) recommended open-individual interview method; we will elaborate more on the procedure and selection later on in this chapter.

We do not think that the reception analysis is enough; therefore we have chosen to combine it with an intention analysis. It is important to analyse the message adidas is trying to convey and the target groups they are trying to reach and compare this with how the message actually is perceived. The sender is the centre of the intention analysis and we discuss the sender’s purposes and intentions with the picture and its message. (Hansson et al, 1999)

The reception- and intention analysis are both done through impartial descriptions of intentions and experiences (ibid).
4.3.1 Analytical tools

There are several things in photographs that can be analysed and that most likely carry a deliberate importance. When interpreting these pictures, we have decided what it is we want to analyse. The picture is partly analysed as a visual expression, where the focus is on the formal qualities and the esthetical value. We have mainly viewed these pictures as communication objects, where there is a message that needs to be pointed out. Borgersen and Ellingsen (1994) clarifies that picture interpretation is not something that follows a special scheme, the aim is to learn to ask certain questions and then try to answer them. Our personalities, our temperaments’ and our opinions are influencing the picture interpretation. This is also why it is important to know the target of the advertisement, so the reaction can be predicted and steered accordingly.

We have chosen the main concepts that Aspers et al (2004) recommends (content, comparisons, form and material), but we have also added two concepts of our own as a complement to fully understand the pictures.

- **Content**: This category aims to identify and classify people, objects, places and happenings in our chosen pictures. This is a recommended starting point for a descriptive analysis.

- **Form and Material**: describe the foundation of the picture and shows how the contents are presented.

- **Open-individual interviews**: is used when interested in the single individual opinion regarding a certain phenomenon (Jacobsen, 2002).

- **Comparisons**: are often used when analysing a photo or a picture and we have used other pictures to point out unique qualities through comparing two pictures that are quite similar, but obviously different.

- **Analysis**: in this category we tie together our impressions of the picture and the message we think it is conveying. We are looking to have a mixture between focusing on single elements and relevant areas of troubles (the questions) and the deepening perspectives (answers) which supports the summarizing value of the picture, “the conclusion”. (Borgerson and Ellingsen, 1994).

In order to complement our analysis and to get a wider perspective and other thoughts on our chosen adidas adverts, we interviewed ten women to get their opinions. Each person were showed the photographs in chronological order and were asked to express what they felt when they saw the pictures. We used Jacobsen’s (2002) recommended open-individual interview method. This method is primary used when the interviewer is interested in what the single individual has to say. These interviews are recommended because they have the ability to obtain the single individuals interpretation of a phenomenon.
When we carried out the interviews, a selection was made. We used the information criteria from Jacobsen (2002), to find suitable respondents, since this allows us to select the respondents ourselves. We asked mainly women who exercise on a weekly basis and were in the ages 20 – 42 years old to get a wider view. Each interview took around 15 minutes and was not recorded. Two of the interviewers sat down with the interviewee in a calm surrounding. One interviewer controlled the interview, whilst the other took notes.
5. EMPIRICAL CONTEXT

This chapter introduces the findings of our primary research. We are presenting the information we gained through the three interviews we performed. We interviewed experts from adidas to get insights in the thoughts behind the brand and communication strategies. We also interviewed a project leader from Clara Advertising Agency as an authority on communication and branding. In this section we have chosen to present a summary of the interviews, the full texts are found in Appendix 1-3.

5.1 Brands

Adidas do not use the terms male or female when talking about core values. They use the three original values that have been around since Adi Dassler started adidas in the 1920’s, these values being; authentic, inspirational and innovative. There are no plans to alter these values or add new ones; instead adidas wants to reinforce the current ones. They want to go from being a well-known brand to being a loved brand and do this through tying strong feelings and emotions to their brand.

Even though they do not particularly use the words male or female, the brand adidas is still known to be very masculine. Their largest and most profitable segment is football and indoor sports, for example floor ball and handball, the sponsorship contracts have been signed accordingly. These are all sports that are primarily connected with men and therefore the brand is perceived as masculine.

Adidas is divided into segments, one of the segments is called Women and examples of other segments are Football, Running (within this segment there are products for both women and men). Adidas Nordic wants to make the brand more accessible to women and therefore they have commenced a venture to attract women. The head office in Germany has never had the female collections as a big priority but it seems as though this is about to change. Traditionally very little of the marketing budget has been spent on women and the female lines. Adidas is now placing a larger budget on this particular segment and this means new and better opportunities to find strong spokespersons that will attract women. Approximately five percent of the current marketing budget is spent on the Women segment. This percentage will however increase now that adidas have decided to venture more towards women. The increased resources on women will not mean a decrease in other segments but should be regarded as a total expansion. Different segments have
different focus periods, at the moment all focus is on football because of the World Cup in Germany but come fall a greater focus will be on women. As adidas strive to get better and to gain a stronger position among females, this will have consequences for the sports marketing, but there is still an enormous difference between the amount spent on Women and the amount spent on for example Football.

Adidas have no plans on developing a separate brand and a separate logo for women. Even though the current logo is quite masculine, it is a symbol of sports with strong historic significance and that is important for adidas.

**5.2 Communication**

Historically, no measures have been taken to ensure a more feminine touch to the brand as a whole but since the adidas brand includes so many different products, the advertising used is heavily adjusted to the specific segment. The football advertisements are very masculine because they are directed mainly to men, but the brand building commercials like the most recent campaign “Impossible is nothing” is made to attract both men and women, so it included for example Laila Ali, a successful boxer. If the target group is women then the advertisements are evidently created so that they appeal to women. When adidas wants to communicate with women, they have chosen a position that they call “perfect fusion of performance and style”. The image that adidas want for their women sport profiles is a strong woman who is very skilled in her chosen sport but more importantly has a distance to her sport and can stand for other values that are appealing to women as well. Adidas have a very clear image of what qualities their female spokesperson should have, they are striving to find someone with dignity, health and a more elegant touch. Adidas have, for example, recently signed Veronica Wagner, rated the 8th best gymnast in the world. Gymnastics is not a big selling sport for adidas but she represents the values and the image that adidas want for their brand. She will not make leotards a huge selling success but she will convey a message and a statement concerning the brand.

Sport is the very core of the company even if they in recent years launched lifestyle collections like “Sports Heritage”. Their main focus is however high technological functional sport collections. Historically, the function has been the most important thing, and style and design have been less significant and less important. Lately, this has however changed. The importance of style when selling sportswear to women is no longer underestimated, adidas has come to realize that women thinks that this is of great importance and that it can be the settling matter in a purchase. Adidas is therefore now striving to improve in the design and style area. Adidas wants to differentiate their products and their brand by combining high technology products with cutting edge design, and through this make clothes and shoes that are stylish and adjusted to specific sports.

Adidas do not use television commercials to sell the women’s collection. This is first and foremost because of the size of the budget; because the budget is not enormous, they pick
the most efficient way in relation to their funds. Women Indoor is not used in any advertising campaigns at all at the moment; the only marketing directed to women is the adidas by Stella McCartney lines. Any other marketing measures are done in smaller scale by adidas and chosen stores or smaller local circulars in cooperation with local stores.

No specific slogans exist just for the Women collections, the only slogans used are the ones for the entire brand, the most recent one being “Impossible is nothing” and before that adidas promoted “Forever Sport”. There are no differences between different countries; the advertising is the same everywhere in the world.

A good advertisement, whether it is a commercial or a photo, should tell a story that people can relate to and identify with. This trend is also shown in the choice of models, at the moment the anorectic ideal is not the most popular choice, it is more okay to show a woman who has a normal body and therefore represents an ideal that is slightly more achievable. The aim is to get women to either think “I am her” or “I could be her”. Adidas prefers to use models for their advertisements that are healthy and well-built rather than the skinny fashion models from the catwalk. They sell clothes made for different sports and workouts and therefore they choose models that stand for an ideal that sends out signals that are appreciated by women who work out. Fitness and health are keywords in the choice of model. The chosen size for samples is a size 38 (a size 10) which requires the model to always be that size to fit in the clothes. Adidas is looking for women that are healthy and normal and that are sporty and cool. They should be easy for the consumer to relate to. Adidas are even open to the possibility to have profiles that are not engaged in sports but that have the right image.

Adidas performed a survey to identify their main target group. They call their main segment for women “athletic stylite”. The average age of this group is 27 years old, she can be older or younger but a third of this segment is expected to be between 21 and 30 years old. She is typically living in a city or a suburban residence and quite often she is still in education. The characteristic personality needs are defined as “sexy, seductive”, “wealthy, successful” and “perfect”. The segment spends its money on clothes, shoes, mobile telephony and music. The athletic stylite thinks that a designer label improves her image, she likes expensive designer brands and she thinks that the things she wears are a reflection of who she is. She is well aware of new trends and people come to her to ask for advice when they want to buy something. She has her own style and she likes attention and to stand out in a crowd. Sports is a very important part of her life, she sees herself as an athlete, mostly for leisure but also for competition. She wants the best functions but it is important to still be stylish. She works out 2-5 times a week, she can be interested in any mainstream sport but quite often it is gym and fitness that she is involved in. She is a member of a fitness centre and being fit and healthy is very important to her.
5.2.1 Adidas by Stella McCartney

Adidas have quite recently launched a new top collection for women; this line is the only one they have chosen to communicate to women and that is adidas by Stella McCartney. A new collection is released twice a year in five different product updates and the collaboration will continue until 2010. This collection is launched and communicated through media and adidas is hoping for a trickle down effect that is that the image from Stella McCartney is going to “rub off” on the less expensive and less exclusive collections that are sold in sport shops all over the country. The Stella McCartney line is also hoping to help build the brand at large. Adidas has through marketing surveys found out that the best way to reach their target group is through women’s magazines. The Stella collection is advertised only in Elle magazine in Sweden and those ads are complemented with ads in newspapers around the time of the launch and around pay day. Adidas also use alternative marketing such as campaigns in the windows of large department stores. The distribution of the Stella collection is very limited and controlled; it is only sold in Stockholm and Gothenburg in Sweden and only in a few selected stores. This distribution concept is applied throughout the world. All distribution channels are carefully chosen after a number of criteria to not loose the exclusiveness of the line.

The Stella line is first and foremost aimed at people in larger cities whilst the Women Indoor collections with for example the three stripes lines are sold in stores all over the country and are aimed at the more general consumer. The fashion aim is not however solely for the Stella line, adidas wants to combine fashion and function in their other collections too.

Adidas does not have many spokespersons for the women segment. Stella McCartney can be seen as a spokesperson since she stands for certain values that she brings with her signature on the collections. Adidas is however planning to spend more resources on the Women segment and will therefore look for women that can represent their values in a good way. They say that when choosing a spokesperson the positioning “fusion of performance and style” will be a key aspect. They have recently signed the tennis player Maria Kirilenko to model and wear Stella McCartney’s tennis line.

5.3 Consumer behaviour

The pattern of consumption has changed during the last five years. Women have a much greater influence in all purchases than was thought before and women are gaining more and more authority in these matters. Women have even completely taken over some of the classically male purchases; hence the trend is very clear. More and more companies are realizing this and therefore redirected their advertising to women. It seems as though women have become more familiar with the masculine aspects of consumption and they seem to think “I can do this”. This makes women the obvious target that all companies want to reach with their brands and their advertisements.

It is possible to sell products to women with just a healthy model whilst men will not go for just any male model in sportwear, they want a profile, a profile is perceived as a
Empirical context

guarantee that the clothes and the shoes are of the desired quality. Henrik Larsson or David Beckham as poster names for adidas football shoes actually generates larger sales of football shoes. Men see someone who is good at something and they try to buy the skill. This is different for women, just because Victoria Svensson wears a certain shoe and is a good football player does not mean that women will want to buy the shoe and therefore fewer female profiles are signed. Women in general look at more than just the skill, they want to obtain an image, a way of life and the person selling the shoe has to be more than just good at her sport.

Women analyze more when they see a commercial than what men do and are therefore more sensitive to mistakes made by the advertisers. There are constantly surveys performed to investigate what appeals to women and what women want. This development and shift in focus have become very clear in the last five years.

Another trend in society at large is that consumers are dividing into smaller groups but despite this they are gaining more and more influence and strength. Mass communication does not at all work in the same way it used to; it has enormous problems reaching out in today’s media climate. The consumer today is more aware and more critical; consumers also know they have power and that they can affect brands and companies. A brand can gain credibility and loose it over night if they make a wrong step or get bad publicity. Since the trend behind the smaller consumption groups is that people strive to be unique and state their identities with certain brands and products there is a huge danger if a product becomes too main stream and that “everyone has one”, when a trend gets to big, the trendsetters will automatically start breaking out and look for a new trend. In all big trends an anti-trend is created, the anti-trend is very likely to take over and become the next big trend. Companies should therefore be aware of that the market force will put an end to a trend that is too homogenous.

Trends today are faster and shorter than they used to be and the groups taking the trends to heart are smaller and this creates the perfect environment for new brands to enter markets. It has also become a lot harder to create advertisements to reach consumers and to get them to listen. In the early days of advertising companies just used a lot of superlatives and even lies but the consumer sees straight through that today. Getting people to listen to your message is the real challenge today.
6. PICTURE ANALYSIS

We have chosen six adidas adverts from different campaigns. Below we describe the picture and analyse them according to the analytical tools previously presented. The response and the reactions we got from our short interviews are also summarized.

We have analyzed adidas ads with the help from Aspers et al (2004) and the different concepts they discuss in their book. We are using three concepts from Aspers et al (2004) and we chose to add two concepts. We feel it is important to discuss the believed target group for the advert, and a final analyse discussion off the advert. Therefore, five heading are used in the picture interpretation. We start with explaining the pictures as it is (content), then we describe the material and form of it. After that we summarised our performed open-individual interviews where ten women describing the presented adidas adverts. Then we followed up with comparing the adidas adverts with other adverts we found similar, but obviously different. The last concept is our own interpretation, where we have the analysis discussion.

All the material collected from different adidas’ campaigns contains only females. We have chosen to first describe the adverts and their physical appearance, thereafter we analyse their meanings. We have chosen to analyse six adverts from Adidas and they are presented in chronological order.
6.1 Picture 1:

Content – In this advert a woman is outside jogging, probably in a forest or in a park. We get the feeling she is training for a race in the near future and she is enjoying herself while doing it. There is pulse meter and a message/text on the ad, “My steps get longer and easier. For every session my body’s ability to absorb oxygen improves. It is called fitness, but I know better. It is called power. My own power.” In the left corner of the photograph, the adidas logo is presented, with the slogan “forever sport”. The photo is entirely black and white, except for a pattern above the text, the pattern looks like the pattern on a heart rate monitor and the colour is a dark orange, almost earth coloured. The background and the body are blurred and the only thing in clear focus is her face. Her eyes are looking straight ahead and she seems unaware of everything but running.

Form and material – This advert is taken from a Swedish magazine but it was also presented in both a booklet and magazines. The booklet was created for an adidas “Women” campaign in 2000.

Open-individual interviews – The majority thought that the advert is intended for professional athletes, who value functional clothes of high quality. Only a few of the respondents felt they could identify with the advert. The majority did not think that they would notice the advert in a magazine, since they were not appealed by the picture. They also felt a strong link between adidas and sports, at least more than previous adverts.

Comparisons – The image that we chose to compare this advert with is from iForm magazine, a health and fitness magazine for women. The similarity in these pictures is that they both show a woman on her own, running. That is however the only thing the pictures have in common. We chose this picture to show the difference between the typical female advert and the not so typical adidas advert. These adverts are directed to very different women. The black and white advert is aimed to women who care about their healthy living, without making a real effort to look her best. The other advert is in the middle of a city, probably on a rooftop, which indicates that she is a “typical” city girl; who cares about fashion at the same time as she is working out. It looks like she is posing and overdoing it.
Analysis – This advert is aimed at women who take their fitness and their sport seriously. There is no glamour in the photograph, just a woman and her running. The colour scheme is black and white and this points to seriousness and serenity. The blurred background indicates speed but also that none of the things around her matters, not the surroundings or the looks of her outfit. Her face and the adidas logo on her shirt are the only things in focus and this lets us know her priorities. She gives the impression that she wants function from her clothes and shoes and she does not care about fancy colours or trendy gyms. She has a no nonsense attitude about her sport of choice. The text is very focused on performance, it does not encourage the playful behaviour we saw in the previous advert. This woman has a goal and the goal is power. The text “forever sport” also gives us the impression that it is the main focus. This woman runs because it makes her feel good, not because she wants to look good. We believe the target group for this ad is women, between the ages of 20 and 45. It is not aimed to young, trendy, impressional women in big cities but rather strong aware women who can not live without their exercise. We think that this advert is quite masculine, it carries no obvious typical female traits other than the female model, but if she was replaced with a man it could easily be an advertisement for men.
6.2 Picture 2:

Content – This picture is taken from a campaign when Anna Kournikova was the model for an adidas shoe called climacool, with ventilation. Anna Kournikova is a famous tennis player who was at her best, rated top 10 in the world. This is the only adidas advert that we are analyzing that has a famous and successful model.

Kournikova is smiling coyly towards the camera and is standing on a pavement over a ventilation system, trying to hold her dress down from the wind blow from underneath. There are people in the background passing by and the scene appears to take place be in the middle of the day in a larger city.

Form and material – This advert was part of a big campaign worldwide 2001, with Anna Kournikova as the female model. David Beckham was also apart of this campaign, as the male model on separate adverts. The advertisements appeared in several magazines and as a poster in sports shops. This picture doesn’t really imply what company is behind the advert.

Open – individual interviews – None of the respondents felt that they could identify with the picture. The majority thought that the advert was directed to men, because there is a sexual tension in the picture. All the interviewees did react to the mismatch between the shoes and the dress, some of them thought that the advert was for the dress. Only a few recognised Anna Kournikova as the model.

Comparisons – We found it obvious that the advert resembles to the sex symbol Marilyn Monroe, when she is posing over the ventilation system. This photograph is one of the most known of the actress Marilyn Monroe, it is kind of a cult picture. The similarities are many, the way they are holding down the dress with their hands, and they are both blonde sex symbols. Both the women are also posing on an open street with a sensual smile on their faces.
Analysis – This advert is selling women shoes and therefore we think that it is probably directed to women, but since there is an obvious sexual insinuation in the photo, we think it is also aimed to attract men. From our point of view it can also be a way to get publicity in debates. It is a controversial advert with a sexual tension, which can be perceived as provocative. There is nothing really sporty about the advert, except Anna Kournikova as the model, but she is taken out of her natural environment as a tennis player and placed in normal casual clothes with nothing other than her looks to remind us of who she is. We think that the combination of the dress she is wearing and the shoes is a mismatch and this is something that women are very likely to pick up on, and be less attracted by. This seems to be an effort to show people that adidas is not only sports but can be worn in everyday life as fashion. We base this on the environment she is in and the clothes she is wearing. The focus is not mainly on the shoes but on her and the sexy pose she is in and we think that this is what adidas is trying to sell.

It is however hard to identify, with the situation she is in, because the picture feels much arranged and unnatural, partly due to the resemblance of the famous Marilyn Monroe photo. We find it quite peculiar that adidas, the sport brand, wants to be connected with the image that Marilyn Monroe is representing. It is essential to make the consumer experience a feeling of identification if a campaign is to be successful. This advert does not make us relate to sports or functional shoes and is not something that attracts sporty women. We do not identify with her and we think that this campaign is a failure as far as attracting women to buy adidas products. We think adidas lost credibility, unfortunately, by launching this campaign.
6.3 Picture 3:

Content – A woman is running on a harbour in this advert. The picture is showing the woman in profile, she has a very distinguished look on her face. The photo is taken from a distance, the focus is on the woman, but the background is playing a part of the advert. She is wearing functional sportswear and a pair of sunglasses. It is not obvious what brand this advert is promoting, but being in a booklet, this is not fully required.

Form and material – This advert is taken from a booklet made of adidas 2004 and the expected audience is women. In the end of the booklet there is a thorough explanation of the clothes because the booklet is sent out to suppliers and it is handed out in stores.

Open-individual interviews – All of the respondents reacted that the woman is running towards the water, they felt that the picture is not realistic. Many thought that she was probably a career minded woman; the sunglasses indicate a woman with fashion sense. The most part of the interviewees felt that this advert is aimed to women around 30 years old.

Comparisons – We chose to compare this advert with the previous adidas advert (picture 3). The differences we can see are that the first one is black and white, and the second is printed in colour. The latter advert makes it easier for the consumer to discern clothes and shoes. The background is clearer in picture 4 than picture 3. The photos are both advertising running equipment, but they are presented in two very different ways. The black and white photo seems to focus more on performance. The woman in the coloured photo has jogging more as a lifestyle and is concerned about how she looks while doing it. They are wearing almost exactly the same outfit, but the blonde woman still seems more elegant and more aware of how she looks. Even though the three of us are in the same age as the woman in the black and white photo, we relate more to the woman in the coloured photo. This is mainly because we can see resemblances in our own life ambitions.

Analysis – We think that the woman on the photo is secure in herself and strong enough to achieve her goals. We think this advert is supposed to attract women who want to
identify with the woman on the photo, which we interpret is a successful businesswoman, with a healthy and good lifestyle. She makes the jogging look easy, even though she is not a teenager anymore, it is clear that she is middle-aged. The message with this advert could be; using adidas helps you live active throughout your life. This picture is different from the other analysed photos. We feel that this is meant to attract grown-up women, who are thinking about their career or are in the middle of it. We can imagine ages 25-45 years old and this is their lifestyle; wherever they are, they exercise to feel good and to gain strength and power. Strength is an operative word in this picture. The woman looks strong and decisive but she is still feminine and even though she is in a tracksuit she has a touch of glamour to her. She wears the clothes because they suit the occasion and because they have the function she needs but she cares about how they and she looks when exercising.

6.4 Picture 4:

*Content* – The picture shows two women standing face to face, with their profiles turned towards the viewer. Both women have their hands in their pockets with hoods covering their hair. The background looks like a beach on a cloudy day, and the women give the impression of being about to go jogging or perform another form of physical activity. Both of the women are smiling and staring deep into each others eyes, they are standing very close together with their foreheads touching. We get the feeling that the women could be more than friends; there is a sexual tension in the photograph, evident through the intimate positioning and the suggestive smiles. The photograph is not really expressing any physical characteristics of the product. The only sign that this is an adidas advertisement is that one of the women is wearing a three-stripe sweat band on her arm. This photo is the first picture in the booklet. We think that this picture is the only photo with a sexual tension of 19 photos in the advertisement supplement. The inside of the cover of the booklet reads “The active woman expects cutting edge design, function and comfort. Our women’s collection reflects these needs, featuring products for both training and other aspects of everyday life. Be inspired by the world of the adidas woman for fall/winter 2004.”
**Form and material** – This picture is a part of an advertisement supplement that adidas gave out for women sports and the expected audience is mainly women. It comes from the same booklet as picture 4. This photograph is the only black and white photo in the booklet. The three-stripe wrist band is enough for the viewer to understand who the sender is, and the cover of the booklet also clearly states who is behind the booklet.

**Open-individual interviews** – All of the asked thought that it was a nice picture, because of the women’s position and also since it was in black and white. The majority reacted to the homosexual vibe between the women and only a few got the feeling that the women were close friends. Some gave comments that it would be more appropriate if it was a man and a woman on the photograph.

**Comparisons** – We find clear similarities to a Calvin Klein advertising from 1994 for the fragrance CK One. That picture shows two models dressed in black and white, facing each other with their profiles toward the camera. This campaign was very successful and won several awards and has been much debated. We get the feeling that the adidas ad is trying to imitate the Calvin Klein ad.

**Analysis** – We think that the target group is women between 25 and 40 years old. The models in the advertisement are slightly older than we are used to see in commercials. They give a mature and grown-up impression and this leads us to believe that the wanted target audience should strive to achieve these qualities as well, hence be slightly older and not teenagers.

The photo shows two women who are similar to each other, but there are two things that clearly distinguish them from each other, the colour of their hair and the colour of the hoodies. The dark haired woman is wearing white and the blond haired woman is wearing black. We think this is done to create more contrasts in the ad, contrasts aim to catch the attention of the viewer. This picture is made to appear spontaneous and just caught in a moment, but the audience probably realizes that is not the case. The posing and the smiles give the picture warmth, this contrast well with the black and white colors that indicate a toughness and strength of the women.

We think that this picture was chosen to be the first in the booklet to catch the viewer’s interest and inspire to continue to read the booklet. We think that it is an obvious copy of
the famous Calvin Klein ad but the sexual tension seems to be taken out of its context and it does not feel right selling sportswear. The booklet as a whole shows the women performing different sports together and even going out or just walking the streets. We think that this booklet is to show what kind of a person the adidas woman is. She uses her adidas clothes, not just when training but she thinks that they are trendy enough to be worn for other occasions. They give the impression of being strong and independent close friends. It is a beautiful photo but we cannot see what image adidas is trying to sell with this particular photo. We think that the sexual tension is there to intrigue the viewer, capture attention and add a dimension and a bit of ambiguity to the story told in the booklet. Even though the photo is very classical in its colouring and form, we still think that the trick used is quite simple and a bit cheap; this is particularly evident when seen on its own and not in the booklet.

6.5 Picture 5

*Content* – The advert portrays two women, outside jogging a sunny day. The location is somewhere in the countryside and both of them seems to be in good spirits and are smiling. The blonde woman’s hair is partly covering her face from the wind and movement when she turns around to face her friend. One of the women is in focus in the photograph and seems to be interrupted while running, by a touch on the back by the other women. We read the picture as it is a meeting between the two and it does not tell if it is a coincidence or a planned get-together. The women appear to be close friends and happy to see each other. The blonde woman is wearing adidas and this is very obvious through the three-stripes on her clothes.

*Form and material* – This advert is taken from a Swedish magazine, published in the spring of 2005. It clearly shows the adidas logo and the three stripes on both pants and top. We think the motive for that is, the advert is placed in a magazine, and it has to be obvious what brand is behind the advert.

*Open-individual interviews* – The general opinion was that the women on the picture seem to have fun while exercising, and it is obvious that the women are friends. A few of the asked felt that this advert was typical for exercise clothes, and that this advert would likely pass them by. Of all the analysed adverts this one got the most positive reactions,
probably because half of the asked felt that they could relate and identify with the women on the picture. They felt that the advert is aimed directly to them. The other half of the respondents felt that the advert is aimed to attract middle-aged women.

Comparisons – We chose to evaluate this photograph with an advert from Nivea, taken from a Swedish Elle Magazine. The photos are very comparable, both of them contains two smiling women that are touching each other in a friendly way. There seems to be a tight bond between the women, both of them are meeting up. The blonde woman seems to be picking the brunette up from an airport. The obvious difference between the two photographs is that the adidas advert signals movement as well as female friendship whilst the Nivea advert, even though also capturing a moment is more still. The women in the Nivea advertisement are also wearing smaller clothes and there are sexual insinuations in the photo.

Analysis – This advert is containing one blonde and one dark haired woman. We think that this is a strategy to make more women to identify themselves with the models on the pictures. This is also a way to create contrast in the picture and this captures the attention of the viewer. The blonde is wearing black clothes and the brunette has a white top and that also brings contrast. This advert is trying to capture a moment, two friends who are happy to see each other or happy being out in the nature together. We think this advert is aimed at women in the age range of 18-35 years old.

There is nothing in this picture that would attract men and there are no sexual innuendos. The women are not showing a lot of skin and from what we can tell they are not wearing a lot of make-up. It is a very natural, “spur of the moment” photograph that gives us the feeling of warmth and happiness. The message seems to be that wearing adidas performance clothes makes the user joyful and healthy. The women in the photograph are not hardcore competitive athletes; there is a playful element to the image presented. These women enjoy exercise and they give a vital and fit impression. This is most likely the target group too, women that are not elite athletes but exercise because they enjoy it and want to be healthy.
6.6 Picture 6:

*Content* – This picture shows a woman jumping through a cloud in a very blue sky. Whilst jumping, she is breaking a hole in the clouds and she has a goal-oriented expression on her face. This picture is not really showing the clothes or shoes it is supposed to advertise. The logo on the left hand side of the advert get hold of the viewers’ attention immediately and it connects the following page to adidas without a problem. It is also very clear that Stella McCartney is the designer of the clothes presented in the advert. The adidas logo is only a fifth of the size of the Stella McCartney logo.

*Form and material* – This advert is on two following pages on the same spread. On the first page, there are only heaven and the adidas logo by Stella McCartney. On the other side a woman running or doing a jump in the sky and in the corner the advert refer to the adidas/Stella McCartney homepage. This advert is taken from the Swedish magazine Elle.

*Analysis and target group* – Compared to other adverts we have analyzed from adidas, the other ads are more about women laughing with their friends and are just “caught in a moment”. This advert is more competitive and is more focused on sports performance in combination with good design. The woman on the photograph appears to us as being strong by herself. She does not need a friend by her side to achieve her goal.

*Comparisons* – We chose to compare this advert with one for Lacoste perfume from a British Elle magazine. Both of the photographs are portraying a woman, weightless in the sky. The woman on the Lacoste ad is reaching for something in the sky with her hand. Both of them have their hair let down and a distinguished look on their faces. We get the feeling that they are both concentrated and are trying to reach something; which could be a mental goal. The woman in the adidas ad is however moving and she is forceful, the woman in this ad is just hanging in the air, posing. This picture seems arranged in comparison to the adidas photo and not at all as natural. This woman is obviously a model whilst the other woman could be anyone.
Analysis – This advertisement differs from the others. Previously it has been either about performance or about women having fun together. This advert seems to be more about the brand and the image than the actual sport. The colours are clear and the form is young and fresh. This is clearly a campaign directed to young trendy women. These are women who want to look good in a gym, doing a sport that is considered to be “in” like pilates, yoga or combat. This woman is not running alone in the forest. This advert is more competitive and is more focused on sports performance in combination with good design. The woman on the photograph seems to be strong. She does not need a friend by her side to achieve her goal. Stella McCartney/ adidas clothes and shoes are only sold in Stockholm and Gothenburg, and big cities around Europe although the campaign is nationwide. This makes perfect sense since the advert seems to be directed to women who are aware of trends and Stella McCartney; these women live first and foremost in bigger cities.

This campaign advert, which is collaboration between Stella McCartney and adidas, is probably directed towards younger women willing to spend more money on sports equipment, and get fashion design with it. The other advertisements seemed aimed at selling products and this is the first that is clearly brand building campaign, and we find this very interesting. Even though this is the first brand building campaign, the brand in focus is not adidas, it is Stella McCartney. It is obvious that adidas is trying to get the Stella brand values to rub off on them and give them a more clear image. The ad is on a two page spread and one page, the first is completely dedicated to the logos. The model is second most important thing and the clothes are hardly distinguishable. She is wearing the collection but it is hard to see what the clothes actually look like. The clothes are not in focus and neither is the model. The model is quite anonymous, her face is not clearly visible and she is quite average looking. She could be anyone which is obviously a good base for identification. On the other hand she is not stunningly pretty or remarkable in any way so that we feel that we want to identify with her. She is anonymous and does not take any attention from the main focus, which seems to be the brand names.
7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is a new trend in consumer behaviour; women are getting a bigger influence in buying decisions. Companies realize this and redirect their advertising towards women (Svenssson, interview). Women do not only buy for themselves, they also make the majority of purchases for their children and they can affect the buying decisions of the men around them. Women are responsible for about 80% of individual consumer spending (Cohan, 2001) and therefore they can no longer be ignored by a brand of adidas size. They have collections for women and have had for many years but they have never succeeded in becoming dominant in the female sportswear market nor add substantial female values to their brand.

As a consequence of changes, women nowadays have greater involvement and access to organized sports (Alreck, 1994). Adidas need to understand these changes, so that their brand building strategies become appealing to the “modern” woman. Gender roles have widened significantly and the masculine and feminine roles have overlapped with each other. This means that the adidas product, brand managers and promoters, have to decide what symbols and models they should associate the brand with when gendering it.

Behaviours that are associated to consumption can also be gendered. The branding and marketing strategies should also be different depending on who the target is. (Costa, 1994)

Brands have the ability to bring certain attributes to mind and create value to the product and the consumer (Kotler, 2003). The values adidas want to distinguish their brand with are; authentic, inspirational and innovative. Other than these values adidas is associated with sport, quality and the three stripes. The attributes that adidas have tied to their brand, through their marketing strategy are mainly male and this makes it easy for men to identify with the product and buy it. Adidas have done exactly what the “doctor prescribed”. They have identified a main target audience, men 15-35 years old. Their market mix have been adjusted to suit this segment perfectly, football, big championships and team sports, all traditional and very male. They have never aimed especially to target women and this is obvious in marketing budgets (Molander, interview) as well as in the list of sponsored athletes (appendix 4).

Adidas have decided to change this and direct more resources to make their brand more appealing to females. They want to build stronger brand name awareness and to be the
first brand that comes to consumers minds. Adidas call their main segment for women “athletic stylite”. The average age of this group is 27 years old; a third of this segment is expected to be between 21 and 30 years old. She is typically living in a city or a suburban residence and quite often she is still in education. The athletic stylite thinks that a designer label improves her image, she likes expensive designer brands and she thinks that the things she wears are a reflection of who she is. She is well aware of new trends and has her own style and she likes attention. Sport is a big part of her life. She wants the best functions but it is imperative to still be stylish. Adidas have formed a strategy that suits this segment and this has led to a collaboration with Stella McCartney.

The sports market is not typical for basic gender attributes. In sports, women can be more wilful and strong and we think that it can even be negative for adidas to portray women as too gentle and tender. The traditional gender stereotypes and prohibitions are only valid if the target market culturally is likely to live by traditional values and traditional sex roles. Sweden is the most equal country in the world and therefore the Swedish women are more tolerant to cross over gender barriers than for example German women (Hofstede, 2001). Adidas campaigns are however global and this can be problematic when the different areas have various approaches to traditional gender roles. The women in a conservative country might have a hard time identifying with a strong female advert and a more liberal culture might take offence by traditional values. Women in general find it easier to use masculine brands than the other way around (Alreck, 1994). We believe that a combination of the basic male and female attributes is most likely to succeed and adidas have achieved just that in their Stella McCartney by adidas advertisement (see picture 6).

The older the buyer, the more likely they are to ascribe to traditional sex roles. There is an age threshold of 45 years, and below that the majority of consumers are less sensitive to gender prohibitions (ibid). Adidas’ target audience is younger than 45 years old and they should be aware of the increased tolerance that this brings. The target group is more often white-collar consumers, especially well-educated professionals. These are often less attached to gender roles and will not be as inclined to buy a product with a pure masculine or feminine image.

It is very difficult to un-gender a brand once the gendered choice has been introduced (ibid). Adidas is a masculine brand (Molander, interview) and therefore adidas should be careful to cross over too strongly. Failed efforts when gendering a brand usually result in the necessity to withdraw the brand completely from the market and start afresh with a new, un-gendered brand. Alreck (1994) Gender credibility is vital; we think that adidas have acted correctly and chosen a female target audience that is tolerant towards the masculine values. Therefore there is no risk of them crossing over too far and alienating their “original” male consumers.

Brands and the values they bring to the consumer have become more and more important to both companies and consumers (Nilson, 2000). We think that adidas mainly created the Stella McCartney line not to sell clothes, but to build their brand. The values from this line will spill over not only to the other Women collections but to the brand as a whole.
By choosing Stella McCartney as a collaborator, adidas are taking a short-cut into the consciousness of women. They are able to adopt the brand associations that are connected with Stella McCartney and merge them with their own brand associations. This is not unusual for companies to do and we think it will prove to be very effective (Svensson, interview). Both adidas and Stella McCartney are brands that include very strong values. Adidas is known for their high tech functional clothes and the perceived quality is high. Stella McCartney is a trendsetter and famous for her designs, the combination of the two brands and their brand associations is very interesting and sure to get attention. Adidas call their new positioning “perfect fusion of performance and style”. The customers that feel loyalty towards Stella McCartney are likely to transfer that loyalty to the new line and this will increase the tolerance for and the positivism towards adidas.

The product materials are not altered, but the design is obviously changed by Stella McCartney. The adidas logo is not adjusted, but it is combined with the very feminine Stella McCartney logo. This is a way for adidas to gender their brand and achieve brand equity among women, without it having a negative effect on their male consumers.

Brand communication has two main challenges; to draw attention to the brand and to build the brand profile. (Nilsson, 2000) Advertising has the power to change a set of values held by the collective majority. It can influence people to switch their attitude regarding things, even things that they feel strongly about. (Cohan, 2003) Consumers need to be reminded constantly and it is important that the brand is consistent in its communication. Consistency and repetition are tools used by all successful communication campaigns and we think that this is where adidas have failed previously. Even though they have performed several campaigns directed to women during the past five years, the campaigns were designed very differently and they did not send the same message. The adverts differs immensely from each other, they are all selling different things to different targets. There is no uniformity, nor an obvious “adidas woman” to identify with and we think that this is vital when trying to add values and associations with a brand.

We have analysed adidas advertisements directed to women the past five years and tried to figure out what type of woman they were trying to reach and why they have not been successful in adapting their brand to women. Women respond differently to advertisements than men. Catterall et al (2000) and Myers-Levy and Sternthal (1991) claim that women are more likely to elaborate on a message and to make greater use of the cues in an advert. They also found that women’s processing often involved greater sensitivity to details in the message. Women dig deeper into the message and uses an effortful strategy to search for inconsistency and to examine all the relevant information. They are therefore more likely to have increased compassion and sensitivity to the details of the message. (Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran, 1991) Women were also found to be more focused on the body language in printed ads (Catterall et al, 2000).

Adidas have attempted several different things and made adverts for different women, almost as if to see what is working. Unfortunately, their efforts seems to have lacked
Discussion and Conclusion

perseverance since they have only stuck with an image for a year or two and it takes a lot longer to change an association with the brand.

The adverts are all very different from each other, it seems like adidas have had no real target group that they have tried to penetrate. They have tried selling with function, the same way they sell to men. The first advert we analysed, from 2000, is black and white; a quite masculine image. It is clearly focusing on serious performance and not on relationships with friends or light-hearted fun. After this adidas made a complete change and started using a sexy sporty model, in Anna Kournikova. This indicates that the previous campaign was not a success. However, the women we interviewed felt that this picture was fake and arranged and that it was more directed to men than to women. The interviewees found it hard to identify with this image and from our perspective the campaign was a failure in selling an image that appeal to women.

In the booklet where pictures 3 and 4 were found, we can tell that adidas has started to consider the image and life of their target audience. There is more style and the photos are more artistic with more to them than just a woman in sportswear, they tell a story and even if the story sometimes is slightly dubious, for example in picture 4 where there are a clear sexual tension between the women. We think that adidas seem to be on their way to forming the image that they want people to have. The fifth picture is feminine, playful and warm. This is not for professional athletes and is not selling sex; but female friendship and the concept of exercising with your friends to feel good. This advert was very popular among the women we interviewed and it clearly tells us that adidas have found a more successful concept.

The final photo is from the second campaign promoting adidas by Stella McCartney, this picture is evidently different from the previous ones. This is more fashionable and more stylish, it is less hands-on sports, no woman running in her natural environment or playing with her friends. This is selling an image and a concept rather than just a tracksuit. It is a fantasy and it is glossy and glamorous combined obviously with some kind of athletic activity. It is more Stella McCartney and less traditional adidas.

Adidas have tried many different identities and designs to attract women, too many in our opinion. Over five years they have presented five different identities, each with different focus and with different brand associations. They have to be more persistent and stay with one chosen identity. The Stella McCartney collaboration continues until 2010 and this could provide adidas with the consistency they need. We think that the lack of uniformity is one of the biggest reasons for their failure, but also that they have not been very clear of who they want to reach, and the best way of achieving this. We do however think that adidas throughout their adverts present a healthy ideal of a woman. They are not depicting women as weak, confused or needy nor have they chosen models that are very skinny or stand for unnatural beauty.

It is possible to sell products to women with just a healthy model whilst men will not go for just any male model in sportswear, they want a profile, a profile is perceived as a guarantee that the clothes and the shoes are of the desired quality. Therefore we think it is
less important for adidas to sign female spokespersons. Women are however, likely to identify themselves with other women and this can be achieved through promoting a strong female profile. Women in general look at more than just the athletic skill, they want to obtain an image, a way of life and the person selling the shoe has to be more than just good at her sport.

7.1 Conclusion

In the first chapter of our thesis we posed three questions and our aim was to answer them. The questions were:

- **Why have adidas not succeeded with their communication towards women in the last five years?**

  Adidas have presented five different identities over five years, each with diverse focus and with different brand associations. We think that the lack of consistency and perseverance is the basis for failure, but also that they have not been very clear of who their target group is. In general, gender roles have widened considerably, and we think that Adidas have not been up to date with these changes in consumer behaviour. Therefore their brand building strategies and communication have not been appealing to the “modern” woman.

- **How do adidas form their communication to reach women and make the adidas brand appealing to females?**

  Adidas have decided to direct more resources to make their brand more attractive to women. To do this, a collaboration with Stella McCartney was established. We think that adidas created this line to build their brand and to take a short-cut into the consciousness of women. They are able to adopt the Stella McCartney brand associations and merge them with their own. The “Stella McCartney by adidas” advert communicates differently then adidas previous adverts. It is more fashionable and stylish and less hands-on sports. This sells an image and a concept rather than just sportswear. The advert is glamorous combined with athletic touch.

  The plan is that the Stella McCartney values will have a spill over-effect, not only to the other Women collections, but to the brand as a whole. The Stella McCartney collaboration continues until 2010 and this could provide adidas with the consistency they need.
• **What message are they trying to convey, who is the typical adidas woman?**

Adidas call their new positioning “perfect fusion of performance and style”, they want their female consumers to realise that fashion and functionality are not mutually exclusive. The adidas sportswear is a combination of the two. The typical adidas woman is around 27 years old, lives in a bigger city. She is educated, athletically active and interested in fashion and style. This target group is less attached to traditional gender roles and will therefore not be discouraged by the masculine values that are associated with the adidas brand.
REFERENCES

Literature


References


References


Internet sources

Appendix 1

Interview with Pernilla Molander, Lifestyle Communication Manager, adidas

Branding
Pernilla thinks that the brand adidas is very masculine, their largest and most profitable segment is football and indoor sports for example floor ball and handball and these are all sports that are first and foremost connected with men and therefore the brand is perceived as masculine. Adidas Nordic is however trying to change this and make the brand more accessible to women and therefore they have commenced a venture to attract women. The head office in Germany has never had the female collections as a big priority but it seems as though this is about to change. Traditionally very little of the marketing budget has been spent on women and the women lines. Adidas is divided into segments, one of the segments is called Women and examples of other segments are Football, Running (within this segment there are lines for both women and men but for future reference, when Pernilla is talking about Women she is talking about the general sportswear directed to women but not necessarily to a specific sport). Now that the venture to attract women has begun, adidas is placing more money on this particular segment but there is still an enormous difference between the amount spent on Women and the amount spent on for example Football.

When it comes to core values adidas do not use the terms male or female, instead they talk about three original values that have been around since Adi Dassler started adidas in the 1920’s, the three values are authentic, inspirational and innovative. According to Pernilla there are no plans to alter these values or add new ones; instead adidas wants to reinforce the current ones. They want to go from being a well-known brand to being a loved brand and do this through tying strong feelings and emotions to their brand. Their goal for the Women segment is to become market leaders. Pernilla doesn’t think that an increased venture on Women will have a negative effect on the male aspects of the brand, quite the opposite. She says that women often shop for their husbands, boyfriends and children and this could only give positive effects. Adidas has no plans on developing a separate brand and a separate logo for women. Even though the current logo is quite masculine, they are symbols of sports and they have strong historic values and Pernilla thinks that that is valuable.

Advertising
No measures have been taken to ensure a more feminine touch to the brand as a whole but since the adidas brand includes so many different products, the advertising used is heavily adjusted to the specific segment. The football advertisements are very masculine because it is directed first and foremost to men, but the brand building commercials like the most recent campaign “Impossible is nothing” is made to attract both men and women so it included for example Laila Ali. If the target group is women then the advertisements are evidently created so that it appeals to women. When adidas wants to communicate
with women, they have chosen a position that they call “perfect fusion of performance and style”. Sport is the very core of the company even if they in recent years launched lifestyle collections like “Sports Heritage”. Their main focus is however high technological functional sport collections. Historically, the function has been the most important thing and style and design have been less significant and less important. Lately, this has however changed. The importance of style when selling sportswear to women is no longer underestimated, adidas has come to realize that women thinks that this is of great importance and that it can be the settling issue in a purchase. So adidas is now striving to improve in the design and style area.

When it comes to women adidas have two target groups, a main focus group called *athletic stylite* and a complimentary focus group called *athletic classic*. As previously mentioned adidas do not talk in terms of men and women but in terms of segments and the segment Women includes general sportswear for women. Approximately five percent of the current marketing budget is spent on this segment. This percentage will however increase now that adidas have decided to venture more towards women. The increased resources on women will not mean a decrease in other segments but should be regarded as a total expansion. Different segments have different focus periods, at the moment all focus is on football because of the World Cup in Germany but come fall a greater focus will be on women.

Adidas do not use television commercials to sell the women’s collection. This is first and foremost because of the size of the budget; because the budget is not enormous they pick the most efficient way of communicating in relationship to their funds. Television and cinema are by far the two most expensive media and there is not enough money to use these in a satisfactory manner. Adidas will not try to respond to their competition’s television commercials directed to women, they want to compete on their own terms and will instead put resources on more personal events like girls theme nights in shops etcetera. They have for example carried out events in connection with different product launches with large department stores where adidas has gained access to the store’s customer database and through that made large direct advertising. Adidas has also arranged events with Elle magazine and had the opportunity to use their subscription database. Adidas very rarely chooses to work with discounts on their events, instead they work with happenings like fashion shows, snacks, drinks and competitions.

Women Indoor is not used in any advertising campaigns at all at the moment; the only marketing directed to women is the adidas by Stella McCartney lines. Any other marketing measures are done in smaller scale by adidas and chosen stores or smaller local circulars in cooperation with local stores.

During the last couple of years the advertisements have not changed much, Pernilla thinks that the main difference is that the advertisements are more stylish and more focused on image and design. Adidas wants to differentiate their products and their brand by combining high technology products with cutting edge design, and through this make clothes and shoes that are stylish and adjusted to specific sports. Pernilla thinks that the collections have a 50 % design focus and a 50 % function focus.
Adidas has no specific slogans just for the Women collections, the only slogans used are the ones for the entire brand, the most recent one being “Impossible is nothing” and before that adidas promoted “Forever Sport”. There are no differences between different countries; the advertising is the same everywhere in the world.

Adidas prefers to use models for their advertisements that are healthy and well-built rather than the skinny fashion models from the catwalk. They sell clothes made for different sports and workouts and therefore they choose models that stand for an ideal that sends out signals that are appreciated by women who work out. Fitness and health are keywords in the choice of model. The chosen size for samples is a size 38 (a size 10) which requires the model to always be that size to fit in the clothes.

Adidas don’t take any particular actions to create loyal customers other than build their brand and try to maintain a high level of product quality.

**Adidas by Stella McCartney**
Adidas have quite recently launched a new top collection for women; this line is the only one they have chosen to communicate to women and that is adidas by Stella McCartney. A new collection is released twice a year in five different product updates and the collaboration will continue until 2010. This collection is launched and communicated through media and adidas is hoping for a trickle down effect that is that the image from Stella McCartney is going to “rub off” on the less expensive and less exclusive collections that are sold in sport shops all over the country. The Stella McCartney line is also hoping to help build the brand at large. Adidas has trough marketing surveys found out that the best way to reach their target group is through women’s magazines. The Stella collection is advertised only in Elle magazine in Sweden and those ads are complemented with ads in newspapers around the time of the launch and around pay day. Adidas also use alternative marketing such as campaigns in the windows of large department stores. The distribution of the Stella collection is very limited and controlled; it is only sold in Stockholm and Gothenburg in Sweden and only in a few selected stores. This distribution concept is applied throughout the world. All distribution channels are carefully chosen after a number of criteria to not loose the exclusiveness of the line.

The Stella line is first and foremost aimed at people in larger cities whilst the Women Indoor collections with for example the three stripes lines are sold in stores all over the country and are aimed at the more general consumer. The fashion aim is not however solely for the Stella line, adidas wants to combine fashion and function in their other collections too.

Adidas does not have many spokespersons for the women segment. Stella McCartney can be seen as a spokesperson since she stands for certain values that she brings with her signature on the collections. Adidas is however planning to spend more resources on the Women segment and will therefore look for women that can represent their values in a good way. They say that when choosing a spokesperson the positioning “fusion of
performance and style” will be a key aspect. They have recently signed the tennis player Maria Kirilenko to model and wear Stella McCartney’s tennis line.

Consumer behaviour
Adidas performed a survey to identify their main target group. They call their main segment for women “athletic stylite”. The average age of this group is 27 years old, she can be older or younger but a third of this segment is expected to be between 21 and 30 years old. She is typically living in a city or a suburban residence and quite often she is still in education. The characteristic personality needs are defined as “sexy, seductive”, “wealthy, successful”, “perfect”. The segment spends its money on clothes, shoes, mobile telephony and music. The athletic stylite thinks that a designer label improves her image, she likes expensive designer brands and she thinks that the things she wears are a reflection of who she is. She is well aware of new trends and people come to her to ask for advice when they want to buy something. She has her own style and she likes attention and to stand out in a crowd. Sports is a very important part of her life, she sees herself as an athlete, mostly for leisure but also for competition. She wants the best functions but it is important to still be stylish. She works out 2-5 times a week, she can be interested in any mainstream sport but quite often it is gym and fitness that she is involved in. She is a member of a fitness centre and being fit and healthy is very important to her.
Appendix 2

Interview with Jonas Carlström, Sports Marketing Manager, adidas

Branding
Jonas says that adidas have never ventured to women to any greater extent and this has obviously been reflected in their choices of spokesperson. The focus has been mainly on men and football and the sponsorship contracts have been signed accordingly. Starting from fall 2006 however a large venture towards women will begin and since a larger budget will be assigned to the women segment there will also be new and better opportunities to find strong spokespersons that will attract women. Adidas strive to get better and to gain a stronger position among females and this will have consequences for the sports marketing. The image that adidas want for their women sport profiles is a strong woman who is very skilled in her chosen sport but more importantly has a distance to her sport and can stand for other values that are appealing to women as well. Adidas have a very clear image of what qualities their female spokesperson should have, they are not looking to sell with sex (as they were when using Anna Kournikova as a model) they are now striving to find someone with dignity, health and a more elegant touch. Jonas thinks that Jenny and Susanna Kallur are ideal spokespersons for adidas. They have also recently signed Veronica Wagner, rated the 8th best gymnast in the world. Gymnastics is not a big selling sport for adidas but she represents the values and the image that adidas want for their brand. She will not make leotards a huge selling success but she will convey a message and a statement concerning the brand. Adidas have also recently signed Djurgården/Älvsjö as their first female football team in Sweden and this is one step towards their new profiling towards women. This might not either generate a huge selling boom of football shoes but it follows the trend in society that women are moving up in typically male sports. Jonas says that it is sometimes more expensive to sign women, quite often they do not make as much money doing their sport and therefore they need more out of their sponsor deals than men do. He also thinks that it is harder to find strong female profiles than it is to find male ones, at least when it comes to “superstars”. Adidas has started signing women but it is still mainly gym instructors (adidas has an ongoing collaboration with World Class Gyms) and other low profile athletes for example Natalie Rosenberg who is a member of the dance group Bounce.

Consumer behaviour
Jonas says that having Henrik Larsson or David Beckham as poster names for adidas football shoes actually generate larger sales of football shoes. Men see someone who is good at something and they try to buy the skill. This is different for women, just because Victoria Svensson wears a certain shoe and is a good football player and is a good football player does not mean that women will want to buy the shoe. Women in general look at more than the skill, they want to obtain an image, a way of life and the person selling the shoe has to be more than just good at her sport.
Appendix

Adidas is looking for women that are healthy and normal and that are sporty and cool. They should be easy to relate to. Jonas says that they are even open to the possibility to have profiles that are not involved in sports at all but that have the right image. Jonas says that for women it is possible to sell products with just a healthy model whilst men will not go for just any male model in sportswear, they want a profile, a profile is perceived as a guarantee that the clothes and the shoes are of the desired quality. Women do not seem to have the same need and therefore fewer female profiles are signed.
Appendix 3

Interview with Janne Svensson, Project leader, Clara advertising agency

Branding
Janne is convinced that advertising has a huge impact on a brand. All a brand really is is a place in our brain with certain values and associations tied to it and a judgement from the individual whether to like or dislike the brand in question. This decision is based on the information that the individual has obtained and quite often, the only information available is the information communicated by the company through advertising. He thinks that it is possible to build a brand solely relying on advertising. Remaining a strong brand is harder since many different things can happen to damage the reputation, for example when H&M used child labour. If the brand is liked this could however soften the blow. One of the main reasons for building a strong brand is that the consumer in general has a bigger tolerance for failure if they decided to like the brand.

Janne does not think that the importance of advertising in brand building will decrease or change. It will continue to be essential, only the means to carry out the information will change.

In his opinion, adidas is a very masculine brand and women are getting more and more dominant when it comes to consumption and purchasing (this he discusses more in detail later on). He thinks that adidas saw that they could no longer ignore the female buying power and looked for a way to gain access to the female market. By choosing Stella McCartney as a collaborator they are taking a short-cut into the consciousness of women and adopting the values that are connected with Stella McCartney and merging them with their own values. This way of adopting values is very common and mostly very effective. Janne thinks that this will definitely be effective and make the adidas brand more appealing to women. Brands can include very strong values and the combination of Stella McCartney and adidas is very interesting and sure to get attention.

Janne thinks that adidas created the Stella McCartney line, not to sell clothes but to build their brand. The values from this line will spill over not only to the other women collections but to the brand as a whole. According to Janne the choice of distribution for Stella McCartney is to protect the brand from overexposure and this is probably a good strategy, the negative side however is financial since not a lot of money can be made from small quantities. Adidas are protected from this since they have other lines that will keep them afloat.

According to Janne, Stella McCartney is one of the strongest high fashion brands around and she is immensely popular at the moment, and he thinks that adidas has made a very wise choice.
Advertising

According to Janne the main difference between advertising directed to women and advertising directed to men is the choice of media. The message tends to be less differentiated and it is becoming more and more alike with time, almost a kind of unisex message. Janne thinks that this trend will continue and that soon we will not be able to tell the messages directed to girls from the ones directed to men. Girls, however watch certain programs on television and they read certain magazines and this is where the advertisement really can be adjusted to the target group. For example, girls tend to watch American television series and read magazines like Elle, so the choice of media is essential to reach the wanted audience.

Colour and form are also becoming more and more unisex and colours that before were considered to be typical for a gender is now used to both genders. There are still certain differences, for example pastels are not used to attract men very often but black is now judged to be colour for both men and women. Today it can be hard to tell a commercial for women from a commercial for men, and this is a major change compared to twenty years ago. Girls are in general less sensitive to cross the gender barriers than what men are. There are however big demographic differences. People in big cities are generally less traditional and more inclined to try new things and they are less bound to their gender. Men in cities are more tolerant and this is often mirrored in advertising. Most companies strive to attract the people in the cities since this is where the trends are created and the large buying power is. The trends that start in the cities in general spread out in the country on their own.

A few years ago, advertisers attracted men with good looking women and women with handsome men but a new trend is becoming more obvious, that women rather want to see other women, identify themselves with them and see what they could be like. Consumers are so much better at screening advertisements today and to pick what they want to notice so the old way of just selling things with sex and good looking people often fall flat today, since the consumers demand more. To underestimate the consumer can have the opposite effect and instead make the consumer turn against the product and the brand. Another mistake that is made in a lot of advertisements is that it is made to appeal to too many people. This makes it bland and the consumer is not forced to make a decision about the product or the brand and then it is most likely to be forgotten. The trend in today’s society is to make a statement with the products you buy and

Janne thinks that for an advertisement to be appealing to consumers today it has to feel natural and achievable. The advert should sell an image of everyday life, ordinary but better than it is today. A good advertisement, whether it is a commercial or a photo, should tell a story that people can relate to and identify with.

This trend is also shown in the choice of models, at the moment the anorectic ideal is not the most popular choice, it is more okay to show a woman who has a normal body and therefore represents an ideal that is slightly more achievable. The aim is to get women to either think “I am her” or “I could be her”.

Appendix
Appendix

**Consumer behaviour**

The pattern of consumption has changed during the last five years. Women have a much greater influence in all purchases than was thought before and women are gaining more and more authority in these matters. This makes the woman the obvious target that all companies want to reach with their brands and their advertisements. For example, buying a television used to be considered typically male and most advertising was directed only to attract men, but recently it has been discovered that women have a lot bigger influence and opinions on not only how it should look to fit in to the home but also on technical features. Women have even completely taken over some of the classically male purchases; hence the trend is very clear. More and more companies are realizing this and therefore redirected their advertising to women. It seems as though women have become more familiar with the masculine aspects of consumption and they seem to think “I can do this”. Janne thinks that it is the woman who is taking initiative to go into male territory and take more and more control.

Women analyze more when they see a commercial than what men do and are therefore more sensitive to mistakes made by the advertisers. There are constantly surveys performed to investigate what appeals to women and what women want. This development and shift in focus have become very clear in the last five years.

Another trend in society at large is that consumers are dividing into smaller groups but despite this they are gaining more and more influence and strength. Mass communication does not at all work in the same way it used to, it has enormous problems reaching out in today’s media climate. The consumer today is more aware and more critical; consumers also know they have power and that they can affect brands and companies. A brand can gain credibility and loose it over night if they make a wrong step or get bad publicity. Since the trend behind the smaller consumption groups is that people strive to be unique and state their identities with certain brands and products there is a huge danger if a product becomes too main stream and that “everyone has one”, when a trend gets to big, the trendsetters will automatically start breaking out and look for a new trend. Janne thinks that in all big trends and anti-trend is created, the anti-trend is very likely to take over and become the next big trend. Companies should therefore be aware of that the market force will put an end to a trend that is too homogenous. This naturally fuels a search for new and groundbreaking products and advertising.

Trends today are faster and shorter than they used to be and the groups taking the trends to heart are smaller and this creates the perfect environment for new brands to enter markets.

It has also become a lot harder to create advertisements to reach consumers and to get them to listen. In the early days of advertising companies just used a lot of superlatives and even lies but the consumer sees straight through that today. Getting people to listen to your message is the real challenge today.
Appendix

Sports Marketing Sweden 2006

Football Events
- Champions League – official supplier

Landslag
- Tyskland
- Argentina
- Frankrike
- Spanien
- Trinidad & Tobago
- Danmark
- Lettland
- Finland
- Grekland
- Nigeria
- Syd-Afrika
- Canada
- Japan
- China
- Saudi Arabien
- Rumänien

Klubblag

**International**
- Real Madrid
- AC Milan
- Chelsea (fr 06/07)
- Liverpool FC (fr 06/07)
- Bayern Munchen
- Ajax Amsterdam
- Olympic Marseilles
- Newcastle utd
- Rosenborg
- Bayer Leverkusen
- Schalke 04
- Anderlecht
- Club Brugge
- Benfica
- Glatasaray
- Fenerbache
- PAOK Aten
- Panathinaikos
- Dynamo Kiev
- Bröndby IF
- Viking Stavanger
- Bodø Glimt
- HJK Helsingfors
- Strasbourg
- Grasshoppers
- Legia Warzawa
- Slavia Prag
- Rapid Wien
- Le Havre
- Nürnberg
- River Plate
- Fluminese FC
- Dalian FC
- Yokohama
- FC Tokyo
- MLS League (US)

**Local**
- Djurgårdens IF
- IFK Göteborg
- AIK
- GIF Sundsvall
- IF Brommapojkarna
- Åtvidabergs FF
- Djurgården/Älvsjö dam
Appendix

...Football
Spelare – Elite

International
- Beckham (Real Madrid)
- Kaka (AC Milan)
- Raul (Real Madrid)
- Viera (Juventus)
- Ballack (Bayern Munchen)
- Lampard (Chelsea)
- Crespo (Milan)
- Gerrard (Liverpool)
- Makaay (Bayern Munchen)
- Nesta (AC Milan)

- Juninho (Lyon)
- Riquelme (Villa Real)
- Zidane (Real Madrid)
- Rui Costa (AC Milan)
- Campbell (Arsenal)
- Riise (Liverpool)
- Grönkjeur (Köln)

Local
- Larsson (FC Barcelona)
- Linderoth (Köpenhamn)
- Alexandersson (IFK)

- Eddie Gustafsson (Lyn)
- Hysén (DIF)
- Dorsin (Rosenborg)
- Fredrik Berglund (Esbjerg)
- Arneng (DIF)
- Bjersmøy (IFK)
- Mjällby (AIK)
- Jane Törnqvist (DIF/ÄFF)

Spelare – X-edge

International
- Cisse (Liverpool)
- Robben (Chelsea)
- Saviola (Monaco)
- Wright-Phillips (Chelsea)
- Kuranyi (Schalke 04)
- D’Allessandro (Arg)
- Del Piero (Juventus)
- Treziguets (Juventus)

- A. Cole (Arsenal)
- Duff (Chelsea)
- Tristan (La Coruna)
- Van Persie (Arsenal)

Local
- Wilhelmsson (Anderlecht)
- Elmander (Bröndby)
- Stenman (Leverkusen)
- Jonsson (DIF, ej SvFF)

- Sjölund (DIF)
- Concha (DIF)
- Barsom (DIF)
- Selakovic (IFK)
- Vasquez (IFK)
- Wendt (IFK)
- Mourad (?)
- Figureido (AIK)
- Morsom (AIK)
- Josefine Öqvist (LFF)

Track & Field/Running
Events

International
- London Marathon
- Prague Marathon
- Madrid Marathon
- Boston Marathon

- Berlin Marathon
- Rotterdam Marathon
- Milan Maraton
- Vancouver Marathon

Local
- Lidingöloppet
- GöteborgsVarvet

Landslag
- Frankrike
- Syd-Afrika
- Tjeckien

- Grekland
- Norge
- Etiopien

- Schweiz
- Cuba
- Bahamas
**Individer**
- Elena Isinbayeva (stavhopp)
- Jeremy Wariner (400m)
- Justin Gatlin (100m & 200 m)
- Keninisa Bekele (lång distans)
- Kim Collins (100 m)
- Maurice Green (100 m)
- John Capel (200 m)
- Katerina Thanou (100 m)
- Hestrie Cloete (höjdhopp)
- Haile Gebreselassie (10.000 m)
- Roman Sebrle (10 kamp)
- Andre Bucher (800 m)
- Mirella Manjani (spjut)
- Andreas Thorkildsen (spjut)
- m fl.

**Next generation**
- Alyson Felix (100m & 200m)
- Luis Xiang (110 m häck)
- Veronica Cambell (100m & 200m)

**Local**
- Oscar Jansson (stavhopp)
- Alfred Schenweta (lång distans)
- Magnus Bergman (lång distans)
- Rafael Askros (110 m häck)
- Louise Gundert (400 m häck)
- Daniel Ragnarsson (Spjut)
- David Frykholm (Längdhopp)

**Indoor**

**Handboll - lag**
- Frankrike
- Ryssland
- Sverige
- Danmark (tom apr-06)
- Kroatien
- Ungern
- Egypten
- Kiel
- Slagelse (Den)
- Redbergs lids IK
- IK Sävehof

**Handboll - spelare**
- Stefan Lövgren
- Kim Andersson
- Peter Genzel
- Jonas Larholm

**Innebandy - lag**
- Pixbo Wallenstam
- AIK Innebandy

**Innebandy - spelare**
- Niklas Jihde (AIK)
- Martin Olofsson (Alligators)
- Johan Andersson (Jönköping)
- Mikael Karlsson (Södertälje)
### Tennis Events

#### International
- Roland Garros

#### Local
- adidas tennis camp

### Individer

#### Men
- Andre Agassi
- Marat Safin
- Guillermo Coria
- Paradorn Srichaphan
- Tim Henman
- Fernando Gonzalez
- Robin Söderling
- Jonas Björkman
- Bryan Bros. (dubbel)

#### Women
- Justine Henin-Hardenne
- Nadia Petrova
- Vera Zvonareva
- Patty Schnieder
- Dinara Safina
- Alicia Molik
- Anna Lena Groenefeld

#### Next generation
- Novak Djokovic
- Jeremy Chardy (Jr)
- Stanislas Wawrinka

### Other

#### Basketball
- Tracy MacGrady (Huston Rockets)
- Kevin Garnett (Minnesota Timberwolves)
- Tim Duncan (San Antonio Spurs)
- Alba Berlin
- Real Madrid CF
- Panathinaikos

#### Golf
- Ian Thorpe
- Sergio Garcia
- Ernie Els