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- Case Södertörn University*

Author: Charlotte Ekberg

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Address	University of Gävle Department of Business Administration 801 76 Gävle Sweden Telephone (+46) 26 64 85 00 Telefax (+46) 26 64 85 89 Web site http://www.hig.se
Author	Charlotte Ekberg
Date	20100524
Supervisor	Ph.D. Maria Fregidou-Malama
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Abstract

Title: Building a strong brand with marketing communications at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral level. - Case Södertörn University

Level: Final assignment for MBA in Marketing Management

Author: Charlotte Ekberg

Supervisor: Johan Gaddefors

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Aim: The purpose of this paper is to investigate how Södertörn University may build a stronger brand through marketing communications. The paper discussed each stage of the buying process. With models like these it is possible to measure the number of consumers who occupy the different stages.

Method: The data was collected in a non-random convenience selection at the Stockholm fair for higher education with 21 000 visitors. I used a survey questionnaire. The number of respondents was 409 respondents. My method of investigation is quantitative. It is measurable so that communication goals can be set. In order to build a stronger brand I analyzed prospective students and their awareness of Södertörn University. The study has a positivistic view and a deductive approach.

Result & Conclusions: My study shows that Södertörn University should use marketing communication strategically by using the models. At the cognitive level the most important is to raise brand awareness. Total knowledge is 52% in Stockholm County which is too low. An increase is fatal to raise the number of applicants. At the affective level they have to increase brand attitude. At the Behavioural level they need to increase brand purchase intention and facilitate purchase.

Suggestions for future research: It would be interesting to use other models of consumer responses too. Next step could be to make interviews with students to be to study how they first got to know the name, and what has affected them in order to choose or not to choose the university.

Contribution of the thesis: The thesis has actually contributed a lot to Södertörn University. I have used the collected data to make a marketing plan. We now have worked a lot with awareness and seen a great increase in applications.

Key words: AIDA, Lavidge and Steiner, FCB-grid, The Rossiter-Percy grid, buying process, marketing communications, student marketing.

Introduction

This study is about building a stronger brand with marketing communications. An everyday task for all businesses and organisations is to add value and to do that to a higher degree than competing offers, this is communicated through marketing communications. Marketing communications is according to Kotler and Keller “the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind consumers – directly or indirectly – about the products or brands that they sell”¹ Selling is supported by marketing communications. Today it is common to use marketing communications also for non-profit organisations such as political parties, NGO’s or public authorities. Can students be approached as customers? Is it possible to use marketing communications on universities and students as it is possible within a company and their customers? I use theories made for companies on Södertörn University even though it is a public authority. But one have to keep in mind that in the universities there is a strong opinion that a university is not a company and adding value to customers in the shape of a student is not always the issue. Another difference is that universities in Sweden are not profit making and the premises like location, maximum revenue and fees of a university is set by government authorities and not only by the university. In this study Södertörn University is considered a company and the student as a customer. In conclusions at the end of this work I will discuss if it is accurate.

Södertörn University wants to inform, persuade and remind potential students to apply to the different courses and therefore the communications department at Södertörn University has received a mission and a budget to execute this. Södertörn University wants to reach new customers e.g. students with advertisement. Advertisement is often a central element in a marketing communications program.² Other parts of a marketing communications program are sales promotion, events, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing. Marketing communications will also create brand equity by making the brand stay in mind and crafting a brand image.³ When building brand equity, it is important to evaluate the different communication options to effectiveness criteria e.g. how well does it work but also on efficiency considerations e.g. how much it costs.

¹ Kotler (2006) p 536

² Kotler (2006) p 536

³ Kotler (2006) p 536-537

It is almost art to develop a communications program. It is a process consisting of several steps. First one needs to identify the target audience then determine the objectives for communications. After that is done it is possible to design the communications, selecting channels, establishing a budget and decide on the media mix. At last one can measure the results and manage IMC. I am in this paper going to concentrate on the second and third step in Kotler's "steps in developing effective communications" which are identify the target audience then determine the objectives for communications.⁴

Södertörn University wants to influence the buyer's purchase decision. They therefore first need to have a closer look at students' buying process and make a detailed analysis of the target students' decision-making process. Södertörn University needs a better knowledge on how students collect information and are affected by their advertising.

Different models can explain the buying process. It is best understood in the context of a total flow of marketing communications. There are several applicable models of the steps a consumer goes through and they are sometimes called message models or response hierarchy models. In these models there are different steps or levels a customer goes through to get to the purchase or decides on courses to apply to. I use different models of hierarchy of effects to show how advertising information influence brand choices. I present AIDA, the Hierarchy-of-effects, the FCB-grid, and the Rossiter Percy-grid and then put them in a matrix where they are summarized so that they are easy to use. I perform an empirical analysis on how well students know the brand. I present what level Södertörn University is strong in its marketing communications, according to these models, or where Södertörn University should put more effort.

Södertörn University does not know if potential customers are fully aware of the brand and not in which stage the prospective students are. Södertörn University needs to lead the potential customers through a series of stages *the cognitive, affective and behavioral level*. With models like these it is possible to measure the number of consumers who occupy the different stages. With these measurements in place it is possible to set goals like "increase purchase intention from 10% to 30% in the target segment within a year", instead of pointless

⁴ Kotler (2006) p 541

goals like “build a strong brand” The strength of these models is that they point out a package of measures of effects that can be measured.⁵

After I have described the different theories I will analyze them and draw conclusions that I will use to make a survey on awareness, brand recall and recognition. Thereafter I will also analyze the results from other universities. The market has been targeted and Södertörn knows whom to address, but they do not know how well the target market knows them. Therefore I conduct an empirical analysis on how known they are and then draw conclusions from the results in order for me to make recommendations.

⁵ Silk (2006) p 134

Problem & Purpose

Problem

As most companies but also NGO:s Södertörn University wants to build a stronger brand.

Research questions

Which theories/models are applicable on the buying/selling process.

How can these be summarized so that they are easily applicable?

I will use my own empirical study on how well known Södertörn University is.

To be able to make recommendations so that students will choose the university I also use others' studies on students buying process for from English universities. I will also apply theories on marketing in a company's life cycle.

I suggest them to use marketing communication strategically e.g. by using the models I have choose to work with in this study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Södertörn University may build a strong brand through marketing communications. This study discusses each stage of the buying process set by the theories AIDA, the Hierarchy-of-effects, the FCB-grid, and the Rossiter Percy-grid.

Limitations

There are more theories and models of consumer responses and I have limited it to four. I have therefore selected hierarchy of effects models in order to know how brand equity is affected by brand awareness and customer attitude toward the brand. I picked the AIDA-model because it was the oldest, I choose the Hierarchy of effects because it was considered to be a turning point in marketing communications. The FCB and Rossiter-Percy-grid are some of the latest models. All four are widely mentioned in scientific articles. The consequences by choosing these models are that I have to apply a consumerist approach to students and their choice of university.

Theoretical discussion - Micro models on Consumer Responses

There are several models of the selling process, even Plato considered if a person thinks before acting or acts before thinking. Today attribution theory, humanistic psychology, and mathematical learning theory are applicable.⁶ I now want to have a closer look at the buying and selling process. I have therefore selected four hierarchy of effects models in order to know how brand equity is affected by brand awareness and customer attitude toward the brand. Micro models of marketing communications explain buyer's responses to communications such as advertising.⁷ All the models have both advantages and disadvantages. I want to discuss, deepen my knowledge about some of the concepts but also discuss some of the weaknesses with this disposition. Finally I develop my own model for the empirical research part.

AIDA

The AIDA model was maybe the first formal advertising model. It has dominated literature ever since and a lot of advertising research started with AIDA. It was adapted for advertising in 1925 by E K Strong.⁸ AIDA is an abbreviation for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. It is a linear theory and it begins with gaining attention that is to create awareness so that the brand is revealed. Then the advertisement should create interest and a positive attitude with the communication towards the product. Desire is developed by the advertiser's ability to motivate the customer to feel something positive about the product or some problem-solution execution. The last stage is action, which means that there ought to be some stimuli so that the customer buys the product.⁹

The consumer passes through each level the cognitive, affective and conative level.¹⁰ Cognition always appears before the affective stage and then behavior. It is important to know that each stage in AIDA can be measured and facilitate marketing communications objectives.¹¹

⁶ Ray et al (1973) p 172

⁷ Kotler (2006) p 540

⁸ Vakratsas (1999) p 26-28

⁹ Grover (2006) p 489

¹⁰ Kotler (2006) p 540

¹¹ Vakratsas (1999) p 26-28

AIDA pros and cons

AIDA is much known and is easy to describe for others within the company or organization. I find AIDA still accurate and it is a good start for someone who is not that into models. AIDA can make it possible to set better goals for the marketing communications even though this is a simple model to make the goals accurate. The problem is that consumers do not always go from think-feel-do in this rational, linear way. It depends on the product and it depends on the person and even the daily mood of that person sometimes a person is more spontaneous sometimes not.

AIDA ignores what kind of product market it is and makes the product one for all markets. It also ignores the context, and type of motivation. AIDA also claims effectiveness in the whole marketing communications process. Advertising effectiveness lately focuses more on the two main behavioral responses: awareness and comprehension. All four phases are not equally important for advertisement.¹² The next model, the hierarchy-of-effects model, will take yet more levels into consideration.

Lavidge & Steiner's Hierarchy-of-Effects model

1961 Lavidge and Steiner introduced another model for productive measurements of advertising effectiveness in 1961. This was somewhat a turning point in marketing communications. This model has been useful ever since.¹³ The model is supposed to be based on a classic psychological model that divides behavior into cognitive, affective, and motivational state.¹⁴

They wanted to know what advertising is supposed to do, the functions, in order to improve the effectiveness of advertisement.¹⁵ The function of advertising is normally to boost sales but all advertising is not. Some effects are long-term.

This model assumes that most consumers pass through seven stages from disinterest in a product to convinced consumers.

¹² Kotler (2006) p 557

¹³ Vakratsas (1999) p 26

¹⁴ Palda(1966) p 13

¹⁵ Lavidge and Steiner (1961) p 59

Figure 1 The hierarchy-of-effects model

Related behavioural dimensions		Examples of types of promotion or advertising relevant to various stages	Examples of research approaches related to steps of greatest applicability
Cognitive - the realm of thoughts. Ads provide information and facts.	Unaware	Announcements Descriptive copy Classified ads Slogans	Information questions Playback analyses Brand awareness surveys Aided recall
	Awareness	Jingles Skywriting Teaser campaigns	
	Knowledge		
Affective - the realm of emotions. Ads change attitudes and feelings	Liking	Competitive ads Argumentative copy Image ads Status glamour appeals	Rank order of preference for brands Rating scales Image measurements, incl check lists and semantic differentials Projective techniques
	Preference		
Conative - the realm of motives. Ads stimulate or direct desires.	Conviction	Point-of-purchase Retail store ads Deals Last chance offers Price appeals	Market or sales tests Split-run tests Intention to purchase Projective techniques
	Purchase	Testimonials	

Source: Lavidge and Steiner, 1961, p. 59

Hierarchy-of-effects model pros and cons

Lavidge & Steiner's hierarchy-of-effects model as well has its advantages and disadvantages. As with AIDA customers do not always pass through the stages in a linear way. Another criticism made is that it focuses too little on creativity many creators in advertising are looking for the great unique idea. And yet another one is that it is not comprehensive enough and do not relate to empirical verifications.¹⁶ I like it a lot though because it has more levels than the AIDA model and there are many good suggestions on how to set goals for the different levels. What is missing though is the high or low involvement aspect. These aspects are included in the next model the FCB-grid.

¹⁶ Fitzgerald (2000) p 73

FCB-grid

In 1980 Foote, Cone & Belding developed a new marketing communications model that adds high and low involvement and left and right brain specialization to Kotler's traditional consumer response theory and Lavidge and Steiner's hierarchy-of-effects model.¹⁷ The model differs from the other two not only because of involvement and think/feel dimensions but also because it classifies product categories.¹⁸ The FCB-grid is a more complex hierarchies than those described before. It is classified as integrative because the sequence does not have to be linear but depends on the context.¹⁹ Involvement is not decided on brand but category.²⁰ The FCB grid focuses on four advertising planning strategies e.g. informative, affective, habitual, and satisfaction. Advertising should be designed according to the matrix.

Figur 3, The FCB-grid Source: Fitzgerald, Arnott, Marketing communications classics, p 76

Figure 2 FCB-Grid

	Think	Feel
High involvement	Informative (Economic) Learn Feel Do	Affective (Psychological) Feel Learn Do
Low involvement	Habitual (Responsive) Do Learn Feel	Satisfaction (Social) Do Feel Learn

Source: Fitzgerald (2000) p 76

Informative strategy. This has the same levels as AIDA or the hierarchy-of-effects; learn, feel, do. This part of the matrix is considered for high involvement products or services.²¹

Affective strategy. This right part of the matrix is also for high involvement products but for those products that arose more feelings that give us an air of being something special, and

¹⁷ Fitzgerald (2000) p 75-77

¹⁸ Vakratsas (1999) p 34

¹⁹ Vakratsas (1999) p 28

²⁰ Vakratsas (1999) p 34

²¹ Fitzgerald (2000) p 75-77

other ego related impulses that require emotional communication by putting feel before learn and then do.²²

Habitual strategy. Down under to the left we find the low involvement and thinking products. Maybe some minimal awareness is required but then the purchaser is prepared to try the product in question. The consumer learning-by-doing.²³

Satisfaction strategy. Down to the left are the second low-involvement products but these have a feeling touch, and could be called to be life's little pleasure and therefore product experience is necessary. This makes it a do, feel, and learn communication process.²⁴

The grid suggests that we know if we deal with a high or low involvement product, and if we do not know about the product's positioning we need to be insightful and flexible about consumer involvement. Also within the think-feel spectra we know that the brain is complex and that the left and right part of our brains are connected but at least this model made emotions a legitimate topic in marketing communications strategies.²⁵

The FCB-grid pros and cons

The FCB-grid adds on more dimensions like think and feel and also high and low involvement than AIDA and the Hierarchy-of-effects model. It made emotions a legitimate topic in marketing strategies. It does not take awareness into account but focuses on attitude. It is hard to make conclusions on different levels especially the behavioral level of the buying process. The next model presented, the Rossettier-Percy Grid is supposed to be an improved model for advertising planning.²⁶

²² Fitzgerald (2000) p 75-77

²³ Fitzgerald (2000) p 75-77

²⁴ Fitzgerald (2000) p 75-77

²⁵ Fitzgerald (2000) p 81

²⁶ Vakratsas (1999) p 34

Rossiter-Percy Grid

The Rossiter-Percy Grid was first mentioned in 1987²⁷ Rossiter and Percy have identified *five* communication effects that a marketing manager has to consider as communication objectives when planning marketing communications. All customers have to go through these effects prior to the purchase decision is made.²⁸

1 Category need. First the category need has to be established. The consumer has to identify that she needs something. This is important in order to motivate and to get the right emotions towards the product. We do not buy a product until we know what we need it for. Product category is the name we give the object spontaneously as we need it e.g. "I need a higher education" Need is that we want something. We can either assume that this category need is already present, or remind the consumer of category need, or to sell the category need.²⁹

2 Brand awareness. Before purchase of a product the consumer needs to identify the brand within the category. For successful advertisement awareness is a necessary condition.³⁰ Awareness is also essential to build brand equity.³¹ Pure brand awareness advertising works because consumers think that the brand must be popular, safe or reputable or it works as a reminder for those who successfully used the brand before.³² Brand awareness comes before brand attitudes especially today when there are so many products in a market.

General tactics to reach brand awareness are:

- Measure what kind of brand awareness the target consumer has.
- Coordinate the brand awareness stimuli with consumer response.
- Make the ad unique.
- Make the time that the consumer can be aware of the brand as long as possible.³³

There is almost no chance for a product to be bought if the name cannot be recalled before or at the time of the purchase.³⁴ We need to recognise the brand at the point of purchase or recall

²⁷ Fitzgerald (2000) p. 84

²⁸ Rossiter, Percy (1998) p 109-112

²⁹ Rossiter (2000) p 110-111

³⁰ Fitzgerald (2000) p 85-86

³¹ Kotler (2006) p 542-543

³² Rossiter (2000) p 113-120

³³ Fitzgerald (2000) p 85-86

³⁴ Fitzgerald (2000) p 85-86

the brand name prior to the purchase. It is more difficult to achieve recall than recognition and brand recall is especially important outside the store.³⁵ Brand recall is very important in many consumer service situations. Intended brand choice is made prior to purchase and then also identified at the point of purchase.³⁶

- Tactics to reach *brand recall* can be good exposure of the name. It could be mentioning the category need. After the first explosion of attention one do not have to use the same media frequency.³⁷
- Tactics to reach and *brand recognition* can be associating the category need and the brand name in the same sentence, keeping it short, use repetition, ad personal reference and carry out a bizarre execution, using jingles and put into effect a high media frequency.³⁸

3 Brand attitude. Brand attitude is defined as the consumer's evaluation of the brand. The brand should fulfill consumer needs.³⁹ Potential consumers are mostly aware of several brands in a product category, consequently they must choose on brand attitude. Overall summary judgment is brand attitude and it connects the brand to a purchase motive. Motives can be negative like problem removal or avoidance or simply it run out of stock. Motives can also be positively originated social approval, intellectual stimulation or sensory gratification.⁴⁰ At this point there should be an evaluation of how the brand can fulfill needs. As in the FCB-grid there is also the difference between low and high involvement products.

The needs can be fulfilled by different motives not only positive (informational) but also negative (transformational) motives.⁴¹ Typical emotional states that portray informational and transformational motives can be seen in the figure below.

³⁵ Rossiter (2000) p 113-120

³⁶ Rossiter (2000) p 113-120

³⁷ Fitzgerald (2000) p 87

³⁸ Fitzgerald (2000) p 87

³⁹ Kotler (2006) p 542-543

⁴⁰ Rossiter (2000) p 120-125

⁴¹ Kotler (2006) p 542-543

Figure 3 Emotional states

Motives	Typical emotional states
<i>Informational motives</i>	
Problem removal	Anger – relief
Problem avoidance	Fear – relaxation
Incomplete satisfaction	Disappointment – optimism
Mixed approach-avoidance	Guilt – peace of mind
Normal depletion	Mild annoyance - convenience
<i>Transformational motives</i>	
Sensory gratification	Dull – elated
Intellectual stimulation	Bored – excited
Social approval	Apprehensive – flattered ⁴²

Source: Fitzgerald, p 90

It is difficult to measure if an ad has fulfilled these motives. It has to be done by qualitative interviews.⁴³ On top of an overall judgment the consumer can hold one or more specific benefits that support the first general attitude. There are also irrational emotional associations that are not obviously tied to specific brand benefit beliefs. At last but not the least is the rule of choice. The consumer might have a different choice rule like “first consider a certain price range and then an overall attitude”. The initial or prior brand attitude level of the targeted audience must be determined so that a higher level can be set.⁴⁴

4 Brand purchase intention. It is defined as the consumer’s self-instruction to purchase the brand. Either the brand manager assume or generate purchase intention, thus most advertisement and promotion offers cannot create immediate purchase intention if category need is not there.⁴⁵

5 Purchase facilitation. It is defined as consumer’s ability to purchase the brand such as availability, ease of payment and the 4P’s product, price, place (distribution), and personal selling.⁴⁶ At least these factors should not make the purchase difficult to make.⁴⁷

⁴² Fitzgerald (2000) p 90

⁴³ Fitzgerald (2000) p 91

⁴⁴ Rossiter (2000) p 120-125

⁴⁵ Rossiter (2000) p 126-128

⁴⁶ Rossiter (2000) p 128-129

⁴⁷ Rossiter, Percy (1998) p 128

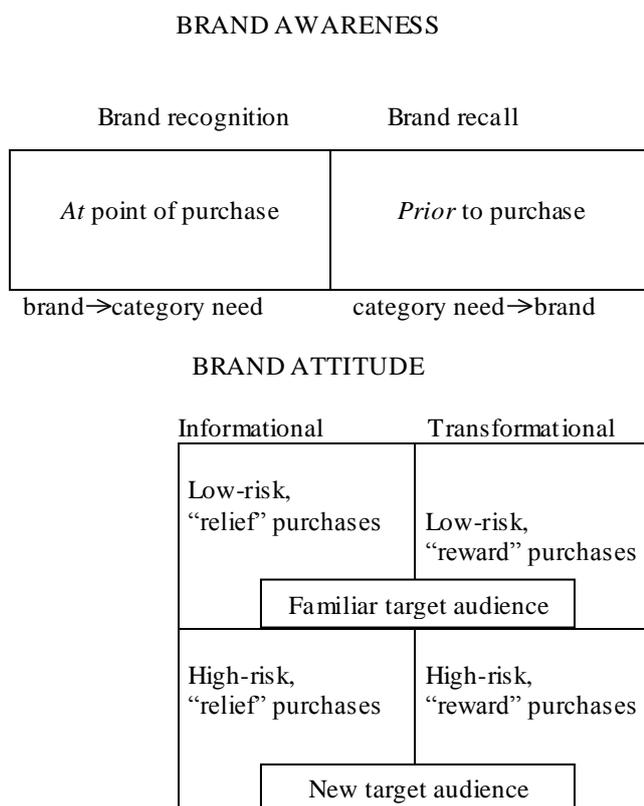
When the brand's communication objectives have been set, it is time to choose or confirm the brand position and that is what the brand is, whom it's for, and what it offers. The positioning statement is:

- 1 To (the target audience) /
- 2 _____ is the brand of (category need) /
- 3 that offers (brand benefit or benefits).ⁱ

When objectives are set and a specific positioning strategy has been selected from the communication effects it is time to create an advertisement and communicating the brand position.⁴⁸

Figure 4 The Rossiter-Percy grid

It consists of six cells that differentiate creative execution tactics in ads.



Source: Rossiter and Percy, 1998, Advertising communications and Promotion management, 2nd ed. p 213

Tactics is needed to gain the targeted potential customers attention, get brand awareness, and communicate the brands positioning strategy persuasively to get a good brand position. The Rossiter-Percy grid finds recommended creative execution tactics for advertisement in all media. It has exactly as the FCB grid four boxes with a high and low involvement and an informational and transformational scale. They have recommended brand attitude advertisements tactics for every box.

Informational/low involvement

To get an emotional portrayal of the motivation one should use a simple problem-solving format and it is not necessary for the audience to like the ad.

To get a benefit-claim one should include at most two benefits that ought to be clearly stated and easily learned.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Rossiter, Percy (1998) p 177-199

⁴⁹ Fitzgerald (2000) p 92-93

Informational/high involvement

Tactics in the beginning of the product life cycle is to have a good emotional portrayal but is not that important in the later stages. One needs to take the consumers attitudes towards the brains in consideration. The consumers do not have to like the ad but should agree on points made. The targeted consumer has to find the benefits convincing at a decent level. It can be good to try a comparative approach to the competitors.⁵⁰

Transformational/low involvement

In the upper right corner of this model the recommended tactics to get an emotional portrayal of the motivation one should use a likable, for the brand unique, emotional authenticity as a USP of the advertisement. Brand delivery is implicit by association and repetition can be used as both a reinforcement function and as a build-up.⁵¹

Transformational/high involvement

For an emotional portrayal tailored to a lifestyle audience it is crucial to get great emotional authenticity because the audience should identify themselves with the product. To get a benefit claim the most important task is to give information in a way that is not over claimed, but neither under claimed. Repetition in form of a build up is often recommended.⁵²

The Rossiter and Percy Grid pros and cons

The Rossiter and Percy Grids advantages are that it is possible to set goals that includes brand awareness that is classified both as brand recognition and recall. The dimension of involvement of attitudes is defined in terms of target audience and brand choice. I find their five communication effects helpful.

Figure 5 Five communication effects

Category need	Brand awareness	Brand attitude	Brand purchase intention	Purchase facilitation
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Source: Rossiter and Percy, 1998, Advertising communications and Promotion management, 2nd ed. p 213

⁵⁰ Fitzgerald (2000) p 92-93

⁵¹ Fitzgerald (2000) p 92-93

⁵² Fitzgerald (2000) p 92-93

English prospective students decision-making process

Now I want to analyze findings on prospective students' decision-making process in the three levels, the cognitive, the affective, and the behavioral level. I have found articles and a book on university choice, e.g. the decision process of school leavers in Great Britain.

Cognitive level

Brown et al suggests that pupils want to go to university to achieve the professional requirements.⁵³ Also career considerations have the greatest impact on students' choice of subject of study at university but also on the basis of their assessed ability in those subjects. The third and fourth most powerful influences on choices of university courses by students are teacher influence and interest in the subjects. Of the external influences, teachers were considered the strongest factor in students' decision-making process, while parents are the least important.⁵⁴ Research demonstrates that school leavers' decision processes are complex and that university should recognize and respond to these needs in the perspective of their institutional and subject/discipline settings.⁵⁵ This is what Rossiter and Percy calls category need. According to Brown et al students to be used what they called a consumerist approach and started to begin extensive information search on different universities.⁵⁶ It also seems to me that most students to be have what Rossiter and Percy calls informational motives because they seek information to reduce the negative state.⁵⁷

Brown et al offer tactics for the cognitive level:

- insights into student/consumer choice processes
- apply services marketing principles
- apply flexible targeting in the recruitment strategies
- include the development of individual subject area prospectuses rather than “one-size fits all” marketing strategy⁵⁸

⁵³ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 317

⁵⁴ Maringe (2009) p 29-44

⁵⁵ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 317

⁵⁶ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 317

⁵⁷ Rossiter and Percy (1998) p 127

⁵⁸ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 322-323

Affective level

Brown et al concludes that university choice is a high involvement decision. In this choice there is a significant level of perceived risk because of costs of living and post university debt.⁵⁹ They claim that in literature there are three variables that prospective students find the most important, course, location and reputation. Other variables of importance are the state of regional job market, the cost of living, entrance requirements as a barrier, financial considerations. Most applicants gained information from a variety of sources most often from Internet but also cited the prospectus as being particularly influential during the early stages of the decision-making process. The prospectuses were used to gain a feel for the university and later as a way of making a short list to the universities to visit for an open day. The students use language of consumerist approach to problem solving and at this stage begin extensive information search on the different universities and their merits/demerits.”⁶⁰ Many students had entrance requirements as a replacement for reputation. Further, in an effort to make the set of courses and universities more manageable, they tried a risk reduction strategy choosing universities with courses that were their aim but also where they had achievable offers. In the end of the evaluation process reputation had lost its importance.⁶¹ Not many students choose courses because they are perceived to be easy.⁶²

Brown et al offer tactics for the affective level:

- institutions have to ensure that their web pages are current
- constant management of the public face of the institution to allow refinement and flexibility of targeted communications
- build and maintain relationships with applicants through new communications technologies such as social networking and mobile phone texts⁶³

⁵⁹ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 312

⁶⁰ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 317

⁶¹ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 318-319

⁶² Maringe (2009) p 468

⁶³ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 322-323

Behavioral level

Brown et al writes that it was the later stages the decision-making cycle that they provide new insights.⁶⁴ When the students had answers from all their universities, it was time to decide who would be their choice. Three new factors influenced the last decision-making process: post-application visit day experience(s), responses from universities and the role of mitigating the fees. The importance of the post-application visit days Brown et al's research supports the findings of Moogan et al. (1999). Nevertheless it is important how the day was organized and the ability to meet tutors and current students. The people with whom student prospects came into contact both the academic staff but also other existing students influenced them. Visit days provided an opportunity to see if they might fit in. Once again, students displayed a consumerist approach when deciding on attendance, universities needed to offer more than an interview to justify the cost traveling to them. The far most important communication that students received from universities was the receipt of the initial offer. Students felt relief and excitement associated with this communication. It often led them to accept this initial offer as their first choice. They started to imagine how it would be at that university, and further that they would start their journey for a degree and students overcome the possibility of making the wrong decision, and sought to reduce levels of perceived risk by favoring the university that they felt "wanted" them. A dialogue from the university was also applauded by students, the greater their familiarity with the university, the greater the guarantee that they had made the right choice.⁶⁵

Brown et al offer tactics for the behavioural level:

- the added value of delivering good customer service throughout the application process will assist universities in differentiating their offer from their competitors
- target the communications at specific student segments⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 316

⁶⁵ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 320

⁶⁶ Hemsley-Brown et al (2006) p 322-323

Communication in a company's life cycle

Another important aspect on advertising is where the company is in its life cycle. A company's positioning strategy has to change over the product life cycle. A certain product or a brand can be expected to meet a lifecycle during its lifetime. Grant argues that a company goes through different stages and that the maturity curve is S-shaped. It starts with Introduction > Growth > Maturity > Decline. The tendency today is that the life cycle becomes suppressed.⁶⁷ There are different strategies to adjust the marketing objectives and to set advertising and sales promotion goals in the different stages as we can see in the table.

Figure 6, Summary of Product Life-Cycle Characteristics, Objectives and Strategies.

	Introduction	Growth	Maturity	Decline
Sales	Low sales	Rapidly raising sales	Peak sales	Declining sales
Costs	High cost per customer	Average cost per customer	Low cost per customer	Low cost per customer
Profits	Negative	Rising profits	High profits	Declining profits
Customers	Innovators	Early adopters	Middle majority	Laggards
Competitors	Few	Growing number	Stable number beginning to decline	Declining number
Marketing Objectives	Create product awareness and trial	Maximize market share	Maximize profit while defending market share	Reduce expenditure and milk the brand
Product	Offer a basic product	Offer product extensions, service warranty	Diversify brands and item models	Phase out weak
Price	Charge cost-plus	Price to penetrate market	Price to match or best competitors'	Cut price
Distribution	Build selective distribution	Build intensive distribution	Build more intensive distribution	Go selective: phase out unprofitable outlets
Advertising	Build product awareness among early adopters and dealers	Build awareness and interest in the mass market	Stress brand differences and benefits	Reduce to level needed to retain hard-core loyals
Sales Promotion	Use heavy sales promotion to entice trial	Reduce to take advantage of heavy consumer demand	Increase to encourage brand switching	Reduce to minimal level

Source: Kotler and Keller, 2006, p 332

Rossiter and Percy have made a table on advertising according to the product life cycle stages inspired on R. A. Strang.

⁶⁷ Grant (2005) p 303-352

Figure 7 Table on advertising according to the product life cycle stages inspired on R. A. Strang

PLC stage	Advertising communications	Promotions
Introduction	High	High
Growth		
Leader or differentiated	High	Low
Imitated me-too product	Low	High
Maturity		
High brand loyalty	High	Low
Low brand loyalty	Low	High
Decline	None	Low (trade) ⁶⁸

Source: Rossiter, 1998, p10

Advertising results decreases during the product life cycle. Massive advertising campaign is more helpful in increasing sales for new brands than for established brands.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Rossiter (1998) p 10

⁶⁹ Vakratsas (1999) p 28

Model for the empirical research - the cognitive, affective and behavioral level

The theories presented are alike in the sense that the consumer passes through different stages. I will therefore not use only one of them but instead work with them all, but to make an overview I will use the same matrix as Kotler and Keller do in their book Marketing Management but I have used some other models than they do. This matrix is based on three stages the cognitive stage e.g. learns, the affective stage e.g. feels and at last, the behavior stage e.g. does.

Ray et al also summarize the different hierarchy models in three levels; cognitive, affective, and behavioural. They describe the hierarchy model as a sequence of mental levels, which the potential customer is supposed to experience during a campaign. The first level is simple and the last is more complex.⁷⁰

Vakratsas and Abler uses one more dimension when they summarize 250 journal articles on various models and theories of how advertising works. The stages are cognition, affect and also experience and at last behavior. Their greatest implication is that there are no supports for any single hierarchy of effects. The different levels cognition-affection-behavioral are anyhow interesting but they should be studied in a space, with affect, cognition, and experience as the three sequences and be adjusted according to product category, the marketing mix, target audience, competitors, and stage of the product life cycle.⁷¹

I limit my matrix to three stages but I consider all the stages presented in the different models later in my analysis. Each of these levels represents a lot of research, a lot of middle-range theory and it is not correct to say that all their terms, measures, or detailed linkages from the models and theories are represented here. I prioritized an overview of the major structures that was easier to comprehend.

Södertörn University needs to use marketing communications on, *the cognitive, affective and behavioral level* as described in micro models of consumer responses as AIDA, the Hierarchy-of-effects, the FCB-grid, and the Rossiter Percy-grid, in order to make prospective

⁷⁰ Ray et al (1973) p 149

⁷¹ Vakratsas (1999) p 29

students choose the university. Marketing communications create the brand's position and cause action through the communication process. Marketing communications create enduring mental associations in the consumer's mind connected to the brand, called communication effects. All of these must be at full strength before the consumer takes action.

Figure 8 Matrix on the four micro models of consumer responses

	AIDA	Hierarchy of effects	FCB-grid Vaughn 1980, 86	Rossiter-Percy grid - The five communication effects. Rossiter, Percy and Donovan 1991, 1998
Cognitive level Think	Attention	Awareness Knowledge	Informative	1 Category need 2 Awareness (Brand recognition or Brand recall ⁷²)
Affective level Feel	Interest Desire	Liking Preference Conviction	Affective	3 Brand attitude (Informational motivation and transformational motivation ⁷³)
Behavioral level Do	Action	Purchase	Habitual Satisfaction	4 Brand purchase intention 5 Purchase facilitation ⁷⁴

Tactics for the Cognitive level

Brand attitudes are formed both on beliefs of the brand and on emotions as the attitude towards the advertisement. Brand recall and attitudes will be higher if the campaign has a series of ads. Which of cognition and affection that is most important depends on the context. Advertising is more effective in the beginning of the product life cycle than in the latter. The impact of trial and usage are low on low-involvement brands that cannot be assessed objectively, but the impact of advertisement is higher because these consumers do not engage

⁷² Rossiter et al (2000) p 1076

⁷³ Rossiter et al (2000) p 1076

⁷⁴ Rossiter and Percy (1998) p 110

that much in the information process. But for high involvement brands cognition is more important than affections and experience is most important for brands that are in the mature states of the product life cycle.⁷⁵ When consumers have to rely on memory to find information about the product or service advertising increases price sensitivity but when consumers have to rely on point-of-purchase information advertising decreases price sensitivity.⁷⁶ Emphasis on advertisement should be on positioning. The brand must differentiate itself through tangible product attributes and then communicate that differentiation positively.⁷⁷

Tactics for the Affective level

To get a high brand preference a likable advertisement will help.⁷⁸ This is so because for brands that represent credence goods like designer clothes, advertising provides information that inspection or experience of the product or service does not give. High-quality products are recommended to have a larger advertising budget to signal their quality.⁷⁹ Brand attitudes are often based on emotions. Brand attitude is often based on emotions toward the ad, which also means that ad likability highly correlates with brand preference.⁸⁰ Affect is more important for low-involvement products.⁸¹

Tactics for the Behavioral level

Short-term advertising effects diminish fast. One to three exposures are enough to make the customer buy the product and after the third exposure response to advertising declines.⁸² And advertising makes a brand less price sensitive and decrease the non-loyal segment.

Promotions on the other hand have the opposite effects on price especially on non-loyals.⁸³ One has to remember that consumers respond to different advertisement in different ways, depending on their involvement.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ Vakratsas (1999) p 38

⁷⁶ Vakratsas (1999) p 30

⁷⁷ Vakratsas (1999) p 29

⁷⁸ Vakratsas (1999) p 38

⁷⁹ Vakratsas (1999) p 29

⁸⁰ Vakratsas (1999) p 31

⁸¹ Vakratsas (1999) p 33

⁸² Vakratsas (1999) p 28

⁸³ Vakratsas (1999) p 28

⁸⁴ Vakratsas (1999) p 33

Choice of method

I need a method to answer the purpose, as stated above; of this study. My method of investigation is thus quantitative. *Quantitative methods* are research techniques that are used to collect quantitative data. I want my results to be numbers and measurable so that communication goals can be set. I want to illustrate my findings with statistics, graphs and tables. According to Christensen et al most marketing research are quantitative.⁸⁵ My marketing research problem needs new data so called primary data that is to be found neither externally, nor internally in the university.⁸⁶ The quantitative method is connected to a deductive approach which is also the approach I want. The study has therefore a positivistic view and a deductive approach.⁸⁷ I start the work to build a stronger brand with analyzing prospective students and their awareness of Södertörn University e.g. how many can recall or recognize the brand. In order to know how known or even well known the brand Södertörn University is I want to make a survey with a survey questionnaire. I want to investigate if the brand is known.

Selection strategy

The overall purpose of this study is to acquire data to validate the literature survey and gain a practical understanding of the buying process aiming to ultimately answer the research question. As several of the above mentioned theories suggests I perform a brand awareness survey and also implement questions on recall. The empirical survey is a descriptive and non-experimental research method. Surveys are useful when a researcher wants to collect data on a phenomenon that cannot be observed. A population is sampled in a survey. A population is a set of persons or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic.⁸⁸ The population needs to be selected. There are two types of selection; random selection and non-random selection. Random selection means that every unit is selected randomly and it has a known probability to become a part of the selection. All other types of selection that do not fulfil these demands are non-random selection.⁸⁹ My choice of selection strategy is non-random convenience selection at the Stockholm fair for higher education.

⁸⁵ Christensen et al (2001) p 222

⁸⁶ Christensen et al (2001) p 102

⁸⁷ Backman (1998) p 48

⁸⁸ Busha (1980) p 67

⁸⁹ Christensen et al (2001) p 109

Description of target population and selection method

I study the targeted segment of potential students. The targeted most important segment for Södertörn University is youngsters primarily 19 to 21 years old living in the Stockholm County that aim to study at a university. I therefore decided to conduct the first survey at Saco's student fair in November 2007 where the visitors are students to be from Stockholm and at the age of 19-21. A key goal of the survey is to understand in what mental bin the students to be are. Is Södertörn University know, how many have awareness of the brand, how many have it top-of-mind and how many can mention it on recall. All participants were at the same spot at the same time made it easy to correspond by means of using a survey questionnaire on paper. Additionally, survey is useful because specific data can be obtained within a short time and they are relatively cheap and can provide answers to questions such as What? Where? When? How?. Data is collected through them and then summarised. After this data is quantified is it possible to analyse different variables. The results from the survey can be analysed to discuss the findings and finally draw conclusions. On the basis of the literature, a pilot questionnaire was developed to find the problem defined in this work.⁹⁰

Description of the selection size and representativeness

The Stockholm fair and seminars are about higher education in Sweden and abroad. The number of visitors at the show in Stockholm was 21 000. They came to the fair on their own or by buss from the different schools in the neighborhood. The Fair visitors were mainly from the Stockholm County but also from Uppsala and Mälardalen. The visitors are mainly from the third year in high school and visit the fair because they are interested in higher education after high school. The number of respondents is a final total of 408 respondents.

Data collection techniques

I was neutral dressed without any logos from Södertörn University. I was equipped with a paper survey and stood at the entrance to the SACO-fair. I only asked those who just entered the building. It was easy to know because the visitors only received one entrance ticket. I did not choose whom to ask but took the first one I saw after finishing with a respondent. I never showed them the questions or answers. The questionnaire was made in Swedish, because the fair was in Swedish but I have translated my questions in English (see the appendix).

The survey is divided into two sets of questions to answer the research question. It contains eight questions. The first set contains general question on background e.g. gender, age, and

⁹⁰ Bell (2007) p 137-152

place to live are in the survey because I wanted the possibility to break down the results on females and males etc. I never asked if they were male or female. Instead I made a qualified guess upon their looks. I asked for their age and I asked where they lived. Only if I did not know which part of Stockholm I asked the respondent if he or she could tell me what part of Stockholm it was and then I could fill in the right box on the questionnaire.

The second set covers questions on recall and recognition "*What universities do you know of (spontaneous)?*" and then I wrote down if Södertörn University was mentioned first, mentioned at all or not mentioned. I asked what universities the youngsters knew and I checked in what order the universities were presented. I also asked the respondents if they were willing to apply for Södertörn University. Directly after that I asked, only if Södertörn University was not mentioned at all, if the respondent ever heard of Södertörn University.

Sources of error, reliability and validity

I used a program called Quicksearch to work with the data. The respondents answered all the questions that were asked but I made a few mistakes when I ticked the boxes either in the survey or in Quicksearch. First of all there were 409 respondents I forgot to check the box on gender for five of them which means that I know the gender of 404 persons and they have all answered the other questions. The same happened on age where I failed to write the age of two persons. I missed one answer on what universities they heard of. If the respondents did not know of Södertörn at all not even on recall I did not ask if they think Södertörn University is a good university therefore there are 209 respondents on this question.

This study can be done in a larger context and with another random sample and therefore be more statistically significant, however, at an entirely different cost. This study should be more regarded as a hint. Reliability is a measure on the method that should show the same result at different occasions but the same circumstances. The advantage of a questionnaire is control, reliability because the same format was used with all respondents. There is always an opportunity to carry out the same survey in the future. This then will provide an opportunity to verify and confirm the previous survey earlier carried out.⁹¹ The validity is issues of accuracy and may be raised when checking if the respondent really understood the questions asked and I therefore asked the same question to several of my friends asking them how they understood the questions.⁹²

⁹¹ Bell (2007) p 117-118

⁹² Bell (2007) p117-118

Data collection and empirical study

Bengt Håkansson senior consultant and a former teacher of mine at Bergh's says that whatever your plan is on the brand you are working with, you have to find out what kind of brand you already have. Brand management is about knowing what the market and the customers accumulated opinion about the brand.⁹³ The question is how? Christensen et al make recommendations in their book on marketing surveys. They claim that the starting point for all marketing surveys is to define the marketing problem. The character and the content of the problem should be analyzed thoroughly. What should the survey focus on? Next step is choice of method, how to collect the data. When the data have been collected it should be analyzed and interpreted.⁹⁴ Håkansson suggests that one should not make the surveys and the results too complex, hard to access or not analyzed in a sufficient way.⁹⁵ As I mentioned in the introduction Södertörn University wants to influence the buyer's purchase decision. They need to have a closer look at students' buying process and make a detailed analysis of the target students' decision-making process. Södertörn University needs a better knowledge on how students collect information and are affected by their advertising.

I have presented four micro models on consumer responses and summarized them into the cognitive, affective and, behavioral level. I have analyzed how English Universities communicate with their students and put the different ways of communicating in the same three different levels. And at last I have considered marketing communication in a company's life cycle.

I now start the work to build a stronger brand with analyzing how many prospective students who are aware of Södertörn University e.g. how many who can recall or recognize the brand.

The questionnaire was made in Swedish, because the fair was in Swedish but I have translated my questions at the next page.

The first questions on background e.g. gender, age, and place to live are in the survey because I wanted the possibility to break down the results on females and males etc. I never asked if they were male or female. Instead I made a qualified guess upon their looks. I asked for their

⁹³ Håkansson (2004) p 188

⁹⁴ Christensen et al (2001) p 11-12

⁹⁵ Håkansson (2004) p 188

age and I asked where they lived. Only if I did not know which part of Stockholm I asked the respondent if he or she could tell me what part of Stockholm it was and then I could fill in the right box on the questionnaire.

Then next question was asked "*What universities do you know of (spontaneous)?*" and then I wrote down if Södertörn University was mentioned first, mentioned at all or not mentioned. I asked what universities the youngsters knew and I checked in what order the universities were presented. I also asked the respondents if they were willing to apply for Södertörn University. Directly after that I asked, only if Södertörn University was not mentioned at all, if the respondent ever heard of Södertörn University.

The number of respondents was 408 persons. This study can be done in a much larger context and with another more random sample and therefore be more statistically significant, however, at an entirely different cost. This study should be more regarded as a hint.

Results background questions

"Gender"		
Male	36%	144
Female	64%	260
Respondents 404		

Most respondents are women and that corresponds very well with applicants to higher education.

"Age"		
0-17	14%	58
18	76%	309
19	9%	35
20	0%	2
21	0%	2
22	0%	0
23 or more	0%	1
Respondents 407		

All respondents are in the targeted group of 17-19. Next year in April will these people turn 18, 19 and 20, which corresponds well with applicants for higher education.

"Where do you live?"		
Northern Stockholm County	12%	48
Stockholm municipality	18%	74
Southern Stockholm County	17%	68
Nacka Värmdö	4%	15
Outside Stockholm County	50%	204
Respondents 409		

50% of the respondents are from the County of Stockholm and the other half is according to lists from SACO who makes the invitation from Södertälje, Södermanland, and Uppsala.

Results for the Cognitive level

"What universities have you heard of (spontaneously)?"		
SH mentioned first	2%	9
SH mentioned	9%	38
SH not mentioned	88%	361
Respondents 408		

Very few only 2% have Södertörn University “top-of-mind”. 9% of the respondents can mention Södertörn University on recall.

Question	What universities have you heard of?			Total
Gender	SH mentioned first	SH mentioned	SH not mentioned	
Male	0 0%	11 8%	133 92%	144
Female	8 3%	27 10%	224 86%	259
Total	8	38	357	403

Only women have Södertörn University “top-of-mind” and more women can have it on recall.

Question	What universities have you heard of?			Total
Where do you live?	mentioned first	mentioned	not mentioned	
Northern Stockholm County	1 2%	3 6%	44 92%	48
Stockholm municipality	2 3%	9 12%	63 85%	74
Southern Stockholm County	6 9%	16 24%	45 67%	67
Nacka Värmdö	0 0%	3 20%	12 80%	15
Outside Stockholm County	0 0%	7 3%	197 97%	204
Total	9	38	361	408

Those who have Södertörn University “top-of-mind” are from the southern parts of Stockholm. The recall rate is higher also highest there.

Next question are for those respondents who did not mention Södertörn University.

"Do you know of Södertörn University?"		
Yes	43%	156
No	57%	205
Respondents 361		

43% of those who were not able to mention Södertörn University on recall were able to recognize Södertörn University when the name was mentioned.

Results for the Affective level

"What university will you choose in the first place?"		
SH	4%	15
Other	67%	265
None	29%	117
Respondents 397		

Most of the potential students will at this stage choose another university than Södertörn University. One third will not apply to any university at all.

Have you considered applying for Södertörn University? (at a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 is disagree and 6 agree completely) "		
1 disagree	42%	129
2	17%	52
3	14%	44
4	16%	50
5	3%	9
6 agree completely	7%	22
Respondents 306		

If the 4th, 5th, and 6th places at the scale are considered as agree 26% would consider applying to Södertörn University. Those who are on the 2nd and 3rd e.g. 31% could maybe be convinced to apply.

Question	What university will you choose in the first place?			
Have you considered applying for Södertörn University?	SH	Other	None	Total
1. disagree	1 1%	114 89%	13 10%	128
2.	0 0%	40 77%	12 23%	52
3.	0 0%	27 63%	16 37%	43
4.	0 0%	32 65%	17 35%	49
5.	1 11%	5 56%	3 33%	9
6. agree completely	10 48%	5 24%	6 29%	21
Total	12	223	67	302

The reason why they would not apply is not clear. But as we see in this diagram many of those who disagreed had another university in mind. Out of those who were not going to choose a university many could anyhow consider applying to Södertörn University.

Question	What university will you choose in the first place?			
What universities have you heard of?	SH	Other	None	Total
SH mentioned first	3 38%	2 25%	3 38%	8
SH mentioned	5 13%	22 58%	11 29%	38
SH not mentioned	6 2%	241 69%	103 29%	350
Total	14	265	117	396

In this diagram we see that if Södertörn University is mentioned first it is likely that they also choose Södertörn University. It is more likely than if they “only” mentioned the university. 69% of those who did not mention Södertörn University at all most likely already made plans about another university.

"Do you think Södertörn University is a good university?" (at a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 is disagree and 6 agree completely) "		
1 disagree	55%	115
2	8%	17
3	12%	25
4	15%	35
5	6%	12
6 agree completely	4%	9
Respondents 209		

If a 6, 5, or 4 are considered as good 27% thinks that Södertörn University is a good university.

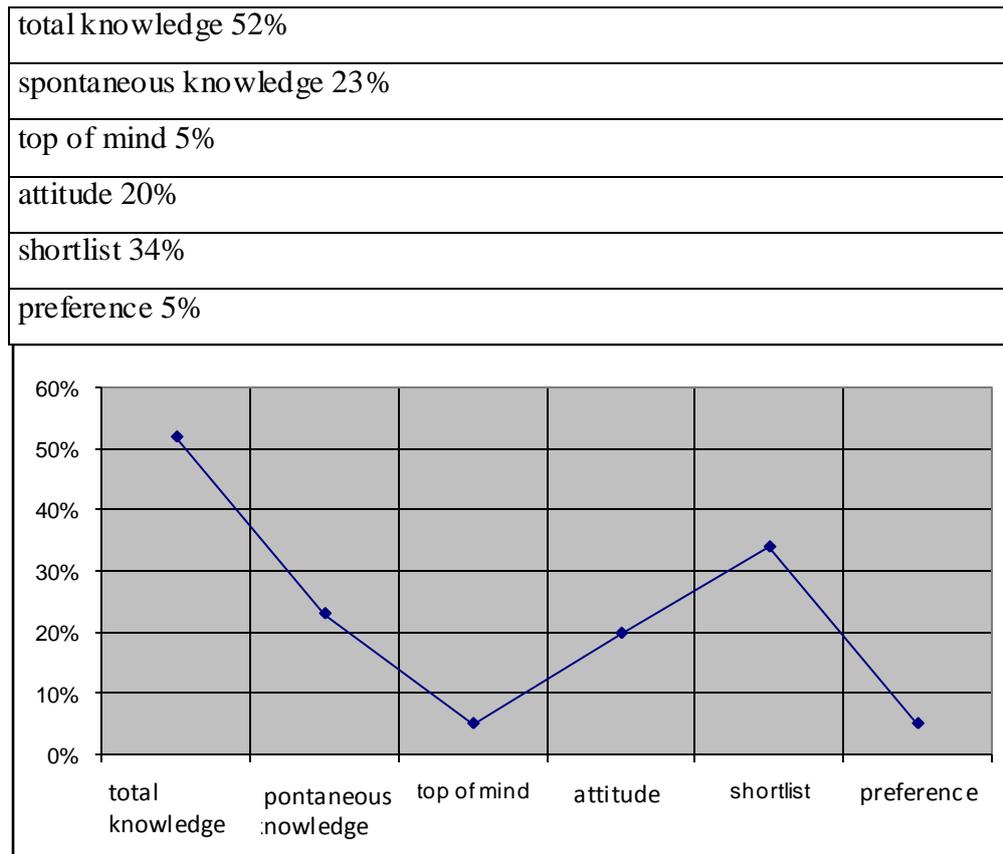
Question	What university will you choose in the first place?			
	SH	Other	None	Total
Where do you live?				
Northern Stockholm County	1 2%	35 74%	11 23%	47
Stockholm municipality	2 3%	49 68%	21 29%	72
Southern Stockholm County	6 9%	43 66%	16 25%	65
Nacka Värmdö	0 0%	9 60%	6 40%	15
Outside Stockholm County	6 3%	129 65%	63 32%	198
Total	15	265	117	397

A total at SACO Fair Stockholm

Total knowledge 38% - including top of mind, mention or can recall the name
Spontaneous knowledge 12% - including top of mind and mentioning the name
Top of mind 2%
Positive attitude 13%
Shortlist 20% - e.g. those who consider applying for Södertörn University
Preference 4% - e.g. those who will choose Södertörn University

Stockholm, Södra Stockholm, Nacka, Värmdö

I have chosen to segment the Stockholm municipality, southern Stockholm, Nacka, Värmdö. Of the 407 respondents 156 persons are remaining. Now we see that awareness of this group is higher, but still it is only every second respondent who can mention us on recall. There are more people willing to get in here than to think that Södertörn University operates well and there are very few who will apply as the first option.



Analysis

Marketing communications create the brand's position and cause action through the communication process. Marketing communications create enduring mental associations in the consumer's mind connected to the brand, called communication effects. All of these must all be at full strength before the consumer takes action. Södertörn University seems to have a weak position according to the results.

I have presented four micro models on consumer responses and summarized it into the cognitive, affective and, behavioral level. We have been taught that all consumers experience five communication effects "in their head" prior to purchase decisions. Communication objectives are selected from the five communication effects. Not all advertisement has to address all five communication effects. Which communication effects or level that should be addressed should be decided from prior research on the target audience? As a matter of fact it is only the first two, brand awareness and brand attitude, which are always objectives.

Now I discuss in what level the potential students of Södertörn University are. The conclusions drawn are based on the empirical study. I use the matrix on the different micro models on consumer response, advice from the English Universities and, marketing communication in a company's life cycle to give recommendations on tactics.

The overall outcome at the cognitive level

	AIDA	Hierarchy of effects	FCB-grid Vaughn 1980, 86	Rossiter-Percy grid - The five communication effects Rossiter, Percy and Donovan 1991, 1998
Cognitive level	Attention	Awareness	Informative	1 Category need 2 Awareness (Brand recognition or Brand recall ⁹⁶)
Think		Knowledge		

⁹⁶ Rossiter et al (2000) p 1076

The cognitive level of the prospective students buying process starts according to the theories at a “think” level. At this stage the consumer should have a category need, gain attention/awareness/information/knowledge in order to achieve brand recognition or recall.

The survey shows that:

Since the visitors to the fair on higher education visited the fair in order to get to know universities better. I assumed that they had a category need. One third of the visitors did not want to apply to a university. On the other hand those who said that they did not want to apply, could consider applying to Södertörn University sometime.

Very few persons, in this rather narrow segment, 2% have Södertörn University “top-of-mind” and another 9% of the respondents can mention Södertörn University on recall even though it is not top-of-mind. It is all together 11,5% that can mention Södertörn University on recall.

43% of those who were not able to mention Södertörn University on recall were able to recognize Södertörn University when the name was mentioned.

Conclusion 1: This means that Södertörn University is relatively unknown. 50% of the visitors of the SACO fair had heard of Södertörn University both on recall and brand recognition.

Only women have Södertörn University “top-of-mind” and more women can mention it on recall.

Those who have Södertörn University “top-of-mind” are from the southern parts of Stockholm. The recall rate is also higher in this area.

Conclusion 2: Awareness is low even in the rather segmented group that consists of young people living in southern Stockholm, who have interest in continuing their studies after high school.

Recommended tactics at the cognitive level

According to the AIDA model which is a linear theory and begins with gaining attention, suggests that Södertörn University should create awareness so that the brand is revealed.

The hierarchy of effects model suggests that the cognitive level concerns the realm of thoughts and that ads provide information and facts. It can be announcements, descriptive copy, classified ads, slogans, jingles, or teaser campaigns. Examples of research approaches related to steps of greatest applicability are information questions, play-back analyses, brand awareness surveys and aided recall.

The FCB-grid suggests that we should make a difference between high and low involvement products. English prospective students seemed to use extensive information in order to make their choice and they also choose an education that lasts for years, which could mean a big difference for them etc. All this implies that higher education is a high-involvement purchase. English students are individuals but most of them wanted to achieve the professional requirements needed and had career considerations. My conclusion is therefore that they could not be reached by an affective strategy. They do not make choices based on ego related impulses. Instead they choose on the basis of their assessed ability in those subjects. They therefore could be reached by an informative strategy and tactics with the same levels as AIDA or the hierarchy-of effects; learn, feel, do.

Rossiter and Percy have identified *five* communication effects that a marketing manager has to consider as communication objectives when planning marketing communications. The two first is at a cognitive level.

1 Category need. All respondents in the survey could mention at least one university. The purpose of their visit to the fair is to know more about higher education. We have to remember that this is an already segmented group of people. English student prospects wanted an education because they need it for their future carrier. It seems to me like the category need is established.

2 Brand awareness. Before students can make their choice they need to identify Södertörn University within the category. Awareness is a necessary condition and awareness is also essential to build brand equity. Rossiter and Percy recommend measuring what kind of brand

awareness the target consumer has. The survey shows that the recall rate of Södertörn University is very low but the recognition rate is higher, but anyhow on a rather low rate. They recommend advertisement, even pure brand awareness advertising, because consumers then think that the brand must be popular, safe or reputable. They also recommend that the ad is unique and that the consumer will be aware of the brand as long as possible.

Rossiter and Percy claim that there is almost no chance for a product to be bought if the name cannot be recalled before or at the time of the purchase and that tactics to reach *brand recall* is good exposure of the Södertörn University. After the first explosion of attention one do not have to use the same media frequency. Tactics to reach and *brand recognition* is associating the category need and the brand name in the same sentence, keeping it short, use repetition, ad personal reference and carry out a bizarre execution, using jingles and put into effect a high media frequency.

Brown at al suggest that students to be have a consumerist approach. They do not use different levels of the buying process. I have instead by using my matrix put the following tactics for the cognitive level. I do agree on getting insights into student/co nsumer choice processes and applying services marketing principles.

The overall outcome at the affective level

	AIDA	Hierarchy of effects	FCB-grid Vaughn 1980, 86	Rossiter-Percy grid - The five communication effects. Rossiter, Percy and Donovan 1991, 1998
Affective level	Interest	Liking	Affective	3 Brand attitude (Informational motivation and transformational motivation ⁹⁷)
Feel	Desire	Preference Conviction		

⁹⁷ Rossiter et al (2000) p 1076

The affective level of the prospective students buying process continues according to the theories at a “feel” level. At this stage the consumer should get interest/liking/brand attitude/desire/ preference/conviction.

The survey shows that 3,5% of the respondents wanted to choose Södertörn University at the first place. Most of the respondents will at this stage not choose Södertörn University as their first option. One third will not apply to any university at all.

Conclusion 1: The preference is low. Very few wanted to choose Södertörn University as their first choice.

One fourth of the respondents could consider applying to Södertörn University and some 30% could maybe be convinced to apply.

Conclusion 2: The potential is huge, there are one third of this segment that could consider applying.

The reason why they would not apply is not clear. But many of those who disagreed had another university in mind. Out of those who were not going to choose a university many could anyhow consider applying to Södertörn University. It is a little odd that six persons that were not able to mention Södertörn University on recall could consider choosing it as their first option. But the majority 241 persons could neither mention it and wanted to choose another university. Interesting to notice is that out of those who did not want to go to university next year or so mostly live outside Stockholm County. The northern Stockholm County has the highest rate of youngsters that want to go to a university but also in the southern Stockholm County.

Conclusion 3: It seems like there is also a potential in those who would not consider choosing a university this year but maybe within the next years.

Conclusion 4: Södertörn University has its strongest position amongst young people in the southern Stockholm and outside Stockholm County.

If a 6, 5, or 4 are considered as good 27% thinks that Södertörn University is a good university and 26% would consider applying to Södertörn University.

Conclusion 5: Södertörn University has more people who can consider applying (81%) than who think that the university is good (56 respondents).

Recommended tactics at the affective level

The hierarchy of effects model suggests that the affective level concerns the realm of emotions. I would recommend that in order to get more information on the brands status rank order of preference for brands, rating scales, image measurements, incl check lists and semantic differentials, and projective techniques should be executed. As I have concluded the survey shows that not many respondents think that Södertörn University is very good. Certainly a change in attitudes and feelings is needed. The hierarchy of effects model recommends ads that change attitudes and feelings, competitive ads, argumentative copy, image ads, and status glamour appeals.

At this point there should be an evaluation of how Södertörn University can fulfill needs. As in the FCB-grid there is also the difference between low and high involvement products. The needs can be fulfilled by different motives. It seems to me that most students to be have what Rossiter and Percy calls informational motives because they seek information to reduce the negative state. But there is not one of a kind student. They have chosen a university from many different motives. Informational motives are, problem removal, problem avoidance, incomplete satisfaction, mixed approach-avoidance and normal depletion. To get a high brand preference a likable advertisement will help.

I claim according to the Rossiter-Percy grid that the choice of university is an informational "relief" decision and not a transformational "reward" purchase. It is a high-risk informational purchase because intention is a necessary response between affective and behavioral level for informational and high involvement decisions. University choice is a high involvement decision because as stated before English student prospects wanted to go to university to achieve the professional requirements. In this choice there is a significant level of perceived risk because of costs of living and post university debt. Rossiter and Percy recommend the following tactics. Have a good emotional portrayal in the beginning of the product life cycle

that is not that important in the later stages. The consumers do not have to like the ad but should agree on points made. The targeted consumer has to find the benefits convincing at a decent level. It can be good to try a comparative approach to the competitors.

Rossiter and Percy have identified *five* communication effects that a marketing manager has to consider as communication objectives when planning marketing communications. The third and is at an affective level.

3 Brand attitude. Brand attitude is defined as the consumer's evaluation of the brand. This survey has not been concentrated on an extensive information research on the attitudes. Anyhow the brand should fulfill consumer needs and I suppose that it does. A university degree is often a professional requirement. For sure many of the respondents were aware of several brands in the higher educational category, consequently they must choose on brand attitude. On top of an overall judgment the consumer can hold one or more specific benefits that support the first general attitude. There are also irrational emotional associations that are not obviously tied to any specific brand benefit beliefs. My recommendation is to conduct research on what the common overall judgment is and which the specific benefits are that supports the general attitude.

At last but not the least in the buying process is the rule of choice. The consumer might have a different choice rule like first consider a certain education and then an overall attitude to the university. The initial or prior brand attitude level of the targeted audience must be determined so that a higher level can be set. More respondents considered applying to Södertörn University than who thought that the university was good. The respondents wanted education in fields that only a few other universities gave. One example is to become a nurse. Södertörn University do not give courses in that field and therefore they would not consider the university but on the other hand if the entrance barrier were to grate in their first choice, they then could consider another education, and then Södertörn University would be one of the options. My conclusion is therefore that if Södertörn University has the educational programs the students want then the university would be considered. Södertörn University also has to communicate this and apply a flexible targeting in the recruitment strategies and include the development of individual subject area prospectuses rather than "one-size fits all" marketing strategy. Especially since English students find three variables the most important,

course, location and reputation. Other variables of importance are the state of regional job market, the cost of living, entrance requirements as a barrier, and financial considerations.

Most English applicants gained information from a variety of sources most often from Internet but also cited the prospectus as being particularly influential during the early stages of the decision-making process. The prospectuses were used to gain a feel for the university and later as a way of making a short list to the universities to visit for an open day. The students use language of consumerist approach to problem solving and at this stage begin extensive information search on the different universities and their merits/demerits.” Many students had entrance requirements as a replacement for reputation. Further, in an effort to make the set of courses and universities more manageable, they tried a risk reduction strategy choosing universities with courses that were their aim but also where they had achievable offers. In the end of the evaluation process reputation had lost its importance. Not many students choose courses because they are perceived to be easy.

A conclusion is therefore, as with the English universities, that Södertörn University needs to target the communications at specific student segments. Institutions have to ensure that their web pages are current. There have to be constant management of the public face of the institution to allow refinement and flexibility of targeted communications. It is also important to build and maintain relationships with applicants through new communications technologies (such as social networking and mobile phone texts).

The overall outcome at the behavioral level

	AIDA	Hierarchy of effects	FCB-grid	Rossiter-Percy grid
			Vaughn 1980, 86	- The five communication effects. Rossiter, Percy and Donovan 1991, 1998
Behavioral level	Action	Purchase	Habitual Satisfaction	4 Brand purchase intention 5 Purchase facilitation ⁹⁸
Do				

The survey has not been applicable on the behavioral level. I will anyhow draw conclusions on purchase intention but not purchase facilitation. Purchase facilitation would be a question for further studies.

Conclusion 1: There are few who will apply to Södertörn university as a first option.

Recommended tactics at the behavioral level

The hierarchy of effects model suggests that the behavioral level concerns the realm of motives. Suggested tactics are ads that stimulate or direct desires, point-of-purchase, deals, last chance offers, price appeals, and testimonials. At the first glance it seems impossible to me to use most of these actions, but it is possible. Point-of-purchase is today www.studera.nu. 99% of the students apply there. It is only courses and programs at university level that are presented there. The universities give last chance offers on those courses that are not filled etc.

There are several ways to get information according to the hierarchy of effects model, market or sales tests, split-run tests, intention to purchase, and projective techniques. As far as I know Södertörn University does not make any of these. A recommendation would be to do so.

Rossiter and Percy have identified *five* communication effects that a marketing manager has to consider as communication objectives when planning marketing communications. The last ones, the 4th and the 5th, are at a behavioral level.

⁹⁸ Rossiter and Percy (2000) p 110

4 Brand purchase intention. Students self-instruction to purchase the brand is today on Internet. Mostly purchase intention is assumed, sometimes generated by letters or phone calls from the university department to the ones that has applied for the course to make sure that they have the information they need to attend the course. In the later stages the English students decision-making cycle when the students had answers from all their universities three new factors influenced the last decision-making process: post-application visit day experience(s), responses from universities and the role of mitigating the fees. The far most important communication that students received from universities was the receipt of the initial offer. Students felt relief and excitement associated with this communication. It often led them to accept this initial offer as their first choice. I agree with Brown at all that suggest that students to be have a consumerist approach. Therefore the added value of delivering good customer service throughout the application process will assist Södertörn University in differentiating the offer from the competitors. One to three exposures are enough to make the customer buy the product.

5 Purchase facilitation. It is defined as consumer's ability to purchase the brand such as availability, ease of payment and the 4P's product, price, place (distribution), and personal selling. At least these factors should not make the purchase difficult to make.

Finally I want to mention advertising in the life cycle of a company. Södertörn University is now twelve years old and has probably reached the growth stage of a life cycle. This means that it has passed its introduction stage and that sales are rapidly rising. The goal is now to maximize market. There are at the moment product extensions like the program for becoming a rhetoric consult that now will have a sister rhetorical consultants with public opinion. Therefore the goal of advertising must be to build awareness but not only awareness but also interest in the mass market. When it comes to sales promotion it is recommended to reduce to take advantage of heavy consumer demand. Also Rossiter thinks that in a growth stage advertising products should be leader or differentiated. They recommend a high level of advertising communications without too much promotion on these products. On the other hand for imitated me-too product advertising communications should be low but use a high level of promotion.

Comments/conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate how Södertörn University may build a strong brand through marketing communications. The paper has discussed each stage of the buying process set by the theories AIDA, the Hierarchy-of-effects, the FCB-grid, and the Rossiter Percy-grid.

I have now asked myself how these theories/models are applicable on the buying and selling process of Södertörn University. The answer is that they are useful. My conclusion is that the models are quit alike and that not much has been changed over time. Changes made are more or less modifications of the AIDA-model. Even the AIDA-model is still accurate and widely used. I have summarized the models to easily work with them. I have presented four micro models on consumer responses and summarized it into the cognitive, affective and, behavioral level. All consumers experience five communication effects prior to purchase decisions. Communication objectives are selected from the five communication effects. I now suggest Södertörn University to use marketing communication strategically e.g. by using the models I have choose to work with in this study. I have used my empirical study on how well known Södertörn University is to set goals on how to build a stronger brand. Because as most companies also NGO:s like Södertörn University wants to build a stronger brand.

Questions are often raised how to build a stronger brand and my conclusion is that it can be done through marketing communications. It is according to me almost impossible to work strategically with strengthening the brand if there are no results to measure and no goals to be reached. When building brand equity, it is advisable to evaluate the different communication options to effectiveness criteria. How effective is a certain communication option towards potential customers through a series of stages the cognitive, affective and behavioral level? With models like the one I present below it is possible to measure the number of potential students who occupy the different levels. With these measurements in place it is possible to set goals like “increase brand awareness from 52% to 62% in the target segment e.g. 18-21 years old students to be living in Stockholm within a year”, instead of less strategical goals like “build a strong brand” The strength of this model is that it shows a package of measures of effects that can be measured.

The results that have been obtained are that I found that the Södertörn University has to work with at all three levels. At the cognitive level they need to become aware of the category need and make sure that the university is positioned as a university. Most important is to raise the brand awareness and make sure that more students to be have the university top-of-mind. Since a total knowledge/ awareness is 52% in Stockholm County this is too low. An increase in this number is fatal in order to raise the number of applicants in the long run. At the affective level they have to increase brand attitude. At the Behavioural level they need to increase brand purchase intention and facilitate purchase. This table is a summary on my recommendations to build a strong brand through marketing communications at each level.

Figure 9 Summary on my recommendations

Goals	Cognitive level	Affective level	Behavioral level
for the Stockholm County segment ⁹⁹	<p>Be aware of the category need. <i>There are more competitors in the category that universities might not recognize like schools that are not universities.</i></p>	<p>Increase brand attitude. <i>The survey shows that brand attitude amongst the fair visitors are 20% positive and this has to be raised by 10% to 30%.</i></p>	<p>Increase brand purchase intention. <i>34% of the same audience has Södertörn University at their shortlist and 5% has it as their preference. If the preference is improved Södertörn University will be more selected. This will be increased if awareness and attitude is raised.</i></p>
	<p>Raise brand awareness. <i>Since a total knowledge/awareness is 52% in Stockholm County and should be increased to 65% in a year.</i></p> <p><i>5% have Södertörn University "top-of-mind" raise this to 7% in a year.</i></p> <p><i>9% of the respondents can mention Södertörn University on recall which is spontaneous knowledge 23%. This should be increased to 30%.</i></p>		<p>Facilitate purchase facilitation. <i>Today 99% of the students to be apply at studera.nu Södertörn University therefore has to work with the course syllabus so that they sound attractive and are easily found.</i></p>

⁹⁹ I have chosen to segment the Stockholm municipality, southern Stockholm, Nacka, Värmdö. From the 407 respondents remaining are 156 persons from Stockholm County.

Reflection on the study and suggestions for future studies

The investigation has actually contributed to Södertörn University. I have used the collected data to make a marketing plan. I have been responsible for the marketing plan. Södertörn University now has worked with awareness and seen a great increase in applications. I think that most brands could use the same method to know how well-known they are and also use the suggested tactics in order to be more well-known, or work on the affective level. Other universities or schools could use the same arena, the Saco fair for higher education, and compare their results to mine.

The study could be made in a different way. Theoretically it would be interesting to use other models of consumer responses too. I am though glad to present the matrix I made on the four micro models on consumer responses. Next step could be to make interviews with students to be to study how they first got to know the name, and what has affected them in order to choose or not to choose the university.

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Appendix

Frågeformulär Rank of Mind.

Kön

Man

Kvinna

Ålder

16

17

18

19

20

“Var bor du?”

Norra Stockholms län

Stockholm stad

Södra Stockholm

Nacka Värmdö

Utanför Stockholmsområdet

”Vilka högskolor och universitet känner du till (spontant)?”

SH nämns först

SH nämns

SH nämns inte

”Känner du till Södertörns högskola?”

Ja

Nej

”Vilken högskola eller universitet kommer du att välja i första hand?”

SH

Annan

Vet ej

”Kan du tänka dig att söka till Södertörns högskola?”

instämmer inte alls

instämmer helt

”Tycker du att Södertörns högskola är en bra högskola?”

instämmer inte alls

instämmer helt

Questionnaire Rank of Mind.

Gender

Male

Female

Age

16

17

18

19

20

"Where do you live?"

Northern Stockholm County

Stockholm municipality

South of Stockholm

County Nacka Värmdö

Outside Stockholm

"What universities have you heard of (spontaneously)?"

SH mentioned first SH mentioned SH not mentioned

"Do you know of Södertörn University?"

Yes

No

"What university will you choose in the first place"?

SH

Other

Do not know

"Have you considered applying for Södertörn University (at a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 is disagree and 6 agree completely.)?"

disagree

agree completely

"Do you think Södertörn University is a good university?"

disagree

agree completely

