Bachelor Thesis:

Interior Design as a way to Convey Corporate Visual Identity
We want to say Thank You

To our tutor Dan Halvarsson for his patience, excellent guidance and support.

We want to give special thanks and gratitude to the participating companies Moodus, Granqvist Design and INSIDESIGN who were very generous with something as scarce as time. This made it possible to collect crucial information for our study.

To our families and partners for all the love and support that they have given us. For encouraging us through the whole process. That they opened up their homes on our travels and drove us back and forth to airports and train stations.

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Abstract

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Title: Interior Design as a way to Convey Corporate Visual Identity

Keywords: Interior Design, Corporate Visual Identity, CVI, Corporate Identity, Physical Environment, Consistency

Background: Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) is a tool that consist of five main components: the corporate name, logo, font type, color palette and slogan/tagline. The CVI can be implemented on different carriers such as signage, interior elements and printed wear. However, the role of Interior Design as a carrier of CVI is not yet established.

Purpose: To establish the role of Interior as a carrier of Corporate Visual Identity

Methodology: A qualitative research was conducted, with a cross-sectional research design. The empirical data was collected through qualitative interviewing. The analysis was conducted through categorization of meanings and pattern matching.

Conclusion: The company’s environment is a vital factor for organizations when displaying the idea of itself to its customers, but the specific role that the interior has as a carrier of Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) has been a rather neglected subject in academic research. This study contains empirical evidence that confirms that the interior has a vital role as a carrier of CVI and that it is significant for maintaining consistency. Interior design that conveys CVI is not a cost, it is an investment; it creates an added value for the company and its customers that can be several times higher than the amount that the company invests in it.
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1.0 Introduction

Due to previous studies in interior design and visual merchandising an interest in the research subject was developed. Through a previous project on interior design and corporate visual identity the subject that this study addresses was discovered, which lead the authors to investigate it further. This study investigates the role of interior design as a mean to convey corporate visual identity (CVI). It examines the concept of interior design and CVI.

1.1 Background

History and theories on interior has often been narrated through the history/theories on architecture, where it is commonly regarded as rather superfluous “to a building’s integrity.” (Taylor, 2013, p.xiii). Taylor (2013) provides a collection of narratives on the phenomenon of interior decorating beginning from early nineteenth century. This was a time when women tried to decorate their homes in times of war and constant cultural changes, as the development of the western thought on design emerged (ibid).

The first development to what Taylor (2013) calls an ‘artistic’ interior trend seems to have happened during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when manufactured furniture became available for the European and USA’s middle classes, and with this “a desire to arrange them ‘tastefully’” (ibid, p.xvii). Further, a second development appears to have happened in the middle of the twentieth century, after the first and second world war, when ‘personality’ and identity became a bigger part of the home interior rather than a main focus of ‘keeping up appearances’ (Taylor, 2013).

However, Taylor (2013) further expresses a third development in the 1950’s and 1960’s when the terminology seems to have shifted from ‘interior decorator’ to ‘interior designer’. Taylor (2013, p.xx) mentions here that in 1964 journalist Dianna Rowntree; “[...]interpreted interior design to mean the ‘design of an environment’ rather than a problem of display”. Further, Rowntree also discussed the difference between interiors in the domestic area and in that of office environments (ibid).

In this study the environment(s) of a company refer to the physical environments i.e. “[...] tangible or material objects and conditions that surround a business” (Rodney, u.d), surroundings (place; geographically), exteriors (e.g. architecture, parking lots, driveways, entrance) and interiors (e.g. reception, dining areas, office environments). Herman Miller Inc. (2007) argues that if a company does not intentionally attend to its environment, the corporate identity might be weakened. Lambert (1989) elaborates on the subject; he expresses that the environment of an organization communicates identity regardless of whether it is attended to or not, which is also supported by Herman Miller Inc. (2007).

Over the last decades, Olins (1995) means that the concept of corporate identity has grown bigger, and further argues that identities can be seen everywhere, from shopping malls to universities and sports associations. Olins (ibid) further explains that the reason identity
generally has become such an important matter, is that there is a growing need to express identity, to differentiate ourselves and our ambitions from those of others. Continually, Olins (ibid) claims that identity, when used properly, influences the whole organization, both externally and internally. Identity is exhibited in three main areas that are visual: products and services; environments; and communications, additionally there is one area “which you can feel and sometimes almost see: behavior.” (Olins, 1995, p.3).

Besides corporate identity, another term that has been developed is Corporate Visual Identity (CVI), which, according to van den Bosch, de Jong & Elving (2006) is vital for the company’s identity and how it displays itself both internally and externally. According to Rowden (2000) many fail to understand the value of consistency in the communication of identity, which can result in a situation where a successful identity is damaged or even destroyed.

The company’s environment is a vital factor for organizations when displaying the idea of itself to its customers (Olins, 1995). One example that is brought up is how banks are designed to certify the customers that they are stable and wealthy (ibid). Further, Herman Miller Inc. (2007) discusses in their company research report what they call ‘three-dimensional branding’ the importance of acknowledging the environment as a medium for communicating corporate identity. In the report it is also expressed that a development is taking place in how interior design is used as a tool to distinguish “[...] how one law office, bank or ad agency is different from all the others.” (ibid, p.2) rather than just making them appear nicer (ibid). A similar development to that of which Rowntree (1964, as in Taylor, 2013) speak of.

Herman Miller Inc. (2007) and Lambert (1998) argues that a company must intentionally attend to their environments in order to maintain a strong identity. Lambert (1998) also expresses that the environment of a company possesses just as much power to influence stakeholders “as any amount of advertising or other planned promotion.” (ibid, p.9). The sort of ‘planned promotion’ that Lambert speaks of is a similar to what van den Bosch et al., (2006) calls carriers of such things that holds CVI. Carriers of CVI, such as products (e.g. packaging), advertising (e.g. billboards, commercials, flyers or anything printed), web-pages etc. where one is confronted with CVI (e.g the name and logo, a color scheme or slogan) are still widely mentioned in the discourse along with the environment of a company.

Further, there is not a lack of theory which acknowledges the environment as a carrier of identity, a few examples are: (Lambert, 1989), (Olins, 1995), (Markkanen, 1998), (Hammond, 2008), (Hultén et al., 2009). However, what seems rather absent is the discourse on using interior design as a mean to convey CVI. According to Brooker & Weinthal (2013) the subject of interior historically often has been misconceived as “[...]unscholarly and intellectually unsubstantiated” (p. 1). Further, they claim that interior architecture and design could be regarded as ‘substantial’ and ‘expansive’ because of its potential effect on many areas (Brooker & Weinthal, 2013).
1.2 Problem Discussion

Markkanen (1998) argues that many executive managers have had/still has a rather condescending view on any matters regarding design, something they seem to think as ‘equal’ to arts and crafts and therefore not important in the world of business. Markkanen presents ‘five delusions about design’ originally developed by Farr (1966, as in Markkanen, 1998, p.55) which is expressed to be part of the attitudes and beliefs among some top managers, something that might also be applicable to more present times:

(1) “Designing is easy” (2) “Designing is concerned with appearance only” (3) “Designers are artists alien to industry” (4) “One designer can do all types of designing” (5) “Design can be made by anyone” (Markkanen, 1998, p. 55)

Even though Markkanen (1998) approaches design as a tool in strategic interpretation, these delusions are based on the word itself and interpretations of it’s meaning. Markkanen (1998) further concludes after an analysis on the concepts of design that “[...] design is purposeful action which needs a coordination point enabling ‘the choice’ between different possibilities.” (p.53). As design is a ‘purposeful action’, and a strategy to achieve company goals (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006) i.e. the ‘coordination point’. The ‘possibilities’ could further be interpreted to be different choices that may affect the result of any design action. Such choices could be argued to be factors that determine whether the result succeeds or fails.

It could be argued that there is a relationship between the ‘five delusions about design’ and how the main focus on using interior design has been on how to make office environments ‘look nicer’ (Herman Miller Inc., 2007) rather than a more design and identity focused purpose. Markkanen (1998, p.53) claims that “design [...] is closely linked to corporate identity because of its interpretive power and the ability to express identity to different audiences.”

As mentioned, interior has struggled to get acknowledged as important on its own, despite the terminology shift from ‘decorating’ to ‘design’ (Taylor, 2013). One can argue that interior design (and decorating) has gained considerably more attention due to the use of new and social medias (e.g. interior design blogs, instagram accounts, pinterest accounts etc.) which have increased significantly during the past 20 years (Findahl, 2012). van den Bosch (2005) also emphasizes Internet as one of many new applications that has contributed to a stronger need for communicating Corporate Visual Identity (CVI). However, regardless of new and social medias, the overall ‘main focus’ still seems to be on interior design in the domestic area - the home - rather than public environments such as e.g. cafés and restaurants and those of companies such as e.g. receptions and office spaces.

Moodus (u.d) states that it seems that most people believe that the interior of a company is of importance, however they claim that astonishingly few actively and strategically works with it. Herman Miller Inc. (2007) and Bitner (1992) claims that the company visitors will have certain expectations and that “what they see and experience inside will either validate or shake their preconceptions.” (Herman Miller Inc., 200, p. 2).
That interior and design to some extent concern high levels of subjectivity (Poldma, 2010) could be argued to be reasons for why interior design has not gained much attention in the world of business, especially among business executives as argued by Markkanen (1998). Furthermore, van den Bosch et al. (2004) claim that academic literature has somewhat neglected Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) Management as a research topic and that CVI is viewed as a rather “obvious and self-explanatory tool that may contribute to an organization’s strategic aims.” (ibid, p.226).

Further, the physical environment of a company is an important carrier of identity (Bitner, 1992; Lambert, 1989; Olins, 1995; Markkanen, 1998; Hammond, 2008; Hultén, Broweus & van Dijk, 2009). It has to be intentionally attended to in order not to harm the company’s identity (Lambert, 1998; Herman Miller Inc., 2007). All this, together with ‘the five delusions’ by Farr (1966, as in Markkanen, 1998), seem to speak for the fact that there is a need for a specific discourse on interior design that is intentional and purposeful to convey identity.

Bergström (2012) describes how a visitor of a ‘visual livingroom’ is affected by the way the home is designed, its wholeness and spatiality. Finally, Bergström (ibid) compares these interactions of a home and of how one can experience it, while relating to websites, advertising, and posters. Why is this book concluded by comparing carriers of CVI with the design of a domestic environment, and not with that of a company e.g. an office? Marrewijk and Yanow (2010) note the “lack of attention to spatial elements in organizational and management studies over the last few decades [...]” despite the fact that each and every visitor of a space “[...] experiences the material and concrete dimensions of built spaces.” (p. 2).

Clegg & Kornberger (2006) state that “The physical environment is an important but neglected aspect of organisational nonverbal communication, the messages conveyed without words through the arrangement and style of space and buildings.” (ibid, p.204). Further, Marrewijk and Yanow (2010) also mention how organizational researchers do not include such ‘visual artifacts’ because they seem to have a habit of viewing them either as irrelevant or they do not know how to study them. Further it is expressed that the research field is problematic due to matters of subjectivity, that it is difficult to grasp individuals experiences of spatial elements (Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010; Poldma, 2010).

However, any research regarding interior design as a way to convey Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) cannot be found, neither factors that might be determining in such action. How is interior design performed? Who can perform it? What are the possible ‘success factors’ and what can go wrong, i.e. fail factors? Based on this discussion it is here argued that there is a need for further research regarding interior as carrier of CVI. Therefore, this study investigates interior design as a means to convey CVI.
1.3 Purpose

To establish the role of interior as a carrier of CVI.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the possible success and fail factors of conveying CVI through interior design?

- What are the different choices that affect the quality of such interior design?

1.5 Delimitations and Definitions

When discussing corporate identity it is common to also deal with image and reputation, however this study is delimited to investigate the subject in an earlier stage i.e. the time of the creation of visual elements and therefore neither image nor reputation will be investigated further. The environment in this study is further delimited to the interior space of a company, but will not involve spaces such as retail environments (malls, stores etc.). When designing interior spaces for e.g. offices, it is both common and important to involve work environments and safety/health regulations, but these aspects will not be a part of this study as it focuses on conveying identity. Hammond (2008) means that marketing, and especially branding, has to do with psychology (consumer behavior) and it can be argued that a study like this one somewhat covers this subject e.g. how consumers might behave in a corporate environment. This however is not an included aspect in this investigation.
2.0 Disposition

Chapter 3 - Consists of the theoretical framework to support this study: interior design, the physical environment, Corporate Visual Identity (CVI), its carriers and consistency.

Chapter 4 - Here the methodological approach of the study is presented, the different choices and the execution of the research is explained. This study is conducted with a qualitative research approach and therefore the methodological chapter includes e.g. qualitative interviewing.

Chapter 5 - Consists of a descriptive narration of the empirical findings in combination with illustrations (quotes) from the conducted interviews. This in order to emphasize the most essential information that was found. This chapter is divided into three cases, each case represent an interview with a company.

Chapter 6 - An analysis of the findings is presented. In this chapter the theoretical framework and the collected empirical data are discussed in alignment with each other in order to answer the research questions.

Chapter 7 - The conclusion is presented and the purpose of this study is answered here. The conclusion further includes what this study may contribute with. This chapter also presents a reflection of the generalization of the findings and suggestions of further research.

Chapter 8 - This chapter consists of a short reflection regarding the conducted study.
3.0 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used for this study. First, in order to explain the concept of interior design it is helpful to understand the two parts: interior and design; therefore definitions of these are presented separately to begin with (see section 3.1). In their research “A Proposal for a Formal Definition of the Design Concept” Ralph and Wand (2009) conducts an analysis on different definitions of ‘design’ and propose a formal definition and a conceptual model, which contributes with greater understanding on deciding who the designer might be and what s/he is actually doing.

Second, theories regarding interior architecture and interior design is presented under the common headline The Physical Environment (see section 3.2). The literature presented here was chosen after which best fit the context of this study. The main focus has been laid upon the purpose and importance of facilities and interiors of organizations and design of such spaces. A study of the interior designer’s ‘Body of Knowledge’ by Martin & Guerin (2005) contributes to greater understanding of the crucial knowledge needed for the profession. Third, Corporate Visual Identity and its carriers are presented (see section 3.3) from the perspective of prominent researchers in this area. Finally, consistency is presented to support the importance of the relations between different carriers of CVI.
3.1 Definition of Two Concepts

*Interior* is defined as “The inside of a building or room, esp. in reference to the artistic effect; also, a picture or representation of the inside of a building or room.” (Oxford English Dictionary, u.d).

Ralph and Wand (2009) conclude the following: “*Design* (noun) a specification of an object, manifested by some agent, intended to accomplish goals, in a particular environment, using a set of primitive components, satisfying a set of requirements, subject to some constraints.” (p. 6).

![Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model of Design (as a noun) (Ralph & Wand, 2009, p. 6)](image)

3.2 The Physical Environment

Clegg & Kornberger (2006) and Marrewijk & Yanow (2010) mean that buildings, i.e. architecture, has most often been designed for certain people and certain purposes and that this has to be taken into consideration by organizations when choosing facilities for their activities. How the facility is designed can affect work performance, relationships and interaction between employees (Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010; Bitner 1992; Clegg & Kornberger, 2006). Raffelt, Littich & Meyer (2011) also expresses that ‘corporate buildings’ affect the employees.

Clegg and Kornberger (2006) mean that there has been research on spatial characteristics such as: distance (between people and things), density (number of people in the office), light/darkness (color and illumination) and enclosures/accessibility (privacy; walls between rooms and workplaces) that has shown to affect work performance and also turnover rates. Bitner (1992) argues that customers and employees, either consciously or subconsciously, are affected by such things as materials and furnishings in the physical environment. This can be aspects such as level of comfortability on chairs, room temperature, sound level, colors and light intensity (Bitner, 1992).
Clegg and Kornberger (2006) further claim that organizational physical space, architecture, and design (OPSAD) have a “direct physical effect on critical audiences” (p.213) and that it therefore is in “alignment with organisational mission and goals.” (ibid). This is in alignment with Klingmann (2008) who claims that the economic value comes from customers’ emotional connections with a brand, and that experiences are “the sum of all the interactions a client has with your brand. It is what makes brand environments so critical to connecting with potential customers and creating preference.”

Poldma (2010) argues that interior design is dependent on how people experience it and that their experiences are subjective. Experiences are individual and happen through the senses - sight; smell; hearing; taste; and touch (Hultén et al., 2009). Hultén et al. (2009) mentions how the human senses have been neglected in researches, despite their ability to strengthen identity (and image). Clegg and Kornberger (2006) in alignment with Bitner (1992) further mean that a connection of an organization’s physical spaces and external messages create greater ‘credibility’ (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006) just as Herman Miller Inc. (2007) argues that external messages create certain expectations on the physical environment.

Clegg and Kornberger (2006) also speak of OPSAD as a tool for nonverbal communication. These nonverbal communications consists of designing and arranging interiors and furnishings; it is also expressed that it possesses affective and emotional information and a purpose of developing trust and loyalty among stakeholders (ibid). By attending to matters such as these, an organization should be able to “improve their efficiency and effectiveness.” (ibid, p.214).

**Design of the Physical Environment**

The process of designing space is complex and it is characterized by a problem-solving focus, it also requires special knowledge on how to identify specific needs in a certain space and how an organization might want to behave in that space (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006; Martin & Guerin, 2005). Poldma (2010) explains that designers of interior spaces need to consider both aesthetics and “[...] how people experience interactions and sensations within the spaces.” (p. 1). She continues to explain that experiences are subjective and that people’s experiences are created both consciously and unconsciously (ibid), which is also expressed by Hultén et al., (2009).

Matta Reddy, Chakrabarti and Karmakar (2012) state that “A good interior space is about considering all the physical, environmental and cognitive elements and harmonizing them to make it a space that feels right, functionally and emotionally” (p. 1072); and that the user is the most important aspect of the interior space. Further, they claim that the physical environment, people and culture affects each other and that they therefore should be attended to as a unity (Matta Reddy et al., 2012). Further, Clegg & Kornberger (2006) stress that designers or design teams must understand the crucial ‘key processes’ and interactions of the specific organization they are working for.
Martin & Guerin (2005) conducted a comprehensive study in which they identified six categories of the interior designers’ ‘Body of Knowledge’ and ninety six knowledge areas; all ranked with different values of the profession. They further divided six categories into three groups. They based these groups upon the total ‘value levels’ of the knowledge areas within each category (Martin & Guerin, 2005, p.xi).

Group one includes:

- **Human Environment Needs**, which expresses the need for understanding how humans behave and interact with the environment and each other;

- **Interior Construction, Codes, and Regulations**, which is based on how the design of the space has to take in account “building systems, non-load bearing interior construction, fire and life-safety principles, codes, regulations, standards, and guidelines.” (Martin & Guerin, 2005, p.xii).

Group two involves:

- **Design**: “Interior designers, knowledgeable in human behavior and human factors, have the expertise to combine users’ needs with design theory to create spaces that meet project requirements.” (Martin & Guerin, 2005, p.xiii);

- **Products and Materials** which they mean can be “[...] considered the heart of interior design practice [...]” (Martin & Guerin, 2005, p.xiv) because these products and materials “[...]are experienced on an intimate level by users of the space. [...] Also, products and materials are no longer an issue of first cost, but life cycle cost and analysis.” (ibid);

- **Professional Practice** which explains the designer’s professional knowledge: “Research and evidence-based design as well as collaboration are cornerstones of professional practice.” (Martin & Guerin, 2005, p.xiv)

Group three includes:

- **Communication** “Interior designers work to create a tone of collaboration between all parties, including the client, users, allied professionals, contractors, and building officials.” (Martin & Guerin, 2005, p.xv). They argue that the designer explains and educates their clients “[...] about the value of design solutions, products, materials, and new systems.” (ibid). Further, the designer has knowledge of how to meet standards, regulations, budgets etc (ibid).

### 3.3 Corporate Visual Identity

The corporate identity mix is made up of: behavior, communications and symbolism (van den Bosch *et al.*, 2005). When developing a CVI it is important to first establish the corporate identity and when doing so take corporate history, culture and strategy etc. into consideration (ibid). The idea is that the CVI should represent the company and be the first step in building
its reputation (ibid). van den Bosch (2005) argues that there are two objectives behind using a CVI: (1) to declare the company’s existence; and (2) to build and support its corporate identity.

Already in 1989 Olins argued that companies in general express identity through design (Olins, 1989, p. 53) as a commercial tool with the aim to generate profit. As mentioned, identity can influence the whole company when used right (Olins, 1995). Baker & Balmer (1997) argue that the CVI reveals symbolism and that it therefore is an important component of the corporate identity mix, in alignment with van den Bosch et al. (2004). In her dissertation on CVI Management, van den Bosch (2005) proposes a definition of the term CVI: “the visual presentation of a corporate identity” (p. 16). CVI is further a tool that consists of five main components (see figure 3.1): the corporate name, logo, font type, color palette, and a slogan/tagline (van den Bosch et al., 2006).

![Figure 3.2 CVI elements. Based on van den Bosch (2005), van den Bosch et al. (2005).](image)

These elements can, when used properly, be powerful for identifying a company. However, van den Bosch et al. (ibid) argue that they cannot be effective unless people are frequently confronted with them. This means that all carriers should communicate the CVI (ibid) and when this is properly performed it results in recognizability (van den Bosch et al., 2005).

van den Bosch (2005) describes how for example changing an already established logo takes a lot of work and resources. Even the slightest change results in a hectic process, not only does new material have to be created, but the old material needs to be discarded (ibid). All use of the CVI affects how the company is perceived (van den Bosch, 2005), it is therefore important to have all carriers of it in mind. Common carriers of CVI are: Signage, Interior elements and Wayfinding; Vehicles and equipments; Printed matter; Corporate wear; Packaging; Correspondence and Presentation; Online and Social Media (Nykamp Nyboer, u.d). It might even be argued that the employees are carriers since they represent the company, and thus contribute to identifying it, in the way they behave and communicate (van den Bosch et al., 2005).
It is further argued that the CVI should be considered “[...] a common responsibility of all employees within the organization.” (van den Bosch, 2005, p. 17). The reason for this is that the influence employees have on the CVI has increased and that they therefore need more knowledge on how to implement it (ibid).

Consistency

Rowden (2000) claims that consistency is the crucial element that binds identity together, without it the customers are unable to fully identify a specific company. Further, consistency has an extremely important role in our everyday life, since we both consciously and unconsciously seek for patterns in order to make predictions before making decisions (ibid). This is supported by van den Bosch (2005) who claims that the identity and values of the company has to be consistently and unequivocally expressed. The reason consistency is the crucial element for binding identity together is according to Rowden (2000) because it generates predictability.

The importance of predictability is high when it comes to creating trust among customers, without consistency there can be no predictability (and thus, no trust) and vice versa (ibid). As mentioned, Herman Miller Inc. (2007) claims that visitors of a company have certain expectations of the physical environment. Clegg and Kornberger (2006) means that inconsistency between verbal and nonverbal messages “that organisations send through their use of space and architecture can undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the total message.” (p.214)

Rowden (2000) further stresses that, whether intended or not, the customers will identify the company on what they believe to be its consistency and therefore the company should attend to it. van den Bosch et al. (2005) argues that the part consistency plays for CVI is “[...] the way brands and graphic elements are used on carriers over a longish period of time.” (p. 114). Consistency is also the reason that we can recognize e.g. international brands in foreign countries even where the script is unfamiliar (van den Bosch et al., 2005); one example is one of Unilever’s brand known as GB Glace in Sweden but known as Wall’s in the UK and large parts of Asia (Unilever, u.d). Although the brand name is different, the brand logo is still the same (ibid).
3.4 Chapter Summary - Theoretical Framework

Below a summary figure of the theoretical framework is presented with the key points of each subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition of Two Concepts</strong></td>
<td>Interior is “The inside of a building or room, esp. in reference to the artistic effect; also, a picture or representation of the inside of a building or room.” (Oxford English Dictionary, u.d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design is “[...] a specification of an object, manifested by some agent, intended to accomplish goals, in a particular environment, using a set of primitive components, satisfying a set of requirements, subject to some constraints.” (Ralph &amp; Wand, 2009, p. 6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Physical Environment</strong></td>
<td>The affect design of facilities may have on employees. (Clegg &amp; Kornberger, 2006; Marrewijk &amp; Yanow, 2010; Bitner, 1992; Raffelt, Littich &amp; Meyer, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonverbal communications, such as OPSAD, physically affects ‘critical audiences’ (Clegg &amp; Kornberger, 2006). Therefore it also affects and is in alignment with a company’s mission, goals and turnover rates (Clegg &amp; Kornberger, 2006; Klingmann, 2008; Herman Miller Inc., 2007; Bitner, 1992).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design in the Physical Environment</strong></td>
<td>The process of designing space is complex and it is characterized by a problem-solving focus. Interior spatial design requires certain competences in many areas. (Clegg &amp; Kornberger, 2006; Martin &amp; Guerin, 2005; Poldma, 2010; Hultén et al., 2009; Matta Reddy et al., 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Visual Identity (CVI)</strong></td>
<td>CVI is a tool for visually presenting a corporate identity, it consists of corporate name, logo, font type, color palette, and slogan/tagline. (van den Bosch et al., 2005; van den Bosch, 2005). It affects profit (Olins, 1989) and is an important element of the corporate identity mix (Baker &amp; Balmer, 1997; van den Bosch et al., 2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CVI is communicated through different carriers (van den Bosch, 2005; Nykamp Nyboer, u.d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistency is the crucial element for holding identity together throughout all carriers (Rowden, 2000; van den Bosch, 2005; Herman Miller Inc., 2007; Clegg &amp; Kornberger, 2006; van den Bosch et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 3.2 Theoretical Framework Summary](image-url)
4.0 Methodology

When conducting research there are many things that must be considered to ensure legitimacy in the choices that are made and the qualities of the results. Prior to this study such literature has been reviewed. This chapter further presents crucial methods of conducting qualitative research with transparency.

4.1 Qualitative Research Strategy

There are two different research strategies - qualitative and quantitative (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this research a qualitative research strategy is conducted, this type of strategy is usually known for emphasising the meaning of words when collecting and analysing data (ibid). A common method for qualitative researches is an inductive approach, this method is typically implemented to generate new theories, as opposed to deduction which normally is conducted for the testing of existing theory (Gummesson, 2000). For this research abduction, which is when induction and deduction is combined (ibid), is implemented. This means that in this study the researchers will weave back and forth between the theoretical framework and the collected data. This strategy allows an expanding of the theoretical framework in alignment with the collection of the empirical data, which is necessary if the researchers discover that more information is needed in order to support some of the findings.

When conducting research there are also epistemological and ontological considerations that has to be taken into account. Ontological considerations regards “whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities[...]or[...]social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors.” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20). As interior design is a subjective matter, constructionism (also referred to as constructivism) is chosen as the ontological position for this study. This ontological position “[...]asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors.” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.713). Constructionism regards knowledge as indeterminate (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This means that in this study the researchers will bring forth a “specific version of social reality” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 22) and thus not one that should be considered definitive. In other words, constructionism is not objective and therefore the result in this study will be dependent on the interpretations the participants make of the subject.

Epistemological considerations concerns “[...]the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline.” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15). Further, Bryman & Bell (2011) presents an issue regarding whether or not it is adequate to use “the same principles, procedures, and ethos” (p. 15) in studies of the social world as the ones used for the natural sciences. In this study an interpretivist position was adopted, which means that the researchers have to be able to understand “[...] the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 715).
Yin (2014) argues that interpretivism is comparable to relativism, which means that the results of this study is dependent on the interpretations that the researchers make. In this study interpretivism allows the researchers to evaluate which variables of the empirical data are of highest value. Poldma (2010) argues that there is an issue with ‘positivist research’ on interior space by quoting Guba & Lincoln: “[h]uman behaviour, unlike that of physical objects, cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 106, as in Poldma, 2010). Thus, it is here argued that a possible issue with studying interior design is that it is a matter of subjectivity and that it therefore is dependent on the interpretations that the researchers make of the findings.

4.2 Research Design

A cross-sectional research design aims to discover patterns between multiple cases and variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Further, the cases connects with (often many more than two) variables (ibid). Bryman & Bell (2011) also argues that the cross-sectional research design is just as common in quantitative as in qualitative research, even though they are mostly discussing it from a quantitative perspective. However, it is mentioned that when a cross-sectional research design is combined with a qualitative research strategy the methods for collecting empirical data are often unstructured or semi-structured (ibid).

Qualitative research does not guarantee generation of theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, this study aims to contribute to a discourse on interior design as a way to convey Corporate Visual Identity (CVI). Further, in the case of this study it could be argued that the purpose creates difficulties to find one specific research design which fits completely. This could be because this research deals with the circumstances of a growing phenomenon, i.e. interior as a carrier of CVI, rather than with a specific case. However, a cross-sectional research design fits the purpose of this study in such a way that it aims to detect expected patterns between cases; in order to gain deep understanding of the research subject, which is the main purpose of a qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4.3 Qualitative Data Collection

When a research problem is specified and the research design is established the data collection can begin (Dhawan, 2010). When selecting a method for data collection there are two varieties of data - primary and secondary (Dhawan, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Primary data is all data that are collected in original by the researchers; secondary data refers to all data that has been collected before by other researchers (Dhawan, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). This research is based on primary data derived from semi-structured interviews.
Qualitative Interviewing

The interview is an important source for qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). Qualitative interviews are typically less structured and thus also more flexible, in contrast to quantitative interviewing (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). This because the main purpose is to gather rich and more detailed data from the interviewee(s) and to emphasize what Bryman & Bell (2011) mentions as a ‘greater generality’ when formulating research ideas.

Qualitative interviewing typically consists of two major approaches: unstructured and semi-structured interviewing (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). In this study, semi-structured interviews are conducted. An interview guide (a guide of questions, generally within a specific topic) is constructed in order to ensure that the different variables for the study are covered. Bryman & Bell (2011) and Saunders et al., (2009) mean that a semi-structured interview guide does not need to be followed in any specific order, further it also allows the researchers to ask follow-up questions to a given answer. Saunders et al. (2009) further means that it is possible to adjust the questions within the interview guide depending on the organizational context. This flexibility is of great significance for this study since it empirically relies on the participants’ knowledge and perceptions of the research topic. Further, Bryman & Bell (2011) also mentions that semi-structured interviewing is preferable: “If more than one person is to carry out the fieldwork, in order to ensure a modicum of comparability of interviewing style [...]” (p. 473) as is the case in this study.

In this research, personal interviews are conducted. One of the main reasons for conducting personal interviews is that telephone interviews, according to Bryman & Bell (2011), seldom are sustainable for more than 20 minutes; something that is important for this study since the researchers aim to collect profound empirical data. Personal interviews also allows the interviewers to respond to signs that are not noticeable through the telephone; for instance, if the respondent makes a puzzled face, the interviewers can respond to it by e.g. reformulating the question (ibid).

4.4 Ethical Principles

Bryman & Bell (2011) mention four areas of ethical principles:

1) **Harm to participants** is about making sure that no harm will come to the participants, there are many different kinds of harm, both physical and psychological (ibid). In this study it means that the researchers must be careful not to harm e.g. the participants self-esteem or career prospects by for example distorting what they say or presenting it in an unfair way.

2) **Lack of informed consent** refers to that the researchers of this study must provide the respondents with as much information about the study as they might need to make a decision about whether or not to participate in this study (ibid).
3) *Invasion of privacy* is about respecting the respondents privacy and values (ibid). This means that the researchers must respect if the interviewee for some reason does not want to answer a given question. It also means that the researchers must respect if any of the respondents wish to be anonymous.

4) *Deception* refers to when the researchers provide the participants with false information about the research (ibid). In this research, this is prevented by being clear with the purpose of it already when the initial contact is made.

### 4.5 Qualitative Sampling

There are two main types of sampling units of analysis: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling allows the researchers to base their sampling on subjective judgment, rather than on statistical matters (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Christensen, *et al.*, 2011). In order to answer the purpose of this study the researchers use a *purposive sampling* strategy. This means that the units of analysis are chosen based upon which might be able to best help answer the research questions of this study. Saunders *et al.* (2009) also argues that this type of sampling might be preferable when using small samples, as in this case.

The first selection is done by identifying companies which in one way or another claim to communicate companies’ identities through interior design and not merely ‘decorating offices’. Some of the companies are known by the researchers before due to previous studies. The other companies were found by searching on the Internet using the keywords: ‘inredning företag’ [interior companies]; ‘inredning design företag’ [interior design companies]; and ‘interior branding’. Due to the limitations of time, costs and range of the study, the researchers decided to mainly turn to companies in Malmö, Göteborg and Stockholm.

Further, the individual(s) within each identified company are chosen based on their education, they are therefore assumed to possess knowledge about the research topic. The different participants are educated as for instance: interior designer; architect; graphic designer; art director; marketers etc. This mix of competences are expected to contribute to different views on interior design and corporate visual identity, judging by the fact that the different participants have different backgrounds and experiences, but still offer similar services.

### 4.6 Operationalization

Jacobsen (2002) describes how a research project is based on a research problem that usually is vague and abstract. In order to conduct the research this problem needs to be concretized, this process is known as operationalization (ibid). Operationalization is done in order to specify what the empirical data collection should cover, in this study it is used for transforming abstract theories into tangible interview topics. This process is here carried out by 1) dividing the subject into key concepts; 2) defining these key concepts; 3) explaining the intention with each of the key concepts; 4) creating topics to cover during the interviews (see operationalization, figure 4.1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Interview topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>“[...] a specification of an object, manifested by some agent, intended to accomplish goals in a particular environment, using a set of primitive components, satisfying a set of requirements, subject to some constraints” (Ralph &amp; Wand, 2009, p. 6)</td>
<td>To establish how the physical environment of a company is designed and who can design it</td>
<td>- The Design process (see Appendix 1,T4) - Interior Design (see Appendix 1,T3) - The Interior Designer (see Appendix 1,T5)</td>
<td>Marrewijk &amp; Yanow (2010) Bitner (1992) Matta Reddy et al. (2012) Clegg &amp; Kornberger (2006) Martin &amp; Guerin (2005) Poldma (2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Visual Identity</td>
<td>“The visual presentation of a corporate identity” (van den Bosch, u.d, p. 16)</td>
<td>To establish what a company’s interior design should be based upon.</td>
<td>- CVI (see Appendix 1,T7) - Carriers of CVI (see Appendix 1,T8) - Interior as a Carrier of CVI (see Appendix 1,T9) - Consistency (see Appendix 1,T10)</td>
<td>van den Bosch et al. (2005) Olins (1989) Baker &amp; Balmer (1997) van den Bosch (2005) van den Bosch et al. (2004) van den Bosch et al. (2006) Nykamp Nyboer (u.d.) Rowden (2000) Clegg &amp; Kornberger (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Interview Strategy

After identifying the different companies the researchers will make initial contact through email in order for the companies to read and respond to it in their own time. The intention is to contact them through telephone within three work days if a response has not been received. An email with a short presentation of the two researchers, the purpose of the study and an explanation of how each receiver has been found will therefore be sent to the different companies; three in Malmö, two in Stockholm and one in Göteborg. The companies will be asked if they are willing to participate in the study through an interview estimated to last about one hour. In return they will be offered to take part of the final report and have their company mentioned in it. This email follows the recommendations of ethical principles towards participants by Bryman & Bell (2011) e.g. by from the start being clear about the purpose of the study. When conducting research it is common to conduct a pilot study, this is done with the intention to test whether the interview questions are likely to be perceived right (ibid). However, since this study is dependent on the respondents’ education and knowledge the researchers decided not to perform a pilot study. Further, if any questions result in confusion, it is possible for the interviewers to reformulate it, something that is not possible if for example a survey is conducted.

4.7.1 Recording

Recording is very common when conducting qualitative interviews, and it is recommended whenever possible (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). One advantage with recording the interview is that the interviewers are able to fully concentrate on the conversation without being distracted by taking notes on everything that is said (ibid). Further, it makes it easier for the interviewers to follow up on given answers. The interviews will therefore be recorded with one of the researcher’s mobile phones. The researchers will further make sure that the respondents agree to being recorded, something that Bryman & Bell (2011) stresses is a very important part of ethical principles in business research. Bryman & Bell (2011) mentions that recording might disrupt the interviewee from his/her natural behavior; s/he might become too self-conscious or bothered knowing that every word is preserved on tape. However, usually the interviewee relaxes during the interview and sometimes even represses that the conversation is recorded (ibid).

4.7.2 Summarizing Empirical Data

While portraying the interview the researchers must pay attention to what the interviewees say and how they say it (Saunders et al., 2009). The data analysis begins according to Saunders et al. (2009) already when the data collection is conducted and continues afterwards. The interviews will be conducted in Swedish since that is the native language of both the researchers and the respondents. After the interviews, the collected data will be partially transcribed, translated and summarized in order to present the main arguments, key points and quotes. Bryman & Bell (2011) emphasizes that it is important not to distort what the
interviewees say, therefore the researchers must be careful while translating and summarizing the interviews. Saunders et al. (2009) also recommend that the recorded audio should be transcribed by a touch typist, however, this is not possible due to cost limitations of this research; further Bryman & Bell (2011) do mention that such requirements are not fully expected in student researches due to such common limitations.

They further mention that interviewees might have “verbal ‘tics’ in the form of a common word or phrase that is repeated” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.483), it might therefore be appropriate to edit these out “for the sake of length and ease of understanding” (ibid). To indicate when a quote has partially been excluded, because of digressions, the researchers will mark it with […]. In order for the reader to fully understand the context, the researchers will add notes to clarify some quotes, these notes are presented within brackets, e.g. [note].

4.8 Data Analysis

The collected data must be properly analyzed and the meanings of it understood in order for it to be of use, still there are no clear ways on how to do so in qualitative research (Saunders et al, 2009 ; Bryman & Bell, 2011). What is clear is that when presenting an analysis it must be theorized in order to be legitimized, and not become a prolonged narrative of the empirical findings (Saunders et al, 2009 ; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Saunders et al. (2009) compares the analyzing process with that of putting together a jigsaw, e.g. by identifying the relationship between different variables. Further, in order to support interpretations of collected data and making sense of information, there are according to Saunders et al., (2009) three different processes of grouping it. These groupings can be used on their own or in combinations: summarising of meanings, categorization of meanings, and structuring of meanings. As this study is based upon a cross-sectional research design, the analytic chapter is structured through the categorization of meanings, i.e. the variables that the interview guide is based upon.

Such coding processes involves “[…] developing categories and, subsequently, attaching these categories to meaningful chunks of data.” (Saunders et al., p.492); which allows the researchers to see possible patterns between the different categories. Christensen et al., (2011) mean that the main purpose of analysing qualitative data is to detect such patterns. Pattern matching is a strategy where the analysis follows a coding of the theoretical framework in alignment with a coding of the empirical data (Saunders et. al., 2006; Christensen et al., 2011). The variables that derived from the theoretical framework of this study are: Interior Design and Corporate Visual Identity.

When coding qualitative data there is always a risk of losing the context of what was said during the interview, since it can force the researchers to extract the categories from their natural context (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Coding involves ‘breaking down stories’ therefore one must be aware of not losing the context of the categories one is creating. However, it is recommended by Bryman & Bell (2011) to start the coding as soon as possible when the context is still fresh in mind. As the interviewees in this study are characterized by their different professions, the
collected data might differ in the main issues discussed. This results in that the structure of the interviews can differ, therefore the researchers have to be careful not to take things out of their contexts when seeking for patterns.

In this study the interviews with each company will first be given a code: e.g. Case 1, Case 2, Case 3. Second, the summarized content of each transcription must be coded in order to keep track of who said what and in what context. This is done by dividing the theoretical framework into variables. The variables are further divided into two categories of data in order to make it easier to present the analysis in alignment with the research questions. In this study category one is Interior design, which further includes the variables: Interior, Design, The Physical Environment and Interior Design in The Physical Environment; and category two includes: Corporate Visual Identity includes: CVI, Carriers and Consistency.

The presentation of the analysis will be outlined in such way that it progressively presents what indicates success and fail factors of performing interior design as mean to convey CVI. Further, it will explain which actions can be taken in order to ensure quality of the result. It will present such factors through a discussion that covers the variables of the study, their content in relation to the empirical data.

4.9 Quality Measurements in Qualitative Research

It has been suggested that the evaluation criteria for qualitative studies should be somewhat different from the criteria used for evaluating quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As a result, two main criteria: trustworthiness and authenticity, have been developed (ibid).

Trustworthiness consists of four components:

• **Credibility**, ensuring that the research has been carried out properly and that the findings have been interpreted in a good way. The researchers will therefore be careful e.g. not to take things out of their context;

• **Transferability**, whether the findings are dependent on context or can be transferred to other milieu. As mentioned, this research will present a “specific version of social reality” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.22). Therefore it is dependent on context and should not be considered definite;

• **Dependability**, whether the study has been conducted according to proper procedures. This is ensured in this study by showing a transparent presentation of the methods used.

• **Confirmability**, whether the study has been affected by personal values and/or, as Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 398) put it, ‘theoretical inclinations’. The researchers will therefore continuously control that such values are not presented in the report.

**Authenticity** regards whether the research is presented fairly, e.g. if it is taking into account “[...]different viewpoints among members of the social setting” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). This is ensured by presenting three different companies, independent of each other.
### 4.10 Chapter Summary - Methodology

In this section a summary of the methodological chapter is provided in a figure. The figure contains a short description of the key points of each of the presented methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Research Strategy</td>
<td>A qualitative research strategy is known for emphasizing the meaning of words when collecting and analyzing data (Bryman &amp; Bell, 2011). Abduction is an approach where induction and deduction is combined (Gummesson, 2000), i.e. the researchers will weave back and forth between the theoretical framework and the collected data. This strategy allows an expanding of the theoretical framework in alignment with the data collection. Constructionism regards knowledge as indeterminate, this means that in this study the researchers will bring forth a “specific version of social reality” (Bryman &amp; Bell, 2011, p. 22) and thus not one that should be considered definitive. Interpretivism means that the researchers have to be able to understand “[..] the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman &amp; Bell, p. 715). In this study interpretivism allows the researchers to evaluate which variables of the empirical data are of highest value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Research Design</td>
<td>A Cross-sectional Research Design aims to discover patterns between multiple cases and variables (Bryman &amp; Bell, 2011); the methods for collecting empirical data are often unstructured or semi-structured (ibid). A cross-sectional research design fits the purpose of this study since it aims to detect expected patterns (ibid).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Data Collection</td>
<td>The interview is an important source for qualitative research (Bryman &amp; Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). The main purpose is to gather rich and more detailed data from the interviews and to emphasize a ‘greater generality’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Principles</td>
<td>Harm to participants: In this study it means that the researchers must be careful not to harm the participants by for example distorting what they say or presenting it in an unfair way (Bryman &amp; Bell, 2011). Lack of informed consent: The researchers of this study must provide the respondents with as much information about the study as they might need to make a decision about whether or not to participate in this study (ibid). Invasion of privacy: The researchers must respect if the interviewee for some reason does not want to answer a given question (ibid). It also means that the researchers must respect if any the respondents wish to be anonymous. Deception refers to when the researchers provide the participants with false information about the research (ibid).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Sampling</td>
<td>Purposive Sampling means that the units of analysis are chosen based upon which might be able to best help answer the research questions of this study (Saunders et al., 2009). The first selection in this study is done by identifying companies which in one way or another claim to communicate companies’ identities through interior design. Further, the individual(s) within each identified company are chosen based on their education, they are therefore assumed to possess knowledge about the research topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operationalization</td>
<td>Operationalization is done in order to specify what the empirical data collection should cover (Jacobsen, 2002); in this study it is used for transforming abstract theories into tangible interview topics. See Operationalization figure 4.1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2 Methodology Summary, continues on next page
**Interview Strategy**

The initial contact will be made through email in order for the companies to read and respond in their own time. An email with a short presentation of the two researchers, the purpose of the study and an explanation of how each receiver has been found will therefore be sent to the different companies.

Recording is conducted since it is recommended whenever possible (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). The interviewers are therefore able to fully concentrate on the conversation without being distracted by taking notes on everything that was said (ibid).

After the interviews, the collected data will be **partially transcribed** and **summarized** in order to present the main arguments, key points and quotes. It is important not to distort what the interviewees say (Bryman & Bell, 2011), therefore the researchers must be careful while translating and summarizing the interviews.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

The collected data must be **properly analyzed** and the meanings of it understood in order for it to be of use, there are no clear ways on how to do so in qualitative research (Saunders et al, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The analyzing process can be compared with that of putting together a jigsaw (Saunders et al., 2009). The analytic chapter is here structured through the **categorization of meanings**, i.e. the variables that the interview guide is based upon.

Coding involves ‘breaking down stories’ therefore one must be aware of not losing the context of the categories one is creating. In this study pattern matching is used.

**Quality Measurements in Qualitative Research**

Trustworthiness consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Authenticity regards the question whether the research is presented fairly (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

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**Figure 4.2 Methodology Summary**
5.0 Empirical Findings

This chapter is divided into three cases, each case presents a summary of an interview that was held as presented in the methodology chapter.

The interviews took place at the offices of the respective participating companies, in relaxed and calm environments. All interviews kept a good pace with good flow in the conversation. The interviewees were very active and engaged in the topic, which led to that the researchers did not have to ask many of the questions that had been prepared, as these came up naturally while the main issues were discussed. All of the prepared topics were covered during the interviews. All of the participants turned out to put aside about two hours for the meeting which allowed a greater presentation of the researchers and time to discuss some topics deeper.

5.1 Case 1 - Moodus

The interview with Moodus took place on May 6th 2015 at 13.00, in Hägersten, Stockholm. After a short introduction about the researchers and this study the interviewers introduced themselves.

Mårten Lindgren and Jennifer Lindstedt are co-owners of Moodus, an architectural bureau that has found their niche in cafes and restaurants; they offer interior concepts influenced by what they call interior branding. Among their clients are e.g. Wayne’s Coffee, Klang Market and Coffeehouse by George. The couple met while studying ‘interior architect and furniture design’ on Konstfack1. After graduating as interior architects, Lindgren in 2004 and Lindstedt in 2005, they acquired a business premises in the same area where Konstfack is located.

In the beginning of it all they had no actual business and they even searched for clients by putting up flyers in ‘affluent areas’ offering help with sketching. Through the flyers they made contact with a client that, half a year later, contacted them again asking for help with a new project. Their assignment was to reconstruct a textile factory with all its functions (such as production, meeting rooms, dining room etc), according to the company. “In retrospective, one can see that this project is almost...it’s the one project that can be traced to interior branding the most, of all projects we’ve had.” (Lindgren, 2015).

A First Example

Lindgren describes how the client was very keen that the interior should reflect the company’s activities and their extensive knowledge on sewing. Lindstedt explains how the management wanted to involve the employees’ requests in the design process. Lindgren and Lindstedt therefore conducted interviews with the employees. The intention was to gather their requests, something that turned out to be quite difficult.

Lindstedt explains: “They were completely perplexed and said like ‘nah, it’s okay as it is’, so we got nothing out of them. But that also gave us free hands [...]”, Lindgren adds: “Yes, together with the new owners, that is”. With few constraints they were able to rearrange the

---

1 Konstfack is one of Sweden’s biggest universities of arts, crafts and design. (Konstfack, 2014)
existing floor plan and create a work space suitable for both employees and company visitors. Lindgren describes how the dining area was placed so that it became “a better place for the workers to eat at, but also for visitors and you can see the whole production and their competence”. The result was much appreciated by everyone.

After working a few years apart gaining more experience, Lindgren and Lindstedt decided to start working together again; they were contacted by a famous café chain which they executed a large number of projects for. The couple found a ‘niche’ in the cafe and restaurant industry: “It felt very good to be able to say that ‘this is what we do’ and not just ‘we’re interior architects’...cause that’s so much bigger” (Lindstedt, 2015)

**Interior Branding - Informing Clients**

They felt a need to be more clear towards clients about what kind of services they were offering, and started to think about a better way to distinguish themselves and came over the term ‘interior branding’. Linstedt explains: “If you see to a client with a marketing division involved, that [interior branding] is a terminology that they might be better able to understand”.

“When we did this restart and became Moodus, we felt that ‘we need to be able to formulate us better as an architectural bureau’... I mean, for the ones ordering it might be a little vague information of what you really order. Let’s say you want to redo the office, you plough five hundred thousand - one million into a new interior…but is it just to make the office look nice or is it just to have a more pleasant work environment?” (Lindgren, 2015)

Further he expresses that such aspects are very important to consider as well, but there are very high costs involved for the client, and all interior communicates the company. Therefore, if they can clarify the value of their service, the customer often understands that: ‘this is something of value that we receive...an added value’.” (Lindgren, 2015)

Lindgren explains that they found the term ‘interior branding’ on an American website and that they also found other terms but that interior branding, according to them, was ‘spot-on’ and something that most people seem to understand. He expresses that interior branding describes how architectural offices work when their service is to emphasize the company in the physical environment, but that they do not necessarily mention the term often. Lindstedt further argues that companies should not see interior branding as a cost, but as an investment.

The interviewees were asked how they would describe ‘CVI’ and Lindgren replies: “I would say that it is...the overall picture you get of a company...I mean, when it comes to interior, exterior, environment and graphic profile and...well, how they communicate”.
When it comes to consistency their opinion is that it is extremely important to be consistent and that the wholeness of it is crucial, Lindstedt means that there will always be some people who see such things, and it is therefore always important.

“If we draw up a physical environment [...] and no one has worked with the graphic profile, or if there’s a display that ‘jumps out’ or is unprofessionally done...then...in our view… well, it becomes totally unbalanced.” she continues “so, we always recommend all clients to engage a graphic...or, in the best case, to let us cooperate with a graphic designer. (Lindstedt, 2015)

Cooperating

The topic moves on to their work procedure and how to uphold consistency.

They explain that the work procedure can vary, sometimes the graphic profile is already established and the client wants an interior that works with it; sometimes the graphic profile is designed simultaneously and they work parallel with for example a graphic designer. Lindgren claims that the ideal is to consider the physical environment while designing the graphic profile. They continue to stress that communication through all carriers, such as the website and social media, should communicate the same thing. At the same time, Lindgren means, it is a complex matter: “you can feel a very distinct wholeness...that feels great, without having worked with logotypes and graphic forms everywhere, [...] ‘this really feels like a wholeness’ even though it is unpretentious.”.

Lindstedt adds that “[...] for the most of these business chains...we believe...it is important, otherwise you lack trustworthiness. There’s a need to at least have a ‘minimum level’ that is acceptable”. They explain that they see it as their responsibility to inform the client if their professional opinion as designers is, for example, that the website or sign display does not match with what the company wants to communicate.

When asked if interior should be regarded as a carrier of CVI, Lindstedt says:

“Yes, definitely. [...] At least in the way we define interior, we work with everything from the floor, to the ceiling, the walls and everything in between. Except for sign displays...so that is almost everything you see [...] what we do affect people - whether they want to enter or not, stay or not stay...and so on” (Lindstedt, 2015)

Lindgren claims that this requires competence from different areas and Lindstedt adds that they like to cooperate with others and that they know their limitations. They believe that whoever is most capable for a specific task should do it; if they feel that a task is beyond their expertise, they recommend someone else, more suitable within that area, to do it. When asked whether they can see a development from using interior design as a way to ‘make it look nice’ to communicate ‘the right identity’ Lindstedt explains that she believes so; they can at least see an increased number of companies that uses a similar way to express their services as Moodus does.
Lindgren & Lindstedt imply that the result is dependent on the designer; this, they mean, is a natural effect since they believe it is hard to completely exclude personal preferences. They argue that it also has to do with experience; today it is easier for them to consider what is best for the project and what is viable, than when they were recently examined. Lindstedt argues that the client’s personal preference, regarding for example a color, is irrelevant since it is not about personal taste but about what the company should communicate.

When asked whether they experience that their clients have an understanding for why it is important to communicate the identity through the interior design, Lindstedt believes that the understanding is quite small. Lindgren fills in “It is hard because the client doesn’t have...the same competence that we possess”.

Lindgren reflects about managers’ view on interior design and CVI:

“I believe that there still is quite a big difference on how people look at interior architecture, or what we call interior branding, and graphic identity and...marketing. I think that many...maybe don’t understand the importance of what the interior communicates and how they should work with it”. (Lindgren, 2015)

He further elaborates:

“I think that...a big reason can be that interior design is such a broad term...which is smudged into home environment and work environment. Everyone has an opinion, everyone...can do it themselves...and it’s not something you [companies] do that often either. Very few are experienced clients. But I also think that has to do with relatively high costs...” (Lindgren, 2015)

**Price and Quality**

Lindstedt explains that it sometimes is difficult to convince the client to select a more expensive option, something that according to her often comes back in quality: “so, if we take the cheapest lamp for example...and it breaks over and over again...there’s no understanding for the fact that quality and price goes hand in hand sometimes”. However, she further means, that in the end it’s more or less a question about budget and that most companies’ budget is limited and has to cover a lot of costs. She expresses that there is a lack of understanding of the cost for this type of service and that they have left many offers where companies have backed out.

Further, she notes that people often get the wrong idea of the concept ‘interior designers’, since there are so many different people that call themselves interior designers, e.g. home decorators, interior architects: “it’s not very easy for people to understand the difference and who does what”. Another problem they have encountered is that today’s TV shows picture the process as something that it is not. Lindstedt argues that this is what people see and therefore believe: “it’s unreasonable to tear down a house, build a new one up and perform interior design in one week. Then there’s a hundred men behind it”.

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The Process is Dynamic

Moodus offer interior concepts which means that they develop the concept ‘on paper’; this includes e.g. layout and floor plans, furnishing plans, material and product information etc. Everything is provided with codes, in order for the purchaser to find the exact product, and handed over to the client. The actual execution is normally handled by construction firms; however, they follow the project and assist the client all the way to make sure that the result is delivered according to plan.

A project normally has a relatively straight procedure where the client already has signed a contract on a business premises. The first step is to make a first proposal on an interior layout in which they elaborate on how to allocate the surfaces. This is according to Lindstedt independent on how it will actually look later on. Lindgren explains: “At that point, we don’t really have to take into consideration for example what color to put on the walls or what kind of chairs to use”. Lindstedt adds: “But, of course we have to be aware of the client and what they want to achieve and so on”.

Lindstedt explains that when it comes to what extent interior branding can be performed, it also depends on how aware the clients are; if there is a distinct plan and if they know how to position themselves in relation to their competitors. “The clients that are not fully aware of this usually won’t let us work with it...there is no capital to let us analyze and do research” (Lindstedt, 2015). Lindstedt continues to explain that in these cases they are usually able, due to their experience from the industry, to classify their clients and deliver the project anyway. Further, she means that it is always important that they, to the best of their abilities, find out as much as possible about the clients and their circumstances.

To work with the wholeness in the design is the most important thing according to them both. Lindstedt argues that the interior does not necessarily have to follow the graphic profile to the letter: “I mean, just because the graphic profile is, I exaggerate, blue and white, that doesn’t mean that the interior should be blue and white” she further explains that according to her, the mood is more important “if the atmosphere and the setting is nice...I mean, you can base it on the brand in a good way anyway”. Lindgren gives an example of the interior of a company that for instance is very aware of nature and being environmental friendly can be designed with materials that are produced in a fair way.

They explain that it all depends on what kind of business it is and that it is easier to apply the graphic profile on some types of environments than others. Lindstedt adds “there really is no right or wrong, it’s all about making a decision, being consistent and stand for your choices...and to understand why you do either one or the other” Lindgren also mentions that especially for cafes and restaurants it is important to consider “the financial aspect when allocating the surfaces. It’s quite obvious that everybody wants [to fit] as many seats as possible”.

Once the layout is done one can start with considering color scheme, materials and so on. When it comes to materials, Lindstedt explains that it is important to consider the expected
wear, if a material e.g. is too fragile it will look worn out in just a couple of weeks. Lindgren adds that it also has to do with corporate culture e.g. how the company manages its environment and things such as cleaning. Another important aspect according to Lindstedt is acoustics: “The place can look really nice, but if it doesn’t work...If you can’t handle to be there, or talk...that’s not good”. Lindgren elaborates:

“The process is dynamic. If we sit down with the client and say ‘the acoustics are really important for how other people perceive you’, and recommend them an acoustic ceiling...they might say ‘we’re not willing to put that kind of money on that’ [...] so there are always things like that to consider, then you have to do something else instead”.

Lindstedt notes that another, very important, aspect is lighting. “With the right lighting...a place can look totally different. Therefore we prefer to engage a consultant specialized on lighting. [...] I mean, you can’t be good at everything and that industry is so fast-moving”.

Lindstedt argues that e.g. tactility can have a huge significance, Lindgren adds:

“That is definitely an aspect where our competence is important. If for example an ad agency were to choose a floor...if I’m prejudiced, or generalize...they would choose based on how it looks, but then after six months...it would be worn out, or it doesn’t work for that kind of environment. We would have been able to make that choice immediately that ‘okay, we’ll find a plate like that one, that looks like it but has these qualities.” (Lindgren, 2015)

The Ideal Way

Another essential factor is according to Lindgren and Lindstedt the relationship with the client, a mutual trust to each other and a functional dialogue with them. They mean that the ideal is that the client contacts Moodus in an early stage, where the contract for the premises is not signed yet, then they are able to recommend whether a premises is suitable for the company’s activities or not. When they are contacted in a later stage they become more restricted and are for example not able to dissuade the client from a less suitable premises since the contract is already sealed.

Lindstedt gives an example of a previous project where one of the client’s consultants (focused in another area) made a first sketch on the layout. When Moodus stepped in with their professional experience they were able to design a better flow and make room for more seated customers. However, the planning had gone too far in order for them to make all the desired changes, wherefore Lindstedt emphasizes how important it is to contact the designer in an early stage.

When asked if they have seen any concrete results that the interior design has made a difference for a client Lindstedt describes how one of their clients doubled its turnover after a remake. She adds that the place in question was shabby before and that it might not have
been entirely because of the remake: “however, it is difficult to measure”. Lindgren explains that the café industry in particular is highly competitive and that the customers often choose the place where they feel comfortable, therefore he means it is important to understand and adapt to it.

Lindstedt reason about what happens if a customer is encountered with a physical environment that does not communicate the right identity: “There’s a risk that they feel deceived, confused...or maybe that they don’t understand”. Lindgren elaborates: “It might also be that, if it is an office...you might not trust them”.

Both Lindgren and Lindstedt believe that more studies on the role of interior design as a way to communicate identity is needed and that the reason that there’s a lack of these type of studies is that the concept is relatively new and that it is hard to measure since it is rather subjective. Lindgren explains that there is no manual to follow and that there is a lack of researches about this kind of interior design: “There’s not much to take part of...for us it’s about the knowledge we’ve developed in school, about things like material, furniture, spatiality and the experience we have...from all the projects we’ve performed”. He means that all this makes them feel confident in what they deliver. Further, Lindgren reason that many people believe that there is a ‘standard solution’ for everything: “but I don’t think it’s really that easy”.

5.2 Case 2 - Granqvist Design

The interview with Granqvist Design took place on May 7th 2015 at 14.00, in Saltimporten, Malmö. The researchers began with introducing themselves and a short background of the study and thereafter Granqvist introduced himself.

Patrik Granqvist is a graphic designer and art director specializing in implementing visual identity on e.g. products and interiors. Granqvist has extensive experience of working with communication and design and among his clients are Philippe Starck, Vagabond, IKEA and Target. During his career he has, apart from Sweden, worked internationally in USA, France, Japan and Belgium to name a few. Granqvist started the company KOOG Design together with a colleague in 2010 but is, since 2013, working independently under Granqvist Design.

Culture and Mission

Granqvist explains what CVI is according to him: “It’s a difficult question to answer with one word. But it is in fact both the company’s culture and its vision, or mission might be a better expression. So, culture and mission combined”. He uses Nike as an example and explains that they sell an instrument for athletes that will help them perform better, in other words the mission is to sell shoes or sports equipment and become number one in the world.

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2 Saltimporten won Malmö city’s business award for creative industries in 2013 and was called Malmö’s creative factory (Saltimporten, u.d) in Malmö.
Further, he explains that the vision is more about the company culture and what the company does:

“Nike sell products that makes it possible to become the greatest at what you do...and if they’re able to really get this sentence ‘spot on’, then you as an employee will feel that you contribute...you actually were a part of Michael Jordan’s slam dunk, you’re a part of his success. And that is a very powerful thing when later on you’re selling something to someone who isn’t Michael Jordan, because then you’re able to say that ‘hey, with a little toil and trouble you can get there too’. You can do that, and believe in all of this, and that is the important part, not to work for a company and sell something that you don’t really believe in. So that is a part of the visual identity, and then when it comes to marketing, they have ‘just do it’ and that’s even more head-on, like ‘anybody can do it, come on! go!’ and so on. The visual identity, or branding, is about that wholeness” (Granqvist, 2015)

Regarding if Granqvist finds it difficult to make companies understand what importance design actually has, he exclaims: “Oh yes!” and further explains that he believes that it has to do with the fact that it is hard to ‘wear two hats at the same time’. He means that it takes a true visionary that other people listen to, who can mediate between the different divisions, inspire them and make them understand what s/he means; “These people doesn’t grow on trees and there are many who simply can’t handle it. Because it is extremely demanding [...] you need to have an extremely strong character to be able to do that”.

Granqvist continues:

“If you’re distinct with these things, everything else follows. I mean, what the future is and what companies had difficulties with before, is to get in direct contact with the final customer. It’s much easier today to get in contact with the final customer and for the company to have a direct dialogue, if that’s what they want.” (Granqvist, 2015)

He explains that this has led to an increased investment in customer service and that some successful companies have realized that design is a significant part of the customers’ experiences.

Taking it to the Next Level

Granqvist explains what the consequences are if a company does not attend to the visual identity; he believes that many companies that have a great mission will be able to make profit anyway. “However, if you want to go to the next level, if you really want to stay and build this security and safety, become number one... Then you have to do it! There is no other way, you can’t ignore it”.

Granqvist explains what the future is and what companies had difficulties with before, is to get in direct contact with the final customer. It’s much easier today to get in contact with the final customer and for the company to have a direct dialogue, if that’s what they want.” (Granqvist, 2015)
Granqvist continues to explain that:

“It’s not the products that create this connection, the one where you become a part of the company culture [...] like with Nike for instance, if you exercise a lot of sports, that...Nike takes care of you. And when your [Nike] shoes are worn out, naturally you go and buy a new pair. Then this connection is created, and it’s not always that people understand why it happens, but subconsciously it has to do with all of this.” (Granqvist, 2015)

He explains that, when this connection exists, the customer might be willing to overlook eventual mistakes that the company does. Granqvist further claims that, when a company fully attends to its visual identity, it is a long-term marketing strategy that is much more powerful than to spend millions on a temporary campaign.

The subject moves on to consistency and how important it is to be consistent with a company’s visual communications and Granqvist answers that it has great importance. However, he argues that as a designer it is important to create an identity that is mutable: “Back in the days one would say that ‘you should update the identity every tenth or fifteenth year’. That’s not really true anymore because this identity must be able to mutate consequently”. He further explains that the visual identity must always be able to pass on to the latest marketing channels. When he started as a graphic designer there was more or less only one demand - that the logotype had to work in a monochrome society, i.e. it should work in black and white. As an example he means that over the years the demand on the logotype has changed from being monochrome to include 3D-effects, to today include mobility.

“But then, in the future, what says there won’t be scents and sound? I mean, sound exists already, I learned quite a lot about that [while working] in Tokyo. There they have a lot of sounds associated to products so... I mean, it should satisfy all the senses. And that is a part of the visual identity.” (Granqvist, 2015)

Starting with the Right Things

Granqvist argues that it is strange that identity typically is associated with a logotype. He explains that, not until a business or a product is developed and a concept is formed, the logotype is brought forth:

“It’s somewhere there when you package it and say ‘this is what it is’, SMACK, on with the logotype. And then, you sort of have capsulated all of this, what you’ve been working on. That’s the strength with a logotype. But if you’re not done with this process, if you put on the logotype to fast, and meanwhile you change way too much... That can be dangerous, and most companies do this, that’s why they’re watered down, you don’t regard it as that strong anymore.”
Granqvist explains that there is no ‘black or white’ and that what works for one company does not work for every company. On the question what is most important to consider when it comes to visually communicating identity Granqvist answers that it is to start with the right things. He argues that one needs to ask the right questions from the start and that a creative person should be included already then:

“Most often, a creative person isn’t involved from the start. [...] It doesn’t have to be someone within graphic design, but someone who can visualize it for what it is, and who can mediate this vision. If you don’t have this you should at least have a creative person, who doesn’t necessarily need to control the meeting, but who can listen to the meeting and visualize what people are talking about, and make sketches so that you can start to form this in an early stage.” (Granqvist, 2015)

Granqvist explains that if this is done right it will be easier, because then the company has clear guidelines when it is time to take it further. Granqvist believes that a part of the problem is that there is lack of understanding for the need of a creative person/designer from the beginning:

“They haven’t thought of it as interesting, because, first ‘what can they [the designers] contribute with?’ and...it’s like a visual secretary sitting on the side. Then there are many designers that can contribute with knowledge, on this level too, but most often we’re not in these meetings with the board of directors. We’re not contacted until it’s been...until it’s been simply far too long, and then we have to take care of problems instead.” (Granqvist, 2015)

Building Castles in the Air

When asked if he can describe what carriers of CVI are Granqvist responds that it differs for different companies, but according to him it has to do with the senses: “I mean, you have smell, you have sound, the visual is everything around you, but also feelings. To feel things, it’s basically everything that you react to as a person that is important”. He explains that it also has to do with the company’s ‘tone of voice’, not just what they say, but how they say it. The visual things, he means, is only a part of the CVI, however a rather big part: “Why doesn’t the company look like its website when you visit the company? Why do they still have a blue carpeted floor, white ceiling and fluorescent lighting? I mean, oh my God, what are you doing?”

Granqvist ponders about what consequences it might have if the company does not take this seriously:

“I think...the consequences are almost what we have today. I mean, what would have happened if the company had taken it further? [...] The production might have increased within the company and the employees. Maybe you wouldn’t change employment that often, maybe you would be more loyal to your company, proud of your company. The company invests in itself and in
you by...customizing work places that functions well and that sort of ‘breathe theirs.’” (Granqvist, 2015)

We ask Granqvist whether he would consider interior as an important carrier:

“Absolutely! Very important. But it’s easier that you jump onto the graphical part first, because it’s possible to trick...you can trick terribly much outwards. You can make people believe that you have built a castle in the air [...] and the better you build this part, the higher are the expectations when you’re about to see it in real life.”

Granqvist gives an example where a company had contacted him because they wanted a new webpage. When he came to the company their facility was a disaster: “Everything looked so terribly cheap, and so worn out in some places that the products, they really lit up, but at the same time they lost their credibility somehow by having them in there”. He continues to explain how a situation like this might affect the employees so that they become embarrassed over working there. He means that instead of saying ‘I work on this company’ when someone asks, they might just say ‘I'm working in an office’.

When it comes to whether the understanding for using interior design, not only to make it look nice but to communicate the company’s identity, has increased Granqvist says: “The companies that have done something about it are often those that have stores and such things. So they sort of understand the importance of it”.

What the Future Holds

Granqvist Design is located in Saltimporten. On the question whether it is important also for office spaces to have the interior design in mind, he explains what he had in mind when he designed their office in Saltimporten: “The reason I did this was...sort of ‘practice what you preach’”. He argues that if you want to be able to tell other people that ‘everything is important’, it is not entirely justifiable to disregard your own office. Granqvist thinks that it has a lot to do with how constructors work: “It’s often constructors that contracts architects, but then they often want to buy ‘what you did there, can’t we just take that and make a few changes?’ and so you change some material... but you don’t buy what people want”. He uses the housing market as an example:

“They complete the work so that you [as a buyer] have to pay a little extra. But often when you pay a little extra you go in and you think ‘this floor doesn’t fit in here’ or ‘this kitchen, it doesn’t really suit me, but I’ll buy it and then I will tear out the kitchen and replace it’. Why is it like that? [...] Instead of creating a ‘raw’ surface and saying ‘this is the shape, can you imagine what it can become? What kind of material would you like? [...] Nobody dares to do that, nobody trust that people can do that.” (Granqvist, 2015)
Granqvist believes that this is transferred into the business world as well; that when a company is about to choose its office space, it is already finished: “and when it’s not finished already, you take over this ‘blue carpeted office’-thing”. He explains that, in order to obtain a reasonable price, that is what you get because not all companies can afford it otherwise. Granqvist continues:

“But I argue that if you were to...remove everything and make it good from the start, then it might not have to change that terribly much. [...] If they hadn’t ‘interfered’ from the start, then we [designers] could get involved in an earlier stage. And it would be more expensive, it would, but maybe not that much more expensive than it is today when you have to throw out functioning interiors. It [the interior] has way too low standard, it’s way too...I mean, there’s no identity at all, they choose materials that ‘everyone’ might like” (Granqvist, 2015)

Role Models are Too Far Away

When asked whether there is a need for increasing the understanding for why a company should invest in interior design he explains: “Absolutely. But there’s a problem with it too, because I believe that you can show many examples of companies that have done that and become successful, but it’s just as if with some companies...it doesn’t sink in”. He argues that the problem is that many of these success stories are ‘too far away’ from smaller companies and that they cannot see the resemblance with their company and giants such as Apple;

“I think that you need to show a mid-size company and say ‘look here, what a difference it was after they did this, they are not Apple but it’s a company that is closer to yours, look at the difference’. And therefore companies must challenge each other, someone has to take the first step and show that there is...a profit in making this investment.” (Granqvist, 2015)

Granqvist explains that when it comes to managers view on interior design there is a big difference between different countries; In Sweden in particular, function comes first. He argues that it lies in Sweden’s DNA to come up with smart systems, smart solutions and industry products that are great contributions to the world, but that design has not been a focus. The ‘typical Swedish design’, he means, has emerged during time with the help of ‘imported’ designers (such as Josef Frank) that have brought their knowledge from other countries.

“And then we have our neighbor Denmark that has thought differently, it’s enough to go over the strait [Öresund] to see the architecture, the way they serve food on a plate, how they...well, we’re not even going to talk about furniture...but their way to handle things, it’s completely different. And we’re neighbors, I don’t understand it. But their, let’s say DNA, is more design related. And that’s about what you have in your baggage, and I think that more people are open to this there, office spaces that are a little different and so on.” (Granqvist, 2015)
Distribution of Capital

Granqvist claims that, when it comes to interior design, few companies are willing to invest a big amount of money:

“It is astonishingly rare that companies consider investing 70 000 [SEK], or whatever it might be, in for example decent and nice-looking chairs that last. And often it’s the people from management that decides... what to put money on. I mean, putting 70 000 in advertising and such things [...] that would have been like ‘whoops’ and then it would last for...well, maximum one week, for a small company.” (Granqvist, 2015)

When a company wants to ‘personalize’ their interior design, Granqvist explains that, at most, they finish it off by simply putting the logotype on the wall: “that’s about the ‘level of identity’ they go with”. When it comes to whether he believes that anyone can perform interior design in a communicative way, if the company should try on their own or if they should hire a design bureau Granqvist ponders:

“I mean, to try is at least a step on the road... I think that you should hire a consultant, then you can at least have your ideas confirmed. If you’re not used to it, the most common thing when dealing with interior design or architecture is that you don’t have a feeling for scale. [...] Such things are extremely easy for a professional to see. [...] There are thousands of things that you can get feedback on. And I mean, it’s fun, the more that are interested the more things will happen. But also, you can look at it this way, there are people who have years in School behind them, and there’s a reason for that.” (Granqvist, 2015)

Granqvist argues that the more engaged and involved the company is in the process, the better the result will be. This, he means, is because:

“Only you know to a hundred percent what your culture is, or how you want your workplace, store or brand and so on to be. So if you’re not involved in the process it won’t be truly good. Then it will be someone else’s identity that is expressed, so it has to be a cooperation, and the more interested you are, the better cooperation it will be. But you also have to see it like ‘this is where I let go’ and let the professionals take over.” (Granqvist, 2015)

Granqvist receives the question if there is a problem that some people believe that ‘anyone’ can perform interior design and he explains:

“You could say it like this, it’s a problem for us that have a higher education within it. Partly because we get less to do and partly because it won’t be as good as if we’d done it. On the other hand it might be done more often and the overall quality might increase. [...] You lose the crafts, but overall it becomes bigger and wider and we get more of it. So there is a warning hand,
it won’t have the same quality, it won’t. On the other hand it might contribute
to a better work environment and more design.” (Granqvist, 2015)

A Concrete Example

When asked about an example of a company that have an interior design that communicates the visual identity he answers:

“I would say Starbucks, my goodness, that is probably one of the most
concrete examples. [...] It wasn’t like the whole world needed coffee, but
the whole world needed a place where you could just unpretentiously sit
down and sort of feel like home. They succeeded, a lot of companies don’t,
but they did. [...] But the interior, or the places that they have, are highly
important for the brand”.

Granqvist argues that it is as important for individual companies to communicate identity
and be consistent as it is for chains: “But it’s the chains that are a bit of a challenge, because
it’s often the chains that have money”. He further means that it is more distinct with chains
since they have to communicate the same thing in several places.

The topic moves on to whether it is important that all carriers look similar: “I believe that it is
impossible to make it look exactly the same, therefore you shouldn’t even try from the
beginning, then you will run into trouble sooner or later”. He explains that he believes that it
is important to be consistent with e.g. color schemes, to pick out a few fabrics to work with,
materials and concepts. He argues that it is also important to consider how people move in
the different environments, and that it is easier for professionals to understand and organize
that:

“You might end up in a mall, without daylight at all, or in a centenary
building, or in a modern design...business complex on a pedestrian street
somewhere. They’re very different but it has to communicate this quality and
atmosphere that you build too.” (Granqvist, 2015)

He gives an example of one of his jobs for a SPA:

“Here scent is quite important too. [...] That you feel ‘I’ve been through this
before, but now I’m in Uppsala and before I was in Malmö’. Now, I don’t
believe that Swedish companies should run off and create scents, they have
so much to work with as it is, but in the future, all over the world, that’s
something we will be aware of. I believe so”. (Granqvist, 2015)

Cutting Corners

Granqvist explains how he believes that the remake of an office is typically carried out and that, when
it comes to office environments, it is often the employees that are the driving force behind it: “So they bring it up in a board meeting like ‘can we do something’ and they say ‘well, okay, we’ll throw in a couple of hundred thousand’ [SEK]”. Then, Granqvist argues, the HR
representative is assigned with the task and the employees are asked to contribute with their requirements before they finally do something without greater commitment. Granqvist means that most of the companies that have an environment where the customer gets in direct contact with the product include interior design in their marketing plan; and he believes that those companies take it more seriously.

When it comes to hiring e.g. a design bureau Granqvist argues:

“Either you can afford to hire someone who does it properly, or you don’t. And there are a whole lot of [interior] companies that are focused on companies that...well, they’re not very good. [...] They know a little about interior design, but they really are...salesmen with a creative touch. There are many companies like that, and they make billions I can tell you.” (Granqvist, 2015)

On the question whether he thinks that many of those companies take on assignments that they do not have the right competences for he answers:

“I think so. But I also believe that there’s a demand for it, and that’s not the company’s fault, it’s the client’s fault. Because the client doesn’t believe that it’s that important and wonder if they can ‘cut corners’, so they say ‘but can you do it?’ and all of a sudden that company earns a little more because they can hire a consultant or something.” (Granqvist, 2015)

Granqvist finishes off by arguing that the interior design of a company can be used as a competitive parameter:

“To stand out and use interior design to express that you represent something else [than the competitors]. Absolutely. But it’s in particular where you have contact with the customer that it’s important. A bank office is a good example, you might not see it as if it’s as obvious as a store, but it’s still a place where you have contact with the customer.” (Granqvist, 2015)

5.3 Case 3 - INSIDESIGN

The interview with INSIDESIGN took place in Turning Torso, Malmö on May 7th, 17.00. Like in the previous interviews the researchers started with a short background on themselves and the research.

INSIDESIGN was founded by Jeanette Gostomski in the year of 2000. Gostomski is an Interior Architect, Architect, Scenographer and Marketer. Some of her clients are Debaser, Iitala, Turning Torso and INPUT Media Evolution. She started out with scenography and the theatre, but then felt that it was too narrow: “Then I started with interiors, and that was quite exciting, but then I started with marketing too. So those were the three things I combined, marketing, scenography and interior architecture.” Gostomski explains that her experience
is that she often must explain to people what she is actually doing: “When people hear that I’m an interior architect they think ‘oh, so you like furniture’.” She explains how she is not interested in furnishings in such ways, but that there are many interior architects that focuses on furniture.

She continues to describe how she has experienced the design industry:

“You could say that the structure in Sweden, and it’s in Sweden because it’s not like this in Denmark, the structure is that the construction industry is the strongest. They will be making the decisions, because they have their contacts. Then it’s the architects, and then the interior architects, but it’s not very common to use them because often the architects design the interior too.” (Gostomski, 2015)

When it comes to the question if she believes that this structure is a problem she answers that she has chosen not to fight against it and to just focus on the execution itself. She continues to explain that a lot of companies have package offers: “they offer both moving, logistics and furniture. So they sort of did a takeover of this...furniture industry for offices. [...] And that world I don’t want to enter either”.

She argues that it is good to engage in doing what you enjoy, to have a niche. Her own niche lies in installations, she means that it allows her to be more ‘creatively free’. She explains that her background in scenography had learned her how to interpret the director’s vision by asking questions like “What do you want to say with your play? Which year are we in? Should we stay realistic or should we stay in present time even though the play is old? Should we mix?”

**Exciting Encounters**

Gostomski prefers to enter in ‘the final stage’, when everything else is done. She argues that although a lot has been done there is still room for improvements. Currently Gostomski works with different types of companies, she creates both permanent and temporary installations and she describes how she communicates her service to a client:

“So I say ‘I can help you with profiling your company through the interior. Who are you?’ And that is such an exciting encounter [...] this is someone who actually created a company, and they are successful, and I want to help them. And some people that are creative say that ‘we don’t want to work with commercial things because we’re artists’, and I think that’s a shame because this person [the founder] is really an artist too”.

Gostomski explains that one must always have an economic perspective: “So far, no one dares to spend that much money, there’s always a budget. And that has to do with economy, so you always have to think economic and about what is realistic.” She argues that all companies, whether big or small, want to express something with their company.
Gostomski explains that there are some basic things to consider: 1) What does the company want to say? 2) Which is the company's target group? 3) Is there a slogan, color scheme etc.? 4) Which are their needs/functions?

No Boundaries

When doing a project Gostomski likes to use materials that suits the purpose of it; her background as an interior architect is of use when she wants to make sure that the interior space is perceived right; e.g. when it comes to how the surface is allocated. Much of her inspiration has come from the Michelberger Hotel in Berlin, she means that they have shown her that there are no boundaries when it comes to interior design. She explains that many people believe that when you remake an environment it is all about re-furnishing. She argues that everything has to be considered: “We also have to think about the walls, the floor... how does it feel when we walk on it? Does it make a lot of noise? And that's where interior architecture comes in, with sound and such things”. Gostomski always considers the client's graphic profile, their brochures, website etc. in order to connect all the different carriers to each other.

Regarding the understanding of the importance of interior design Gostomski’s experience is that the bigger the city is the more understanding there is: “Here in Malmö they absolutely see it as important. [...] And in Stockholm they definitely see it too”. She argues that the demand grows and that there is no lack of work for interior designers. Gostomski started with this type of interior design in the year of 2000: “At that time this basically didn’t exist in Sweden. It was just supposed to look nice”. When it comes to why the demand for this kind of communicative interior design has increased she argues:

“There is always a pressure on companies that they need more customers, higher turnover rates...and if you understand the economic world, which I believe is important in this context, then they too realize that it’s not enough to 'look nice', to have nice-looking interiors. People want more, people want events. [...] It is about attaching the customer too. (Gostomski, 2015)

On the question if it is difficult to convince the clients about the small details that will make the difference Gostomski ponders:

“No, I actually don’t think so. I believe that the important part is to listen to the client, what they want to say. And if you’ve listened enough and understand what kind of people they are and what they want to achieve, then they’re quite open for suggestions and think that it’s good because they want to distinguish themselves from others...and feel proud. So together we can be proud that we’ve accomplished a change” (Gostomski, 2015)
The topic moves to *how the CVI can be implemented in the interior design*.

“I’m equally surprised every time because I realize that ‘oh right, you think marketing, you want me to put a logotype on the wall’ [...] and I haven’t even thought about it because I always try to work with the subconscious. [...] That is the common thing when people think about this kind of advertising and interior design, they think ‘furniture’...and then they put up a logotype.”

(Gostomski, 2015)

**Experiencing Identity**

She adds that she understands that they want the logotype but her opinion is that the interior should communicate the company without it too, this she means can be accomplished by for example using details from the logotype. Gostomski gives an example of a work that she did for a client where she designed their office. The client wanted to express innovation and care for the environment: “For example, in the restrooms [...] there I put up green wallpapers with birds on it [...] and when they lit the lights you could hear the twittering of birds”. She explains that by doing this people will associate it with nature and they are likely to interpret the company as environmental friendly: “it is a lot about psychology too”.

When it comes to **consistency** Gostomski claims that it is very important:

“If they want the highest impact, because everything that is repeated for you sticks, so if someone has seen it on the website and then see it again in the interior, and perhaps on the receipt and business card and...I think that is really important. And many people only uses the logotype to do that, but you can take it even further.” (Gostomski, 2015)

According to Gostomski a company that does not actively attend to marketing probably does not see the importance of interior design:

“It’s about routines, traditions...I think that hospitals are great places to work on, but they have so much else [to consider], they don’t work with marketing, it’s like ‘no, we don’t do that and we’ve never done it’. [...] I feel for the employees that has to work there, and for the patients that come in...and that’s the way it is for all companies that doesn’t want to acknowledge it. And the companies that are advancing, that’s because they want to distinguish themselves, they’ve realized that it’s important.”

**Challenging the Standards**

Gostomski claims that it is not just companies that need to distinguish themselves from others, but also municipalities, hospitals etc. She gives an example of a municipality that she worked with: “They wanted more people to move there, that was their goal. And that contributes to more taxpayers, and that more people can split on the costs for all services they have”. She explains that public attention is good, e.g. to get attention in newspapers and
on social media. “Then it will spread, I mean how important is it to go from the website to the reception? It’s so important. If it also gets out on social media it is even more important, I mean even better”.

When it comes to carriers of CVI Gostomski argues that it is more important that the packaging conveys the CVI than that the interior does so:

“If you have to prioritize the budget I think so, because that’s what comes out in stores. But if they want to increase their turnover and distinguish themselves from others, and especially if they have customers that visit... This is how it is, an interior can be designed for employees and it can be designed for customers. For employees it is for them to feel patriotic for their company and to feel ‘we’re fighting together’, and then you get a higher turnover. If the customer doesn’t visit the company, then you do it for the employees to feel ‘wow, look at this’, and then they [the company] get promotion through the employees. And that’s positive. [...] So therefore the packaging design is more important, but if they want to increase the turnover the interior design is very important, but you have to start somewhere.” (Gostomski, 2015)

Gostomski reason that it is important to consider that e.g. the type of furniture also communicates what quality it has, something that she means also can reflect the company. If the company uses furniture of low quality that looks cheap she means that it appears as if the company simply does not care. She means that e.g. people do not want to sit in a chair that looks cheap and unstable because it does not feel safe, and that also says something about the company; if the company chooses a more stable chair they might feel more secure about the company too. She argues that if the company communicates one thing on e.g. their website and something else in the physical environment it might lead to a sense of unreliability:

“I hear that often, people that complain because they believe that the company is quite big and then it’s just a shed. And by that I don’t mean that the company has to be huge, but if they only have thought it through...and that can be done with small means”.

Gostomski explains that she has experienced that it is not necessarily more expensive to invest in ‘proper’ material: “Sometimes it costs more, but often I’ve realized [...] that for the same amount that they [the company] have intended to use, I’ve been able to create something else, something better that gives an added value”.

‘Interior branding’ is the term Gostomski uses as a way to define what she is doing: “I haven’t actively used it that much here in Sweden. [...] I came across the term at one point and felt that ‘Yes! That’s what I’m doing!’”. She describes how she established her ‘title’:

“People are unsure of what to call me, and I have chosen to call myself ‘scenographer’. I could choose to make it complicated, but at the same time
I can’t if I want to be able to explain what I’m doing in a simple way. And therefore I chose ‘scenographer’, and I’m so glad that people understand that term. Because, ‘what is a scenographer? okey, it’s someone who creates spatial design in one way or another’, and they think about theatres and that it’s not all about furniture. Because if I say ‘interior architect’ they immediately think about furniture. And I can’t say interior decorator either, because then I deprecate my profession. Spatial designer expresses a higher level than decorator. [...] And interior designer might be better than interior architecture, since you actually design the interior” (Gostomski, 2015)

Gostomski argues that it does not ‘have to look nice’ either: “It can be political, it’s like art, it can be political, it can be functional, it can be ugly...it doesn’t matter. I mean design is function and aesthetics but also for a target group, which is the target group? That’s design too.” She explains that this type of communication in the physical environment can be traced back even as far as to England’s baroque theaters in the 15th century: “You could see how they used real living swans, it was almost like a 4D-cinema, they had real swans, rain, they used scents and so on”.

Further, Gostomski explains that it is easier to work with company environments than home environments because it does not involve personal values, it is about communicating the company. “The goal for me is not that it looks good, that’s evident, and the goal is not to make it practical, that’s evident. The goal for me is ‘what does the interior convey?’”. She explains that this kind of interior design is about challenging the norms and standards, that she believes that in Sweden the standards are very fixed and that it therefore is difficult to work around it.

The Added Value

Regarding the question if she has seen any actual effects where a company has gained something due to e.g. a remake of the interior Gostomski reason: “Well, I can tell you this, it’s an added value because if you create an interior where people visit, customers or employees, you automatically have a person that will tell ten other people”. She argues that it gives an added value as opposed to an advertisement in e.g. a newspaper: “Because it comes from a person that has been there and felt special and believes that the trademark is special. [...] They [the companies] pay a certain amount, but the added value might be three times that amount”.

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5.4 Summary

In this chapter three different viewpoints were presented. Questions regarding interior, design, the design process, interior design and CVI were brought up and elaborated upon. This data was collected through three interviews with three different companies: one in Stockholm and two in Malmö.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Moodus</td>
<td>In the interview with Moodus the main focus was on the design process and the designer. The interviewees explained why it is important as a designer to be humble and know your limitations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Granqvist Design</td>
<td>The interview with Granqvist Design was mainly focused on design, identity, CVI and how/what the company communicates. Granqvist stressed that interior design should affect all the senses. A handful of descriptive examples was presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSIDESIGN</td>
<td>This interview is characterized by a more artistic approach to the profession. How to work with interior design subconsciously by creating experiences in the physical environment; not necessarily by following the graphic profile to the letter.</td>
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Figure 5.1 Empirical Findings - Summary
6.0 Analysis

This chapter is outlined in such a way that first, competences needed for performing interior design, as presented in the theoretical framework, are analysed in alignment with what the interviewees expressed regarding this. Such an analysis was partly necessary in order to answer the main research question in this study: *What are the possible success and fail factors of conveying CVI with interior design?* Second, pattern matching also revealed similarities between the fact that identity also includes how a company behaves and to what extent it attends to its physical environment i.e. the interior space. Further, when attending to the interior with the purpose of conveying CVI a few choices was revealed that can affect the quality of the result: *What are the different choices that affect the quality of such interior design?

Knowledge is Crucial

Ralf & Wand's (2009) conceptualization describes how *design* is a goal-oriented, slightly constrained, specification of an object which is composed of primitive components. The object is further created by an agent, with the intention to satisfy a set of requirements, within an environment. Thus, when performing interior design, the interior is the object of design. Martin & Guerin (2005) concludes that the interior designer possesses exclusive knowledge within three groups (1. *Human Environment Needs*; *Interior Construction; Codes, and Regulations*; 2. *Design; Products and Materials; Professional Practice*; 3. *Communication*).

The analysis further indicated that interior design is indeed an action as conceptualized by Ralf & Wand (2009). In all three cases the respondents claimed that their *education* has provided them with skills that are crucial for performing interior design. Further, the respondents first and foremost argued that experience has taught them that their knowledge of how humans experience and use spaces, and of material qualities are vital factors; this seems to be in alignment with Martin & Guerin (2005) category *Professional Practice*. For instance, both Lindgren & Lindstedt, and Granqvist argues that it is easy for a professional designer to perceive scale; something that they mean is difficult for inexperienced people. In Martin & Guerin (2005) study, *Human Environment Needs* ranked the highest value of knowledge, which indicates that this skill might be conclusive for an interior designer. Clegg & Kornberger (2006), Poldma (2010) and Matta Reddy et al., (2012) also stresses the importance of this skill.

Further, Martin & Guerin (2005) expressed that *Products and Materials* are considered the heart of the profession, such as the understanding of its longevity. This is for instance demonstrated when Lindgren & Lindstedt explain how their knowledge of materials help them choose the right material for every project that will last the longest. As it is the interior designer’ role to educate their clients (Martin & Guerin, 2005), Lindstedt and Granqvist argue that price and quality often goes hand in hand; however, their experience is that it is not always easy to convince their clients of this fact. Something that Lindstedt describes in her example of choosing the cheapest lamp, which continues to break over and over again.
What can be interpreted here is that a more expensive lamp, or chair as in Gostomski’s example, probably would last longer and thus have a higher Return Of Investment (ROI). Knowledge about Human Environment Needs and Products and Materials areas could therefore be interpreted as crucial success factors for designing interior space; to ensure that the interior space has appropriate scale and that the materials can withstand the wear of the expected use.

Further, all interviewees expressed that the interior design process is a subject to constraints, as claimed by Ralf & Wand (2009). They all argued that economy and a company’s budget are obvious constraints, and that it sometimes is difficult to convince the client why, as Lindstedt put it, they should see it as an investment rather than a cost. Granqvist expressed that this might be because companies executive managers cannot see that interior design is a powerful long-term marketing strategy, as opposed to ‘temporary campaigns’; a short-term strategy which he argued many companies easily spend a lot of money on without hesitating. This implies that interior design might be undervalued as an effective and profitable strategy.

Another major constraint that was revealed through pattern matching was the amount of knowledge that executive managers seems to have about what interior design actually concerns. For instance, Gostomski and Lindgren & Lindstedt expressed that many of their clients have little knowledge of what interior design is i.e. that involves all interior elements such as floor, ceiling, walls and everything in between, and what amount of work and time it involves. Often they appear to believe it only concerns furnishing and/or decorating; ‘making it look nicer’. This seems to be a fail factor since it might constrain the possibilities of fully conveying identity. It could therefore be argued that it is important to understand what interior design is in order to ‘be prepared’ on what costs it might involve. The empirical data also brings forth the emerging term ‘interior branding’ which might contribute to that lack of and/or misunderstandings will fade in the future, since it seems to ‘speak a language’ that marketing divisions understands (Lindgren & Lindstedt).

Further, it seems as if the type of premises a company holds can compose either a success or fail factor of conveying identity. In the theoretical framework it was found that the facility an organization chooses for its activities affects a few crucial areas, especially its employees (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006; Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010; Bitner 1992; Raffelt, Littich & Meyer, 2011). In the empirical data Lindberg & Lindstedt and also Granqvist indicated that not all premises are suitable for all types of companies. Further they argued that the most ideal way to proceed in order to assure the best choice of premises, would be to contact an interior designer before signing any contracts, in order to be recommended which premises might fit the company’s activities better. Martin & Guerin (2005) also found that communication of such guidance is a valuable competence of the interior designer.

Choices Become Behavior

Organisational physical space, architecture, and design (OPSAD) affects critical audiences, which puts it in alignment with a company’s mission and goals (Clegg & Kornberger,
further the economic value of physical environment comes through the emotional connection that potential customers make with it (Klingmann, 2008). The appearance of a company’s physical environment is also a crucial element in developing trust and loyalty among stakeholders (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006; Herman Miller Inc., 2007). These statements indicate similarities to theories on corporate identity and Corporate Visual Identity (CVI). For instance, an organization’s behavior communicates identity (van den Bosch et al., 2005) and it could be argued the behavior includes whether an organization attends to its physical environment, i.e. interior space, or not and to what extent. Further, the empirical data implies that a company that does not attend to the visual identity can make a good profit anyway, but in order for the company to ‘get to the next level’ and ‘become number one’ it must be attended to (Granqvist, Gostomski), as Granqvist put it “There is no other way, you can’t ignore it”. Granqvist and Gostomski both argued that interior design can be used as a competitive parameter and that it can help to distinguish a company from its competitors.

How an organization behaves also communicates its values (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006), this could be as simple as how the company manages its environments through e.g. cleaning, as Lindgren & Lindstedt explains; which they further argue is dependent on company culture. Granqvist further argued that CVI is actually composed by a company’s culture, which indicates that behavior is a visual matter. Gostomski claimed that the choice of products and materials is also a matter of behavior, that choosing low quality products can communicate that ‘you don’t care’. Further, what an interior space communicates seems to depend on how it appears; this was implied by all interviewees. Gostomski for instance, pointed out that a company’s environment always communicates ‘something’, which is in alignment with what Herman Miller Inc. (2007) express, and that it therefore is important that it communicates the right thing. Granqvist exemplifies the design of his own office with; ‘practice what you preach’. He further argues that it is not ‘justifiable’ to claim something through external messages and then disregard ‘your own office’. He implies that ‘building castles in the air’ will only create very high expectations that can be difficult to meet.

This is in alignment with Herman Miller Inc. (2007) and Clegg & Kornberger (2006) who stress that if the physical environment does not communicate the same things as other external messages, it might lead to ‘a sense of unreliability’ (Gostomski) among customers; they might ‘feel deceived, confused or might not understand’ and further it can lead to that a customer no longer ‘trusts them’ (Lindgren & Lindstedt). Granqvist further validates how the appearance of premises might fail to ensure the ability to convey an established identity; he gave an example of a client whose facilities reflected so badly on the quality products that they lost some of their credibility. The empirical data further implies that, when ‘taking over’ premises, interior design is very important to invest in; otherwise the company might end up taking over whatever identity that interior space communicates.
Choices in the Design Process

The empirical data revealed what actions might ensure that a company’s identity is visually presented as fair as possible, and the ideal way to uphold its consistency. It seems that this procedure involves a few decisions that determine whether it is a success or not. One of the most important decisions when establishing a Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) appears, according to Granqvist and Lindgren & Lindstedt, to be to as early as possible include a ‘creative person’; or preferably a designer in the process. Someone who is able to create visual guidelines in alignment with what is being said, company mission and culture. Granqvist indicates that the quality of the CVI can depend on whether the graphic designer has to solve problems ‘when the process has already gone too far’ or if s/he can be involved from the start and thus preventing such problems from appearing.

Lindgren & Lindstedt further stresses that it is important not to exclude the interior designer in this process, only relying on the graphic designer. Their experiences has taught them that the best result is achieved when the graphic profile and interior design is created simultaneously. This is consistent with what van den Bosch (2005) states: that all carriers must be kept in mind when designing CVI and that is has to be ‘unequivocally expressed’. Graphic and interior designers possesses such necessary skills to create a visual identity that is ‘mutable across different marketing channels’ (Granqvist). van den Bosch (2005) emphasizes the time and money it takes to change an established CVI or even just parts of it. Therefore it might be better to, as the empirical data implies, invest in consulting professionals to make sure that the company has an effective and ‘mutable’ identity which might not cost if and when any changes have to be made. The empirical data further indicates that consistency is not about making all carriers look as similar as possible, but ensuring that the design of each carrier follow the same rules i.e just as van den Bosch et al., (2006) mean about CVI being a tool which determines such rules.

Lindgren & Lindstedt explain that it is easier to ‘apply the graphic profile’ on some environments but Granqvist argue that the most important things is to follow the established color palette and work with suitable materials; i.e. develop a sustainable concept. Gostomski seem to agree and means that interior design is about affecting the subconscious; by working with the details from the graphic profile and take them ‘even further’ and turn them into experiences. It was indicated that some companies try to ‘cut corners’ (Granqvist) by asking interior companies if they can deliver a package deal, this might result in that the interior company undertakes assignments outside of their area of competence. It can be argued that only a professional designer is able to understand how to interpret the details of a CVI, in order to develop an interior concept that presents a fair experience of the identity. Lindgren & Lindstedt stresses that upholding consistency is also important because ‘there will always be some people who see such things’. This implies that it is not only the designers that are aware of details, wherefore consistency is important.
It’s Other Dimensions Too

Granqvist claims that what is visual is just one aspect of a CVI. He means that a visual identity is also about feelings, in alignment with Gostomski when she talks about experiencing identity subconsciously. The theoretical framework presented that Hultén et al. (2006) and Poldma (2010) mean that experiences happen within individuals, and that the human experiences through her senses; sight, smell, touch, sound and taste. Granqvist further claimed that ‘basically everything that you react to as a person is important’ when conveying CVI in interior spaces, and Gostomski also expressed an important point when she claimed that interior design is also about psychology. Granqvist further means that the design of a physical environment where customer service takes place plays a ‘significant part of the customers experience’ and to be able to build such a relation with them so that they later on might ‘overlook’ any mistakes made by the company.

Both Granqvist and Gostomski expressed that they believe that one factor that causes some constraints to what extent they can take design is the ‘Swedish standards’ which they mean is characterized by ‘function’ and an engineering focus rather than a ‘form’ and design focus, in comparison to Denmark where ‘design is everywhere’. They seem to imply that many people cannot see that you can have both, and how the physical environment allows other dimensions of conveying CVI. This indicates that interior design may create solutions that increases both the level of identity conveyed and the functional work environment for employees. Gostomski elaborates and states that “this kind of interior design is about challenging the norms and standards”.

Lindgren & Lindstedt exemplifies that an environment can look right, but if the acoustics are bad it can affect how long customers ‘unconsciously’ chooses to stay or e.g. how the employees feel about their work environment. Further, it must not be forgotten other effects interior design have on employees. Just as presented in the theoretical framework, studies have shown that how an interior space is designed affects the work performance, relationships and interactions between employees (Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010; Clegg & Kornberger, 2006; Binner 1992). Granqvist and Gostomski stresses how interior design also can affect turnover rates.

Clegg & Kornberger (2006) claim that if a company values the power of attending to what they call OPSAD, may even affect a company’s efficiency and effectiveness. Granqvist somewhat discusses this when he argues about ‘how it could have been’ if companies had valued interior design more. For instance, the empirical data implies that how well interior design convey identity can affect whether employees feel proud of their workplace and therefore their performance, which also can affect how they encounter customers and other visitors. Gostomski also seem to mean that this can create ‘mouth to mouth’ marketing, not only from employees to others but also between customers. This indicates that it does affect reputation, just as van den Bosch et al. (2005) mean that CVI does. This further implies that all interior elements has a role of not only conveying identity in visual aspects, but also how they feel as a unity when being touched, walked upon, how they sound and perhaps even
smell. This is indicated in the empirical data to play a huge role in how customers experiences identity subconsciously in the physical environment. This also seem to be in alignment with what Rowden (2000) mean when claiming that people ‘unconsciously seek for patterns’ in order to make any decisions. Lindgren & Lindstedt who focus their service on cafes and restaurants mean that customers makes such unconscious decisions after what environment ‘feels better’.

**Stay Involved in the Process**

The empirical data further revealed that one major success factor is not just to involve a designer early in the process, but also that the company should be engaged during the design process. One reason for this is just as when it comes to an individual, ‘only you know to a hundred percent what your culture is’ and vision which Granqvist further mean is dependent on each other. However, the empirical data also implies that the employees does not necessarily have to be a part of this process, as conveying CVI is not a matter of anyones personal values. Further, it is also implied that it is important to listen to the designer when it is ‘time to let go’ and let them finish the process, it requires a mutual trust between the designers the client (Lindgren & Lindstedt). It was also found that with experience it is easier for interior designers to exclude personal preferences, something that might be of importance when the aim is to convey a company’s identity. This can be interpreted as a recommendation to why companies should not try to ‘cut corners’ and relying its identity on someone without crucial experience.

Letting go at the right time also concerns the designers themselves; the interior designer creates everything ‘on paper’: layout, a list of materials and products etc. All interviewees stressed that it is of great importance to ‘know your limitations’ and to involve specialists on e.g. lighting, which Lindgren & Lindstedt mean is one of the most important aspects of how an interior space is perceived.

Cutting corners may also be a fail factor in such way that a person without education might not know how to properly communicate information ‘on paper’. In the end all decisions that have been made are to be left in the hands of purchasers of products and materials; exact codes of these or clear descriptions of requirement that has to be met (Lindgren & Lindstedt). The company i.e. the client must also be able to understand the information in order to know what it agrees to, but what seems to be most crucial according to Lindgren & Lindstedt is that the construction firms understands instructions for a project. This further emphasizes the importance of hiring an interior designer that meets the crucial competences needed for communicating instructions to everyone involved. This can also affect whether a project is delivered in time.
Chapter Summary

In this section a summary of the analysis is provided, it shows a summary of the most determining success and fail factors that were found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Factors</th>
<th>Fail Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hiring an interior designer</strong> that possesses</td>
<td><strong>Not attending to the interior space,</strong> which seem to be dependent on company culture. This might e.g. give the impression that the company is not trustworthy and that it simply ‘does not care’. It can also affect negatively on how the service/products of a company and environment is perceived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The Body of Knowledge’ (Martin &amp; Guerin, 2005). This knowledge was found crucial for being able to design a company’s interior spaces and to what extent the CVI can be conveyed effectively.</td>
<td><strong>Using interior design as a mean to convey Corporate Visual Identity:</strong> A sound company culture that is in alignment with company vision, which seem to affect whether the decision to design the interior space with such a purpose are valued. Taking such a decision communicates behavior, a part of the corporate identity mix (van den Bosch et al. 2005) which affects how a company is perceived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using interior design as a mean to convey Corporate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not understanding that interior design concerns all interior elements,</strong> and therefore not being able to see its potential to convey CVI. This was found in questions regarding, among other things, budget priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Identity:</strong> A sound company culture that is in alignment with company vision, which seem to affect whether the decision to design the interior space with such a purpose are valued. Taking such a decision communicates behavior, a part of the corporate identity mix (van den Bosch et al. 2005) which affects how a company is perceived.</td>
<td><strong>Consulting an interior designer</strong> on what premises fits the company’s activities better and also its possibilities to convey CVI. This also concerns involving an interior designer in an early stage of establishing the CVI and not rely on a graphic designer alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consulting an interior designer</strong> on what premises</td>
<td><strong>‘Cutting corners’: undervaluing the power of all interior elements by hiring interior companies or individuals that might not focus on conveying CVI and letting employees decide what they want. This also seem to be a problem later when final instructions is handed over to everyone involved e.g. purchasers and construction firms. This can also affect whether a project is delivered in time.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fits the company’s activities better and also its possibilities to convey CVI. This also concerns involving an interior designer in an early stage of establishing the CVI and not rely on a graphic designer alone.</td>
<td><strong>Staying involved in the process</strong> and respecting and valuing the expertise of the designers involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying involved in the process</strong> and respecting and</td>
<td><strong>Taking over premises</strong> and not investing in customizing the interior space so that it conveys the company’s CVI, which will result in that it communicates a random identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valuing the expertise of the designers involved.</td>
<td><strong>Dare to challenge the norms:</strong> Understanding and valuing the many possibilities of conveying CVI with interior design, how it may affect customers or any user of the company’s interior space on subconscious levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dare to challenge the norms:</strong> Understanding and valuing the many possibilities of conveying CVI with interior design, how it may affect customers or any user of the company’s interior space on subconscious levels.</td>
<td><strong>Not walking the talk:</strong> Conveying outwards that the company has certain values but not actually proving it. ‘Building castles in the air’ and then living in a ‘shed’.</td>
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</table>

Figure 6.1 Chapter Summary - Analysis
7.0 Conclusion

The company’s environment is a vital factor for organizations when displaying the idea of itself to its customers (Olins, 1995) but the specific role that the interior has as a carrier of Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) has been a rather neglected subject in academic research. This study contains empirical evidence that confirms that the interior has a vital role as a carrier of CVI and that it is significant for maintaining consistency.

The empirical data indicates that this is most important for companies that offer services where the final consumer (and other stakeholders) come in contact with the company’s physical environment; i.e. interior space e.g. in offices, receptions, cafes and restaurants. Conveying CVI is in such environments has shown to be determining on how a company is perceived as trustworthy or not. It can also affect employee turnover rates in such way that it affects how well they connect and engage with their workplace, and further their function as additional carriers of identity - how they encounter and communicate the company’s value to customers. Conveying identity through interior design can further be done to different extents.

This study shows that interior design is a competitive parameter that can contribute to distinguish a company from its competitors by conveying CVI. If a company wants to ‘take it to the next level’ or wants to challenge the standards, engage and motivate its employees and customers, interior design is a marketing strategy that cannot be ignored. It can convey CVI through several dimensions since it can be conveyed through all interior elements that affects visitors and users of the interior space in subconscious ways. Finally, interior design that conveys CVI should not be seen as a cost, it is an investment; it creates an added value, for both employees and its customers, and that value can be several times higher than the invested amount.

Generalization of the Findings

The researchers of this study are sure that the findings can be generalized to the extent a qualitative study allows, since the all the interviewees express themselves in similar ways regarding same or similar topics. If one should use the same sampling techniques, for collecting empirical data in a research with a resembling topic, one would probably find more or less the same things.

Suggestions for Further Research

This research has revealed a few topics that might need further research. The empirical data brought forth the term ‘interior branding’ which seem to be emerging among practitioners i.e. interior architects and designers that work with conveying corporate (visual) identity, mostly in America but also Europe. The interviewees of this study express that this term makes it easier to communicate ‘the added value’ that comes out of it.
Research might be needed to establish whether this term can be effective to enhance the knowledge of the phenomena among business executives. Further, research is needed on how to effectively measure ROI of conducting this type of interior design, depending on to what extent it is done.

8.0 Reflections

When six different companies were contacted during the study the goal was to collect data from at least 3-5 professionals, to ensure the ability to generalize any findings. However, only three interviews were conducted in this study because the remaining companies that were contacted could not participate in the study. In retrospect, the time and range limitations of this study would probably not have made it possible to involve a greater amount of data than currently included, as all three cases were rather comprehensive in time and content.

The researchers are aware that this study does not contain concrete examples of how CVI can be conveyed through interior design; and that it neither contains any numbers of ROI of any companies that have done so, which would have legitimised statements in the conclusion. However, at the beginning of the study the researchers made the decision to not include e.g. any pictures to exemplify this in order to exclude personal preferences by evaluating such projects. If one is interested in examples it is recommended to visit the webpages of the participating companies in this study.
9.0 References

Brooker, Graeme & Weinthal, Lois (red.) (2013). The handbook of interior architecture and design. London: Bloomsbury Academic


Herman Miller Inc. (2007). Three-Dimensional Branding - Using Space as a Medium for the Message


Ralph, Paul & Wand, Yair (2009). *A proposal for a Formal Definition of the Design Concept*. Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia Canada


**Empirical References**


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## Appendix 1. Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Topic</th>
<th>Example questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T1. Demographics</strong></td>
<td>• Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Profession/Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Company information</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T2. Interior</strong></td>
<td>• What counts as interior?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T3. Interior Design</strong></td>
<td>• What is interior design?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the general view on it?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Clients’ view/knowledge of?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management’s view/knowledge?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How important is it for a company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T4. The Design Process</strong></td>
<td>• How do you start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is important to consider?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What can go wrong?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T5. The Interior Designer</strong></td>
<td>• Can anyone perform interior design?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why/Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T6. Identity</strong></td>
<td>• What is identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is it important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why/Why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T7. Corporate Visual Identity</strong></td>
<td>• What is CVI?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is it important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why/Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T8. Carriers of CVI</strong></td>
<td>• Different types of carriers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T9. Interior as a Carrier of CVI</strong></td>
<td>• Is/Should interior be regarded as a carrier?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why/Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there a growing demand/interest/awareness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why do you think there is/isn’t?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T10. Consistency</strong></td>
<td>• How important is consistency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What happens if consistency is neglected/forgotten?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. Source Criticism

When collecting data for the theoretical framework one must have a critical stance to what is being said (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Thurén, 2013). To secure the authenticity of the theoretical framework of this study, the main gathering of information was done through tools such as OneSearch (on the Linnaeus University’s database), DiVA, Google and Google Scholar.

Most of the articles and books in this study were found in the list of references of other studies that were assumed to be relevant. This was an effective way to find authors on relevant research topics. As mentioned in the problem discussion there seems to be a lack of research on the subjects CVI, interior and interior design in the context of how organizations use them to communicate identity. This made it difficult for the researchers to find additional references. van den Bosch (2005) and van den Bosch et al., (2005), Hultén et al. (2009) and Wally Olins were recurring in many places regarding corporate identity and CVI. Therefore, these authors were assumed to be reliable as they had been used in other studies as well. Much literature was also known through previous studies and evaluated as reliable.