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An Analysis of Volvo Cars' Brand Experiences in Torslanda & the Alignment with World of Volvo

Master's Thesis in Management and Economics of Innovation

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Abstract

The aim of this report is to investigate how Volvo Cars can increase their overall brand equity through their brand experiences considering the imminent transformation where World of Volvo is launched, and the Brand Experience Centre is laid down. To accomplish this, the literature review first presents theory regarding the brand management field and the different sorts of brand equity. Then a framework is created to allow an appropriate analysis of the case study. Thereafter, a research question, including two sub questions, is formulated and a qualitative research strategy with an abductive approach chosen. The data is mainly collected through observations and semi-structured interviews with representatives from three identified key stakeholder-groups, namely the brand experience personnel, the onboarding team and the public affairs department. Initially, the current value generated by the different brand experiences is investigated before the changes which the transformation would entail are analysed. This is followed by an analysis and discussion concerning opportunities, potential value losses, affected stakeholders, and how challenges could be handled. The findings indicate that internal people are the ones that stand to lose on the transformation and recommendations are provided to the brand experience department regarding improvement potentials, how to mitigate risks, and how to ensure an enhanced overall brand experience for both internal and external people.

Keywords: brand equity, brand experience, EBBE, CBBE, customer satisfaction

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Anton Hansson & Nima Vatankhah Hansen, Gothenburg, 2023

Glossary List

Brand Association - anything that you can link from your memory to a brand e.g. an attribute.

Brand Awareness - ability to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category e.g. thinking of cars when seeing or thinking of Volvo Cars.

Brand Commitment - An individual's attachment to the organisation and to what extent they internalise or adopt the company's values, perspectives, beliefs and characteristics.

Brand Equity - The added value a brand creates to the product.

Brand Image - A set of associations constitutes a brand image.

Brand Knowledge - A mixed form of tacit and subjective knowledge that creates a stronger role clarity and brand commitment.

Brand Loyalty - The commitment that established customers have to a certain brand.

Brand Personality - A set of human characteristics that one links to a brand.

Brand Promise - The consistent value or experience that customers can anticipate receiving whenever they engage with a company forms the foundation of its brand. By consistently fulfilling this promise, a company strengthens its brand value in the perception of both customers and employees.

Customers - potential and established customers to the experiences and/or products depending on context

Customer-Based Brand Equity - One of the three perspectives on brand equity (financial, customer, and employee). The higher customer-based brand equity, the greater is the positive impact on customers.

Dipped in Blue - A term commonly used at Volvo Cars. When an employee has joined the factory tour, attended the BEC, and gotten a profound understanding of the company, they are considered "dipped in blue."

Employee-Based Brand Equity - One of the three perspectives on brand equity (financial, customer, and employee). The higher employee-based brand equity, the greater is the positive impact on employees.

External people - Customers that are not internal people.

Internal People - The onboarding department on behalf of employees (new and established), Volvo Cars affiliates (e.g. retailers and similar), and the Public Affairs department on behalf of their VIP clients.

Onboarding - A sequence of activities for new employees when they join Volvo Cars.

OSD - Overseas Delivery program. A program where American customers can get their car delivered in Gothenburg, drive it around on vacation, and then ship it to the U.S. The factory tour is included in this process.

Perceived Brand Quality - Consumer perception of a brand's excellence and subjective judgement.

Role Clarity - The level of clearness regarding the employees' guidelines and paths.

Stakeholder-groups - Different people that find some value from attending the experiences E.g. Onboarding department, Public Affairs department and Brand Experience department.

Volvo Group - The Volvo company focusing on trucks, buses, construction equipment, etc.

Volvo on Demand - An app to temporarily hire Volvo cars for an hour or longer.

Abbreviation List

BEC - Brand experience centre (is an activity itself)

CBBE - Customer-based brand equity

EBBE - Employee-based brand equity

FT - Factory Tour

WoV - World of Volvo (new joint Volvo venture and building in the city of Gothenburg)

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1. Introduction

The following section will introduce the case study and some related theoretical background. Thereafter, the preliminary aim of the research will be presented along with the research questions. The section ends with the demarcations of the thesis.

1.1 Case Background

People often say, “*a good product sells itself*”. Despite this notion, Volvo Cars are together with Volvo Group investing more than ever into their brand experiences. Can it be that brand management has become more important than ever before? Will investments in brand building intentions generate proper return on investment or are companies simply imitating what their competition is doing?

Volvo Cars’ purpose is to “*provide the freedom to move in a personal, sustainable and safe way*” (Volvo Cars, 2022). The Volvo Cars brand is currently managed and supported in several ways. Besides the products, i.e. the cars, there are teams working with marketing, events, product launches, etc. There is also a department, which will hereinafter be referred to as the brand experience department, in charge of providing some of the Volvo Cars visitor experiences, which is currently located in Torslanda. The current brand experiences include the Factory Tours (FT) as well as guided tours at the Brand Experience Centre (BEC). During the FT, visitors get to follow the manufacturing process, from sheet metal to a fully functional car while also learning more about Volvo Cars as a company. At the BEC, the guide provides a more comprehensive picture of Volvo Cars, focusing on areas such as: safety, design, and sustainability.

Moreover, Volvo Cars and Volvo Group are currently building World of Volvo (WoV) in the city centre of Gothenburg which will open within a year, in April 2024. This is supposed to be the new meeting place where a plethora of experiences and exciting events will be offered. At a first glance, it may appear that everything will improve with this remarkable experience and substantial investments. However, it may not be that simple. The BEC might be laid down after the introduction of WoV while other experiences are intended to remain or be added in Torslanda. The ambition of this thesis is to analyse how these changes will affect Volvo Cars from a brand management perspective by taking a qualitative and theoretical standpoint. After a thorough analysis, recommendations will be provided regarding how the department could revise the experiences to mitigate potential value losses due to the disappearance of the BEC and to increase the overall value which the experiences create. Further, recommendations will consider the alignment of the Torslanda experiences with World of Volvo’s offers and operations to consider the opportunities and difficulties which this geographical transition entails.

1.2 Background to Brand Management

In this section, the role of brands and the impact they may have on organisations will be discussed. Furthermore, a brief overview of brand management theory will be provided, and related terminology defined.

1.2.1 Introduction to Brands

The role of brands are multiple and they are seen as a valuable intangible resource, according to Grant (2018). The author explains that brands function, on a fundamental level, as an “implicit guarantee of quality” as it identifies the producer of a product or service. Grant (2018) also remarks how a trusted brand name becomes more important the greater the cost of the purchase is for the buyer. This notion is corroborated by Aaker (1991) who argues that the power of brands is indicated by firms’ willingness to pay for establishing and managing them. Furthermore, Grant (2018) discusses how brand building efforts of companies today revolve around areas like: brand experience, shared values, and emotional dialogue, rather than the traditional advertising to mass-market. It is clear that companies need to focus on such value creating activities if they want to retain and increase their brand equity. In addition, Deloitte (2022), acknowledges that brand experience centres are a trend in the automotive industry, especially related to luxury brands, that potentially can become an intrinsic part of brand-building and that can be tailored to customers’ preferences. Furthermore, Chunawalla (2008) explains that the process of managing an organisation’s brand with the goal to increase their brand equity is referred to as brand management.

1.2.2 Brand Equity

There are several definitions of brand equity, however, Farjam and Hongyi (2015) define brand equity as “the added value endowed by the brand to the product” and that you should consider brand equity as:

“a set of characteristics that make a brand unique in the marketplace, allows the company to charge a higher price and retain a greater market share than would be possible with an unbranded product”

(Farjam & Hongyi, 2015, p.15)

Farjam and Hongyi (2015) highlights how brand equity has become a major area of attention for managers and marketers due to its role as a critical intangible asset for a company. In addition, the authors divide brand equity into three different perspectives: financial, customer and employee. In the financial perspective, managers focus on measuring the value of the brand as an asset but its efficacy for building brand equity is under debate. The customer perspective, the most widely used, is based on the belief that if a brand has no value to its customers, it does not have any value to investors, retailers or manufacturers. The customer-based perspective on brand equity (CBBE) includes for instance when customers have developed favourable, unique and strong brand associations in their memory (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015). Employee-based brand equity (EBBE), as described by the authors, refers to the impact that brand knowledge has on employees’ response to their work

environment and culture. They argue that employee-based brand equity can foster an emotional connection between the employees and the company, reducing their willingness to leave. Lastly, several prominent scholars (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015; King & Grace, 2009; Kwon, 2013) emphasise how the employee-based brand equity acts as a cornerstone for constructing customer-based brand equity, as employees who comprehend and support the company's objectives transmit these principles to their customers. Employees therefore play a crucial role in the success of a company's brand. The importance of brand equity is further strengthened by Wilcox et al. (2008) who explain that the focus on finding methods to create strong brand equity is prioritised by marketers to ensure that a company remains competitive and that "strong brands stand the test of time, are leveraged for decades and provide increases in revenue streams for the products sold under those brands" (Wilcox et al., 2008, p. 202).

1.3 Aim & Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how Volvo Cars can increase their overall brand equity, i.e. both customer-based and employee-based, through their brand experiences considering the transformation that will occur. We aim to provide an external perspective on the matter and generate recommendations based on our research. Since limited research has been conducted on similar case studies, there are few guidelines to follow. Therefore, a literature study will be conducted and result in a framework. The framework will help us navigate and pinpoint crucial aspects and perspectives in the ambiguous landscape of brand management.

Based on the purpose of this thesis, one research question with two sub questions has been formulated:

Research Question

How can an equivalent or enhanced overall brand experience, compared to the current one in Torslanda, be offered to all relevant stakeholders in the new context with the inauguration of World of Volvo and the probable disappearance of the BEC?

- a) *How do the past and current brand experiences in Torslanda contribute to the overall brand equity and how can those be improved?*
- b) *What possibilities and challenges will the transformation entail?*

1.5 Demarcations

Due to the nature of this research, the focus will be primarily on the offers of Torslanda. However, the offers of WoV in Gothenburg that relate to Volvo Cars will be considered to a limited extent as well to ensure alignment between offers and logistical matters. Since WoV will not be opened during the time of this thesis, all empirical data will be based on interviews with key people currently enrolled in the development of WoV and their knowledge.

It should be noted that the foremost consideration in this thesis will be the evaluation of the brand equity of Volvo Cars from a customer and employee perspective. While other factors may also be analysed, they will not be to the same extent. Another demarcation in this thesis will be that all research participants will be either visiting Sweden and Torslanda as customers to the experiences, be employees of Volvo Cars in Sweden (mainly in Torslanda) or involved in WoV during the time of this thesis, i.e. we will not reach out to previous visitors or employees placed abroad. Further, the thesis may not fully provide detailed descriptions of all brand experience activities, as some are in the process of being developed or remain undisclosed at this time. The same applies regarding the non-disclosure of certain proprietary figures and operational details. Lastly, employees will be categorised as employees even though we acknowledge that an employee could be a customer as well.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the following section, relevant literature will be introduced and at the end a theoretical framework for the study will be presented. The theoretical framework will constitute the foundation for the research. Moreover, it will guide us through the data collection and the analysis of the empirical data to facilitate well-grounded conclusions and recommendations. The focus will be on brand equity from a customer and employee perspective whereas the financial perspective is excluded based on how its efficacy for building brand equity has been under debate (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015), as aforementioned.

2.1 Customer-Based Brand Equity

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) are important academic contributors to brand equity (Fayrene & Lee, 2011). Both could be seen as pioneers in conceptualising brand equity from a customer perspective, despite having different conceptualizations. However, Aaker is the most cited researcher in this field (Farjam & Hyongi, 2015). Aaker's (1991) customer-based brand equity model consists of five dimensions, namely, brand loyalty which is viewed as a core dimension by Aaker (1996), brand awareness, perceived brand quality which is viewed as a core construct in measuring brand equity (Aaker, 1996), brand associations and brand assets (proprietary assets). Most of the CBBE-studies have excluded Aaker's "brand assets" dimension of the CBBE-models as consumers do not understand them, and the other four dimensions are enough (Kwon, 2013).

Yoo et al. (2000) explore this further in their research, looking at how marketing actions increase and decrease brand equity. The authors create a customer-based conceptualization of brand equity based on Aaker's multidimensional concept of brand equity made in 1991. Yoo et al. (2000) divides brand equity into three dimensions (See Figure 1), perceived brand quality, brand loyalty and brand awareness/associations and they argue that by strengthening the dimensions, brand equity can be created, maintained and expanded. In addition, according to Yoo et al. (2000), consumers' subjective judgement of quality can be influenced by product experiences, unique needs and consumption situations. When managing brand equity, Yoo et al. (2000) advocate long-term investments that can be sustained over time. This by ensuring brand consistency, protecting the brand equity sources, appropriately alternating between leveraging and fortifying the brand, and establishing marketing programs that are fine-tuned to develop strong associations with the brand, high perceived quality of the product and brand loyalty. Aaker (1991) states perceived quality could be based upon associations and awareness and emphasise the non-independence of the dimensions.

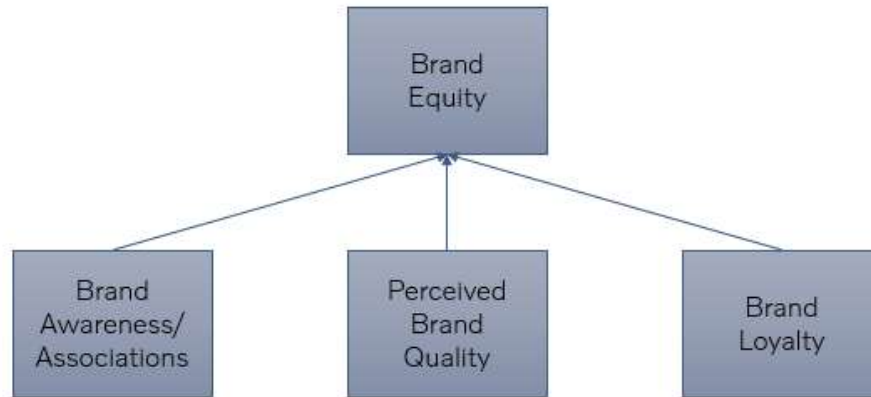


Figure 1: An illustration of the dimensions of brand equity, inspired by Yoo et al. (2000)

2.1.1 Brand Awareness

According to Romaniuk et al. (2017), brand awareness is seen as a cornerstone for creating brand equity by several authors despite differences in their models, e.g. the previously mentioned models by Aaker (1991) and Yoo et al. (2000). Further, brand awareness is regarded as precedent to brand association as customers need to be aware of a brand before creating associations (Kwon, 2013; Romaniuk et al., 2017). Aaker (1991) has a relatively simple explanation of why brand awareness needs to exist and argues that for a brand to enter the consideration stage during a purchase, it must first be known. Further, Aaker (1991) defines brand awareness as “the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category”, which agrees with Keller (1993)’s definition. Moreover, Aaker (1991) emphasises the ease to attach new associations, e.g. product attribute, when recognition is established.

2.1.2 Brand Associations

Similar to brand awareness, brand associations are seen as a cornerstone in creating brand equity. Aaker (1991) describes brand associations as anything that you can link from your memory to a brand, e.g. images, symbols, lifestyle/personality or product attributes. Further, Aaker (1991) remarks that brand associations can be of different levels of strength and are magnified by being based on several exposures or experiences. In addition, Aaker (1991) states that a well-positioned brand will have a competing and attractive position supported by strong association and it will rate high on desirable attributes. Moreover, brand association creates value by helping customers process and retrieve information, creating reasons for customers to buy the product/services, generating positive feelings/attitudes and in addition, it helps the firm to differentiate by acting as an important basis for differentiation (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Kwon, 2013). However, Aaker (1991) highlights that the most important associations are those who directly or indirectly affect buying behaviour. Furthermore, brand associations play a dominant role in creating brand equity as it signals quality, loyalty, credibility, and confidence in the brand (Kwon, 2013). Guzmán and Davis (2017), who use Yoo et al. 's (2000) framework (fig. 1) in their research, claim that associations to a brand are directly impacted by customers’ attitudes towards the brand. Further the authors remark that the attitude towards a

brand arises from a rational response to company's communication, thus it can become more positive through social initiatives and increase brand equity.

2.1.3 Perceived Brand Quality

Perceived brand quality is defined by Zeithaml (1988) as the subjective judgement and notion of a brand's overall excellence from a consumer perspective. Yoo and Donthu (2001) clarify that it is only customers' or users' "subjective evaluations of product quality" and not the perception of managers or experts. Further, Yoo and Donthu (2001) emphasise that the perceived brand quality represents the overall quality and not specific elements of quality. On this note, Aaker (1991) explains that the perception of brand quality is not necessarily based on knowledge, meaning that it might not be based on facts. The subjective aspect of this dimension is important to stress since customers' perception of a brand's quality could be based on things that customers have picked up from others or their own conclusions. Further, Aaker (1991) highlights that both brand associations and the perceived quality of a brand can enhance the customer satisfaction in relation to customers' experience of the products. The author provides a concrete example stating that sometimes simply knowing that a piece of jewellery is of a certain brand can affect how the user experiences wearing it. Hence, if someone perceives the overall quality of a brand to be high, they will feel more satisfied whenever they are using the product or service.

2.1.4 Brand Loyalty

Guzmán and Davis (2017) provide a short definition of brand loyalty stating that it is the grade of commitment and attachment consumers have to a specific brand. Oliver (1999, p. 34) presents a more detailed definition which is recognized by several established academics:

“a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour”

Additionally, Aaker (1991) explains that one of the reasons that brand loyalty is important stands on the fact that it is expensive to gain new customers while inexpensive to retain existing ones. Thus, by continuously managing the brand and all its related aspects, companies can save a lot of resources and ensure that their customer base does not shrink. Aaker (1991) continues to state that an increased brand loyalty leads to higher switching costs which can discourage competitors from trying to snatch one's customers. This resonates with the discussions by other established researchers such as Oliver (1999) and Grant (2018). However, Aaker (1996) points out that one of the limitations with measurements of brand loyalty is that they cannot be applied to non-customers. Therefore, it is impractical to measure the impact of brand loyalty on a company's brand equity based on non-existing customers (Aaker, 1996).

2.2 Brand Image

Aaker (1991) defines brand image as “A set of associations, usually organised in meaningful ways.”. Chunawalla (2008) explains further that brand image is a perception of a brand as a result of different factors, including brand experience. Furthermore, Cid et al. (2022) explain that the importance of creating a positive brand image is based on the fact that people react to what they perceive as reality, rather than reality itself. The authors continue to state that “customers’ perception of who the brand is and what it stands for” constitutes the brand image. Furthermore, Grant (2018) states that in order for a company to have a credible brand image, it is key to have consistency in the image presented. Ansary and Hashim (2018) conducted a research based on Keller’s (1993) model, where they concluded that brand image has a significant positive impact on brand equity.

Moreover, brand experiences can be used to create a bond between the brand and the customer which in the end, if positive, leads to increased brand equity (Chunawalla, 2008). Chunawalla (2008) further argues that the exposure to a brand, e.g. through brand experiences, forms the customers’ perception of that particular brand. The author explains that customers’ perception in turn consists of brand personality and brand associations. Brand personality is explained as the adjectives that customers link to a certain brand, e.g. friendly, sustainable, macho, serious, etc. (Chunawalla, 2008). Furthermore, the author argues that a company’s core values, and external communication helps form the brand personality. According to Chunawalla (2008, p. 88), “brand personality may well be derived from the core values”, given that the communication and marketing efforts are consistent. The author implies that these components, i.e. brand personality and brand association, in combination constitute the brand image (see Figure 2). Brand personality is further highlighted as a core dimension of brand image by Farjam and Hongyi (2015).

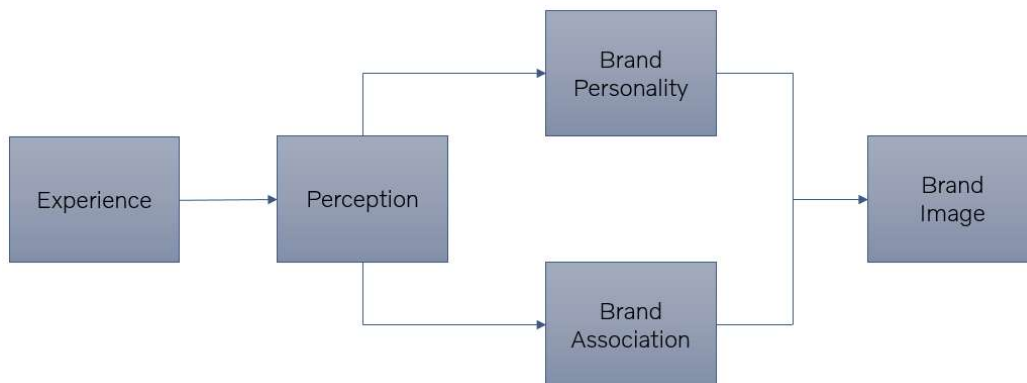


Figure 2: Concept of brand image (Chunawalla, 2008)

2.3 Employee-Based Brand Equity

King and Grace (2009) introduce a second perspective of brand equity and create a framework regarding employee-based brand equity (EBBE) to understand the impact brand building efforts have from an employee perspective. EBBE consists of three dimensions: brand knowledge, brand commitment and role clarity, and EBBE can according to the authors be defined as:

“the differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee’s response to their work environment”

Further, King and Grace (2009) emphasise how employees are an essential organisational asset in the realisation of organisational goals and the importance of marketers to comprehend this to utilise the power of employees when making marketing strategies. This is further corroborated by Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) who state that employees' knowledge and skills have a huge impact on customers' experience of the brand and, in turn, their brand perceptions. In addition, King and Grace (2009, 2010) as well as Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) argue that employees bear the responsibility of ensuring that the brand promise is delivered as intended. Thus, a first dimension of King and Grace's (2009) framework is introduced, brand knowledge, since a prerequisite for delivering the brand promise as intended to customers is ensuring brand knowledge amongst employees. To generate brand knowledge, and to create and maintain strong brands, internal brand management is needed (King & Grace, 2009; Kwon, 2013). By generating brand knowledge, both brand commitment and role clarity is created as an outcome (King and Grace, 2009; Kwon, 2013). Lastly, Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) emphasise the major importance of understanding employee's interpretation of the brand and how this interpretation is translated to the brand for internal branding success. Since if employees' values are not aligned with the values of the company, the customers' experience of the brand when interacting with employees will be ineffective. Further, they argue that the organisation's brand values, brand promise and strategic orientation can be communicated through formalised channels to frontline employees, and subsequently raise employees' knowledge of the brand (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020).



Figure 3: EBBE framework, inspired by King and Grace (2009).

2.3.1 Internal Brand Management

Internal Brand Management from an EBBE perspective, is about transforming brand knowledge into something appropriate and useful that helps employees be successful in their roles and enabling them to deliver the brand promise as intended (King and Grace, 2009). This requires organisations to understand the existing employee brand knowledge structures and use communication channels to distribute information that is meaningful and relevant for employee’s work.

2.3.2 Brand Knowledge

King and Grace (2009) describe brand knowledge as a mixed form of tacit knowledge and subjective knowledge. Tacit knowledge, in contrast to codified knowledge, is difficult to express or extract and therefore transfer. Malerba and Orsenigo (1997) argue that tacit which is complex, and part of larger systems needs to be shared through knowledge transmission that is of informal nature, e.g. face-to-face talks and personal training of personnel. Subjective knowledge is instead defined as perceived or self-assessed knowledge which, van Mulukom and Geertz (2021) state, is specific to human experience or human condition. Furthermore, tacit knowledge is emphasised as dependent on practical skills and experiences and therefore, considerations for the transferability of such knowledge is needed to set employees' knowledge structures. King and Grace (2009) define brand knowledge as: *“a form of subjective knowledge that is difficult to formalize”* . According to Kwon (2013), brand knowledge could be defined as: *“the employee’s ability to be aware of the organization’s goals and/or vision”*, from an EBBE perspective. Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) state that employees’ cognitive representation of a brand is captured in the brand knowledge concept and that it is based on the accumulation of

prior knowledge which, thus, makes brand knowledge essential in determining EBBE.

2.3.3.1 Role Clarity

Role Clarity provides employees with clear paths and guidelines, i.e. decreases confusions and potential role conflicts (King and Grace, 2009), and is defined as: *“the level of clarity an employee has of their role as a result of having brand knowledge”*. The authors state that role clarity leads to an increased job satisfaction and thus, an increased organisational commitment. This is further strengthened by Kwon (2013) who states that role clarity is considered to be a predictor of organisational satisfaction, commitment, performance and turnover. Lastly, Kwon (2013) highlights that brand knowledge serves as a catalyst for role clarity and that role clarity, in turn, makes employees more likely to identify with the firm and the firm's goals.

2.3.3.2 Brand Commitment

In the case of brand commitment, King and Grace (2009) argues that, if employees feel that their relationship with the organisation is important to maintain and valuable, the employee will have a higher level of commitment to the organisation. This is emphasised as a key factor for organisational success as employees who sense a higher level of commitment, will go beyond their assigned tasks to reach organisational goals (King and Grace, 2009). With commitment the authors refer to the type of affective commitment which according to the authors represents: *“the strength of the individual’s attachment to the organisation and the extent to which they internalise or adopt the values, characteristics, perspectives and beliefs of the organisation”*. Kwon (2013) remarks that brand commitment for employees leads to loyalty, attitudinal attachment and employee retention.

2.4 Customer Satisfaction

Bergman et al. (2022, p. 33) define quality of a product or service as: *“its ability to satisfy, and preferably exceed, the needs and expectations of the customers”*. Oliver (1980) has a similar view on customer satisfaction and regards it as a function between expectations and expectancy disconfirmation. In other words, the expectations that customers have and how well these are met will determine their level of satisfaction. Further, Grigoroudis and Siskos (2010) states that the most popular definition of customer satisfaction is based on fulfilment of customer expectations and that many prominent authors, including Hill (1996), view satisfaction as a standard of how products or service fulfils customer expectations. On this note, Parasuraman et al. (1991) state that the ability to understand customers’ expectations is a prerequisite if a company wants to deliver services that are superior to competitors. Bergman et al. (2022) advocate that by utilising systematic approaches to understand customers’ needs, positive reinforcing mechanisms can be created that increases customer value and loyalty. This resonates with Jösko Brakus et al. (2009) who explain that deliberate brand experiences can have a long-lasting impact on consumers’ memory and should affect both customer loyalty and customer satisfaction.

2.4.1 Measuring Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction measurement is according to Grigoroudis and Siskos (2010) one of the most essential issues concerning business organisations of all types. The authors state that customer satisfaction measurement is the most reliable feedback as it provides customers' preferences and expectations in an effective, direct, meaningful and objective way. This is corroborated by Aaker (1996) who explains that measuring customer satisfaction becomes a particularly powerful tool in service businesses. Grigoroudis and Siskos (2010) further argue that from an employee perspective, a sense of achievement and accomplishment can be provided to all employees involved in any customer service process by communicating the measured customer satisfaction internally in an organisation. The authors suggest that this in turn motivates people to perform even better and become more productive.

2.4.2 Perceived Quality of a Service

Similar to the concept of perceived brand quality, the quality of a service can be regarded as customers' subjective perception of the quality. Grönroos (1982) proposes that the total perceived quality of a service can be divided into three parts: technical quality (outcome), functional quality (process), and corporate image. The technical quality refers to the actual result of the service, i.e. what the customer gets out of it. For instance, customers' know more about art after they have visited an art museum. Functional quality on the other hand refers to how the service affects the customer, e.g. attitudes, behaviours and accessibility. For example it could be how a customer perceives the behaviour of the person helping them or their attitudes towards one another. Thus, it can be seen as the customer's perceived experience of the service. Lastly, Grönroos (1982) argues that due to the intangible disposition of services, the corporate image (brand image) also plays a vital role. The author states that the quality of a service in part will be judged based on outward appearance and therefore underline that service businesses must also look good and not merely be good. A visualisation of Grönroos' (1982) model can be seen in figure 3.

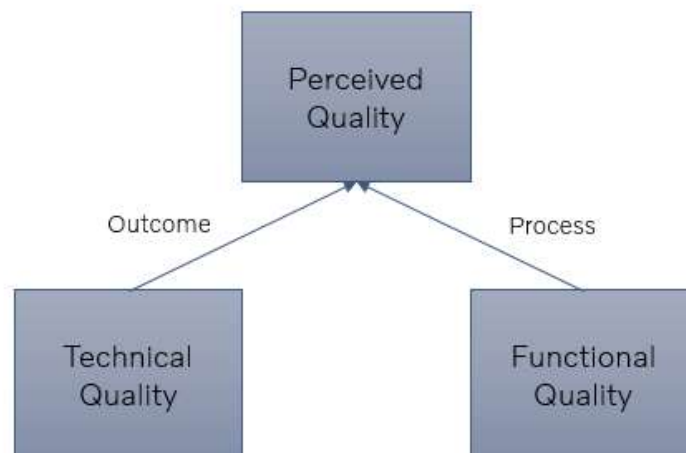


Figure 4: Grönroos' model of perceived quality (Grönroos, 1982)

Grönroos (2008a) argues that the technical quality needs to be up to a certain standard in order for the service to be deemed good. However, the author emphasises that it is through functional quality and brand image that companies compete within their market and truly has the ability to create a higher perceived quality of the overall service. An increased perceived service quality can yield greater customer satisfaction (Grönroos, 1982).

2.4.3 Co-Creation of Value

Furthermore, Bergman et al. (2022) explain that in the case when services are being provided, the created customer value does not only depend on the service itself and the content but also on customers' interaction with the company. Thus, the providers of the service contribute with some to the creation of customer value while the rest usually is created by the customers themselves. Bergman et al. (2022) therefore argue that customer value is co-created by both parties. On this note, Vargo and Lusch (2004) state that enterprises can only offer value propositions and that it is the customer that determines the value and contributes in the process of co-creating it. This is corroborated by Grönroos (2000) who argues that marketing efforts should focus on value creation and not value distribution, i.e. the emphasis is put on facilitating and supporting value creation processes instead of distributing "ready-made" value to customers.

2.5 Interactive Experiences

Merriles (2016) stresses the importance of collaborative efforts from both customers and the firm in brand building activities and that interactive experiences play a fundamental role. The author argues that customer value co-creation and customer-brand engagement often is preceded by interactive brand experiences. Bozzelli et al. (2019) instead discuss how users should be emphasised in interactive experiences and they should have the opportunity to "guide" their own experience through choices. The authors argue that such a concept can increase the users' engagement and also enhance content understanding from the user's perspective through these forms of direct experiences.

Chang (2006) points out that regardless of the intentions of personnel at a museum, visitors will most often experience it differently since everyone's expectations differ, levels of perceptual skills, interest and previous experience. Among other things, Chang (2006) addresses the question: "How do visitors learn in museums?". Furthermore, in his article, Chang (2006) discusses the "Interactive Experience Model" which was brought forward by Falk and Dierking (1992). The interactive experience model is based on the assumption that all experiences are contextual and that there is an interplay involved between three different contexts: the personal, social, and physical. Chang (2006) explains that the **personal context** includes interests, expectations, and prior experiences. According to Dierking and Falk (1992), the **social context** instead considers the social interactions that occur within and between groups as well as between visitors and museum personnel. Lastly, the **physical context** involves facilities, layout, activities, policies and rules. Chang (2006) highlights how visitors' interactions with these contexts vary over time and that at any given moment, either one of these three contexts "could assume a major importance

in visitors' experience. Thus, all of these contexts will contribute substantially but not necessarily in equal proportions throughout each experience. Falk and Dierking (1992) emphasise that each visitor brings their own personal context and interacts in different ways with the social and physical contexts which makes the visitor a co-creator of the experience.

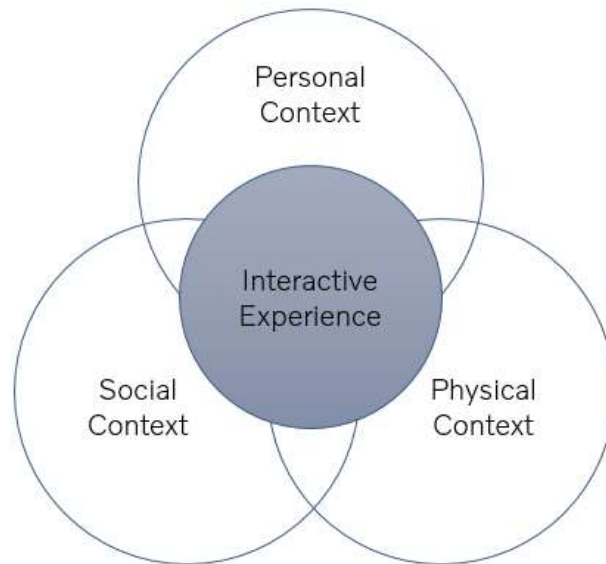


Figure 5: Visualisation of the Interactive Experience Model (Dierking and Falk, 1992).

2.6 Framework for this Case Study

To enable a thorough analysis of the Volvo Cars' brand experiences, a framework has been developed specifically for this research. Previously mentioned frameworks have been extended and combined to facilitate an analysis of the current and future experiences offered as well as their contributions to Volvo Cars' brand equity.

2.6.1. Extended CBBE Framework

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) are both seen as pioneers in the literature regarding CBBE. Still there are some differences, Keller's (1993) dimensions only hold brand awareness and brand image, however, brand image consists of different dimensions of brand associations such as: types of brand associations, favourable brand associations, unique brand associations and strong brand associations (Keller, 1993). Brand image is not considered to the same extent in Aaker's (1991) model, at least it is not discussed as a key dimension of the CBBE framework. Even though some authors use the terms brand image and brand associations interchangeable, we acknowledge the importance of separating the terms. Further we have chosen to include brand image in the framework as prominent authors, including Kellers (1993), have highlighted it as a key component in building brand equity. In addition, we have added brand

personality, as it has been emphasised as a core dimension of brand image according to Farjam and Hongyi (2015) and Chunawalla (2008). Moreover, brand awareness is acknowledged as a precedent to brand associations because we agree with the authors regarding the fact that a fundamental awareness must be present before the creation of associations is possible. Lastly, as this study does not focus on measuring the level of brand equity, measuring the level of different elements is not considered of major importance. The essential is to understand which elements the different experiences contribute to and draw conclusions regarding how different changes could impact the CBBE either positively or negatively.

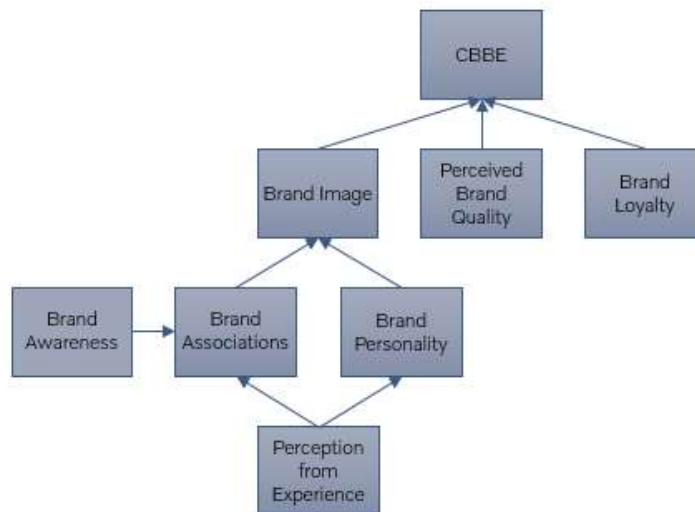


Figure 6: Our conceptualisation of CBBE.

Note that all of these dimensions are to some extent distinct yet still intertwined, as Aaker (1991) highlights, meaning that changes in one of the dimensions will affect the other ones as well. This calls for a holistic view where all dimensions need to be considered in each instance of the investigation.

2.6.2. Extended EBBE Framework

Internal brand management will not be considered to a higher extent during this thesis as it is outside the scope of our research. It is unclear if we will have access to information regarding what each employee already knows or learns about the brand outside the experiences in other departments. Thus, discussing the matter may be based on too much speculation. Thereby we marked it as light blue to indicate our decision of excluding it.



Figure 7: Our conceptualisation of EBBE, inspired by King and Grace (2009). Note that components marked as light blue are areas that will receive less attention due to the scope of this study.

2.6.3 Resulting Framework

Figure 8 illustrates the framework that will be used during this study to guide us through the data gathering process and analysis of how the different experiences contribute to the overall brand equity. By creating this framework, we acknowledge that changes in an organisation with regards to brand management needs to be seen from two perspectives, how it impacts the CBBE and the EBBE. This provides a more holistic view which is needed as both are essential elements in understanding the overall brand equity. No revision has been made to the framework on EBBE by King and Grace (2009) since it is extensive and deemed sufficient for this study.

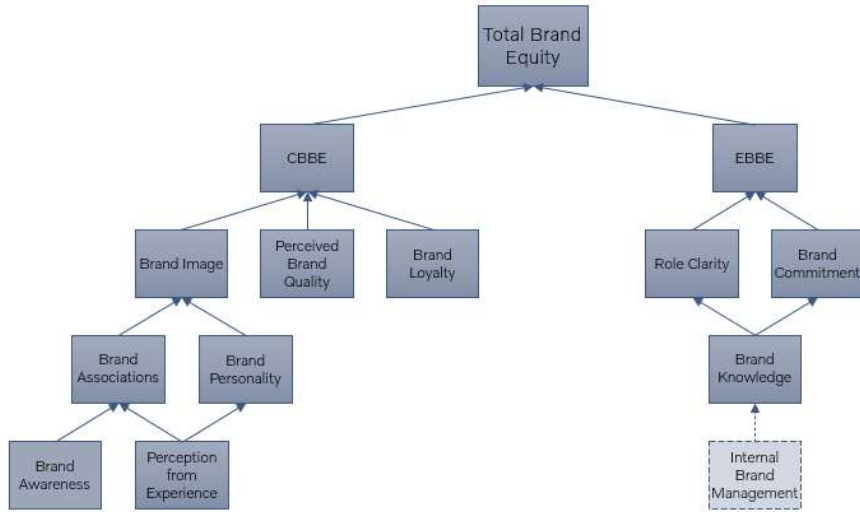


Figure 8: The framework for the study. Note that components marked as light blue are areas that will receive less attention due to the scope of this study.

3. Research Methodology

In the following section, the methodology of the thesis will be presented. It will include a discussion of the chosen approach and a thorough description of how the empirical data has been collected.

3.1 Methodology Approach

Bell et al. (2019) explain that there are two general approaches to choose from when conducting a business research, namely: quantitative and qualitative research. These distinctive research strategies disclose the main orientation of the “conduct of business research” (Bell et al., 2019, p. 35). Furthermore, the authors state that the main differences between the research strategies lie in the role of theory. A quantitative research strategy puts emphasis on quantification in both the data collection and data analysis and views social reality as an objective and external reality (Bell et al., 2019). Since it generally relies on testing theories, the authors state that it entails a deductive approach in the role of theory, which is one of the two established logics of inquiries used in research. A qualitative research strategy, in contrast, puts emphasis on words and images in the data collection and analysis of data, according to Bell et al. (2019). Furthermore, they explain that social reality is seen to be constantly changing and affected based on individuals’ actions and perceptions. Bell et al. (2019) further explain that a qualitative approach generally is associated with an inductive logic of inquiry.

As mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, Bell et al. (2019) remark that there are two different logics of inquiries, deductive and inductive. By carrying out a deductive approach the researcher deduces hypotheses based on what is previously known in the domain of the study and the theory is therefore subjected to empirical scrutiny. The deductive approach is emphasised by Bell et al. (2019) as a linear process where the theory and hypotheses drive the data-gathering process. An inductive approach, on the other hand, is characterised by generating theory as an outcome of the process and the authors state that the process involves drawing generalizable inferences out of observations. Lately, an abductive approach has gained momentum in business research and is used to overcome the limitations associated with the deductive and inductive approaches. For instance, the deductive approach relies on strict logic of theory testing and falsifying hypotheses but it is at times unclear which theory to test, and the inductive is criticised on the basis that empirical data will not necessarily enable theory-building in itself. The abductive approach involves engaging with the social world by moving back and forth between empirical sources and literature (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

It is evident that there is no existing theory that is perfectly suitable for how Volvo Cars should handle their brand experiences in Torslanda in conjunction with the relocation to World of Volvo. Conversely, the study can not merely rely on empirical observations to generate theory and sufficiently answer the research questions. Instead, the thesis has involved both types of processes. Literature has partly decided the direction of the study and what empirical data was collected. Conversely, the

empirical findings have in a similar way steered the search for suitable theory and helped determine the relevance of theoretical concepts. Furthermore, observations have also been useful to generate a deepened understanding of Volvo Cars' operations and brand experiences, to enable recommendations that are tailored to the company's specific situation. Due to the need for alternating between the logic of inquiries in this case study, a qualitative research strategy with an abductive approach was chosen as it was deemed to best fit the purpose of the study. In addition, it has made the research more robust as it overcomes the limitations associated with sticking to one of the above-mentioned approaches (Wallén, 1993).

3.2 Data Collection

A pre-study was conducted to get acquainted with the department at Volvo Cars and their current brand experience offers which was needed to write the planning report. The data for this thesis was mainly collected through literature reviews, observations and interviews. Through multiple literature reviews, theoretical concepts and frameworks were scanned and selected based on relevance to the topic at hand. The theory was to a large extent gathered from scientific articles and university literature where publications close in time were chosen whenever possible to ensure that the content had not become obsolete. Furthermore, multiple interviews were carried out to collect empirical data related to the case study. The theory gathered through the literature reviews was used to analyse the empirical data and guide the discussion in relation to the research questions. Conversely, the empirical findings were useful to navigate the search for suitable theoretical literature. The iteration between theory and empirical investigation that took place clearly indicates the thesis' abductive approach.

3.2.1 Interview Design

In qualitative studies, a distinction between two types of interviews is drawn according to Bell et al. (2019), namely: unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. In unstructured interviews, the interviewer may start with just one question and then the interviewee's answers steer the follow-up questions. It is referred to as a conversational interview according to Bell et al. (2019). In contrast, in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a list of questions or topics to be covered which is used as a tool that guides the interview. This allows the interviewer to cover important questions but in contrast to a structured interview used in quantitative research, the interviewer still has the leeway to ask other questions and dig deeper into other subjects as the conversation progresses. Further, Bell et al. (2019) states that semi-structured interviews are preferred when the researcher needs to gain a deepened understanding of the world views of people in a specific social setting. In addition, Bell et al. (2019) emphasise how semi-structured interviews are more suitable when the researchers have a fairly clear focus so that more specific issues can be addressed. In this study, Volvo Cars and WoV can be seen as the social setting that needed to be analysed in order to create a deepened contextual understanding. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were a great fit to the purpose of this thesis and helped answer the research questions.

3.2.2 Sampling Technique

There are various sampling techniques that can be used in research. However, as Bell et al. (2019) highlight, most qualitative research entails some form of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling means that units of analysis are selected based on some criteria that will be helpful to answer the research questions. Moreover, when purposive sampling is “sequential” (Bell et al. (2019)), the researchers start with an initial sample and then gradually add more units that are of relevance for the study as the research continues. In contrast, a non-sequential sampling approach entails that the sample is established at the offset of the study (Bell et al. (2019)). Furthermore, when the sampling technique accounts for different actors’ experiences and perspectives, Bell et al. (2019, ch. 9) use the term “stratified sampling”, which is another form of purposive sampling. They argue that it helps ensure that all actors are represented in the sample of the study. Bell et al. (2019) continue to explain that it is common for qualitative research to involve several different purposive sampling approaches. In resonance with this statement, a stratified purposive sampling strategy of sequential nature was used in this thesis to allow the capture of different stakeholder-groups’ interests. Some of the prospective interviewees were selected beforehand for the sample while others were added later on as the case study developed and new ideas emerged.

3.2.3 Participant Observations & Informal Interviews

Besides the use of semi-structured interviews, participant observation of employees and customers as well as informal interviews with brand experience customers took place during the course of the thesis. As Bell et al. (2019) state, participant observations can help gain insights from an internal perspective on current processes. Furthermore, informal interviews were also utilised to gather a holistic understanding of the topic at hand. It may be regarded as a more natural way than semi-structured interviews as the interviewees might be more genuine and feel less exposed when participating.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

Most interviews were audio-recorded, when consent had been given by the participants. The interviews with employees at the brand department were also later transcribed. Bell et al. (2019) argue that records and transcripts are advantageous as they allow for a thorough examination of what has been said, makes it possible to counter accusations regarding the influence of the researchers' biases and values on the analysis and help correct the limitations of human memory. However, Bell et al. (2019) recognize that the procedure of transcription is time-consuming. Therefore, to minimise the time spent on transcribing, web-based tools were used to generate text from audio. It should be noted that the text generation from interviews held in Swedish was flawed.

Bell et al. (2019) states that grounded theory is the most widely used framework for analysing qualitative data and covers the tools of grounded theory, namely: theoretical sampling, coding, theoretical saturation and constant comparison. Further the authors point out five outcomes, which are: concepts, categories, properties, hypotheses, and lastly theory. Worth to emphasise is that it is an iterative process where the researchers shift back and forth between the tools of grounded theory. In this research, the grounded theory framework was used to analyse the empirical data that was

collected. This process was facilitated by the pre-formulated interview questions. However, the semi-structured interview form that was used made it possible to ask follow-up questions related to topics that had been addressed or mentioned at prior interviews which helped gather interesting insights and it also enabled comparisons between answers. Moreover, it was deemed that saturation in each interview category was reached since the last respondents provided similar input as previous ones.

4. Empirical Study

In this chapter, the empirical results that have been collected will be presented in a categorical way. Put simply, we initially categorised the sections by differentiating the results derived from different stakeholder-groups and subsequently, we have further divided each section into suitable headlines.

4.1 The Current Brand Experiences

From our observations we will start with providing a detailed summary of the two different experiences currently offered. The experiences that are currently offered and managed by the brand experience department are the factory tour and the BEC. Then, the brand associations which have been identified in the interviews will be summarised in this section as there is no need to differentiate those based on stakeholder-groups.

4.1.1 The FT

When joining the factory tour, customers are transported from the department's office and reception just outside the fenced Volvo Cars area to inside the factory premises with a chartered bus. The tour begins with a short introduction where the map of the entire factory is shown to provide an overview for the customers. Furthermore, the guide explains in short the different legs of the tour, what the customers will see and some of the rules that need to be followed, e.g. no mobiles or cameras are allowed during the tour and it is mandatory to wear safety glasses. Then, the actual tour begins on one of the two trains which takes approximately one hour, and the guides speak about some brief history about Volvo Cars and the factory. Inside the factory, the tour begins in the press shop where the components for the car body are pressed from rolls of mild galvanised steel. During the second leg of the tour, the visitors follow how the components are reinforced, combined and assembled. Several steps are shown and the guests are given the opportunity to see how people and robots together assemble car bodies. When the car body is finished it is sent to the paint shop. Since it is a dust free area, it is not included in the factory tour. Instead, the train heads to the assembly plant where everything that goes inside the car body is put in place. Further, the powertrain is also manufactured and later on joined with the car body. On the way back to the start location, the guides talk about ambitions and investments that are done to reach the organisation's goals. At the end of the tour, the customers get the opportunity to ask potential questions that they might have regarding Volvo Cars or what they saw or did not see during the tour. After the Q&A, the customers step onto the bus and are transported back to the department's office.

4.1.2 The BEC

Similar to the FT, the BEC tour is located inside the factory premises and visitors are transported with a chartered bus from the brand department's office. The tour starts with an introduction, informing the attendants about the history of Volvo Cars and its creators. In addition, the purpose "Freedom to move in a personal, sustainable and safe way" is in depth explained. The BEC exhibit is divided into four parts: safety,

sustainability, future outlooks, and design. The purpose of the BEC is to dig deeper into these areas making sure that the attendants understand how Volvo Cars work with the different areas e.g. safety. The experience has different physical attributes. In the future outlook part, a concept car called 360c is shown and discussed. The 360c was an initiative and conversation starter in the discussion of autonomous vehicles and indicated their foresight of the future development of the automotive industry. Moreover, in this part the importance of Volvo Cars remaining ambidextrous is also highlighted, i.e. being efficient in their current activities and business initiatives while adapting and innovating for the future. It also has the crash sled (“krocksläden”) and the elephant scale connected to safety, the crash sled represents the feeling of an impact at 15km/h which usually one attendant gets to try and later explain the feeling to the group. The elephant scale instead shows how heavy you would be in the case of a collision based on the speed and your body weight. Moreover, there is a “baby helmet” which lets attendants feel how much a baby’s head would weigh in the case of a collision. As safety is such a huge part of Volvo, this area is especially highlighted during the BEC tour. Besides these aforementioned physical props, there is also a crashed car with a narrative about a guy that has experienced a crash with a Volvo and survived. There are also other videos of people and families that have had similar experiences. Additionally, there is a car painted with different colours to show the attendants what materials that are used and where, to facilitate the discussion on how this contributes to increasing the overall safety of each vehicle. Lastly, in connection to the safety part, there is an interactive game called the Moose game, where the players try to avoid mooses on the road while getting different tasks to perform. The game signals the importance of being focused and aware while driving and how easy it is to get distracted. With regards to sustainability, the attendants get to see powertrains for both plug-in hybrids and fully electric vehicles. Furthermore, several short videos on how Volvo Cars work with sustainability are shown touching upon topics such as: manufacturing, supply chains and circular economy. Lastly, in the design part Volvo Cars’ design principles are explained and ideas about design choices are presented. Furthermore, a C40 stands on display which the attendants are allowed to have a closer look at and step into. Here the guide speaks of matters such as colour choices and their representation, interior fabrics and details.

4.1.3 Current Brand Associations

Since brand associations are viewed as an important part of brand equity, we have during all of the interviews touched upon the subject trying to identify the most common associations with Volvo Cars and their products. Furthermore, a majority believe that the brand experiences are important to create those associations and, above all, strengthen those associations. Safety has been emphasised as something that pervades everything at Volvo Cars and is, in addition, seen as something that all customers request nowadays. Below, a chart is provided, visualising the most common associations that have been highlighted during the interviews. One interesting thing is that all key areas at the BEC can be seen as some of the most commonly mentioned associations such as safety, sustainability, innovative (Future outlooks) and design.

Most Common Associations

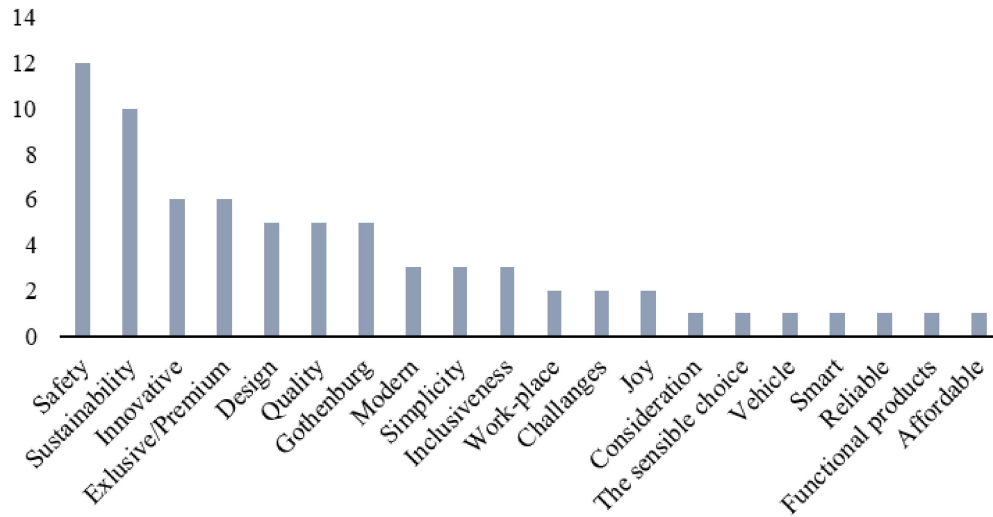


Chart 1: A chart visualising the most common associations with Volvo Cars amongst the interviewees.

4.2 Interviews with Brand Experience Personnel

Ten interviews were held with personnel at the brand experience department. The insights provided will be presented in the following part. The team consists of different roles including guides for the factory tour and the BEC, booking coordinators, and managers. Some members have several roles while others are rather focused on one, the combination enables different perspectives on the matter. A feeling of saturation was achieved during the seventh interview and onwards as similar messages, or repeated meanings were heard which were not contributing to new discussions or insights.

Respondent #nr	Duration	Date	Type
Respondent #1	20 min	13 March	Face to face
Respondent #2	30 min	14 March	Face to face
Respondent #3	40 min	14 March	Face to face
Respondent #4	35 min	23 March	Face to face
Respondent #5	35 min	23 March	Face to face
Respondent #6	25 min	29 March	Face to face
Respondent #7	30 min	3 April	Face to face
Respondent #8	20 min	3 April	Face to face
Respondent #9	45 min	17 April	Face to face

Respondent #nr	Duration	Date	Type
Respondent #10	40 min	21 April	Microsoft Teams

Table 1. The table shows the respondents from the brand experience department, which constitutes the whole brand experience personnel team.

4.2.1 The Purpose & Contribution of the Experiences

Generally put, the purpose with the brand experiences is, according to one respondent, to show customers how Volvo Cars work and ultimately attract them to purchase Volvo Cars' products or remain loyal customers. Furthermore, a lot of the internal people who attend the BEC are already familiar with Volvo and often drive a Volvo. As a result, selling them another car may not be feasible so the objective is rather to educate this group while also fostering brand loyalty. Another view provided, is that the goal is not necessarily to sell cars to internal people, more specifically employees, instead they should get a good understanding of their role in the whole machinery, metaphorically speaking, and how they can contribute to Volvo selling cars. Because, as one interviewee puts it: "The end goal is always the same, to sell cars, but the approaches differ". Lastly, several respondents have argued that both the FT and the BEC signals that "we are proud of our brand and that we have a fantastic history to share".

4.2.1.1 The FT

Based on the interviews, it seems like most of the customers that join the FT have some basic knowledge about the brand and the vehicle industry. Even though no efforts are currently put into marketing the tour, all the respondents mentioned that it is practically fully booked for the upcoming months. Many interviewees highlighted how the tour lets them generate more knowledge about Volvo Cars as they get to see how the cars are manufactured, and that it is further a good way to showcase the company to important stakeholders. Furthermore, one respondent thinks it becomes extra special due to the fact that Volvo is such a big part of Gothenburg. In addition, several of the respondents mentioned that the FT indicates Volvo Cars' transparency, and that it is unique to get the opportunity to see how fully functioning cars are produced. On this note, it was emphasised during multiple interviews that the FT should not be too arranged, as part of the visitors' experience consists of feeling the pulse and the heartbeat of the factory, making the entire experience more credible and real. Lastly, several respondents stated that an additional contribution of the FT is that it has the potential to attract workforce.

Essentially all respondents concluded that the FT is a physical experience and described how important it was for the FT experience that customers got to use their senses. One interviewee said: "Seeing things on video can not be compared to using your senses and actually seeing, smelling, and hearing.". Another respondent shared a unique view, highlighting that one needs to understand the value of having the undivided attention of ~20 people joining the tour since modern factories look pretty much the same. The respondent referred to it as a golden marketing opportunity.

Shortly put, it should be the information that ultimately makes a lasting impact on the attendants and not the view.

4.2.1.2 The BEC

A majority states that in contrast to the FT, the BEC is regarded as a less entertaining experience where the purpose instead is to provide a deeper understanding of Volvo Cars. Everyone claimed that the BEC has more depth and details and is not as relaxed as the FT. Multiple respondents argued that the BEC is crucial for employees to broaden their perspective and avoid tunnel vision in their work. This, in turn, enhances their comprehension of the company's products and direction. One respondent further stated that it provides a deeper understanding of how employees' tasks align with and support the organisation's overarching objectives and vision. This is further corroborated by several respondents who stated that the BEC contributes by exposing employees to Volvo Cars and by generating a desire to work for the company. Moreover, a majority argued for how the BEC's purpose is to educate people and how it is an important part of the onboarding process as it sets the foundation for a good starting path. Further, many argued that some product knowledge is needed, regardless of position, as well as knowledge about the company's history and understanding of the product portfolios as it makes them more trustworthy in their roles. However, it is ambiguous if marketing is part of the purpose too. Several respondents further argued that it should be mandatory for every employee to attend within certain intervals to refresh and become updated.

Regarding the contribution, attendees at the BEC get to learn about how Volvo Cars prioritise sustainability, safety and other focus areas. A dual perspective was presented by one respondent, stating that the BEC serves the purpose of informing external parties about Volvo's values, history, and future direction, while for internal employees, the purpose is to build knowledge about the industry and the company's brand and products. Further, the respondent stated that the BEC contributes by enabling dialogues between the guide and the attendants, and how the BEC is rewarding for both parties as they obtain new perspectives during these interactions. Another intention with both experiences, the BEC in particular according to two employees, is to create brand ambassadors, meaning that all employees should become proud ambassadors of Volvo Cars, know everything about the company and be able to spread the positive words through word of mouth, e.g. at the Christmas table. This process is ignited by teaching retailers and employees what they do, what the brand is, who they are, and who Volvo Cars works with. The sharing of ambassadorship between all employees strengthens the company and becomes a great source of marketing, they argue. Another respondent argued that both experiences help generate a holistic view while also facilitating communication of common goals for the future. For instance, the company's goal to be climate neutral throughout the organisation by the year 2040 is declared during both tours, and if it is not known or not achieved, it will affect the whole organisation and indirectly affect all employees which indicates its importance.

4.2.3 Target Audience

The FT can be booked by anyone, an opportunity which is clearly taken advantage of since people of all ages and different professional backgrounds join the tour. When asked about the target audience, the members of the department gave both unified and diverging answers. All members stated that anyone could attend the train, enjoy the tour and get something out of it. However, some mentioned customer segments which they thought should be prioritised above others. For instance, they mentioned that teenagers and young adults who study in high school should be invited since it can attract potential future workforce. Another customer segment that was deemed as high priority by several interviewees was new and existing employees.

The BEC's target audience is, according to many of the respondents, mainly internal people. Furthermore, several respondents claimed that the heavy amount of information presented during the BEC tour makes it inappropriate for families with kids and some argued that it is too much information for an external audience. The main argument is that the majority of the population is not interested in hearing that much about for instance Volvo Cars' design and history. However, two respondents have highlighted the BEC as a better selling point compared to the FT and another respondent added that it could be offered to external people too that want to see "*a bit more than an advertising brochure*" - but stated that the BEC is mainly directed to internal people. Another respondent claimed that the BEC's focus on internal people is due to limited resources.

4.2.3.1 Segmentation

In relation to the FT, some of the respondents were satisfied with the current division of visitors while others advocated further customer segmentation. Advocates for further segmentation argued that it will enable the guides to adapt their guidings with more ease, especially for those guides with less experience. Moreover, one respondent proposed that further division could be made based on external customers' prior knowledge and interests. A majority of the respondents remarked that one needs to be careful with dividing people into boxes, and therefore argued for leaving the choice to the customers. A different view that was highlighted concerned whether internal people and external people should have different tours, or at least be separated to enable adjustments based on departments and focus areas. It was further emphasised how one could then adjust the manuscripts for different audiences and how the experience department should offer experiences of different durations. One respondent further argued for how people in different departments may need tailored tours, e.g. people working in production. This could improve scheduling of staffing if e.g. enthusiasts are segmented together as you could take a BEC guide with more experience to provide a more in-depth tour when required. Today, according to many respondents, some customising is done but it is the guide's responsibility to adapt the content and communication.

Additionally, one respondent believes that a split between internal and external people is needed. The dialogues with employees sometimes revolve around organisational challenges whereas external people need to know our visions, not all challenges - "*All is "Great" when talking to customers*". One respondent provides a contrasting view

regarding how further segmentation is not needed, as customers can not really make an informed decision if they have not attended the BEC before. Another contrasting perspective is how the golden marketing opportunity, as previously brought up, can be utilised through segmentation. The respondent stated that one needs to consider what Volvo Cars wants to mediate to the audience, and how the intended message should be different for internals and externals. However, it is only the BEC that is in need of segmentation based on external and internal belonging as it is of essence to mitigate the risk of making it too complex in terms of administration by segmenting on too many levels.

4.2.4 Potential Improvements & Additional Experiences

Everyone in the team agrees that the FT and the BEC complement each other but during the interviews, the respondents were asked about what is missing or how the experiences could be improved. In a more general regard, one respondent stated that the department and its associated experiences are popular but that there is a lot of potential that is not utilised. One reason for this is the lack of resources and personnel, a view that was shared by many respondents.

4.2.4.1 The FT

During the interviews, a strong need for two new trains to the FT was articulated by multiple respondents. The sound quality has been highlighted as being insufficient, having a negative effect on the entire experience for guests. Further, the current quality makes it unreliable in snow which constitutes a problem during the winter season, sometimes leading to cancellations. One respondent, who shared the same view, explained that Volvo Group purchased two new trains for their factory tour a few years back which is working great with almost double the capacity compared to Volvo Cars' trains. Something similar would therefore be preferred by the team as the current trains are considered outdated and unreliable, this improvement potential has been referred to as a low hanging fruit. Lastly, a respondent stated that it feels like the BEC, and the FT are taken for granted by the organisation and how it should receive more support and be prioritised.

4.2.4.2 The BEC

When looking at the BEC, the respondents provided some insights into how the experience could be improved. For instance, one explained how it is currently only bookable as a two hour visit which may be difficult to fit in on a tight schedule for many managers and their employees. The interviewee suggested that there should be a possibility to offer tailored BEC tours based on employees' needs where there could be more focus on some parts while other areas could be skimmed. A similar proposition was made by another respondent who argued that many guests that have been working at the company for a longer time already know about Volvo's history and way of working and instead need a refresher on current and future ventures. The same person further requested more elements related to crash tests in the exhibit, since it is such an important part of Volvo Cars.

The physical exhibit at the BEC is regarded as outdated by some respondents. Even though the script and the videos that are shown are updated regularly, not much is

being done with the props. Further a need to utilise technological progress in the society was highlighted. For example, the interviewees suggest using interactive screens and digital 3D models which enables the customers to try out for themselves. Additionally, the topic of interactivity came up during practically all interviews. Most of the respondents articulated wishes for an extended use of interactive elements. They argued that it would make the experience more entertaining and memorable while also increasing the audiences' involvement in discussions and the presented content. Conversely, one respondent did not see a need for more interactive elements at the BEC as it could distract visiting employees' attention and since it would make it more difficult to communicate all the information in the set timeframe.

4.2.4.3 The Demo-Track

In the past, other experiences were offered by the department, including test drives at a demo-track on the factory premises. However, one manager explained that a couple of years ago, decisions were made to let another department supervise the demo-track and today it is not used to the same extent. Multiple of the respondents however uttered that it is still inquired regularly by internal people. It was stated that customers too should have the possibility to test drive different car models when they have spare time, both on track and out on the roads with traffic. The respondent behind the statement explained: "It is weird to come to Volvo, a car manufacturer, and not get first-hand interaction with the vehicles". This is seen as essential to complete the entire brand experience package that is offered. Another perspective on the matter is how everyone working at Volvo Cars, no matter which department, should have the opportunity to test drive the cars to get some knowledge about the products. Furthermore, since Volvo Cars has the ambition to only produce fully electric cars from 2030 and onward, one respondent argued that it becomes increasingly important to offer test drives of fully electric cars to facilitate the transition and retain customers. A majority believe that the demo-track is more applicable for internal people while city traffic suits external customers better since it matches the context where they will eventually use the car. However, as one respondent pointed out, it might not be practically feasible to reinstate the demo-track due to reconstruction of that area. Additionally, several respondents stated that it would be beneficial if it was possible to let customers and employees drive heritage cars, e.g. the P1800, as it would be a good way to exploit Volvo's rich history and boost their interest.

4.2.4.4 Marketing

The marketing of the experiences is heavily lacking according to all the respondents. There is currently only some limited information available on Volvo Cars' website, but the respondents explained that there have been very few marketing initiatives over the last couple of years. Most external customers instead say that they heard about the factory tour from someone they know that is either working for the company or has attended the tour before. One manager stated that the practically non-existing marketing of the BEC is somewhat intentional as the department does not currently have the resources to meet the demand but added that it will hopefully change next year when WoV is launched.

4.2.5 The Launch of World of Volvo & its Impact

No one in the team believes that the launch of WoV will have a negative impact on people's attraction to the factory tour. However, one concern was lifted in relation to the future availability of the factory tour and the uncertainty regarding if it will remain open for the public in the long term. Moreover, plenty of the respondents believe that the geographical distance will affect customers' willingness, and firstmost, ability to visit both the factory in Torslanda and WoV on the same day. Further, they stated that there need to be different transportation options available to address this issue. Based on search results, the distance between WoV and Volvo Cars in Torslanda is approximately 22 km, and the travelling time by car is varying between 20-40 min depending on route, time of day and traffic.

One of the respondents believes that WoV will be a remarkable experience and stated that it will be the new shiny thing in the centre of Gothenburg which will remind people about Volvo and attract interest from tourists. Nevertheless, the respondent is unsure that it will contribute significantly to increased sales. Moreover, a majority believes that the launch will provide a major increase in marketing opportunities for Volvo Cars' products but also for the available brand experiences. As aforementioned, the current marketing for the experiences is deemed inadequate by several interviewees. However, they do all believe that WoV will function as a great marketing source for the experiences offered in Torslanda as well. Another respondent stated that WoV has the potential to be really great but risks failure if not executed properly. According to the respondent, a great deal relies on making the right marketing decisions, where WoV needs to invest and direct the marketing efforts correctly. In addition, Volvo Cars' experiences are small in contrast to WoV and therefore mainly advantages are expected as an outcome of the launch. One concern that has been raised however are the logistical issues with the integration of the factory in Torslanda. In relation to this, some respondents highlighted how it should be possible for customers to choose different packages and experiences depending on what level of information they want to receive and where.

4.2.6 The Disappearance of the BEC and Stakeholders' Loss

One interviewee remarked that if the BEC is laid down, the company's capability to satisfy the needs of interested customers by offering detailed information about its strategy and history will diminish. Additionally, multiple respondents argued for how the ability to communicate ideas tangibly to customers, employees and other actors will be lost. For instance, discussing crashes by showing cars after accidents has a greater emotional impact on people if they can see the actual cars. This loss could potentially reduce the overall impact of the company's communication and the overall experience for its audience. Moreover, it was articulated that some of the closeness to employees and the ability to ask questions whenever they pop-up will be lost with the disappearance of the BEC. Another concern is that the cornerstone to the concept "dipped in blue" will be lost, as the core values are currently being communicated during the BEC tours which is essential to provide a comprehensive view of Volvo Cars. Other respondents who had a similar line of reasoning added that it would be impossible to offer the same quiet and informative tours for a group of people in WoV. With that said, several interviewees still hope that some form of guided tours will be

offered at WoV to compensate for the loss. One respondent, however, argued that the same experience can not be offered in the new context since the dialog between the guide and the visitors will be inhibited. One of the best things with the BEC tour, according to this respondent, is the opportunity to have face-to-face dialogues and discussions with the attendants, especially if they are internal people.

Further, one respondent emphasised the advantage of the BEC being in Torslanda and argued that as soon as you put people outside of their working place, e.g. in the new context of WoV, it becomes another experience. It is perfect for a kick-off, when you want people to move out of their roles, but as it is supposed to be educational, people should stay in their roles which is difficult being at an “amusement park”. Another interviewee stated that the aim is to do a light version of the BEC at WoV, giving a bit deeper understanding in some areas through e.g. digital movies. Additionally, the respondent argued for how new employees in the onboarding process probably will be the stakeholder that loses on the transition but confessed that they do not really know how they value it today. Another concern articulated is that people will no longer have an as clear understanding of what Volvo Cars stands for and what makes the company unique. This could result in a lack of clarity about why someone should choose Volvo Cars over other brands, and ultimately affect the company's recruitment of new employees and retention of existing employees and affiliates negatively. In response to the question of whether WoV could replace the BEC for employees, several respondents believe that the BEC can provide employees with a greater sense of exclusivity, given its smaller and more private setting. Nonetheless, one respondent acknowledged that much depends on the planning and how Volvo Cars together with WoV package the transition of the onboarding and educational activities. Further, emphasis is put on maintaining focus and exclusivity for employees, and how the large space at WoV provides opportunities to achieve this. Lastly, a contrasting view to what has been expressed earlier was brought forward, arguing that from a broader perspective, location should not be a major concern. While understanding the reasoning behind wanting to keep employees in Torslanda, one respondent articulated that the advantages of WoV outweigh the disadvantages of relocating outside of Torslanda.

Lastly, the respondents were asked how the BEC could be included in the new context when it disappears and several respondents believed that the department could give a similar experience through VR or with videos being shown somewhere else. However, they also emphasised how it never can cover 100 percent without having a place with physical props. Further, they remarked how attendants lose much of the things they can create associations to when talking about Volvos' core values without the physical props, such as the 360C (concept car). Further, one respondent stressed how it is essential to offer a guided tour for employees at WoV to ensure the learning of essential subjects, e.g. personal safety, sustainability etc. In resonance with this, one of the respondents articulated that the synergies between the FT and the BEC needs to be utilised and added that if it disappears, the incentives to visit Torslanda will be weakened, and more logistical issues will arise.

4.3 Interviews with World of Volvo

In order to fully understand the offerings and what the launch of WoV means we conducted interviews with three key players involved in the project. It was of major importance to understand how WoV's activities can enhance the current experiences offered for external and internal people. Therefore our aim was to gather an understanding of what the purpose is of WOV, which audience they intend to target, what offers they plan to have and how they will integrate with the experiences in Torslanda. At the same time, we addressed the question regarding whether WoV would be able to replace the lost value which the disappearance of the BEC would entail.

Respondent #nr	Duration	Date	Type
Respondent #11	35 min	29 March	Face to face
Respondent #12	75 min	11 April	Face to face
Respondent #13	75 min	11 April	Face to face

Table 2. The table shows the respondents who work with the WoV layout and launch.

4.3.1 The Purpose of WoV

There was some discussion regarding the purpose, however, two of the respondents argued that the overarching purpose will be people entering as “x” and exiting as “y”, meaning going in as a person with one set of assumptions and leaving a bit smarter and with more knowledge about Volvo (i.e. both Volvo Cars & Volvo Group). The ambition is to be: “A meeting place for people and ideas”. In relation to this, one respondent continued to state that the exhibition is intended to be an “invitation to explore, be entertained and contribute”.

Further, the respondents have a unified vision about the goal, which is to make sure people learn more about Volvo and get a more positive feeling towards Volvo as a joint brand which may later result in them buying a car. Everyone is seen as a potential Volvo Cars customer, however, brand building is the main focus and to show that Volvo keeps up with our changing society. To conclude, the purpose is not to sell the products, e.g. cars and trucks, according to the respondents. The purpose is to create a positive view, make people interested and give them an unique experience that in the long term makes them loyal customers and possibly coworkers. Furthermore, as WoV is a joint venture between Volvo Cars and Volvo Group, one respondent explained that a lot of effort goes into making sure the communication becomes public friendly rather than corporate, to help set the tone of the entire experience of visiting WoV.

4.3.2 Target Audience

A general division of customers is done into three categories called: skimmers, swimmers, and divers. Skimmers are for example people who come to visit with their family over the weekend, where the main goal is to just have fun. The aim is, according to the respondents, to convert skimmers into swimmers after their visit. Swimmers are instead described by one interviewee as visitors that are already interested in what Volvo does and possess some knowledge regarding what the company stands for. The goal here is to make them more knowledgeable, interested, and fond of Volvo. Lastly there are divers who, as one respondent put it, are dedicated fans that want to know everything there is to know about details related to the brand and the products.

Since it is a joint venture between the two Volvo companies, the exhibition will include roughly 16 products from each company. However, two of the respondents argued that since they share the same past and in recent days have reconnected more in terms of collaborations, it is seen as positive that WoV will be the home and meeting place for all of Volvo. One of them continued to state it should be a place where international people feel welcome as well, people that do not necessarily know that much about Volvo in comparison to for instance people from Gothenburg. Moreover, one respondent described that World of Volvo is meant to be a destination for adults but with a kids dimension, i.e. it is not as Liseberg. There will still be things that engage children and they will be considered, however, adults are prioritised in the experience.

4.3.3 What WoV Plan to Offer

The respondents made it clear that several experiences besides the exhibition will be offered. For instance, TEDx talks will be hosted as well as talks about sustainability in relation to smart mobility by both Volvo personnel and external parties. Moreover, co-labs will also be available where people are invited to collaborate, usually in the form of workshops. Live music entertainment will also be offered and corporate activities too. There is an ambition to be the company that to the largest scale include employees in the program, for example, having speakers from Volvo each wednesday or similar. Two of the respondents explained that WoV is supposed to be offering a lot more than the exhibition. On this note, another ambition is that the high level and reputation of the restaurants at WoV will eventually be a sole reason to attend WoV. Additionally, the representatives explained that two different hubs in the exhibition area will be supplementary to the exhibition. One which will always have a Volvo theme and another separate gallery for “travelling exhibitions” where external artists can display art or photography that is not directly linked to Volvo but which touches upon topics that Volvo values, e.g. the climate or safety. Furthermore, concept cars will sometimes be included in temporary exhibits in the gallery. The plan is to also have a permanent gallery of cars that will always be present.

When asked about whether guided tours will be offered, one respondent answered that they may be bookable and maybe seen as a bonus for VIP clients or similar. It is not yet decided, but the interviewee believes that some form of guided tours could be offered in the Volvo exhibition. However, between 400-500k people will visit each

year, so guided tours will not be conceivable for everyone according to one of the respondents. Walking through the exhibition is estimated to take between one to two hours where two hours is for the visitor that tries and looks at everything. Moreover, it has been decided that the Volvo museum will close at the end of the year. Instead, “The Vault” will be introduced which will be a facility for storing all heritage cars that are not on display in WoV. Further, a visit at The Vault is planned to be offered as an experience to enthusiasts and VIP clients. The setting will be “rougher”, meaning that it will be an authentic storage garage where all the cars are lined up and available to be explored.

4.3.4 WoV’s Ability to Replace the BEC and Integrate with Torslanda

Onboarding is intended to be a part of World of Volvo and it is essential according to one respondent that WoV becomes a place for all the employees. However, they do not want to close the exhibition for external customers in favour of employees. Thus, planning ahead will be important, maybe by having pre-set dates for onboarding tours or if visits by employees could be adjusted and planned when you have data on peak seasons for external customers for instance. In addition, they stated that WoV should feel inclusive, both for internals and externals, and how they should have the “worlds opportunity” for onboarding. One of the respondents regards employee branding as particularly important.

All of the respondents agreed that the plan is to charge everyone attending WoV, but how much and eventual subsidies have not been decided yet. The plan is to coordinate with the experiences offered in Torslanda and offer full packages, e.g. visiting WoV, the FT and The Vault, for those visitors who are interested. The transportation options have not been decided yet either but having a shuttle bus and collaboration with Volvo on Demand are two possibilities that are currently being investigated. The objective is to always deliver with quality and not promising too much in the beginning to ensure satisfied customers.

4.4 Interviews with Internal People

During our investigation of the brand experience department, we found that the forthcoming transition would have a significant impact on the BEC and its visitors which currently are employees, Volvo Cars affiliates and VIP clients of the Public Affairs department. Further, we interviewed three key players within WoV to understand their potential to mitigate this loss and enhance the overall experience. Lastly, to gain a more in-depth understanding of this issue, we conducted five surveys and three interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders who had between zero to 38 years of experience working for Volvo Cars. The interviewees and surveys includes personnel responsible for onboarding, visiting employees/affiliates and one employee working within the public affairs department.

Respondent #nr	Duration	Date	Type
Respondent #14	-	30 March	Survey
Respondent #15	-	3 April	Survey

Respondent #16	-	11 April	Survey
Respondent #17	-	11 April	Survey
Respondent #18	-	12 April	Survey
Respondent #19	20 min	17 April	Microsoft Teams
Respondent #20	35 min	20 April	Microsoft Teams
Respondent #21	40 min	21 April	Microsoft Teams

Table 3. The table shows the respondents who work at Volvo Cars.

4.4.1 What the Onboarding Aims to Contribute with

One respondent who works with onboarding highlighted that the significant contribution of the onboarding process is creating a welcoming environment for new employees and fostering positive attitudes towards the company. Further, new hires should understand where Volvo Cars is heading and get a comprehensive and good understanding of Volvo Cars' values. Additionally, the respondent stated that individuals who do not feel a sense of belonging or do not comprehend their contribution to the company are more likely to quit soon after joining. This insight emphasises the importance of effective onboarding in promoting long-term employee retention.

The respondent suggested that to ensure that the onboarding experience fulfils its requirements, it should be carried out using a "push" approach rather than a "pull" approach. Currently, new employees have the option to participate in the experiences, but it is not mandatory due to logistical issues. The respondent believes that it would be beneficial to allocate two days to ensure that every new employee takes all the necessary information to heart, attends the brand experiences, and receives on-site training. By ensuring that everyone participates in the same activities, they can guarantee that each employee gets the best possible start to their career at Volvo Cars. *"Make them dipped in blue right away"*, one respondent stated.

4.4.2 The Current Contribution of the BEC & FT for its Stakeholders

The two respondents that work with onboarding explained that the BEC provides a good overview of the company's history and believes that it boosts the new employees' motivation to be part of Volvo Cars. For new employees, the purpose is seen as mainly educational, but one respondent expressed that it in addition is inspirational and gives the new recruits a "Wow-feeling" for Volvo as a brand and company. One of the other respondents had a similar view and described how important it is for new employees to understand where the company comes from and how Volvo Cars has developed into what it is today. The interviewee further articulated that the BEC helps to showcase the soul of the company and which values it stands for. An example was provided regarding how focal safety is now and always has been in the past, a message that needs to be communicated to newcomers with

more than merely words. People need to see crashed cars if they are to obtain the message and understand how past innovations have contributed to saving lives. Furthermore, the BEC and FT are not part of the onboarding, i.e. mandatory, at the moment as the limited time they have is used to focus on the future and where the company is headed.

In turn, when asking the employees responsible for the onboarding about the FT, they believe that it contributes by providing an understanding of the pulse of the factory and how it is the foundation of the entire company, i.e. its where everything starts. Further, it contributes by creating an appreciation for co-workers in the production, as they enable the white collar positions at Volvo Cars. In addition, they stated that it creates an understanding of how products are made and an understanding about the core of the company, i.e. the complex manufacturing processes that have an enormous amount of work and effort behind them.

From the perspective of an employee in Public Affairs, VIP clients highly value the BEC for its exceptional tours and knowledgeable guides. The interviewee also takes pride in being able to offer both the BEC and the FT to clients. Additionally, the interviewee emphasised how the BEC facilitates a deeper understanding of various subject areas, and highlights how one can “tailor” the tours to meet the specific needs of the clients, such as focusing on safety when having Trafikverket as a client. Finally, the respondent underscored the importance of safety as a key value associated with the Volvo brand, and asserted the necessity of emphasising this value to demonstrate that Volvo Cars are not only talking, but they are also acting.

4.4.3 The Relationship between Onboarding, Public Affairs & the Brand Experiences

According to the onboarding personnel, the central onboarding, before the pandemic, lasted an entire day. The newly recruited people, apart from getting similar introductions and presentations as today, also attended the FT and the BEC. When covid-19 hit, the brand experiences were closed, and the cooperation was put on ice. After the pandemic, reorganisation decisions led to cuts which decreased the capacity of the brand experience department and the onboarding team which in turn led to the collaboration not being reinstated. However, one of the respondents explained that making it work was a hassle already back then due to the difficulty of getting people inside the factory premises. Everyone entering must have permission and be pre-registered by their manager or the onboarding team and they are not allowed to enter by foot, meaning that everyone needs to have access to a car or get in with a bus. This has always been problematic and nowadays, fewer of the new employees own a car, instead more use public transportation to get to work. The respondent in charge of central onboarding stated that they do not have the budget to charter a bus, which is needed. Therefore, the respondent explained that the logistical part needs to be solved and financed by someone else. This is further corroborated by the other onboarding respondent who shared how the accessibility of the FT and the BEC has been bad lately, resulting in a decreased contributing value of the experiences. However, there is still an interest in attending those experiences, but updates need to be done, e.g. transporting solutions to increase the value further.

4.4.4 Potential Improvements besides Logistical Issues

The former demo-track was mentioned by both respondents working with onboarding, where one mentions how fun and rewarding it was to try the products at the demo-track as a newcomer. The other one stated that in the past, all new employees also got the opportunity to visit the demo-track where they could test drive all the car models and get walkthroughs of the cars, leading to increased product understanding. Further, it is expressed how hands-on product activities are not used at the moment and the importance of possessing some product knowledge is highlighted, regardless of which department you belong to.

4.4.5 WoV's Ability to Replace the BEC

The respondent within Public Affairs stated that it would require a considerable effort to bring a VIP client to the World of Volvo (WoV) due to its greater geographical distance from the management centre located in Torslanda. Furthermore, it may be burdensome to schedule meetings and gain access to the facility, which is a significant part of the respondent's daily work. The interviewee also suggested that WoV may not be the appropriate activity for the Public Affairs department's clients, remarking that *"I don't think my type of clients are the target group for WoV, they can visit WoV in their spare time when they are in Gothenburg"*.

Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that WoV could serve as a substitute for the BEC for new employees during onboarding, providing a full day of activities and a morale boost to help them start working. However, one respondent expressed a concern about the potential confusion between Volvo Cars and Volvo Trucks, questioning if the exhibitions will be distinct from each other. This respondent commented with a humorous expression that *"even politicians are not fully aware of the difference between the two largest companies in the region"*.

One of the onboarding respondents agreed with the view of the Public Affairs's representative regarding how WoV entails a lot of opportunities in relation to the onboarding of new recruits. The respondent suggested that it could serve as a starting point for new hires on Monday mornings, given that an average of 35 new employees join the company each week. Further, a great need and desire for new employees to visit WoV was expressed. Additionally, the respondent presented a contrasting view, stating that there is no issue with taking new employees outside of Torslanda to visit WoV. The argument was that they will work at their office for the "rest" of their employment so why not give them one day at WoV. However, the respondent stated that they may need some guides, videos, or similar to give the new employees an overview of Volvo Cars' history and culture, etc. According to one respondent, the ideal solution would entail the provision of a private room where the onboarding team can efficiently facilitate the onboarding process for new employees, followed by a guided tour. It should be noted the respondent believes that the presence of external people will not be considered a problem. Additionally, the respondent expressed a preference for conducting onboarding activities on Mondays and Tuesdays in WoV, and access to a larger room onsite that can accommodate chairs and tables.

5. Analysis

The analysis is divided into relevant categories based on the collected empirical data. Subsequently each category is divided in three parts, one where a qualitative standpoint is taken, one where the framework is applied and one where a summarisation of the analysis of that headline is provided. Please note, in this section the analysis of the BEC will be preeminent over the FT as the upcoming changes affect the BEC to a larger extent and there is more room for improvement. With that said, the FT will still be analysed and discussed. Due to the abstract level of our framework in relation to the question at hand, we have chosen to apply the framework separately for those who are interested in reading this from a more theoretical point of view. Worth to note, during the writing of this thesis, it became apparent that the FT will continue to be offered in a similar manner as today. It is clear that the BEC targets internal people and external customers are rarely invited. Thus, analysing the contribution of the experiences from a customer (CBBE) view will be done to a lesser extent than initially anticipated. This is due to the fact that customers are only to benefit from the transformation as they will not lose any experience. The CBBE perspective could have been applied for the FT to answer sub question **RQ1a** but is deemed to not be of sufficient relevance to answer the **overarching research question**. However, it will be applied in later sections when analysing improvement potentials in connection to the FT, additional activities that will benefit customers, and WoV.

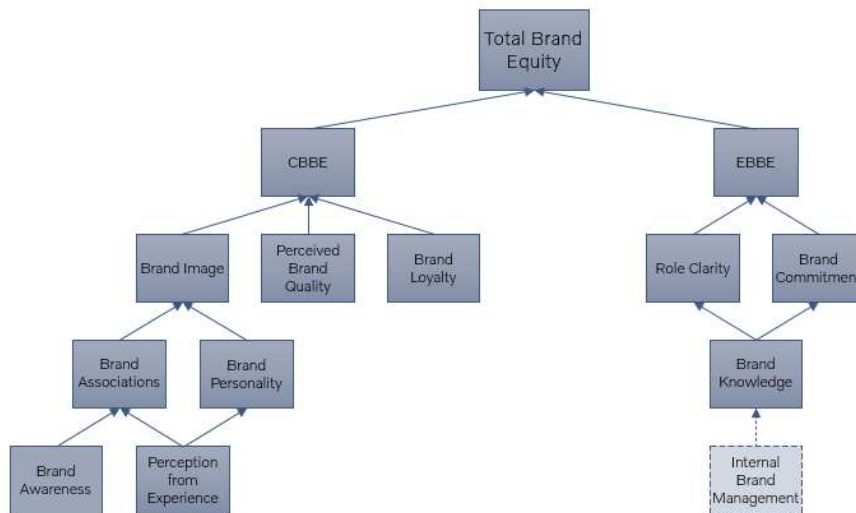


Figure 9: The previously introduced framework for the study.

5.1 Addressing the Current Activities

The purpose of the BEC is, according to all stakeholder-groups interviewed, to provide attendees a deeper understanding of Volvo Cars as a company. Further, a majority of the respondents view the BEC as an educational tool rather than a fun experience in contrast to the FT. However, our data showed that there were some divided opinions regarding what the purpose of the BEC is, i.e. if it is entertainment, marketing, or education. We argue that this may pose a problem for instructing the guides to deliver the intended message. Additionally, according to the brand experience personnel, the BEC contributes by widening the perspective of employees by giving them a place to identify how their work relates and contributes to the bigger goals and visions of the organisation. As such, one could view the BEC as a formal channel to spread organisational core values, which is emphasised as important by Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) to increase employees' brand knowledge. Moreover, we can conclude that the BEC is a great way for employees to start their career within the company, a place to build brand loyalty, and to showcase to important stakeholders, e.g. investors. From an onboarding perspective, the BEC provides a comprehensive picture of Volvo Cars and boosts the new employees' motivation to be part of Volvo Cars. Except for being educational, BEC is inspirational and creates positive feelings towards Volvo Cars. When asking respondents from the onboarding and brand experience personnel regarding how the BEC is valued by internal people, no one knew for sure. Understanding customers' expectations and needs is important to deliver superior services (Parasuraman et al., 1991; Bergman et al., 2022). Therefore, we argue that surveys need to be utilised to measure and understand how well the BEC serves its purpose from both an employee and a customer perspective. Moreover, collecting feedback and sharing it with the brand experience personnel can have a positive impact on their sense of accomplishment and willingness to improve (Grigoroudis and Siskos, 2010). In addition, Aaker (1996) and Grigoroudis and Siskos (2010) highlight how measurements of customer satisfaction are essential in any organisation.

The FT in turn, is a unique and exciting experience for everyone, indicating Volvo Cars' transparency, and contributing with a powerful and lasting impression. Further, it creates an understanding of how the cars are made from the beginning to the end. Moreover, when asking the onboarding representatives about the FT, it is viewed as important for employees to understand how the production is actually working and to understand the importance of the coworkers in the production as it is where everything starts. Without the cars, Volvo Cars can not provide mobility which they claim to sell. In addition, from a Public Affairs perspective, there is a lot of pride in being able to show the BEC and the FT to clients which is highly appreciated due to the competent and exceptional guides.

It is further relevant to review the technical- and functional outcome of the experiences, in accordance with Grönroos (1982), to properly assess their impact on the overall perceived quality of the experiences. Firstly, looking at the technical outcome, one could note that the FT gives attendees the opportunity to see with their own eyes what a modern car factory looks like and follow along some of the key stages in how safe cars are manufactured. From a functional outcome perspective, the

tour inside the factory might change visitors attitudes towards Volvo Cars, leaving them feeling impressed by the complexity of the manufacturing process and gratuitous of the shown transparency. However, some visitors may have opposite reactions, feeling that the experience was below their expectations or too promoting. Nonetheless, our interview data points to the former of the two, that a majority of the attendees are satisfied with their experience and would recommend others to attend.

Furthermore, at the BEC, the dialogues and interaction with the guides also affects the functional outcome of the experience as employees attitudes and working behaviours may change. Thus, it is of great importance that these interactions take place and that the guides remain as knowledgeable as today. Using the same line of reasoning for the technical outcome, one could argue that employees receive education regarding Volvo Cars' core values, history and future outlook, in exchange for taking their time attending the experience, which is a good trade in our opinion.

5.1.1 Applying the Framework

By applying our framework, more specifically the EBBE perspective, we would say that the BEC is important from an internal brand management perspective. The BEC's contribution to increase employees' **brand knowledge** is rather obvious. The visitors are presented with information regarding the history of the company, novel solutions that have been successfully commercialised, and design concepts. Moreover, the part of the exhibit that regards safety is substantial and the same can be concluded about the section concerning sustainability and the ongoing transition towards fully electric vehicles. In other words, it stands clear that the BEC facilitates employees' ability to recollect and understand the organisation's goals and visions, which Kwon (2013) argues is the definition of brand knowledge. Another positive contribution to increased brand knowledge which the BEC provides is the dialogues that occur between the guide and the audience. The dialogues are highly valuable as they allow guests to ask questions, raise concerns and provide their perspectives. In other words, it makes the experience more vibrant and interesting which fuels curiosity, making the experience more unique and worthwhile. As presented by King and Grace (2009), subjective knowledge is one of two cornerstones in the theory of brand knowledge. In this case, the BEC could be regarded as a channel for obtaining and sharing employees' subjective knowledge through the experience. It should also be noted, in resonance with Malerba and Orsenigo (1997), that the BEC promotes the transfer of tacit knowledge, which is the second cornerstone of brand knowledge (King and Grace, 2009). Furthermore, the dialogues that pop up, as we have observed during separate occasions, stimulates knowledge generation and is a prime example of co-creation of value. Scholars such as Bergman et al. (2022) and Grönroos (2000) emphasise how an organisation, by supporting value co-creation in their offered services, can make each experience unique and more tailored after the attendees' needs and interest. We believe that this is a key to sustain the high satisfaction that the BEC-visitors have and maximise internal people's learning.

In addition, by sharing how everything fits together, the BEC can function as a sense-making process which increases **role clarity**, in accordance with King and Grace (2009) and Kwon (2013). The authors state that the degree of clarity an employee has of their role increases with the amount of brand knowledge they possess, which the

BEC as aforementioned contributes with. However, one incomplete part of this process is the lack of following up visits with team reflections. It is impossible to ensure that the role clarity of all visitors is increased as a result of visiting the BEC. Nonetheless, we would argue that by making it mandatory for each visiting group to together reflect upon what they take with them from the experience and how they can utilise it in their daily work, an increased role clarity for a majority of the attendees can be expected.

Furthermore, the motivational boost which several respondents have stated that the BEC generates indicates another dimension of the value that the experience creates. By definition, the **brand commitment** will be greater as employees become more engaged and motivated to be part of the organisation. Similarly, as the guide of the experience focuses on communicating Volvo Cars' core values, it facilitates employees' ability to find shared values and relate to the organisation. This in turn, will lead to them feeling more committed to reach organisational goals, referred to as affective commitment by King and Grace (2009). Furthermore, the BEC currently provides new employees with a sense of exclusivity and prioritisation. By offering employees visits to the BEC during work hours and making them aware of the organisational tasks and goals, Volvo Cars signals that they care for their relationship with their employees. It further indicates how the company acknowledges the importance of each employees' hard work, which as the literature has shown, creates a higher level of commitment to the organisation (King and Grace, 2009).

Moving further, we would start by stating that the FT does not have as big of an impact as the BEC from an EBBE perspective. The main reason for this argument is that the information during the tour is communicated in a more casual way with less details, making it more shallow and less **brand knowledge** generating in contrast to the BEC. However, it contributes by providing employees with a broader perspective and several of Volvo Cars' ambitious goals are communicated, which once again resonates with the theory of King and Grace (2009). Moreover, it seems that the excitement and curiosity that many employees display, as we have observed during multiple FTs, should increase the likelihood of them remembering the communicated information, thus resulting in increased brand knowledge. It further provides **role clarity** as employees get to see where their part of the work is added in the manufacturing product, even though it may not be as deeply discussed as in the BEC, this experience may provide a more holistic view compared to the BEC. Regarding **brand commitment**, we do not believe that the FT has any major contribution except making people prouder. As mentioned in interviews, many workers bring their families and friends to the tour to show off their work which we believe can increase the commitment as it creates pride around the individual's contribution to the organisation and as a reinforcing mechanism, creates a deeper affective commitment. Moreover, an important difference between the experiences from an EBBE perspective is the lack of two-way communication during the FT. Attendees get to ask questions after the tour but we argue that a Q&A that follows an hour-long tour will not be able to cater for all the questions that in reality appear in guests' minds during the tour. Instead, many of them are lost. The BEC, on the other hand, offers the possibility to ask questions whenever they arise which we believe facilitates a better learning environment.

5.1.2 Summary of Addressing the Current Activities

The view of the BEC's contribution and purpose seems to be rather unified when putting the different perspectives of stakeholders next to each other. It is clear that the BEC is viewed as an important experience to create a deeper understanding of Volvo Cars and its corresponding focus areas for internal employees. In addition, the FT is also an appreciated experience and emphasised as "the core of Volvo Cars" since it is where everything starts. Most importantly it signals transparency and provides the ability to offer a unique experience to different stakeholders.

Moreover, it is evident that all parts of the EBBE-framework are positively impacted by both the BEC and the FT. Therefore, there is no doubt regarding whether or not the experiences create value for employees. In relation to Aaker's (1991, p.26) statement: "All brand-building activities require justification", we deem the experiences justified and of value for the company. Lastly, we have concluded that the BEC provides more value from an EBBE perspective than the FT due to the content of the experience and the setting in which it takes place.

5.2 Addressing Potential Improvements in Torslanda

Under the following sector we will analyse the improvements potentials that have been identified during interviews and through our own observations.

5.2.1 The FT

There has been many discussions during our interviews with brand experience personnel regarding how the quality of the train is far from something that they can proudly represent, i.e. it is below standard. It is mainly because of the speakers but also due to the less comfortable seats and unreliable equipment. The speakers are currently making it hard to hear the guide at times which is a huge problem since anyone but employees pay for the activities and expect to fully hear what the guide communicates. Connecting to the theory of customer satisfaction, which Bergman et al (2022) defined as "its ability to satisfy, and preferably exceed, the needs and expectations of the customers", there is a risk of not reaching up to those expectations. As Oliver (1980) and Hills (1996) describes it, customer satisfaction is a function between expectations and expectancy disconfirmation, i.e. how well the expectations are met determines the level of satisfaction. This also highlights the importance of ensuring a proper physical context, which Falk and Dierking (1992) argue affects the interplay in an interactive experience. In this instance, the train and the factory constitute the physical context. The trains' influence varies depending on which customer you ask, but nevertheless, it is worth considering.

Further, updating the trains to reach the same standard as Volvo Group's new trains should be adequate and would double the capacity. We would like to stress the importance of this matter as the launch of WoV and the inherent marketing opportunities will most certainly increase the demand on the factory tour. For instance, assuming that about five percent of the yearly visitors will be interested in joining the factory tour in conjunction with WOV, we estimate that this will lead to an increased

demand of approximately 20 000-25 000 customers per year, i.e. roughly 500 more persons per week. Thus, it becomes important to ensure reliable equipment and increase the capacity to possibly meet the guaranteed increased demand.

5.2.2 The BEC

In this section we will present improvements potential directly connected to the BEC, not suitable for the FT.

5.2.2.1 Interactive Additions

Today, the BEC tour consists of videos, talking, physical props, and four interactive parts where only one person out of the group gets to volunteer. The absence of interactive elements in the BEC was articulated by most respondents in the brand experience department. Some respondents argue that the extensive use of videos and talking can become too much for some of the visitors, which then hampers their ability to absorb the communicated information. The respondents sharing this view, a majority, believe that an increased use of interactive elements in the tour would make it more enjoyable and easier to digest, sequentially leading to more people leaving with a positive impression of the brand experience. Others argue that more interactive elements would steer away attention from what is communicated, making visiting employees and affiliates less susceptible. However, we do not agree as interactive elements have been highlighted to facilitate co-creation of value and brand commitment, in accordance with Merriles (2016).

Based on the analysis of the data it is clear that adding a multitude of more interactive activities at the BEC is a low-hanging fruit that just needs to be grabbed since the BEC today feels much like a presentation. The possibility to do so is of course dependent on the allocated budget and investments in the brand experience department which is left out for Volvo Cars' to decide. On the other hand, there have been concerns about adding distractions through interactive elements. To conclude, we do not identify any problems or complications with adding more interactive elements and believe that it would increase the value of the overall experience, the attendants, and the guides. Similarly, in the case of WoV, adding an increased amount of interactive experiences will most definitely benefit external customers as it enhances the experience and facilitates learning and recollection by increasing the engagement, according to Bozzelli et al (2019), which in turn will increase CBBE.

5.2.2.2 Target Groups & Segmentation

As mentioned previously, the FT is not viewed as an experience where customers need to be segmented, according to onboarding personnel and the brand experience department. However, there have been advocates for different customer segmentation methods at the BEC. Some advocate that a segmentation based on the customers own levels' of prior knowledge and interest is a good method. Others, a majority, advocate for segmenting based on externals and internals is to prefer, as the dialogues with externals differ from the ones with employees regarding openness about challenges. Most respondents claim that this is currently done, but the responsibility to adapt is placed on the guides. Another opinion that also stands out was to divide external and internal to enable adjusted tours as an offering to internal people based on their

department. Thus, the focus areas and the duration of the tours could be tailored. This would generate better possibilities to accommodate for different stakeholder-groups' needs but also schedules since it has been articulated by several respondents that not all internal people have two hour slots available in their schedules.

It is evident that there is currently no cohesive viewpoint regarding the optimal customer segmentation strategy. One identified issue with the current approach is that the assignment of tailoring based on segmentation falls upon the tour guides. We assert that an explicitly defined customer segmentation strategy is necessary to establish tour standardisation and simplify the tour guides' work. While experienced personnel may easily modify the tour manuscript on a daily basis, this approach is suboptimal for less experienced or new guides. Going forward, we concur with two viewpoints regarding the value created by segmentation that has been appearing during interviews with the brand experience personnel. The **first** being the notion that it is imperative to present a positive image when interacting with customers - "All is "great" when talking to customers", while challenges could be discussed with internal people to a higher extent. The **second** being the significance of utilising the golden marketing opportunity that arises from having the undivided attention of a group of 20 individuals for approximately 1.5 hours.

The **first perspective** advocates for a segmentation between internal and external individuals, and we agree with this perspective. We support the idea that customers do not necessarily require information regarding all issues related to, for instance, the manufacturing of cars or meeting future goals. Instead, such issues should be primarily communicated to employees, to foster transparency, engagement, problem-solving, and to stimulate discussions at the BEC. To meet the **second perspective**, the ability to effectively convey the appropriate message to the relevant target group, which we anticipate to be diverse, becomes crucial. To effectively leverage the valuable marketing opportunity that the BEC provides, one could either adapt the tour to **prior knowledge** and/or tailor the content **based on department**. Adapting to **prior knowledge** could be an effective approach as it would enable Volvo Cars to cater to the demands and expectations of individuals who are enthusiastic or interested in various aspects of the cars while, simultaneously, avoiding the pitfall of sorting individuals into particular categories by allowing them to choose their level of prior knowledge. Currently, the majority of attendees at the BEC are internal individuals, such as Volvo Cars employees or affiliates, e.g. retailers. Therefore, a segmentation based on **departments** could prove advantageous, as it would provide employees with the opportunity to further educate themselves based on their own interests or the teams' needs and become more effective advocates for the brand.

5.2.3 Marketing

The lack of marketing of the experiences has been addressed by a majority of the brand experience personnel. In today's society, being visible on social media is vital to attract new customers. Looking at what experts say about satisfying customers, they all agree that ensuring customer satisfaction is all about managing customers' expectations. Oliver (1980) proposed the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm which entails that service providers must both know their customers' expectations and be able to meet them to reach a high level of customer satisfaction.

We would argue that by starting to put some more effort into marketing the brand experiences offered by Volvo Cars, the department will be able to induce some expectations into customers. Thus, it will make it possible for the department to set the expectations and ensure that these are met and exceeded. This can be achieved by under promising in the marketing campaigns and over delivering during the experiences. If one would compare this to the current state, our data indicates that most customers visiting, independently if they are external or internal, do not know much about what they will get to experience. Further we believe that all respondent groups would benefit from more marketing of the experiences. Internal people would then know more about the opportunity they have and be more prepared, whereas external customers would know more about the experiences offered, and the onboarding personnel would have even more eager new employees starting and looking forward to attending the brand experiences.

5.2.4 The Demo-Track

A majority interviewees articulated that they would like the demo-track, and the value it creates, to once again be part of the experience. The demo-track is greatly missed and was considered unique in several ways. Firstly, the demo-track was presumably one of the few places where people could test drive all of Volvo Cars' models. As indicated by the brand department, this ability was highly appreciated by guests. Secondly, it allowed visitors and employees to familiarise themselves with Volvo Cars' products and the differences between them, something that the onboarding personnel value. Multiple interviewees explained that nowadays, a lot of the new employees use public transportation to work. As such, product knowledge may be more important today than ever before as the initial elementary understanding of the products when joining the company might be lower than in the past. Furthermore, as expressed by multiple respondents, a lot of the departments work far away from the actual products, e.g. with finance or software, which leads to them feeling distant from the core of the company. Additionally, by offering employees and external customers the opportunity to test drive Volvo Cars' electric cars, the acceptance and adoption of fully electric vehicles can be facilitated. This would in turn pave the way for a smoother transition with more advocates in conjunction with increased sales. One could argue that the value created by the demo-track experience could instead be satisfied at retailers by letting employees test drive a Volvo on their own. While it is true that this can generate some product knowledge, it is not comparable to the experience of being able to truly test out a car on a test track in our opinion. Moreover, it is neither as fun driving a car in the city traffic as at a test track, which provides a whole unique experience in itself.

Based on the collected data, it is clear that everyone is in favour of reinstating the demo-track. As such, it is justified to argue that the demo-track should be put back in use and under the management of the brand experience department if it is possible despite the ongoing reconstruction of the location, which will remain to be seen. The experience will complement the two current experiences and as phrased by one respondent: "complete the overall brand experience". Due to limited resources, we recommend that the demo-track should initially focus on new employees as their need for product knowledge and motivation boost is greater than for employees that have been at the company for a couple of years. One might argue for how it is more expensive to lose an employee that has been at the company for a longer period and

how those are the truly important employees to keep, however, we would argue for how there is a bigger probability that those employees have tried the products before and that there is a reason for them staying at Volvo Cars. In addition, it seems reasonable that offering test drives of electric cars could smoothen the transition and create a positive attitude towards electric cars and Volvo Cars' ambition to only manufacture fully electric cars from 2030 and onwards.

The interview data shows that it has been possible to drive heritage cars in the past. We would argue that the launch of WoV and the new storage facility for the cars not on display in The Vault will set up the possibility to occasionally offer driving of heritage cars. As one of the biggest obstacles for this currently is logistics and ensuring that the heritage cars are not damaged, one could argue that the demo-track can serve as a great place to host such events and attract or create enthusiasts. A happening of this sort should preferably target several different customer segments and employees likewise as its uniqueness has the ability to increase everyone's interest in Volvo's history, comparing the past with the present and increase the demand for all of the other brand experiences Volvo Cars offer. This will positively impact the CBBE and EBBE which we will elaborate on later. However, for this to be feasible, the brand experience department needs to have resources to keep the track up and running.

5.2.5 Applying the Framework

Starting with a CBBE perspective, if Volvo Cars was to modernise the two trains by substituting them for newer ones with improved speakers and seats, they can create a higher sense of **perceived brand quality** of the experiences in Torslanda. These are further strongly linked to the **perception of the experience** which will improve as a result. The amount of brand associations might also increase due to the expanded capacity, and these elements together will lead to an increased **brand image**. Further, by increasing the number of seats, Volvo Cars should be able to better meet the demand which is currently higher than the supply as visitors need to book a tour a couple of months in advance. As a result, this would expose more customers to the experience and increase **brand awareness**. From an EBBE perspective we do not believe that the improvement potentials in relation to the FT are sufficient to make a noticeable difference and it will thereby not be analysed. Nevertheless, new trains will of course positively impact internal people's overall experience and larger groups could attend.

Moving on to the BEC, we believe that an increased amount of interactive experiences can facilitate the learning even further due to the fact of how it is increasing the overall engagement of the users according to Bozzelli et al. (2019). From a long term perspective, this should increase **brand knowledge**. Further, by using the segmentation strategies aforementioned, we expect to see a significant difference from an EBBE perspective. We would argue that providing **role clarity** does not necessarily require the provision of a comprehensive overview of Volvo Cars. Instead, presenting a tailored tour on how a departments' solutions and challenges fit within the broader picture and what they contribute with as a team, while providing a more concise overall picture, could potentially result in an increased **role clarity**. This perspective is further strengthened by King and Grace

(2009) definition, once again, “*the level of clarity an employee has of their role as a result of having brand knowledge*”. In other words, we believe that by tailoring the tour and by mediating the brand knowledge necessary to the right audience, Volvo Cars can increase the level of role clarity for employees. This can only be done by segmenting the visitors and adjusting the tour correspondingly. This may also further strengthen the **brand commitment** as Volvo Cars would implicitly show how much they value the relationship with the employees by offering different segments of internal people tours customised for them.

Further, there is no doubt regarding how increased marketing efforts should increase brand awareness from a CBBE perspective and thus, strengthen the brand image and the overall CBBE. We believe that this is self-explanatory, however, we do not deem it to be sufficiently connected to the experiences per se, therefore we will not analyse this further. Lastly, we believe that the reinstitution of the demo-track can contribute both from a CBBE and an EBBE perspective. Starting with the **CBBE** perspective and given that the demo-track is open for the public, we would add an experience that previously has been highly appreciated, i.e. we would contribute to the **overall perception** of the experiences. Further we believe that it can strengthen the **brand associations** as, assumingly, people create stronger associations if they get to try-out things themselves, in comparison to just hearing things from others. Worth to note, they might not create totally new associations, but they might at least strengthen the current ones that we have identified, e.g. safety, innovation, or premium, by getting to try out the newest cars and technologies. In addition, we would argue that this will increase the **perceived brand quality** as people themselves get the opportunity to feel the quality of Volvo Cars’ products. From an **EBBE** perspective it is relatively straightforward. By receiving the opportunity to try the products you are helping to create or sell, employees should gain more **brand knowledge**. Further we believe that it is essential to have at least tried the products once to be able to genuinely advocate Volvo Cars’ to others. In the end, there is no business without customers buying/using Volvo’s cars. In addition, employees should feel a higher sense of **role clarity** by actually feeling their contribution as they are driving the cars, which in turn should increase their motivation and brand commitment towards the company as they may feel a sense of achievement.

5.2.6 Summary of Addressing Potential Improvements in Torslanda

The advantages which two new factory trains would bring are deemed to exceed the investment costs by far, based on observations. We further believe that it is a necessity to take action as soon as possible if a fruitful collaboration between the brand department in Torslanda and WoV in Gothenburg should be conceivable within a year. In other words, it will be difficult to begin a collaboration if the ability to meet the demand does not improve, and it needs to be increased to seize the advantages the collaboration can bring.

Moreover, an expansion of interactive elements at the BEC is deemed to have predominant positive influence on the overall experience, visitors’ satisfaction and employees’ learning. Furthermore, we would advise adjusting the segmentation of visitors and offer tailor visits to make the most of the time spent with those attendants while increasing **EBBE**. Looking at marketing, it will cost some but it will undeniably

create a lot of value as it increases demand which in turn can increase the allocated budget for the department, ease the task of managing customers expectations, and delivering high quality services. However, one must be aware that increased marketing will inevitably lead to increased demand which requires resources to be sufficiently met as discussed previously.

Furthermore, reinstating the demo-track should be prioritised as the advantages are apparent from both a qualitative perspective (interviews) and theoretical perspective. We assess that this will contribute to both CBBE and EBBE. However, we note that this is heavily dependent on logistical, and accessibility matters such as the possibility to keep the facility where the current demo-track is located.

5.3 Addressing the Transformation

In the upcoming part, the consequences of letting the BEC go will be analysed and how losses can be minimised. Further, in the second headline of this section, we will analyse how the transformation can become as successful as possible. In order to grasp how we could integrate Volvo Cars' experience department with WoV and how we could enhance or retain the value of the overall experience, we needed to understand who the current stakeholders are and how this transformation will affect those stakeholders. After the interviews with the brand experience personnel and WoV, it became clear that internal people risk being impacted in a negative way by this transformation. In other words, new and established employees, affiliates to Volvo Cars and clients of Public Affairs which we refer to as "VIP clients". All of these could benefit from a more private setting in contrast to the public setting which WoV's exhibition will offer.

5.3.1 Introduction of WoV & the Disappearance of the BEC

To start with, there has been no doubt regarding how customers will benefit from this transformation. The brand experience personnel are convinced that people will continue to attend the FT, regardless of the geographical distance, due to the unique opportunity to get a guided tour in a factory. In addition, WoV will most probably be fantastic for external customers given the investments and variety of activities covering several of the identified flaws with the BEC, e.g. interactive activities and frequent updates of the exhibitions. In addition, the BEC is not currently open for the public (external customers) and as the FT will remain open, these customers will not really lose anything, instead they will gain another experience that will be astonishing.

5.3.1.1 Stakeholders' Loss

We have identified a big disparity in the beliefs of which stakeholders are the losers in this transformation. Therefore it is important to sort out which stakeholders' that are affected and to what degree. One can conclude based on the interviews that the brand experience personnel believes that the disappearance of the BEC will impact new employees and their onboarding process more compared to what the onboarding personnel believes. One of the reasons why the onboarding might be less concerned of their loss is the logistical issues that are currently present, making the onboarding personnel less appreciative of the BEC. However, it seems like this may not be

adequately communicated to the brand experience personnel, creating a mismatch regarding the perceived current value. Attending at the BEC is also optional within the onboarding process which could be seen as an indication that visiting the BEC is not viewed as an important stage of the onboarding, however, it is due to the logistical issues as confirmed in the interviews. Another potential reason why the brand department overestimates the BEC's value for onboarding could be that the personnel are a bit biased of the contribution, amplifying the contribution of their own work. However, even though the onboarding personnel may not yet have realised the loss of losing the BEC, we believe that this will become more apparent if WoV can not meet their demands in terms of providing rooms and frequent tours. There were also concerns regarding the placement of WoV and how one might want, from an educational standpoint, to keep people at their workplace (Torslanda). Moreover, the change of geographical location may pose a problem as well with regards to time and transportation, which has been highlighted as burdensome.

Moving beyond the onboarding process, the VIP clients connected to the Public Affairs department seem to be a group of stakeholders losing out due to this transformation which is unfortunate. In addition, we would not advise to keep the BEC solely for a group of VIP clients from a cost perspective as they are on average 5-10 people per visit and it is currently used as a bonus if the VIP clients have time over after meetings. However, when we have interviewed people at WoV they have clearly stated that guided tours will not be conceivable for everyone as they estimate to have about 400-500k visitors per year. Nonetheless, they might be bookable and available for different types of VIP clients. This further shows a lack of communication between different stakeholders as the Public Affairs department does not believe that WoV will be a place for their clients, but also the lack of clarity for how things are going to turn out for the onboarding process. Another thing we are worried about is whether it is a good idea to mix the brands of Volvo Cars and Volvo Group when people already have trouble telling the two of them apart as stated in interviews. This could cause problems when trying to teach new hires or impress VIP clients. It is like trying to mix apples and oranges – they might both be fruit, but they are not the same. Focus should be on Volvo Cars in those instances and not on Volvo Group. This mix can be dangerous as inconsistency in the image presented may negatively affect the brand image, following Grant's (2018) reasoning.

From a more theoretical view, one should consider that the social context may vary between the two locations if the WoV exhibition is not guided and if public customers are around when internal people walk through the exhibition. As Falk and Dierking (1992) present, the social context affects how people will interact with others in their surrounding, and the authors highlight how the visitors' interactions with the three contexts: social, physical and personal, vary over time. Thus, the social context may be more important for some individuals or groups at one occasion and have less perceived impact by others. With that said, we believe that WoV still has the potential to provide a good social context if the internal attendees get an exclusive feeling, get the possibility to ask questions, and have some distance from external customers. Moreover, we can conclude that the personal context, by once again looking at Falk and Dierking's (1992) interactive experience model, will not be significantly affected if WoV is to replace the BEC. The reason for this is that the interests and prior experiences of employees will not have changed. However, their expectations of

WoV, in contrast to the BEC, may come to differ over time. Lastly, the physical context will most certainly change as the data clearly shows that the WoV exhibit will be less private and include less of the BEC exhibit's physical props but will instead have other props and interactive elements. It has further been requested by respondents that a "mini BEC" should be included in the exhibition where for instance crashed cars and powertrains are part of experience. Since safety and sustainability is focal in Volvo Cars' operations and we have observed how people react when they see crashed cars, we would strongly recommend that this type of physical props should be on display at WoV.

5.3.2 Applying the Framework

To understand how the introduction of WoV will impact Volvo Cars CBBE, we will start by looking at the framework. We have three main elements, brand image, brand quality and brand loyalty. We assess that the **brand image** will be affected as gaining an experience that aims to draw international attention and have 400-500k visitors per year will, with certainty, increase **brand awareness**. Further, as a result, more people will create different associations to Volvo Cars, i.e. increase and strengthen current **brand associations** due to an increased exposure and reaching of more people. Nonetheless, since we do not have complete knowledge of the content of the exhibition, we will not explore further which associations WoV will strengthen or establish, as any such analysis would be mostly speculative. Furthermore, if Volvo Cars are to be recognized and relevant associations to be made, the customers need to be able to distinguish Volvo Cars separately from the collaboration between Volvo Cars and Volvo Group. If most people turn out to think of WoV as a separate entity, it might leave the brand of Volvo Cars with less attention. Moreover, our observations and interviews have led us to believe that the perception of the experience will undoubtedly be positive. We have noted that WoV per se is meticulously planned and that the investments made to create remarkable experiences are substantial. As a result, we expect this transformation to have a significant impact on Volvo Cars' **brand personality**. For instance, the high emphasis on ensuring that everyone feels welcome in WoV that has been articulated during interviews will most certainly have a positive impact on brand personality. The reason for this is that it makes people associate Volvo Cars with inclusiveness, an association that was seen in the data, to a larger extent which, in turn, further strengthens the people's ability to relate to the company. Furthermore, through genuine personality associations, Volvo Cars can facilitate other positive associations and leverage their human-centric values to enable creating a positive brand image while also attracting skilled new recruits.

Further we have **brand quality** which, as aforementioned, is defined as the "subjective judgement and notion of brand's overall excellence from a consumer perspective" (Zeithaml, 1988). We would assess that the perceived brand quality will increase as the launch of WoV will position Volvo Cars as a part of, what could be, the largest and most distinguished brand experience centres within the automotive industry. This signals overall excellence. Furthermore, the notion of how the perceived brand quality represents the overall quality and not specific elements (Yoo and Donthu, 2001) are of major importance. Because, the quality of specific elements such as the products or their attributes are not dependent on the launch of WoV, i.e.

the launch of WoV will not increase the actual product quality. Instead, it is the subjective judgement of the quality that has the potential to be impacted by the inauguration of WoV. This notion was emphasised by Aaker (1991) who stated that the brand quality is not necessarily based on facts. To conclude, the large investments made in the WoV building in combination with all the brand experiences will have the ability to positively affect people's subjective perception of the overall quality, thus contributing to an increased CBBE.

WoV's extensive and "all-in-one" exhibition will undoubtedly strengthen the **brand loyalty**. The increased engagement which WoV will create can generate a greater commitment and attachment from everyone, which Guzman and Davis (2017) defines as brand loyalty. With everyone, we are referring to devoted divers (enthusiasts) and skimmers/swimmers (semi-interested people). Divers will be offered details and the ability to ask experts about specifics and skimmers/swimmers will get a memorable and entertaining experience. Overall, we believe that the launch can contribute by strengthening brand loyalty as it will be remarkable and generate a "wow-feeling" and at the same time make people prouder of owning their Volvo (if they have one). Many from the brand experience department have stated that the FT currently has this effect on people. It helps them confirm that they have made the right choice by purchasing a Volvo car, which results in them being loyal to Volvo Cars. Lastly, as Aaker (1996) pointed out, measurements of brand loyalty can not be applied to non-customers, therefore we can not provide anything else but our speculative assumption regarding how the brand loyalty will change as a result of this transformation. Something that we are sure about is that it will not decrease due to the disappearance of the BEC as mostly employees attend the BEC.

Moving on to an EBBE perspective, since we have already covered the positive contribution the BEC have from an EBBE perspective, this is the value that has the potential to be lost in the transformation. The question becomes to what degree WoV will be able to fill the BEC's shoes, given that the BEC disappears?

Looking at internal brand management, more specifically the generation of **brand knowledge**, it seems, based on the collected data, that it is likely to decrease. However, it is hard to grasp and provide concrete arguments from a theoretical perspective when much regarding the integration and content of WoV is still too unclear. Therefore, the following analysis will largely be based on assumptions and have a speculative undertone. First off, by removing employees from their workplace and into a public exhibition at WoV, one can imagine that their ability to concentrate will decrease due to an increased amount of distractions. Consecutively, this might decrease the brand knowledge generated in comparison to a tour at the BEC. Further, by stepping outside of your role during the attendance of those tours may decrease the engagement in fruitful discussions and the pursuit of obtaining information that can help one develop in one's role at work. Fruitful discussions, according to Bergman et al. (2022) and Vargo and Lusch (2004), is a form of co-creation of value which should be nurtured. Secondly, another concern regards whether WoV can provide a private room and guided tours for the onboarding employees each Monday. If WoV can not meet this demand or provide anything special for employees, they might feel unprioritized. In the end, it is the company that they work for that are co-owners of this experience and as such Volvo Cars should nurture their relationship with their

employees if they want to retain and enhance their EBBE. Not doing so has many consequences. Firstly, it might lead to fewer experiences for employees and affiliates which in the long-term will decrease the overall brand knowledge and thus **role clarity** which the BEC provides today. Further, the feeling of not being prioritised or the feeling of your relationship with Volvo Cars not being valued may result in an decreased **brand commitment**.

5.3.3 Summary of Addressing the Transformation

We conclude that customers are one group of stakeholders that with certainty will benefit from this transformation. The losers are Volvo Cars employees (especially new ones), affiliates and the public affairs department's VIP clients due to the BEC's contribution from a qualitative and theoretical perspective (EBBE). Moreover, we acknowledge that the geographical location could pose a problem for some stakeholder groups as transportation time and overall time spent will increase. It is not possible to provide a clear answer regarding whether WoV can replace the BEC as much depends on how WoV actually turns out in terms of content. However it is important that they do replace the value for the internal people as several prominent authors have emphasised how EBBE acts as a cornerstone for creating CBBE. In the end, it is the employees who transmit values to customers and they need to work in favour for the company (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015; King & Grace, 2009; Kwon, 2013). Further, it is important for new employees to attend, i.e. the onboarding department needs to offer knowledge generating activities early on to facilitate the accumulation of knowledge as brand knowledge is seen as essential in determining EBBE in connection to Boukis and Christodoulides (2020).

Additionally, due to the different views of the BEC's contribution, we believe that solid communication channels and feedback loops between the onboarding team and the brand experience department must be established due to the current lack of insights regarding the value and usage of the BEC. Moreover, in an optimal world without resource constrictions, we believe that the brand experience department would benefit from keeping BEC for as long as possible, to let things settle and see how well the integration of the onboarding is possible at WoV due to the reason that BEC is a different experience that currently creates value for internal people and facilitates organisational learning. This resonates with Yoo et al. (2000) who state that one should protect brand equity sources and Aaker (1991) who remarks that several brand experiences strengthen brand associations. Even though this is from a CBBE perspective, we would argue that the reasoning is applicable in this case as well. One should further be cautious with removing the BEC since a lot of tacit knowledge is transferred to internal people. It is further crucial that the communication regarding WoV's intentions reaches all affected departments to create unified expectations and visions. By doing so, further uncommunicated concerns from the different departments can become apparent and managed.

We can further conclude that one can expect WoV to have a positive impact on CBBE. The physical and social context that WoV will offer is especially suitable for external customers but might, as discussed, have a negative impact on internal people. The physical context could be seen as improved compared to the current BEC exhibition, as it will be more updated, prioritised, and include interactive elements to a high

extent. The social context however may be inferior to the BEC as internal people will not be alone which might constrain dialogues and learning.

5.4 Combined Offers & Logistical Challenges

The geographical distance between the brand experiences in Torslanda and WoV will entail some practical challenges in terms of logistics and administration. In the following section, some of these challenges will be analysed and solutions discussed. Note that our framework is not applicable for this topic.

5.4.1 Bundling of Offers

It has been clearly stated by some respondents that the intention is to offer customers the opportunity to purchase full packages that include all experiences. However, since the BEC may disappear, concerns were raised by one respondent regarding how the incentives to visit Torslanda will decrease. We do not share this concern due to the fact that the BEC mainly focuses on internal people. Most of the employees already work in Torslanda, hence they will not be affected in this sense, but affiliates who may travel from other places may be affected to some extent. Nevertheless, we would argue, based on our own observations and the collected data, that the FT will still provide enough incentives to attract them to Torslanda. The question to address then becomes how one should combine the FT with the other experiences. Moving on, we would like to provide an example of how the offers could be combined to cater for different customers. The first level could be an entry to WoV's exhibition. A second level could be to offer WoVs exhibition and the FT, with transportation in between included in the price. Furthermore, a full package could be offered to divers or enthusiasts, which includes WoV, the FT, The Vault, and of course transportation. At The Vault, these customers should have the possibility to ask questions to experts as they will expect it and will most certainly appreciate it.

5.4.2 Transportation Issues & Considerations

Furthermore, we can with confidence assume that both external customers and internal people will expect that the two geographical locations will be seamlessly connected. In other words, it will be vital that Volvo Cars are able to meet these expectations in a sufficient way to achieve high customer satisfaction in resonance with Oliver (1980) and Bergman et al (2022). To practically do so, multiple transportation options should be available to cater for different customers' needs and expectations. For instance, there could be some form of shuttle bus between the locations that has the capacity to transport at least the amount of people which corresponds to a fully booked FT. Another possibility is to offer rentals as it would both solve the transportation issue but also let customers get hands-on experience of a product of their choice. However, there are some potential problems that should be considered. Firstly, offering a rental service requires resources in terms of personnel, parking lots and vehicles. Secondly, it may be difficult to ensure that everyone arrives on time to the experiences in Torslanda as traffic, route choice, or eventual stops, can differ. It would be a liability that may create further issues. In addition, one option to look into is if Volvo on Demand could have vehicles in WoV's proximity to enable

short term rental of cars. Nevertheless, similar problems as the aforementioned option may arise.

To conclude, there is no evident and simple solution to the transportation challenges. We believe that a good portfolio of options may be generated through trial and error. Therefore, we would recommend that a shuttle bus is initially used to provide transportation between the locations if customers' have purchased some form of bundle that includes visits at both WoV and in Torslanda. If customers instead will attend one of the locations, they should solve the transportation on their own, i.e. a car or public transportation. We further recommend that the two shuttle buses are used between WoV and the FT, where both stop at The Vault in between. These should go back and forth during the day, preferably between 9 am and 3 pm to avoid heavy traffic.

6. Discussion & Recommendations

Upon initial observation, it may appear evident that the World of Volvo will undoubtedly improve the overall experience for visitors of Volvo Cars and contribute to the enhancement of the company's brand equity, given the substantial investments that have been allocated towards it. However, a comprehensive analysis reveals that the matter is not as straightforward as it seems. The strategic decision to relocate from the headquarters and primary production site on Hisingen to the central area of Gothenburg brings forth a range of both opportunities and risks. Through taking an external perspective, conducting interviews with various stakeholder groups and making observations, we have been able to identify a number of potential risks and opportunities associated with this transformation.

The implementation of our framework has had a positive impact as it facilitated the creation of a coherent structure for our thesis, provided a template for conducting interviews, and facilitated the categorisation of the collected data. Moreover, this framework holds potential for future research endeavours, as it can be applied to analyse other organisational changes from a brand management perspective, capturing the viewpoints of both employees and customers. If we were to investigate this further, it would have been intriguing to conduct a more quantitative study, aiming to measure in detail the contributions of the current experiences from a quantitative perspective. Additionally, exploring the geographical change in greater depth and focusing on the opportunities and challenges related to the selection of WoV's location, particularly placing it in the heart of Gothenburg, would be of interest. For instance, examining how it can attract a larger international audience due to its placement or comparing the likelihood of individuals visiting WoV in Gothenburg versus if it were situated in Torslanda.

Lastly, we believe that our framework could be enhanced by establishing a connection between the EBBE and the CBBE. The existing literature demonstrates that EBBE serves as a fundamental building block for constructing CBBE. Thus, it would have been beneficial to incorporate a link between these two concepts. Additionally, one could argue that CBBE should possess the potential to enhance EBBE. By strengthening CBBE, it is conceivable that a more positive external perception of Volvo Cars would emerge, leading to the attraction of a highly skilled and enthusiastic workforce who can act as strong advocates for the brand. In the long run, this could contribute to an increase in EBBE. It would be interesting if future research could investigate this relationship further and find empirical evidence that supports this notion.

We would recommend the following to ensure that Volvo Cars's brand experience department can offer an enhanced overall brand experience after the transformation:

1. Improve the communication internally, i.e. regarding WoV and but also between departments.
2. Reinstitute the demo-track if possible. Otherwise, ensure that some form of hands-on experience is provided during the onboarding process.
3. Update the two trains used in the FT to increase capacity, reliability and ability to take a larger fee.
4. Consider and discuss the risks mentioned before dissolving the BEC and keep it until the lease goes out. The facility could in the meantime be a great place to try-out some of the initiatives or activities which will be made or launched in WoV's exhibition.
5. Start measuring the impact that the experiences have on attendants from different stakeholder-groups through surveys to enable making more informed decisions regarding different experiences. These measures should then be shared and discussed among the people in charge of the different stakeholder groups.
6. Make sure to provide educational guided tours ("diver-tours") at WoV for internal people but only focus on Volvo Cars in the exhibition. The attendants should be able to ask questions and have fruitful discussions in, for instance, during the tour or in a conference room after the tour if the topic is sensitive.
7. Communicate Volvo Cars' core values in the WoV exhibition to ensure that some of the lost value from the BEC is retained. For internal people, it is crucial that the core values are communicated and as such, we recommend that this is done prior to them entering the exhibition to ensure that these are present in their minds during the tour.
8. Meet the requirements set by the onboarding department to enable a great experience during the onboarding of new employees at WoV.
9. Make sure that all internal people feel welcome and prioritised to increase EBBE.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the primary objective of this study was to explore how Volvo Cars could enhance their overall brand equity, encompassing both CBBE and EBBE, in light of the ongoing transformation. The investigation has yielded several significant insights. Firstly, in response to **RQ1a**, the FT has a stronger contribution to the CBBE while the BEC instead generates a higher EBBE. A past experience that will have a positive impact on both CBBE and EBBE is the demo-track if it is reinstated. Furthermore, none of the experiences are perfect, there is room for improvement. Volvo Cars need to allocate more resources to the brand experience department in order to sufficiently increase the overall brand equity, meet the increased demand and keep their personnel motivated. This is further essential to make the recommended improvements. The main improvement potential identified with the FT is to update the trains, including the seats and speakers, as the current reliability and capacity is too low to adequately meet expectations and the increased demand which WoV will generate. The main improvement potentials in connection with BEC instead are to make the tour more interactive, segment the attendants and update the exhibit more frequently.

In relation to the **RQ1b**, some of the key challenges and opportunities that come with the transformation were identified. We can conclude that several different opinions exist regarding the potential impact that the transformation, i.e. the disappearance of the BEC and launch of WoV, will have. The transformation does not only bring advantages, there are other stakeholder-groups, except for external people, that we assess will lose value if no actions are taken. External people will benefit, but merely focusing on increasing CBBE is not adequate as literature has shown. Perspectives from different stakeholders need to be taken into account in organisational transformations, otherwise negative consequences might follow. We do not believe WoV will be able to fully replace the BEC from an EBBE-perspective, however, it could be a “good enough” substitute, bringing in other benefits from an EBBE viewpoint. In the end, we believe that WoV will be an amazing experience and a smart investment, i.e. the problem is rather the disappearance of the BEC. This is since the BEC has a stronger contribution than the FT from an EBBE perspective due to its more educational nature, in combination with the uncertainty of WoV’s ability to cover up that difference. The question then becomes how well can WoV meet the needs of the internal people?

To answer the **overarching research question**, Volvo Cars needs to quickly improve the internal communication regarding WoV and how it will impact different departments as it is clear that some of them are still uninformed. As such, there are currently expectations from various departments on WoV that we believe will be difficult to meet based on our interviews with key players at WoV. By establishing closer communication, different perspectives and opinions can be brought to the table and actions can be taken which are needed to make the transformation successful. If the internal communication is nurtured, it will be easier in the future to determine what value is created and lost to effectively create more efficient internal and external brand management initiatives. Similarly, the lack of measurements without too much effort by putting measurement processes in place. This will help the different

stakeholder groups to understand what value is created by the experiences for their attendants and what kind of revision that could be done to create more value. It could further function as a way for them to allocate more resources by highlighting the contribution of the brand experiences to higher levels in the organisation. It should be noted that even though we have advocated for keeping the BEC, it has been decided that the BEC will disappear, and Volvo Cars will not invest anymore to keep operating it. In the end, the purposes of the BEC and WoV are different, and in an ideal world, both should remain as they are not interchangeable. But as the BEC will be laid down permanently, the improvement potentials that have been discussed to enhance the experience, should not be implemented. Lastly, we feel confident that the transformation can become successful as long as the actions are taken to mitigate value losses and maximise value creation by considering all relevant stakeholders

In summary, there are evident areas for improvement regarding the current experiences offered by Volvo Cars which we have highlighted in the report. The ongoing transformation presents both challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed or seized. From our analysis, it can be concluded that CBBE is expected to increase, while there is a potential risk of decreasing EBBE. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that Volvo Cars, in collaboration with WoV, possesses the capability to mitigate any potential loss in EBBE. By implementing or considering our recommendations, Volvo Cars can proactively address this risk and ensure that the overall brand equity is enhanced.

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