Design management methods in private label brand development

Case Stockmann: Cristelle & Co

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Summary

In this thesis I conduct a brand research on Stockmann private label Cristelle & Co through consumer involvement. The theory behind this is design thinking where consumers are integrated into the design process. The aim of this thesis was to find out how the chosen brand is perceived by the consumers now and whether it is consistent with the brand strategy set by Stockmann. My main goal was to find out how the brand image could be improved and how design management could facilitate the designing process of a private label.

Data was collected through semi-structured interview conducted in Sinco-laboratory, which is situated in the premises of University of Lapland and through a questionnaire made in Webropol program. Therefore this thesis mixes both quantitative and qualitative methods. This data is then analyzed through content analysis, creating different themes, which I was then able to make use of when I finally designed the final collection and proposed a new brand image for Cristelle & Co.

When compared together the survey and the interview gave different answers of the current image of Cristelle & Co. Therefore the data proved through the analysis that the brand image of Cristelle & Co was not consistent with the original brand strategy and therefore needed to be changed. Another result was that Sinco-laboratory worked as a ground for conducting research also in the field of clothing design and that it offers further possibilities for clothing research.

Keywords: Design management, private label, clothing design, brand management, design thinking.
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Introduction

This research started in Autumn 2012 when I contacted Stockmann Design Manager Luisa Laine. In my master's thesis I found it important to do research on how design management could be utilized in clothing design and the management of a design process within clothing industry. I have studied design management as my miner study both at my home University and in my exchange schools in France and Switzerland. In my bachelor thesis I concentrated on brand image and visual communication means of corporate clothing. Stockmann Oyj Abp as a corporation is familiar to me through my position there as a sales person.

This research is about developing private label brand image through design management methodology and using design thinking in practise. I focus on Stockmann department store's private label Cristelle & Co and test how design thinking could be integrated into private label design process. Main question of the case study is whether the customer brand image is consistent with the brand image set by the brand itself? The research question is then analysed through theory of design management and branding. The basics of these areas are covered in the theory part of the thesis, focusing on the key aspects relevant to the case study.

How is the research structured? During the theory part I explain how I included the theory into the questionnaire and interview, and what is the logic and ideology behind this research. At the end of the research, after conducting the questionnaire and interview, I open the data with content analysis analyzing the brand. In the conclusion I present the new image of Cristelle & co, which is built according to the customer feedback and through my own reasoning as a designer. I design a collection to test whether the method works as a tool to facilitate the design process of a fashion designer. This can be found in the appendix. The theory part advances from the big picture, design management, to the small and practical part of service design.

The subject is current as private labels, also known as house brands or no-name brands, are common within department stores and other retailers. They create extra value both in economic value creation and in marketing and image value. (Raatikainen 2008, 94-95) The area of design management is finally finding its place in organizational strategy

development and management in Finland and is widely accepted as an important asset for a functioning company, especially for one, which is planning to expand globally. In resent years Finnish corporations after another have started to invest in their design processes and have taken design as their driving factor when it comes to strategy and management. Design is an important tool to boost sales and control the whole management of the company. (Cheng, Keinänen & Salo 2012, 26-28)

1. Basis of Research

1.1. Aim and focus of thesis

This master thesis is done in cooperation with Stockmann focusing on their private label brand portfolios, and especially ladies brand portfolios. The aim of this thesis is to test a method to improve the design management of these portfolios. Research part focuses on analyzing the current structure and quality of one chosen brand, Cristelle & Co. Aim for the thesis is to improve the brand image through survey and semi-structured interview conducted in Sinco laboratory and find out through the data how the brand could be channelled to a more profit oriented direction.

As there are currently four different ladies brands in Stockmann's private label portfolio: ENY, NOOM, Global Essentials and Cristelle&Co, I decided to pick one of these brands to conduct a deeper analysis on its product portfolio and brand structure. According to Luisa Laine, the design manager in Stockmann's fashion department, Cristelle & Co is currently set to be the most innovative and trendiest of ladies' portfolios and is produced with the smallest sizing. However it is not currently answering the need of its target customer, women aged 20-30 rather is more popular amongst women aged 34-55 and 55+, which are Stockmann's two biggest age groups covering 50% of sales. (Information from Luisa laine 2012) Therefore the brand is experiencing problems finding loyal customers and trust within Stockmann consumers. My aim in this research is to produce data on the customer aspect of Cristelle & Co, which could work as a base to upgrade the image of the brand and its product portfolio.

This research takes its mindset from design management. Data, which I analyze in this research, is collected through semi-structured interview and survey. I apply design

management and brand management when thinking about the questionnaire and interview, to construct it so that it is useful for the design process in Stockmann, but also to fully understand how design management can be a benefit to the firm in every way, especially in clothing industry.

1.2. Research Questions

Main question of the case study is whether the customer brand image is consistent with the brand image originally set by the company? To find this out I include design thinking to clothing design and test a service design method to conduct product and brand development in clothing industry. Design management literature does not include many examples on how its methodology should be utilized in clothing design and to clothing industry in general. What is the connection of design management in clothing design and what tools does it provide for a designer of a private label to design customer-oriented collection? This research tests one method of how design management could be integrated in clothing design. When it comes to design management one of the most important tools are trends and customer aspect. Research aims to help targeting the private brand to the right customer group. The method used in the research gives a tool for a designer to design a customer-oriented collection; in the last chapter, I as a designer test how successful the tool is by designing a new collection for Cristelle & Co.

Sub questions for this research include e.g. the brand aspect of design management: how can the brand value of a private brand be increased? How can the private brand be targeted to the right customer group, and at the same time recruit new customers for the brand? Brand theory works as a base for forming the questions for the survey and semi-structured interview. The brand value from a customer aspect in this case emphasises on creating loyalty and customer satisfaction within Stockmann customers, concerning Stockmann's private brands.

1.3. Key terms and Concepts

The starting point for this research came from design management. From design management point of view the process is an important part of design and it should be the core value in any corporation and be seen in each function of the company. This research

proves how focusing on design is beneficial to a company and brand. Another term used in this research, which is often mixed with design management, is *design thinking*. Design thinking is above all a human-centred innovation process that seeks to bring together consumers, designers, and businesspeople in an integrative process. (Lockwood 2010, x) Design thinking provides a mindset for the case study on how to integrate customers to Cristelle & Co design process. This brings the research to service design, which is the tool to test how design thinking could be integrated into concept development of a private label in practice. Thesis uses design thinking in the practical part of the research. "Businesses need to be ambidextrous, and to think from both sides. All too often, it seems, businesses either excel at the creative side, in which case innovations usually fail, or they excel at the analysis side, which generally leads to only incremental innovation or, more likely, stagnation. The challenges of today's economy require much more." (Lockwood 2010, ix)

Private label is seen in this research as a brand, not just a label without the soul of a brand and the structure of a brand. Aim is to find out how to create customer loyalty for the brand Cristelle & Co. Therefore it needs to be defined, how the customer sees the private label as a brand. Which kind of emotions does it stir up? As in this research the focus brand Cristelle & Co is looked as a brand, therefore it is needed to fully comprehend the essence of a brand structure and the value it adds to a product. Brand management literature works as a base for the questionnaire and the interview.

Clothing/Fashion design is presented in the research from a commercial point of view. Fashion design brings out the designer's point of view and the beginning of the designing process where the inputs of a customer should be considered according to design thinking.

1.3. Stockmann Oyj Abp

Stockmann Oyj Abp is a Finnish company founded in 1862 by Gearg Franz Stockmann a German born businessman. Stockmann operates in two divisions: firstly the Department Store Division and secondly on the Fashion Chain Division. There are 16 department stores and over 700 other divisions in sixteen countries. (Vuosikertomus Stockmann 2012, 5) Stockmann's department store's retailing business areas operate under the Stockmann, Hobby Hall and Academic Bookstore brands. Fashion division holds now Lindex, which

runs an online store in the whole EU area and Norway. Seppälä covers Russia and some Baltic countries and its online store covers the whole Finland. Zara was left from the Fashion store division in 2012. (Stockmann www-pages" About" 13.3.2013)

This research focuses on Stockmann Department Store Division and especially on its private label portfolio. Stockmann's private labels consist of ladies' brand portfolio with ENY, NOOM, Cristelle & Co, Global, Global Essentials producing accessories. One Way youth sector holds Zoey m. teenage girls and STC DENIM for teenage boys. Men's department includes Cap Horn and Bodyguard and children's sector Global Girl, Cube Co and Bogi for babies. Private labels are used in home furnishing departments in Stockmann as well as in their food sector. (Infromation Luisa Laine, Stockmann 2012)

Stockmann focuses on high customer satisfaction by emphasizing on their tangible and intangible services such as sale force and Internet services such as online store. The total sum of these benefits is high customer satisfaction and loyalty. Competitive pricing, reliable quality and good customer service are vital elements in achieving these goals. Stockmann has a loyal customer program to which I also refer to in this research. When joining the loyal customer program the customers get access to different offers, which change each month. Loyal customers receive the loyal-customer magazine once a month that includes the current offers of the month. Loyal-customer program has three levels in Stockmann depending on the amount of annual purchases of the customer. (Stockmann www-pages "kanta-asiakkuus", 2.10.2013)

Stockmann's strategy is to expand internationally. Russian division is doing well since the department store division turnover (€) grew 13,1 percent in 2013 and in total 8,2 percent when including Bestseller-franchising stores, which were shut down at the end of year 2012. In 2012 Stockmann's overseas turnover exceeded domestic turnover. Stockmann group's whole turnover in 2012 grew 5,6 percent to 2,12 milliard Euros. (Taloussanomat www-pages "Stockmann kasvoi joulukuussa vahvimmin venäjällä", 13.3.2013) In the future Russian division is expected to grow within their economic growth, this creates also a challenge for the design division also taking into consideration the Russian consumers and their needs.

During economic downturn the need to bring extra value for customers becomes increasingly crucial for Stockmann. This research is one possibility to improve their private label and give ideas on how to improve also the other private labels, and bring profit to the company.

As the research objective is to improve the design it is also important to understand Stockmann strategy. "Designers are sometimes tempted to confound the strategic character of certain design projects with the conviction that they can be strategists of the firm. In order to make the strategy visible, which is the objective of their profession, they need to know the strategy in depth. This often results in the firm going back to renewed consciousness of its fundamental values. Designers help the firm to conceptualize these values and, therefore, work in the company's ideation process. But that does not mean they are able to take a leadership role in the company." (Mozota 2003, 51)

Is there Design management integration in Stockmann already? According to Borja de Mozota firms differ in their design management policies according to their position on four key variables: identification of design responsibility, design experience, strategic positioning, and design integration: Design responsibility requires a person in a company who is responsible for design, as well as responsible for implementing design training programs (Press, 1995; Mozota 2003, 50) Stockmann sports now a design manager Luisa Laine. They also have in-house designers for their private labels and in-house stylists, responsible of the visual image in Stockmann. Stockmann does cooperation with Aalto University, a Finnish School of Arts, Design and Architecture. (Information; Luisa Laine 2012) In the private label department there are yearly projects involving a master's student conducting research. Investing in research builds future and improves future structures. (Mozota 2002; Mozota 2003, 50)

1.4. Research Methods

This research includes semi-structured interview to collect qualitative research data and a survey to measure the quantitative aspect of the case study. In this research I try to find out whether the results from quantitative and qualitative methods differ from one another. Is it always best to have quantitative measures, or is qualitative equal in significance? Qualitative research focuses on the development and answering of questions, looks at

natural settings (not manipulated), and uses descriptive and grouping formats to answer the research questions. Qualitative research investigates the phenomenon or experience and analyzes data by grouping similar things coming based on the data and placing it in the context of the culture and situation. Quantitative research is used to test the hypothesis and to examine causes and effects. Researchers using quantitative design collect data with experiments or surveys and then analyze the data using statistics. (Zaccagnini Flynn &Foster 2009, 119) In this research the method chosen for the analysis of the data collected in the survey and semi-structured interview is content analysis where the data is organized within themes. The target of the analysis is the transcribed material conducted in the interview. The transcribed material will be divided into themes and topics presented in the theory of the thesis.

Theory influences the choice of the research method. Functionalists and conflict theorists with macro perspective tend to use quantitative method while symbolic interactionists with a micro perspective tend to use qualitative methods. This research is focusing mostly on the micro perspective, trying to focus on the practice of a private label and its management and later trying to develop the concept through the methods mentioned. In deductive, quantitative research, theory plays a big role at the beginning of research and the theory may be revised at the end based on the findings while in inductive, qualitative research, it plays a role after the data is collected and the research makes an attempt to make sense of the data collected. (Kawamura 2011, 24) Even if this research includes both qualitative and quantitative research theory is revised in the beginning of the research process as the qualitative data, which is the interview in this case, is analyzed with content analysis. The data is later divided under different themes, some of which are already set before the data collecting is conducted. Semi structured interview and the survey are constructed following a cognitive theme map, which is theory based, taking influence from design management, branding, concept management and fashion design.

As this research mixes both quantitative and qualitative methodology to answer the research question and test the hypothesis, then this can be called as mixed method or combination method. The concept is that by using both it helps to understand the questions as well as test hypotheses developed. Dillon and Wals (2006) discuss the importance of understanding the underpinning of research methodology when "mixing" research methods. When selecting the type of research they discuss factors over which we have no

control, factors over which we have some control, and a range of beliefs and preferences that reduce our choices in designing, conducting and reporting research. (Dillon & Wals 2006, 549) The objective is to understand the ontological (of what), epistemological (the how) and axiological (the why) foundations of methodology to be used. (Zaccagnini Flynn &Foster 2009, 121) In this research key role is on ontology, which is *what* is investigated: for example the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of the customer. What attitudes do they have when they go to the store, which brands they choose and for what reason? How does the shop space influence their shopping behaviour? What behaviours do customers have when they enter a retail store, in what direction do they walk, and what items do they see? (Zaccagnini Flynn &Foster 2009, 121) Difference, which is relevant in this case study, between qualitative and quantitative research is that qualitative is contextualised: it takes into account the cultural, social, institutional, temporal, and personal or interpersonal characteristics of the context in which the data is collected. (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets 2013, 5)

The Semi-structured interview is conducted in Sinco laboratory, which is based at the university of Lapland. Sinco is a service prototyping laboratory. Sinco represents a holistic hands-on approach to service design and user-experience-driven innovation activities. In this research Sinco is tested as a ground to conduct fashion research. (Sinco www-pages, 5.11.2013) There are 7 interviews, each of them are videotaped. Interviews are transcribed based on the videotapes filmed during the Sinco interview. In this interview the transcription is not as exact as it could be, as this is not necessary for the content of this research analysis. The forms or the emphasis of the dialogue does not give any extra input for the data; therefore the transcribed material follows the accurate speech of the interviewee, but does not include all the symbols, which could be used in transcribing. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, 138-141). The transcripted material is in researcher's possession.

The transcribed material is then analysed with content analysis that was originally developed to interpret written and spoken texts. Qualitative content analysis is a method used to describe the meaning of qualitative material in a systematic way. This is done by assigning successive parts of research material to the categories of the chosen coding frame. This frame is at the heart of qualitative content analysis (QCA), and it covers all those meanings that feature in the description and interpretation of the research material.

(Schreier 2012, 1) Basically the aim of QCA is to systematically describe the meaning of the material. However QCA can help to describe the material only in certain respects that the researcher has to specify. QCA does not allow describing the full meaning of the material in each and every respect. In content analysis the research question specifies the angle from which the data is examined. Focusing on selected aspects of the material is what distinguishes QCA from many other qualitative methods for data analysis. However qualitative research tends to produce a lot of data and content analysis helps to focus on the key aspects relevant to the research. (Schreier 2012, 2)

Some differences between quantitative and qualitative content analysis are that in qualitative content analysis the coding frame can be regarded as valid to the extent that the research categories adequately represent the concepts of the research question, and to achieve this the frame has to be adapted to fit the research material. (Schreier 2012, 7) The categories of the coding frame will usually be at a higher level of abstraction than the more concrete information in the research material.

This research uses both concept-driven way and data-driven way in the analysis. The data is analyzed by combining these two strategies. Concept driven is a deductive strategy for building coding frame, making use of things that the researcher already knows, without even looking at the data. This knowledge can come from different sources: from theory, from previous research, from everyday experience, or from logic. (Schreier 2012, 84-85) Data driven way of building coding frame is to do so inductively, creating categories and subcategories based on data. In QCA, typically, part of the coding frame will be data-driven. (Schreier 2012, 87) In this research the data is organized according to the themes after transcription. Usually the categories or themes, as I refer to the topics in this research, are formed from the data by searching the text for its answers or common or separating aspects of the text. Especially in a theme-based interview the theme system is an easy option as usually the same themes are coming up in each interview, as was also the case here. But it is also possible to add new themes to the table if this is seen necessary. (Schreier 2012, 87) Sometimes new topics come up from the interviewees. In this research the themes are more or less the same that were used as the basis of the questionnaire and the interview.

In the analysis part of the research report the themes are usually presented by using quotation, not whole tables or interviews. The quotations need to be connected to the theory of the research. In this research I set the themes by topics such as colour, pattern, brand etc. The quotations and the researcher's comments are found underneath these topics. At the end of each chapter there is a summary of the content of each theme. Using quotations for the outcome the researcher demonstrates the statements of the analysis part. This works as a proof for the reader that the researcher uses data upon which he or she bases his claim on. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka. 2006. KvaliMOTV Internet)

1.5. Position of Researcher

With the researchers position is meant the researchers subject relation to the research problem, data and the methods used in the research. The researcher can form a special connection to the research data through personal motives, qualities and cultural and social backgrounds and roles. Knowledge interest, unconscious motives and ideologies can influence the building of the researcher's positioning. Positioning can also be a conscious choice, when the researcher wants to rely on certain ideologies and theories that influence the basis of forming the information. Depending on the research topic and the dilemma the research positioning can become more relevant than in the other. The position can influence significantly on how the researcher interprets the data and understands the meanings and what kind of information the researcher generates. Researcher's position can also influence the research ethics. Therefore it is important to acknowledge the positioning of the researcher in relation to the research data and information. As this research is formed by a relevant part of analysis of the data by the researcher it is important in this context to go through the relevant aspects from which basis the researcher is doing the analysis and of which knowledge base. It is not insignificant in this research, as the researcher has a strong connection to the topic in hand. (KvalimOTV www-pages, Saarinen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006) Marketing has a view of new development that is shaped by problem solving; design professionals have an understanding of an iterative design process that involves exploring possibilities and being open to serendipity and surprise. (Stickdorn & Schneider, 50-51)

Paco Underhill writes about the science of shopping, the benefits of an anthropological way of conducting research on consumer behaviour, and the psychological aspect of this

method. In their research cases they first hired graduate environmental psychology students, but they found later that they were unsuited to the work. More often than not, they came to the job burdened with newly learned textbook theories they wished to prove or disprove. As a result, they did not possess the patience necessary to watch many shoppers at great length to see what they actually do. Creative people, however - playwrights, artists, actors, novelists- have proven to be perfect for this work, says Underhill. They have no theories to uphold or demolish, just open minds and boundless curiosity about what people do and how and why they do it. They are dispassionate yet avid observers with no agenda except for wanting to accurately document how human behaviour plays out in the retail arena. (Underhill 2012, 6) The description of creative people fits also for clothing designers from my point of view. Through my own experience while working with other designers and clothing designers I agree with Underhill's opinion on creative people. In this research I try to see the case study through open eyes, focusing on the matter in fact and not just the theory. For Stockmann this brings a different point of view than what they would get from a marketing student or other economic background. This is one aspect that makes this research different. This research is focusing on having an open minded, creative and imaginative premise.

1.6. Existing Research

The role of design in company success is proven by different research projects and in literature. Latest research in Finland includes for example design ROI measurable Design-report, a project where the objective was to find out a tool to measure the future profit when investing on design, either inside the company or by hiring an outside design agency. This project also worked as an inspiration for this research giving the idea to test a method to improve the design process of a private brand. (Cheng, Keinänen & Salo 2012)

Johanna Ahopelto Design management as a strategic instrument (Acta Wasaensia 2002) a study on design management concept on the factors of product, environment and communication, and how these factors are understood in firms. The purpose of her study was to explain the meaning, content, nature and usability of design management as a strategic instrument. The first objective was to study strategic thinking models in firms in Vaasa and Kuopio provinces in relation to Porter's competition model. (Ahopelto 2002)

One research on design is an article by Borja de Mozota called four powers of design, which concentrates on finding out a tool to measure the value of design. However research in the field of private labels in clothing design are practically non-existing. However private labels in dairy products are common, starting from Master's thesis level to published books and so-forth. Furthermore in research combining design management to clothing industry seems to be unique for this research as the literature of design management is mainly focused on industrial design and graphic design.

2. Design Management

2.1. Fundamentals of Design Management

Firstly when talking about design management it is important to define what exactly is design? According to Brigitte Borja de Mozota design is an activity involving a wide spectrum of professions in which products, services, graphics, interiors, and architecture all take part. (Mozota 2003, 3) Kathryn Best defines design as people-centred, problem solving process. To design (verb) is to plan, to create or to devise. It is a process, a practice and a way of thinking. A design (noun) has form and function; it is the outcome of the process of designing. (Best 2010, 12)

The term 'management' refers to the people and processes involved in managing, organizing, controlling and administering a business. Frequently the world of business and management, focused on financial rewards and profit-making incentives, is at odds with the people-centred, problem solving process of design. Therefore design should be sheltered form traditional management controls and incentives. However design also needs the protection of efficient management framework. (Best 2010, 3) When talking about design as a management instrument, it is usually referred to as 'design management' Design management includes all activities that ensure that the visual identity of a brand is put to effective use in the achievement of the goals set out for the brand. The management of design is becoming increasingly important because brands are ever expanding (Internet, experience communication). In all these kinds of products and applications design management ensures that the brand remains recognisable. Design management seeks to maximize the potential of design to benefit the corporation. It can fulfil a meaningful role

in transformation processes such as fusion, integration and repositioning, as in this case where the private label brand image is evaluated and transformed. (Riezebos 2003, 128)

Design management is the implementation of design as a formal program of activity within a corporation by communicating the relevance of design to long-term corporate goals and coordinating design resources at all levels of corporate activity to achieve the objectives of the corporation. (Mozota 2003, 71) As a management tool design can be implemented in the identity process of a corporation, which is the basis for finding out a solution for the research question fixed for this research in hand. Helping to define the company, or in this case the brand, for itself, its customers, and its investors. It differentiates a firm from its competitors and is at the heart of the firm's success. Design provides key identifier for the company to the public. This brings out the great necessity for design managers to take proactive positions in design process management. (Anders 2000, Mozota 2003, 17). The design process is similar to the processes used by management in new product development and the innovation process. In this research I test whether Sinco could work as a tool also for a design manager to manage the process of design, how it could be utilized in the development of a brand and the design of products, which are in this case mostly garments and accessories. Design process first begins with a brief that defines the nature of the problem to solve. In this research it is the question of what is the brand image of Cristelle & Co according to the customer? It ends with a result- a product, packaging, and service- in answer to the brief, which in this case is a collection. (Mozota 2003, 18) The result of the analysis is the answer to this researches' main research question. (Mozota 2003, 79)

What does a design manager do? Design managers operate between different departments of the company from management, marketing, publicity, graphic design, product design and sometimes service development. Their task is to make sure that these different departments work on a coherent identity of the company making sure the expressed view is consistent with the brand image of the company. (Dorst 2006, 157) There has been continual search for a common understanding of the values of design; is there such a thing? Can it be solely the province of creative people to agree on value system for design? However design is an important part of variety of business cultures that can be lead to positive strategic benefits for companies. For design values to be commercially realised, a framework of organisation and planning is necessary. Design managers (or employees who

have traditionally taken on this role) have generally assumed the role of intermediary, to organise the design process and manage relationships between designers and other managers. In this research the case study conducted in Sinco laboratory tests how it could work as a method to improve design and help a design manager to create a coherent image. "Business increasingly recognize the power of design to provide significant benefits, business executives increasingly are asking for metrics to evaluate the performance of design." (Lockwood 2008, 3) Since the business environment has changed, design has become more involved with the goals of other business functions, playing a more significant part in the company's strategy. (Jerrard & Hands 2008, 3)

2.5. Design thinking

A concept closely related to design management and a key source to this research is design thinking. Thomas Lockwood in the book Design Thinking (a collection of articles) explains design thinking as a human-centred innovation process that emphasizes observation, collaboration, fast learning, visualization of ideas, rapid concept prototyping and concurrent business analysis, which ultimately influences innovation and business strategy. However most importantly design thinking involves consumers, designers, and business. Most of these elements are represented in the case study of this research. Sinco laboratory works as a research ground for testing whether the space could work as a mean to involve customers in the brand creation process and how the laboratory could work as a base to bring together designers and consumers. After the data is analyzed I finally evaluate whether Sinco could be used in integrating design thinking into fashion and private label construction to design or improve a brand concept. Another relevant issue is what does it give businesswise and for designers in their creative process.

According to Lockwood design thinking is generally referred to as applying a designer's sensibility and methods to problem solving, no matter what the problem is. In this research I work as a test designer and try to find out how I could make use of this tool by trying to design a collection based on the research data and the final analysis. The concept of design thinking will be tried out in Sinco laboratory, which is a technology based future aspect searching method. Questionnaire is the traditional, safer option to find out the customer needs and wants. The aim of the research was to find out new information and new means to develop private label concept. Sinco laboratory has never before been tested as a tool for

clothing design. Lockwood separates design thinking from design management by saying that design thinking is primarily an innovation process. Design management is the ongoing management and leadership of design organizations, processes, and designed outputs-products, services, communications, environments, and interactions. Design management and leadership lie in the area of integrating design into business and in continuous development and improvement, whereas design thinking is more interested in front-end innovation and radical improvements. Why are both of these aspects then added to this research? Design Thinking provides a mindset for the practical part of the research and an inspiration for the tool, which could be used in the design or the brand development process. Design management however is presented in this research because it worked as a base for the idea and the theory of the research, building a coherent design image and managing design of a private label.

2.2. Design Management in Clothing Industry

When trying to define what design is in clothing Tracy Jennings refers to it being like the golden ratio, where the elements and principles of design are guidelines that are referenced in many principles, including architecture, art, visual merchandising, interior design, and fashion design. The elements of design are the raw components to every design. However when it comes to fashion design key elements are line, colour, shape, texture, and pattern upon which fashion styling can be built. The boundaries for garment design lie on the style lines, seaming, and detailing that partition areas within a garment. The placement, spacing, and direction of a line can draw the eye to, across or around a given area; thus, it can create visual illusions that can make a body appear shorter, taller, slimmer, or wider. (Jennings 2011, 28) The case study utilizes the fashion elements of the design in the analysis where some of the boundaries for garments are set to be the themes in the content analysis. This helps testing the method, which could help a clothing designer to make use of the customer interviews in the design process.

What does a product mean to the customer? Buying a garment is an emotional process. Therefore emotions are an important tool for a designer to be able to design clothing. The theory behind is that emotions brought on visually are stored hierarchically in the consumer's memory. The memory works then like a chain reaction, beginning with a

visual image of the product's attributes, which leads to a sequence of links with the consumer's concept of self and his perceptions of the product's benefits. Put simply, products are brought for what they mean to the consumer. (Peter & Olson, 1987; Olson, 1988; Mozota 2003, 87) Therefore it is important to support the customer participation in the design process.

Design differentiation through branding could for example start when a company launches a new brand. This brings an opportunity for a company to suffuse design within its functions. If the brand is well developed and persuasive, it instils loyalty and commands a premium among consumers. Design is crucial to achieving coherence: it brings together the diverse elements of performance, product and service messages, marketing and support communications, employee behaviour and appearance, and the spaces that represent a company and its activities-both digital and physical. Differentiation through brand development and positioning is not just about graphic identity and visual image. The launch of a brand is the first reason given by managers for design integration in a company (Borja de Mozota 2000). The design profession has grown side by side with brand development, particularly within the field of package design. (Mozota 2003, 97)

2.3. Brand management

Brand management is relevant to this research as it is used as a base for the questionnaire of Cristelle & Co brand image. The case private label is considered as a brand and therefore it is relevant to go through the fundamentals of a brand and different elements related to brand structure in general when it comes to product design and areas related to clothing brands. The goal of the brand theory of this research is to find out the current brand value to the customer and how Cristelle & Co could be positioned as a brand.

What is brand? A brand is a set of perceptions that are driven both by communications and experiences. Brand has different functions. First of all to create value for consumers by informing them about the products' attributes and to create value for the company by differentiating the product and making tangible the intangible. (Mozota 2003, 98) Brand management is the management of perceptions. In building brand value perceptions are more important than reality. Nigel Hollis claims in his book The Global Brand that only a

few people in business really understand what a brand is. According to him it is not the same as business. A brand is not the same as a trademark or corporate identity. He quotes a U.K. brand-planning guru, Paul Feldwick " A brand is simply a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer." Which means that a brand only exists in the minds of a customer. However Hollis ads to the definition the idea that this collection of perceptions must somehow make the associated product or service more salient, more interesting, or more compelling than it would be otherwise. (Hollis 2010, 9)

The very basic consumer benefit a brand provides is replicability of simple satisfaction of a functional need, the solving of a problem. (Elliott & Percy 2007, 4) A strong brand is not the same as a business or trademark. A brand - global or local - derives its value from creating a strong relationship with consumers. Ideas and associations in people's minds determine the strength of that relationship. For that reason, marketers must use every available "touch point"- that is, every available point of contact between a brand and a consumer- to reinforce relevant, differentiating, and motivating perceptions about their brands. (Hollis 2010, 7)

Image is a separate term from brand, however in some contexts they are used together. Image is what develops in the minds of the consumers through brand communication such as marketing, advertising etc. (Fisher 2010, xiv) English term "brand image" emphasises on the term image. Rope & Mether see image as an essential part of brand image, according to the translation from the English word to Finnish language. In Finnish language there is no straight translation for the word "brand". Working on the brand image and brand building is a consistent work which aims to build the brand a certain content for the image which includes the criteria and qualities to enable to construct an appealing brand image. This brings us to the concept "image marketing". Which is in charge of constructing a consistent image of the brand. However brand marketing and image marketing are not synonyms. Image marketing has to be taken into consideration in all the marketing functions. Brand marketing or brand construction should be the core process through which a company is able to reach the set brand status in the markets. (Rope & Mether 2001, 167-170) Brand image is at the core of building brand equity. Loyalty to brand is achieved as consumers become increasingly aware of the brand and form positive emotional ties to it. When this occurs, there is added value for the brand beyond the functional characteristics of the product. This is termed brand equity. Brand equity,

because it represents increased value, offers the seller the opportunity to increase profit. This is where brand image comes in. It is a reflection of what people think, feel, and say when they see or hear a brand name. It is developed from consumers' interpretation of product attributes and benefits, usage conditions and situations, consumer base, and marketer characteristics. Brand image is both an objective and emotional response. Another term I use in this research concerning brand is product position, this especially in the question of where the consumers position Cristelle & Co brand compared to other brands on the market. Brand image is what positions the product. Product position refers to the position, either positive or negative that a product holds within the mind of the consumer. Product position includes a product's position relative to other similar offerings, or in this case, competitors. (Kemp-Gatterson & Stewart 2009, 315-317)

Building a strong brand, according to Timo Rope and Jari Mether, having fame and a good reputation in the markets, requires a name with which the brand can set itself apart from other competitors. There are two terms, which are usually connected to brand: reputation and image. However these two terms are intertwined in a way that with working on the image of a brand their can be created a certain brand status, which means that a certain matter e.g. a company is known in the markets. Image as a separate term is dependent on the individual point of view. Building an image is a corporations' objective to influence the individuals' perception of the brand, and by doing this influence their shopping behaviour. (Rope & Mether 2001, 167-170) In this research Cristelle & Co name, was not in the main focus of the research, but was not hidden either, it was posted next to the marketing material in the interview, and it was associated to the target group with questions such as what is Cristelle as a person like? Describe what she does in her free time etc.

Brand as a strategy is based on two parameters: differentiation and added value. With differentiation a company tries to distinguish its product from that of the competition. This implies that the motive of a brand strategy has a competitive character, to give a competitive advantage. Added value refers to the fact that a branded article has more value for consumers than the "bare" product. In order to create such an added value, the brand must be meaningful for consumers. (Riezebos 2003, 18)

Brand usually positions itself, its products and services, with two dimensions: relative price and intrinsic dimension (that which the brand has to offer the consumer, either in

material or immaterial terms). Brands are usually either Low-cost, premium or prestige strategy, where private labels usually situate in the low-cost section. The experience of the brand identity experienced by consumers is in the core of the case study in this research; what is the first impression and experience of the brand? This I try to find out by adding simple evaluation question in the questionnaire where the consumers have to estimate a price of the products. This same type of question is included also in the interviews. The experience of the brand identity is also briefly called the image that consumers have of the brand. The conclusion is therefore that a certain discrepancy can exist between brand identity and brand image. (Riezebos 2003, 64)

Semantic differential is used in the questionnaire to find out how the consumer sees the value of the brand. According to Riezebos, there are three components of brand images: content, favourability and strength (Keller 1993). These components are related to the results that may be obtained in the measurement of images through the use of semantic differentials (Osgood et al. 1957). In the application of this measurement technique, consumers must evaluate a brand on different bipolar scales such as low quality vs. high quality and old-fashioned vs. modern. Every scale consists of five unnumbered option in the questionnaire and in the interview either or. In the processing of the results, the positions that are the furthest to the left usually get a negative value, the middle position gets zero and the positions that are the furthest to the right are assigned positive values. Basis of this result can be determined the contents of a brand image and the favourability (a feeling -negative vs. positive) and the strength, the extent to which the association is experienced as negative or positive. The content of a brand image refers to the associations a brand name may invoke. (Riezebos 2003, 64-65) This method is also used in the case study of this research. The scale is put into the questionnaire to measure the brand image of Cristelle & Co. Marketing communication can be helpful in conveying the differentiation to consumers, whereby the turnover of the branded article will increase and the payback period of the innovation can be shortened significantly. Marketing communication is therefore essential for material differentiation. (Riezebos 2003, 54) Marketing communication is also an essential part of questionnaire and interview in this research.

As the brand in this case study is a private label, which usually represents a low-cost strategy, it is necessary to go through some key factors of this brand strategy. Riezebos argues that in a low-cost strategy, there is usually no budget available for marketing

communication and differentiation is therefore not recommended. According to Riezebos it is better to tune the intrinsic attributes of the branded article to those of successful branded articles that are based on a premium or a prestige strategy. In this case a low-cost strategy therefore usually utilises the opposite of differentiation: identification. In identification, a branded article is tuned to another, successful and more highly market-positioned branded article. This other branded article can come from the "same stable", as Riezebos puts it, but it can also be successful branded article of a competitor. Differentiation is therefore dependent on the position that a branded article occupies on the price dimension; a high price goes together with differentiation and a low price demands identification. Therefore according to Riezebos identification is not possible when there is no branded article positioned higher in the market with which to identify. In other words, a discount brand will have little success if this brand does not have a reference point at a higher level. If the thoughts of Riezebos would then be mirrored to this case study, there should be identified a brand that resembles the private label of Cristelle & Co, therefore I included a question in the research for the customer to identify the private brand with another retail brand from both a higher price range and a lower price range. If the associations of the private brand are connected to the higher price range brands, then according to Riezebos' theory the private brand in question follows this strategy. In the interview I first gave an open-ended question which competitor the interviewees thought the brand resembles and later gave them options to choose from, if they were not able to identify it with any other brand in the clothing market. (Riezebos 2003, 55)

Ko Floor in his book is focusing on the branding elements of a store, which is related to this research, as the store design is present in the interview, on how the private label in question, Cristelle & Co is presented inside Stockmann. (Appendix 1) According to Floor the store design of a retail brand is in some ways comparable with the packaging of a manufacturer brand. It is, in some extent, the packaging of the merchandise offer of the retail company. The objectives are the same with the store design as with the packaging. The most important objectives of store design are to communicate the positioning and personality, add value to the merchandise and achieve efficiency and effectiveness. (Floor 2006, 286) As the store design is a form of communication, so it should be aligned with the retail brand. Every design tells the customer a story. In the store the customer can see, feel, hear, smell and sometimes also taste the retail brand. Positioning and brand personality in particular can be expressed well through the store design. The store design must confirm

and strengthen the known values of the retail brand. The shapes, colours, materials and all other design elements must evoke the right brand associations. A well-organized store communicates a personality of competence. This research tests in the Sinco laboratory in part 1 and 2 how the store design is able to communicate the first impression of a brand image to the consumer. (Appendix 1)

The available store space has to be used efficiently and effectively. The customer needs to be directed to the best products, and need to be able to see as much as possible of the store. (Floor 2006, 289) In Cristelle & Co case the brand is well positioned in Stockmann department store. Most of their private labels are in key locations for the customer to find them. In the interview I tested which things the customer pays first attention to in the shop space, and which factors makes them stay in the shop area. The store exterior should communicate not only the brand positioning but also the brand's human characteristics. In other words, the store exterior has about the same effect as someone's looks. On first impression people immediately form an opinion about new acquaintance's character. That is the same for a store exterior. The first impression consumer gets of the store immediately gives them a positive or negative feeling. The look and feel of the exterior should give consumers the feeling that the store will suit them very well. That emotion is mostly determined by design elements. A big, not very transparent building can appear massive and even somewhat threatening. In contrast, a spacious entrance can give consumers the feeling that they are really welcome. (Floor 2006, 293)

From a distance, the outside signage is the consumer's first contact with the store. The brand name and sign give a first impression of the store's brand identity. (Floor 2006, 294) Good visual merchandising communicates brand promise. Together with store design, visual merchandising clarifies what the brand stands for. Product sensations, displays, graphics and signage determine for the most part the look and feel of the store. In the interview conducted in the Sinco lab the possibility to create this same look and feel of the actual store, giving the interviewee a quiet environment to observe the shop space in detail and form a first impression on the brand image. This is one reason why the qualitative part of this research is important, as in the questionnaire it would be impossible to create the same feeling as can be created in the Sinco space. The store design is one element which builds the visual identity of a store. Visual identity is the visual part of the company or a product, everything that can be physically seen from a corporation or a product.

Traditionally the elements of a visual identity have been logo, colour codes and typography. This paradigm is concentrated in the management of visual communication. (Pohjola 2003, 108)

2.4. User-centred Design - Service design

In this research the case study is strongly connected to the concept of user-centred design (UCD). The method of the case study is related to this area and therefore it is necessary to cover the concept of user and user-centred design. The chapter will also connect UCD to management and to design management, to create a bridge through the chapters under the theory of design management.

Design should start at the concept stage, considering the different stages of product manufacturing. (Hollins 2010, 215) User-centred designers develop products, services and experiences that solve problems faced by users. To this end, user-centred designers try to create an in-depth understanding of users. Beyond this, user-centred designers take trouble to understand the context within which products and services are used, and the changing business environment. (Dunne 2011, 129) In this research the aim of the case study is to bring the user-centred design aspect to private label collection design. However in the chapter Research Outcome it is shown how the chosen method (service design) serves the idea of user-centred design, and whether it is a prospective tool for clothing design. The term 'user-centred design' refers to the design of products, services, and experiences to meet the needs and capabilities of those who are going to use them. It might sound clear that design should take into account users' needs, but there has been disagreement over the extent to which users should dictate the design process. (Dunne 2011, 129). However, each user's experience is essentially a subjective and only partially observable event: each user creates his or her own experience through the usage of the product in its particular context of use and in conjunction with the user's own physical, cognitive, and emotional perspectives, says David Dunne. (Dunne 2011, 130) According to Dunne One part of the user-centred design process is the emphasis on developing a deep understanding of the problem before attempting to develop solutions. (Dunne 2011, 130) In this case study the interview was targeted to the designer (researcher) to better understand the problem the private label is facing, and also use the study as a tool to create a new collection. However

the emphasis was not on this part during the interview, but to understand the problems and user needs and expectations of the brand in case. Dunne connects user-centred design to management where it is not concerned only with creating value for customers, but also developing tools or methods for the administration of the business. (Dunne 2011, 133) What Dunne says connects the user-centred concept to design management and management in general, and most importantly, to this research. Creating a tool for management to understand the 'users'.

The role of designer when it comes to user-centred design has been traditionally viewed as distinct from the corporate strategy process. The designer's methods, largely qualitative approaches that seek to generate the market and user insights that spark creativity in execution, have been considered to be separate from the highly analytical and quantitative approaches required in strategic planning. In this case study there are both quantitative and qualitative methods, and it is interesting to mirror these two, whether they generate different data, or are equal in their results. This study seeks to prove that user-centric view is relevant to a designer and a strategic tool for a corporation. (Chhatpar. 2008, 13)

Techniques for user involvement are increasingly popular in research and design, partly because they promise to enhance relevance and legitimacy, mostly in relation to interactive products such as services, software and installations, but I see no point in why this could not also be applied to tangible products such as clothes. The figure of the user is rarely questioned and often simply taken for granted. First, we argue that users are never equal people but are better understood as representations of people from a particular perspective and for a particular purpose. Users and their representations are not out there to be discovered by designers. Rather, they are assembled through the process of design in relation to different actors, ideas and constraints. *(McHardy, Olsen, Southern &Shove, 95-97)*

At the end of this research in the comparison chapter the table Cristelle & Co before, now and in the future, includes a section of the "user" therefore it is critical to open and explain what it means in this context. To know your users (consumers, clients, voters, readers) is the first demand of user-centred design. In response, a wealth of participatory design methods is put forward as tools for gaining knowledge of the user. User-centred design tools such as the "persona" are used to create distinct and specific user profiles that serve

as a point of reference for design, discussion and decision-making processes within a design team. (Cooper 2004; Pruitt and Adlin 2006). Such rhetorical tools can be useful in focusing on a design process. (McHardy, Olsen, Southern & Shove, 98) These personas also worked as a tool in the later design process of the collection I drew for this research based on the data collected. The personas can be found in table 14 in comparison-chapter.

The concept of a user in this case study is vague as the research is conducted in Rovaniemi, where there is no Stockmann department store, and therefore loyal-customers of Stockmann are hard to find. Therefore this research has to exclude the concept of an actual customer, but rather sees the "user" in broader sense, as a potential customer or an average consumer. Individual participants are selected to this research for reasons of convenience as they are all based in Rovaniemi. The criteria for the participants are however their age, as there is an interviewee from each age group from every ten years from 20 to 60. The categories of users and people cannot be neatly separated. The figure of the "user" has different but co-existing conceptual status, sometimes featuring as an actual person- a real participating in a design project- and as a spokesperson taken to represent all the other users "out there". As they slip between these positions, users are gradually and continuously established, but never entirely or finally defined. Users may thus be understood as actors that translate in a makeshift and more explicit fashion between different assumptions of what people and things are like in relation to the project in question. (McHardy, Olsen, Southern & Shove 2010, 105-106)

In the semi-structured survey I use Sinco-laboratory, which enables to take the consumer in the development of the design and the design process. Sinco bases its theory on service design, which is the basic element of design management. As there can be as many definitions for service design as there are practitioners, it is not possible to explain service design in this research as broadly and objectively as would be suitable. Therefore I chose thoughts and opinions that can be applied to this research at hand and which support the case study conducted in Sinco laboratory. This research and the case study, is not however straight related to service design. I use service design laboratory to conduct more like a marketing research or brand research than service design research. However the idea is the same. Taking the user, or in this case, consumer to the process to evaluate the current status of the brand, and to give an input on the design and how it could be improved. The "shop space" in this case is the service area, which is evaluated through the eyes of a

consumer on how it answers to the needs of the consumer and whether it is inviting as a shopping area. As a marketing focus is to find out what consumers want or need, in this case from Cristelle & Co brand. Mainly in the beginning of the case study the objective was to explore possibilities through co-design and bringing the customer to the process, to find out their needs. In the end however the case study, through the method that is used, comes close to the concept of service design, and therefore is needed to clarify.

Service design is a relatively new field of expertise: it has been developed during the past 20 years. The deepest roots of both design and service design are in arts, crafts, and organized planning. Later the actual concept of design and many of its sub-areas, such as architecture and jewellery as well as textile, furniture and graphic design, started to emerge. Then service business development, service marketing, industrial design, as well as ergonomics, interaction design, usability design, and information design grew out from the history and the concept design. Eventually service design was formalised alongside its two sibling concepts design thinking and co-design These three key concepts got strong branches from concept design, ideation, design management and analytics, and participatory design. Generally speaking, these new fields of expertise brought a great influence on the whole design field, and especially on service design work and principles. (Kuosa & Westerlund 2012, 5) Service design is an interdisciplinary approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines. It is a new way of thinking as opposed to a new stand-alone academic discipline. Service design is an evolving approach; this is particularly apparent in the fact that, as yet, there is no common definition or clearly articulated language of service design. However in this research I take the liberty of including the case study within the field of service design. (Stickdorn &Schneider 2011, 28)

Service design is a holistic way for business to gain comprehensive, empathic understanding of customer needs. (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 30-31) What is the link between marketing and service design? Marketing is about organisations creating and building relationships with customers to co-create value; design aims to put stakeholders at the centre of designing services and preferably co-design with them. Marketing researchers study customers to develop insights into their practices and values; designers can use insights as the starting point for design and add a focus to the aesthetics of service experiences. Marketing has a view of new development that is shaped by problem solving;

design professionals have an understanding of an iterative design process that involves exploring possibilities and being open to serendipity and surprise. (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 50-51) In this research I test whether service design laboratory Sinco can work in facilitating innovation or improving existing products or brand to making them more desirable for consumers.

3. Private Labels

3.1. Private Label Basics

Cristelle & Co is one of Stockmann's private labels from their ladies brand portfolios. In this section I go through the fundamentals of a private label and the advantages of a private label for a company.

Private label is retailers' owned brand, which is sold in their own premises. Private labels are mostly connected to no-name food brands owned by supermarkets with low-cost strategy. Only 20 ears ago private labels were seen as inferior brands with cheaper quality thus with a lower price. Many consumers preferred national brands because they recognized the names and trusted their reputation within quality. (Hameide 2011, 166) Retailers are usually performing close to the customers which gives them a chance to observe their customers' shopping behaviour and thus be in a better position to design suitable products consistent to their customers needs. Therefore private labels could be considered as to be more consumer-centric as they should fill up the consumer need gaps in a store. (Chunawalla, 2009, 277) With private brands the retailer is in direct competition with manufacturer brands, and more often than not the retailer will be the winner. After all, with its market approach the retailer has a number of advantages over a manufacturer. The most important one is that the retailer has full control over all activities that take place in the store with regard to the private brand. It can divide how to bring private brand to the consumer's attention. A manufacturer would have to rely on the cooperation of the retailer. (Floor 2006, 35)

Pricing is a major factor in private label business. Offering equal or better quality than competitor's manufacturer brands at a lower price is instrumental to their positioning strategy and success. One strategy some retailers adopt in promoting their private labels is

to inflate the price gap between the retailer's private label and the competing manufacturer brand. The big difference in price makes customers feel that the extra money they pay for manufacturer brands is not proportionate to the perceived extra benefit they may receive. As a result, retail labels make more economic sense to them and appear to be more attractive. (Hameide 2011,169) Today the apparel industry is one of the largest sectors for private labels, which currently account for an estimated 45 percent of sales in the United States, whereas in some categories such as women's wear, skirts, and children's clothing the share is more than 65 percent. (Hameide 2011, 166)

3.2. Private Labels in Clothing Industry

Kaled K. Hameide describes in her book Fashion Branding Unravelled different types of brands and brand structures, which can be found specifically when it comes to fashion industry. Hameide is one of the few who summons a private label brand in fashion industry. According to Hameide they are brands created by retailers rather than manufacturers. They are sold exclusively within their own chains, but can exist side by side with other national brands. A few examples are INC and Club Room by Macy's and Arizona and American Living by JCPenney. They are meant to compete with existing manufacturers' brands mostly on the premise of comparable quality and lower price, so they offer a better value for money. They are not usually trendsetters and are not associated with a famous designer name. In many cases, brand names are simply made up with a French or Italian sound to them to imply certain emotional value (such as Alfani by Macy's). LaFayette has LaFayette Collection and Avant Premiere for a younger consumer. As hameide is one of the few who concentrate in private labels in fashion business I will refer to Hameide's book when it comes to private labels in Fashion.

Private labels (in Fashion) are generally created by a team of young designers or product developers, except for those instances where stores decide to work with famous celebrity designers to create exclusive collections. (Hameide 2011, 167) Today private labels are well positioned as "proper brands" that possess the same emotional elements generally associated with manufacturer's brands. One of private labels' core values is creating a sense of "smart shopping" for the customers. This is one of the many reasons why these brands usually become more popular during economic downturns. For this reason it is

crucial for a company to concentrate on private brand development and also one of the reasons which makes this research in question valuable. The rivalry between retailer and manufacturers' brand is also evident in their fight over in-store space and locations dedicated to each brand. Retailers will normally give priority to their own brands. In Macy's there private label INC is given prominent display in the store where it is usually placed to be seen by customers as they first enter the store. Private label's work as a differentiating factor between stores as they more or less offer the same international brands. Therefore they are usually positioned in entrances and other places to be seen by customers as they first enter the store. (Hameide 2011, 167) This is also the case in Stockmann where they give full coverage on their private labels inside the store and in their marketing material, such as loyal customer magazine.

Hameide separates private labels into four main categories: generics, copycats, premium store brands, and value innovators. First of which, the *generics*, is currently not the most popular one, and certainly not common within fashion labels for it refers to no-name products such as shampoos and soaps which are sold in large discounts next to branded products in supermarkets. *A copycat is* referring to the first initial strategy behind private labels. Copycat private labels that simply imitate the styles, colours and details of an established manufacturer brand offering the same models with competitive price. This strategy was achieved by eliminating the middle man from the developing process and by copying trends and styles of manufacturing brands, they indirectly benefit from those brands' proven creative resources and investment. *Premium store brands* rather than copying, try to differentiate the store from other specialty stores by offering private labels with superior quality at lower prices and high creativity. Macy's, JCPenney, Target and Nordstrom are among the many department and specialty stores that offer a range of private labels that have been successful and instrumental in positioning their store brand. *Value Innovators* are a group of retailers, which are able to balance low-priced value-driven labels with a high level of innovation and style. For example by having a collaboration with a famous designer e.g. Target's collaboration with Isaac Mizrahi. (Hameide, 2011, 167-169) Of all these types I would position the Stockmann private label Cristelle & Co into the category of premium store brands based on the description of Cristelle & Co brand strategy book. (Brand strategy book Cristelle & Co; in researchers' possession)

Some ways of making it possible for a private label manufacturer to offer the same quality with a lower price and controlling the manufacturing costs are sourcing from low-cost developing countries, mainly in Asia, having fewer middlemen, buying in large volumes, controlling costs at every level and stage, using an efficient distribution system that secures quick delivery. (Hameide, 2011, 167-169) Private labels should not only focus on low prices, they also have to create value for the customer, or otherwise they don't create loyalty and trust within consumers. Quality and creativity are also key values if a corporation wants to create more value for their customers. However this of course brings its own challenges to the creative process and requires resources from the company. Even though private labels increase economic turnover and value for the customers private labels also create cost and require resources from the store: warehousing and transportation expense. Within manufacturers this is usually covered with higher price and turnover, which is necessarily not the case with private labels. Private labels do not usually require big advertising campaigns, but they also require some sort of advertisement, especially when launching a new private brand, these expenses lie fully on the store's responsibility. Store with private labels has to make sure it does not alienate the manufacturers brand within its store, otherwise this might force them to take their brand elsewhere leaving the store with narrow and less diverse merchandise mix. In general private labels suffer from lack of advertising. Their core communications channels are through catalogues, new media such as FB and online store and they are usually strategically placed in-store, which fits also to Stockmann private labels. (Hameide 2011, 169-170)

In short, private labels need dedicated resources for innovation, marketing, manufacturing and warehouse costs. Private labels' success depends a lot on the retailer's brand, which in Stockmanns' case is strong, especially amongst their Finnish customers. Private labels are not just competing with price, but with quality, product and service. Today a private label needs to differentiate itself as much as a national brand. Therefore it is crucial to see private label as a brand and use the same means to manage it as other national brands are using. This ensures the growth of the private brand and the benefit to the store. This is emphasized in Stockmann private label strategy creating a need for this type of research.

3.3. Private Label as a Brand

"Distributors' or retailers' own-label brands (private labels) are on the rise everywhere. Having been restricted for so long to the mass consumption sector, they now form part of the competitive environment in all sectors: automobile equipment, agricultural cooperatives, pharmacy groups and so on. For so long merely the cheapest products, they have now become innovators, which are quick to offer consumers products that keep pace with the latest trends in society.

Academic studies have long failed to pay sufficient attention to distributors' brands. With the producer's brand being considered as the only point of reference, distributors' brands were thought of as 'non-brands', attracting price-sensitive customers. Furthermore, the scale of the problem was different in Europe from the United States where, with the exception of Wal-Mart, no single retailer/distributor dominated: distribution is regional, and the national brands still have power in the distribution channel. This is why distributors' brands have long been perceived in the United States as low-cost, low-quality alternatives, an assessment that failed to take the full measure of the phenomenon. However, this situation too has recently changed, as can be seen from the recent interview with Russ Klein, the Executive Director of 7-Eleven, the store that invented the convenience store concept some 76 years ago: "private label has changed to the point where retailers are using it as the premium brand in some cases' (Marketing Management, Jul-Aug, 19; Kapfrerer 125-127) Throughout the world, the distributors' brand is often becoming the only true competitor to the producer's brand---." Hypermarket or supermarket (or why not also department store) shelves are divided into three parts, holding producer's brands, the store brand and the lowest-price products. This positions the producer's brand firmly and squarely on its pillars of differentiation: innovation and quality on the one side, emotive added value on the other. (Kapferer 2005, 125-127) For consumers in mature countries, distributors' brands are perceived as genuine brands, with their attributes of high profile and image always combined with an attractive price. Over time, some distributors' brands are able to generate the typical brand effect.

What also influences the choice is if the consumer expects the distributor to have a good reputation and an image of quality and service. In this research the image of the distributor is quite crucial, as Stockmann is perceived as a high quality department store with good

service and product range. Therefore it is important that the private brand keeps this image up. Image is the conception of a company or a product in people's minds. (Pohjola 2003, 22) In this case study Cristelle & Co is seen as a fashion brand, not just a private label. Gordon Kendall explains fashion brands in his book Fashion Brand Merchandising as any apparel, accessory, cosmetic, nondurable home product, or service offered for use, sale or exchange that exhibits characteristics intended to identify and differentiate them from other similar goods and services and which are further intended as means of expressions of personal preferences, tastes, or acknowledgement of prevailing style trends. (Kendall 2009, 10) Many fashion brands, by way of further distinction, are also private brands, because they are developed by and available from one or only a few retail establishments.

4. Case Stockmann

4.1. Focus Brand: Cristelle & Co

Cristelle& Co is a Stockmann private label, one of the four other private labels in the ladies brand portfolios. Brand portfolios could be described as collections of individual brands a business makes available to consumers. Some businesses offer a great deal of brands under their "umbrella" while others only a few. However to be defined under the concept brand portfolio, the brand must be intended for specific product categories. (Kendall 2009, 272-273) Cristelle &Co is a brand for young women's wear, set to be the trendiest and innovative brand of all the ladies private labels in Stockmann. Currently however the brand is facing the reality that their biggest consumer group are 34-55 and 55+ women. This creates a problem as Cristelle &Co has the smallest size group from the other women's private brands and therefore does not provide the perfect fit for the loyal customer group of the brand as it is meant for a younger consumer group with smaller size needs. Consumer as a term refers to individuals and members of the general population or to specifically identified groups of potential and real purchasers or users of goods or services. Consumer groups are clusters of individual shoppers or purchasers, often defined by common characteristics group members share. (Kendall 2009, 62-63) This case study aims to find out what kind of consumer group Cristelle & Co now draws to, and how it could answer their needs. One possibility is also to target it to a new consumer group and specify their needs, in case the study shows that it should be better for Cristelle & Co to change their

strategy. Consumer groups are sometimes referred to as market segments, but in this case study the term consumer group suits for the purpose. (Kendall 2009, 63)

This case study aims to find out the current target group of Cristelle & Co. Design management methodology is used to analyze the fashion brand, how to improve their brand image with design thinking. This shows how the new method of Sinco (service design) can be used in clothing industry. According to the first brand strategy document of Cristelle & Co, the Cristelle customer could be considered as early majority. (Cristelle & Co brand strategy book, in researchers' possession) Although more risk-avers, this group accepts new products, ideas, and brands, although usually only after being influenced by early adopters. Cristelle user was set in the beginning of the brand creation to be a trendy up-to-date person who embraces new fashion trends. This group is considered to comprise of about 34 to 35 percent of consumers. (Kendall 2009, 73) Cristelle & Co logo, a word or several words designed and spelled out in particular font (or type) style, is a simple text on a white background. Like symbols logos are complex, nonverbal ways to communicate brand image. (Kendall 2009, 148) However in this case study I will not focus on the logo of the Cristelle & Co brand.

4.2. Semi-Structured Interview

This research uses the focused interview or more commonly known semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interview revolves around central themes or questions, which are set before the interview. Methodologically semi-structured interview highlights people's interpretations of matters and meanings that come up during the course of the interview and the interaction. There is no necessary need to ask the questions in the same order; the level of coherence concerning the interview depends on the research and the criteria it sets for itself. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 75) The themes, which are the base of the semi-structured interview, are based on the frame of reference or the research problem or the assignment (goal). Semi-structured interview contains semi-open questions or open questions. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 77)

The semi-structured interview of this research is conducted in Sinco-laboratory. Why Sinco- laboratory and what exactly is Sinco? Sinco is a laboratory based at the University

of Lapland in the faculty of Arts. It is originally designed to be a service design laboratory to test different technology, based in the laboratory, for conducting research in the field of service design. However the laboratory is a flexible complex, which I thought, had potential to work as a test ground also for fashion research. With Sinco laboratory I am able to create a calm environment resembling an in-store shop space (shop in shop) where the private label Cristelle & Co is. Naturally the geographical location was also a factor that made me choose Sinco as a tool for my research. I am not able to do my research in a Stockmann shop, because of the location, as the research is based in Rovaniemi, and Stockmann does not have a store in Rovaniemi. Another factor was that it would not be considerable to conduct this research inside a store as it hinders consumer's shopping time. Regardless, Sinco is able to provide a service design aspect for the research. It is also possible to pay attention to the shop space of Cristelle & co and change the elements in the big Sinco screens. This way the interviewee can focus on the matter in fact. This is also an interesting aspect when it comes to service design combining clothing design, as this kind of laboratory has not yet been used as a tool to conduct research in clothing industry. (Simo Rontti, head of Sinco-laboratory) Then why was the interview the best method for this research? The benefit of an interview is its flexibility. The interviewer has the chance to repeat the question, or correct misunderstandings or have a conversation with the interviewee. One advantage, which was especially relevant for this research, was that in an interview the interviewer could be an observer. Marking down the reactions and movements of the interviewee, as an example the red laser used in interview. (see picture 3, p 40.) This was important for this research when some of the Sinco tasks and gadgets are a tool for observing people in a certain space. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73)

Important part of the survey and the questionnaire was the focus in marketing communication. What is communication? Communication is created when the message reaches the receiver. In communication there is a sender, a message, a receiver and a sending channel. (Poikolainen 1994, 91) One of the main questions in this research was whether the marketing communication of Stockmann is the one that is perceived by the customer? Marketing communication is common understanding of the product, corporation and actions between sender and the receiver. (Vuokko 2002, 12) Marketing communication is also where you sell the product (the image of Stockmann) and it is about communicating values of the company. Strategic marketing decisions are segmentation, target group identification, positioning, for different segments, and how we set apart from

the competitors? (Vuokko 2002, 24-25) That, how the receiver finally interprets the communication, sets the outcome of marketing communication. (Vuokko 2002, 29) The outcome of Cristelle & Co's marketing communication is tested in this research in the questionnaire and in the interview. Showing the pictures of Cristelle & Co published in the premier magazine and loyal-customer magazine. (Appendix 1, pictures 3&4)

Communication is included in this research because I wanted to test whether Sinco could test the success of marketing communication. If this type of research would be done before the launch of the marketing material, this might bring savings to the corporation when they avoid communicating in the wrong way. Different stages of effect in marketing communication are a cognitive influence: knowledge, fame and affective influence stage: attitude, opinion, action and behaviour. (Vuokko 2002, 37) Means of marketing communication are: personal sales work, advertising, promotion, public relations, publicity, sponsoring. In this research the focus is on advertising. (Vuokko 2002, 17) Usually marketing communication aims to create positive effect. Wanting to add publicity, improve image or increase market share. (Vuokko 2002, 39)

Sinco tests in most parts the consumer/user behaviour. By better understanding user-behaviour design can become more useful, usable and successful in meeting peoples' needs and can also lead to new innovation. Through applying new design techniques to understand user-behaviour come other opportunities for design innovation. One such area is the increasing interest in how design can be used to "guide" user-behaviour. (Best 2010, 66) What is relevant to this case study is the usage of new innovation to understand the user behaviour in fashion merchandising. New innovation in this case is the Sinco laboratory. The field of consumer behaviour covers a lot of ground: it is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. A consumer is generally thought of as a person who identifies a need or desire, makes a purchase and then disposes of the product during three stages in the consumption process. In many cases different people may be involved in the process. The purchaser and user of a product may not be the same person, as when a parent chooses clothes for a teenager. Consumers may be organizations or groups in which one person may make the decisions involved in purchasing products that will be used by many. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askergaard & Hogg 2010, 4-5) However in this research the consumers are seen individuals, which are categorized in terms of their

age and gender. In the analysis the interviewees are considered and referred to as consumers, this term is used in this research throughout survey and interview analysis.

What is the benefit for Stockmann in identifying the consumer of this private brand in hand? Data about consumers help organizations to define the market and identify both threats and opportunities for a brand. This research also focuses in the case study to find out the private label's core market. Consumers in different age groups have very different needs and wants. In this survey it was necessary to have women in the interview from different age groups to find out what exactly appeals in the brand to consumers of different ages. While people who belong to the same age group differ in many other ways, they do tend to share a set of values and common cultural experiences that they carry throughout life. (Solomon, Bamossy, Askergaard & Hogg 2010, 8-9)

How I constructed the Sinco interview? I fitted the survey form I used in the questionnaire to the laboratory, so that they would both follow the same base. I used the theory of marketing communication, branding, design thinking and design management to construct the semi-structured interview in Sinco. It was a great opportunity for me that the Sinco laboratory was in our university premises, however that was also a hindrance, as it was hard to find interviewees outside university to conduct the research. Interviewees are coded in order to regard their privacy and they are coded in the order I interviewed them. Therefore they are referred to as X1, X2 etc. the picture data from the interview can be found from appendix 1, transcription is in researcher's possession. Design thinking theory gave the idea to bring the user into the process of developing the brand. To find out how the design could answer to the exact needs of the consumer. Naturally this was only the hypothesis in the beginning that it would bring any benefit. The Sinco laboratory was familiar to me from earlier courses, but as it was a long time ago the head of the laboratory Simo Rontti gave me a short introductory to the systems of the laboratory based on which I was able to build my interview there. Rontti told me that it had not been used in clothing design before, let alone to conduct an interview.

Picture 1. Sinco screens. Pictures from part 1. Phtographer: Marianna Suhonen

I built the interview based on the resources provided by the Sinco laboratory and the material I received from Stockmann. Main area of the laboratory consists of the Sinco screens, where pictures are fitted to create life-like space where the test-people (interviewees) in the laboratory can imagine being in the actual space e.g. skiing center, service desk, or as in this case, the Cristelle & Co shop space. Here I fitted the pictures from the Cristelle & Co shop to create a life-like atmosphere as if the interviewee was in the shop space. I added live sound, which I took from freesound platform (www.freesound.org), to have background noise that resembles a department store sounds (music, people talking, crowd noise etc.) This was to add the feeling of being inside an actual department store. (Picture 1.)


Picture 2. Sinco screens - laser pen. Picture: Marianna Suhonen

In the Sinco screens I went through part 1 and 2 of the interview (appendix 1), which build up the first impression of the brand a customer constructs when first entering a shop. Here the interviewee used the red laser pen to show how they survey the space and which objects they point out from the shop. This I later marked to the pictures for each interviewee, all the pictures can be found from appendix 1 (picture 2). I used the smart board on the left side of the wall in part 4 and also in part 2 and 3 in the adjectives assignment. (Picture 3.) The adjective assignment was where the interviewer had to choose different adjectives to fit the Cristelle & Co image they had structured based on what they had seen in the interview. (appendix 1, part 1 & 3)
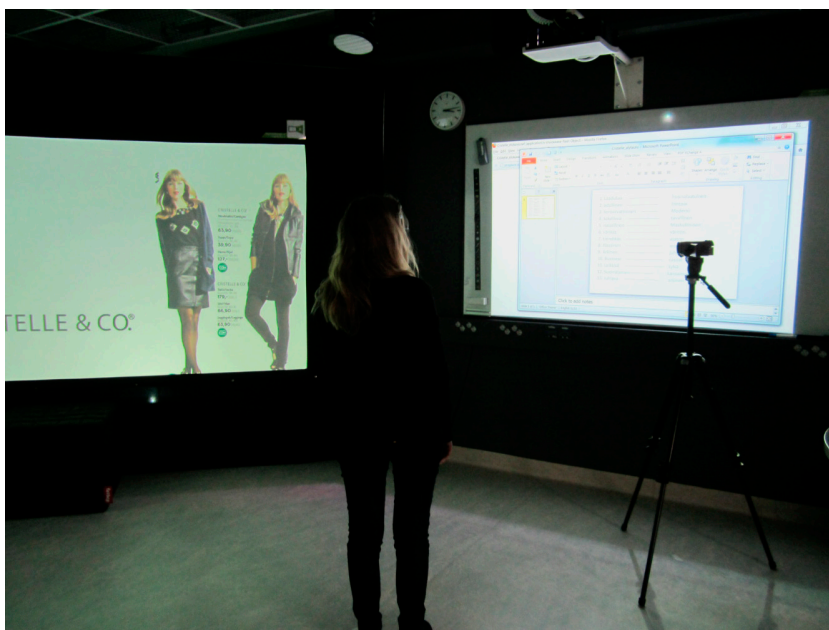
Picture 3. Sinco screens and Smart board. Photographer Marianna Suhonen

The smart board works in a similar way as a desktop, but also as a board where you can draw, erase and move items with the smart pen. In the smart board I made a flash base where I took all the pictures of Cristelle & Co spring 2013 collection I found from Stockmann online-shop, and structured the Flash-animation so that the interviewees were able to build their own outfits for different occasions. Later the interviewees were able to modify the outfits and make notes with the red pen on the smart board (picture 4).
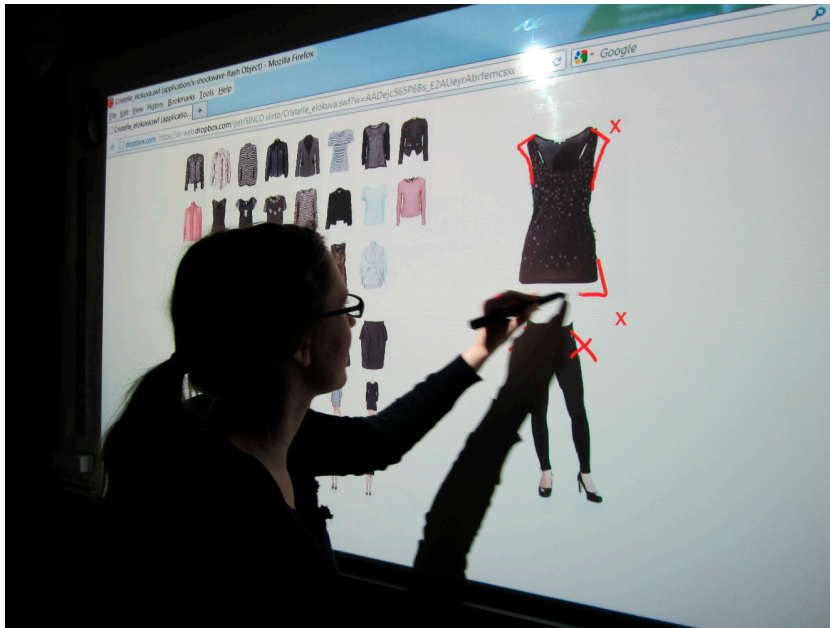
Picture 4. Smart board. Photographer Marianna Suhonen

In the appendix 1 is the base created with InDesign where the pictures and the order of the questions of the interview can be seen. I followed this order in all the interviews, but only the last part (part 4) varied a little with each interviewee. During the interviews I added a new assignment where the interviewees had to choose which garments they would buy and which not. This originally was not part of the interview, but my first interviewee started to spontaneously tack which items she would want and would not want at the end of the interview. I decided to try it with other interviewees and it turned out to be an important part of the data. This shows how flexible Sinco laboratory is, and how each interviewee was able to bring something new to the research and suggest new ideas on how to use the laboratory. (Appendix 1)

4.3. Survey

The survey is conducted in this research so that it would be possible to compare the data gathered through the semi-structured interview, and whether the end results of both the interview and the survey would be consistent with one another. The survey however uses material from the Spring/summer 12/13 collection where the interview was conducted with Autumn/Winter 12/13 collection. This is also one aspect, which is looked into in this research whether the images of these two collections are similar.

The structure of the survey includes likert scale questions or statements (likert 1932, Lemon, 1973) Which consist of a statement or question concerning attitudes, opinion, or beliefs followed by a set of responses that ask the degree to which the subject agrees or disagrees with the statement. The scale is referred to as a summated scale. One that refers to the degree of liking or disliking is an ordinal scale. Numbers are used to code answers for analyzing the data. Each statement should test only one attitude or opinion. (Sellitz 1962; Zaccagnini Flynn 2009, 152) In this research the question is constructed with adjectives, which the consumer has to choose, the middle ground I depict as being indecisive, however I acknowledge the fact that some consumers chose the middle ground as the brand being both adjectives e.g. Classic vs. trendy, however in some questions such as low price – high price, I assume that in the scale the consumer means middle priced. This is dependant on my interpretation as a researcher, which makes it lack some theoretical certainty do to this.

Another question type used in this survey is open-ended questions, which are often used in survey research. Open-ended questions have no answers for the participant to choose from where the purpose is to answer with own words the given topic. Objective is to establish the underlining meaning or social context behind the topic. These questions are the easiest to develop; however, the coding and data analysis are often vague and establishing the criteria for analysis a challenge. (Zaccagnini & Flynn 2009, 153)

In total the questionnaire had 85 participants, of which unfortunately there were only 11 participants over the age 40-60, when the idea was to have an equal amount of representatives from different age groups. However it was a bit difficult to find people from older age groups as I used Facebook as my main channel for acquiring participants in the questionnaire.(www.facebook.com) Another channel I used was the university e-mail. The older age group was not so easy to access through a net link. In total there were 17 participants out of 85 in the questionnaire above the age 30.

4.4. Analysis of Data

Theory base for the building of semi-structured interview comes from branding and design management that work as a base for the content analysis through which the data is then analyzed. In the analysis the content is divided into themes based on the theory. However in this case the user is not straight involved in the design process, as the case focuses on the ready-made collection. This study aims to work as a proposal for user-centred management of design in a private brand. Building innovative solutions to problems based on intimate understanding of users and the context of use, in addition to the circumstances faced by the business, as David Dunne puts it in his article about user-centred design connected to management. (Dunne 2011, 140)

Research method used for analyzing the semi-structured interview is content analysis, which is a simple tool to look into the data and try to find out themes or look into the data with pre-constructed themes. As I started the analysis of the transcriptions I had a few themes according to which I first divided the data. These themes came from the brand theory I used to build the questions for the interview. While dividing the data of the interview I found new themes and was able to combine some themes together. I divided the themes in two main categories. Firstly, keys to use in fashion design process and secondly, brand image of the case label. This proved to be the ideal solution as this was originally how the survey was structured. Finding ideas for design process and figuring out the current brand image of the brand.

The process of structuring interviews into themes advanced by first giving colour codes for the themes and later underlining them from the transcription. I arranged the right themes together according to the given colour. Therefore the sentences and dialogues of each theme can be found under the same headline in the analysis and are for this reason much easier to be analysed and compared between the different interviewees. However the line between the different themes is not completely clear. Therefore in some cases and sentences I had to simply decide into which theme I had to place a sentence. In content analysis it is typical to create a table, but because I did not want to loose important data or shorten the sentences, which would have made the interpretation of the data more difficult, I first did the analysis in paragraphs and later made a table to summon the content. In comparison chapter (5.4) there is a table where all the different phases of Cristelle & Co

brand image can be found. The analysis is structured based on the different parts of the interview. For example in the first part (part1) there was the Sinco shop-space. The different themes, which were found from the interview through content analysis, are listed under the part 1 as follows:

Part 1.
Theme 1. (e.g. colour)
Theme 2. (e.g. brand)

As the interviews are conducted in Finnish I will not translate everything rather summarize the main content of the given theme and add key quotes of the interviews. I explain each theme in brief just to give an overview of what the theme consists of and what answers I wanted to conclude in each theme. Themes used in the analysis are following:

Collection

This section looks into the shapes of the garments and the styles. What each interviewee said about certain garments or the collection as a whole. They said what changes they would make to the garments and how they see the Cristelle & Co style.

Brand

Brand section of the analysis mainly focuses on identifying the key brand elements of the private label Cristelle & Co. Here the questions were trying to identify how the brand was positioned when it comes to other brands, the overall age group and the price range of the brand.

Age

This is the part where I asked interviewees how the brand answered to their age group's needs and wants. Part concluded questions such as does this brand fit your age group, if not then to which age group do you think it is meant for?

Style

Style was mainly about how the style of the clothing is perceived by the consumer. Whether the style is consistent or the consumers think there are different types of styles that the clothes present.

<u>Space planning</u>

Space planning theme was set to find out what draws customers attention in a shop space. What kind of elements should be added in the shop space in order to make it more appealing to customers: Clothes, colours, model figures, logos or interior? Another matter I wanted to find out was how do people behave when they go into a shop space or when they pass by a shop area? What makes them stay there? How they advance in the shop space. This I observed by giving them a red laser pen, which they could use to show me in which order they observed the shop space. If they talked about a particular garment they were able to point it out with the red laser. (Picture 3.) Each interview is drawn in the appendix, and the red laser assignment is drawn from each interview. (Appendix 1)

<u>Colour</u>

Simply put, how colours affect the purchase and the image of the brand? How the designer can make use of colours and what is to be avoided. Colours were frequently mentioned during the interview, so this theme came strongly through the interviews as an important part of a design.

Part 1.

The first part of the interview was mostly targeted to find out what strikes up the customers attention in a shop space? (Picture 1, Appendix 1) What attracts them to come and look at the brand and the collection in more detail? This I analyzed firstly through the transcribed material and secondly through the laser marked pictures. (Picture 2.) All pictures of this assignment can be found from the appendix 1. (e.g. X1 picture 6, Appendix 1)

<u>Space planning</u>

For most interviewees the first thing what they saw were the mannequins and what they were wearing. After this they started searching for certain colours what they would like or prints which draw attention. Then they started to look for details, for example interviewee X4 is into bags, so she usually tries to find them, also other accessories such as shoes or scarves seemed to be an important addition to shop decoration according to her. X7 pointed out that there is many clothes scattered in a small shop space, which she found negative. However interviewee X2 found that the shop space looks quite neat and nicely decorated, but she did emphasize that she does not like it when the space is too crowded as she is afraid she might cause some harm while moving in a crowded shop.

Colour

This part collected in most part comments on the colours in the shop space. Colours and prints are the second thing that draw attention, in both good and bad. Just by adding colours to the shop space does not necessarily attract customers. The green clothes at the right side of the Sinco screens were mentioned in almost each interview. One interviewee suggested that the colours should have been dropped in different parts of the space rather than having them only on the other side of the brand area.

Collection

X1 among with the others paid much more attention to shirts and upper garments than pants or even dresses. This shows that when designing a collection what most of the sales come from are tops. However this is nothing new to most working in clothing, but also shows what information can come up from this type of research even with such small quota of interviewees. X2 was 61 and she saw already in part 1 that this brand is not necessarily for her as she was worried that there wouldn't be any bigger sizes for her. In this part I realized that it would have been important to mark the dress size of each interviewee in their information, but in X1 case I could say that she was a normal sized 60 year old, if this adds anything to her answer. However she was right that most probably Cristelle & Co sizes are too small for her. In part 4 though she realized that she found most of the models pleasant and said she would think they fit her generation, but she was still worried about the sizes.

Age

X1 (age 24) found that based on the style of the clothing the brand seemed to be for older people than the age group she represented. "When I look at these shirts (number 3in picture 6, appendix 1) I wouldn't ever wear them - For example this I wouldn't see to fit for a younger persons style maybe for forty or fifty year old. It simply isn't for people my age". However X7 (age 50) said "Even though I'm fifty these are just not my style of clothing." She new the age group was in theory for her, but she still wouldn't like to wear them, because of the style. This shows that after five minutes of looking at the first pictures the interviewees were able to have an understanding and a raw overview of the brand, what age group it might represent and whether they would see themselves wearing the clothes of the brand.

Style

X1 found that the shop space and the perception she got from the brand was old style and too pricy for her budget. This was when I asked the question whether she would stay in the department or continue in other departments if, hypothetically, she were to be in Stockmann department store, and the answer was no. Also X3 (age 30) was reluctant to say whether she would like to stay in the apartment rather said that it seems a little business-like to her. I assumed as a sales person she necessarily does not need to dress in such way.

Brand

X1 pointed out the importance of the logo, she said that she pays attention to the graphic design, which also affects her perception of the brand. In general most interviewees were able to form a basic conception of the brand only by observing the shop space.

Part 2.

In Part two was shown a close up of the shop space on Sinco screens, with a view on the back wall of the Cristelle & Co space. Here the customer could have a closer look of what the brand has to offer and see the products in closer detail. (Picture 2, Appendix 1) In this part there can also be found the laser- pen assignment of each interviewee in Appendix 1. Another assignment in this part 2 was the adjective assignment, which can be found from appendix 1 from each interviewee.

Colour

When talking about colour in part 2, the most frequent comment, which came up in each interview, was the lack of colours. Different shades of grey and black colours were not necessarily what the interviewees found tempting, and some said that this gives them the notion that the brand is quite Finnish with its grey scale (X5). This did not necessarily mean that the clothes were unattractive, but the space in itself was found colourless in a negative sense.

Space planning

In part two the shop space was shown a little closer than in part one. Here most of the interviewees wished to have more colours. X4 said that by adding colourful details such as scarves or shoes the space would have been more interesting.

Collection

In pictures of the part two, garments consisted of mostly suits and skirts in grey shades. This gave the perception to most of the interviewees that the garments would probably fit for work and business affairs but not necessarily in casual situations.

Age

X1 (24) answered the question of the age group by dividing the age group to people who she thinks buy the clothes and to whom she thinks the brand is meant for. If there had been more time for each interview it would have been interesting to ask some additional questions on how she built that notion. However she did find some products to which she was able to relate to, for example one blazer was "young" for thirty to twenty-five year olds, but this can also just be what she thinks her own style is. However as the interviewee also put it, it is also about the combinations and how they are styled in the shop space. Some accessories and small details made X3 (30) considered the brand for forty year olds, as a thirty year old she did not yet relate to the brand. X4 (age 49) found that the brand could be for her age but that originally designers might have been looking to design for a person little younger than she is. But she still thought she could use some of the products at work. She found basics which could be wearable and which she could consider buying for herself. When asked about the age group she said that it is meant for a "grown up woman" (aikuinen nainen), which at least rules out the possibility of the brand being meant for teenagers or younger women on the interviewees opinion. X5 found that what was seen in the shop space she found that the brand fit her age group. However as she put it, there needs to be taken into consideration also the style of a person, not everything is related to age, but in general the brands age group could start from thirty five and reach until fifty or even sixty year olds. X6 (age 39) said forty to fifty year olds and she found it fits her age group. X7 (50) said up from forty to fifty and to her it seemed to fit her own age group.

Brand

This question was about brand identification. The main question was: Which brand does Cristelle & Co resemble most? These were the answers:

X1 Filippa K

X2 Could not identify the brand with others

X3 Identified some elements of the brand with H&M clothing and also Aleksi 13, brands like Luhta and other brand she found are a little "better" or businesslike.

X4 Some Esprit and a little care-free H&M.

X5 Filippa K, Esprit and Tiger of Sweden, she chose three brands which she identified the private label with.

X6 Esprit

X7 said it was probably around middle range affordable priced.

For many of the interviewees it was hard to identify the brand with a competitor one. This might be an indicator that the image is not consistent, and that the interviewees were not able to form a coherent image of the brand and therefore were unable to identify it with another. One option is that they simply were not that familiar with other brands on the market, as many of them said they are not able to come up with any brands.

<u>Style</u>

X5 (age 54) also said that she found the clothes to be for "better situations" (parempiin tilaisuuksiin) in her profession she does not need to dress as neatly. In this she referred to the right side of the shop space, but then again she said that the left side of the area was more casual.

Part 3

In part 3 was shown the marketing material of Cristelle & Co. There were in total two pictures, first one was from the premiere magazine and the other one is from the monthly loyal customer-magazine. (Picture 3, Appendix 1)

<u>Age</u>

X1 said that the picture on the right communicates a much younger target group than the image she got from the collection (part 1). She said the image she got from part 3 was for thirty-year-old women, who still like a playful and free style. Now she said the target group is for thirty to forty year olds. X3 said that there is some kind of collision; the model looks young, around twenty-five to thirty. When asked whether it fits her age group she finds that the model is styled quite young. She finds it might fit, at least the jacket (leather jacket), which is on the model, but there is not anything else she could identify with. X4 said the image of the persona was a young adult, not a teenager anymore. However she pointed out that in these days there are different kinds of forty-year-olds. She could imagine buying the jacket in the photo for example. X5 said picture on the left made the

iamge even younger, making it a brand for around thirty-year-olds. X6 said it is meant for younger people according to this picture, around thirty or twenty-five year olds. X7 said that the age group would be around thirty, but she could see herself buying the clothes.

Brand

In this part the brand questions were focusing on the marketing material, how is the girl like in the picture? Can you see yourself fitting to the target group presented in the material? Would you buy this brand's products? I was trying to find out whether the marketing material fits to the perception the interviewees built based on the part 1 and part 2 shop visit. The comparison analysis of these two parts is also based on the adjective assignment of each interviewee, which can be found form appendix 1. Here I added descriptions of the persona according to the interviewees.

Left side picture (Picture 3, Appendix 1)

X1 "Based on this picture the female person does a lot of shopping, and has a job, which enables her to do a lot of shopping. She is university educated and well paid. On her pass-time she does culture, goes jogging and does different kinds of sports."

X2 "Outgoing, young woman, who parties. She is in her twenties, could still be studying something, she spends her free time doing sports."

X3 "This gives an urban image, a little better casual dressing. Would probably be working in an advertising agency. She is a little rock n' roll, but still a businesslike person."

X4 "Is probably working in a job, which requires social skills. Where there are other people, like service business, PR agency perhaps."

X5 "Works possibly in a creative business, this is not a typical office wear, so basically in customer service where you need to be stylish and presentable, also up-to-date. The person takes care of herself and is sporty." When asked whether she fits in the target group she said that she has already passed it. She wouldn't necessarily buy the clothes based on this picture, but what she saw in the shop space she would, but the marketing material does not necessarily rule the brand out.

X6 said that the person parties and wants to try new things. She had problems to say where the person would work, but she said she probably would not wear that kind of skirt at work (see-through long skirt). She would still buy the clothes, but not necessarily the ones, which are seen in the photo. She could consider buying the blazer she saw in the earlier pictures.

X7 Young, working, single woman. As a customer she is brand and quality based.

Right side picture (Picture 4, Appendix 1)

X1 She still sees the person as university educated, but now the person is a student or has a part-time job. She mentioned that the logo brings an image of a pricier brand, which attracts people who are highly educated. This notion, according to her, came from the combination of the logo and how the person is styled in the picture. X2 "Also this young person, around twenty-five or thirty. Working somewhere where she can be seen and she can be active". X4 "Probably because this picture does not have so much speed in it, she could be working as an office rat, but in that kind of office where she could use this outfit. Where there are some customers also." To her it did not fit her age group, little under, she said starting from thirty. However it did not rule out the possibility for her to check what else the brand has to offer. X5 said "This became even younger now. Went to the teenager department. She could be working, but could also be a student. This has a more casual atmosphere than in the other photo (left), although this style could fit my persona. But the model is young and the style is targeted to younger group. Even though you can see the prices here and a little leather even, it still is quite a stylish photo, but not the left one. This did not fit her target group but she was still open to buy the clothes." X7 "twenty-year old person who wants to dress trendy and up-to-date, but who doesn't have her own money to spend. X7 said she would not buy the clothes according to the photo."

Based on the adjective assignment each interviewee gave more or less different answers on the brand image than in part 1 and 2. The shop space is marked in the pictures as (S) and marketing image as (M) as an example picture 7 in appendix 1. This tells that the marketing follows the original brand image of the Cristelle & Co brand, but is not consistent anymore with the image communicated through the collection and shop space.

Part 4.

In part four the idea was for the interviewees to pick different outfits for work, leisure and party. They were able to make changes to the chosen garments with the smart board. (Picture 5, Appendix 1) Each interviewee picked three options, which can be found from the appendix 1 (collection assignment). The collection was picked from Stockmann's online store, so it does not show the whole Autumn/Winter collection. However in the interview this was a problem as it was hard to build a combination for different situations.

Collection

X1 had difficulties finding the right trousers from the collection. She finally did find them, but which in her words, were the best on offer (from this collection). She would have rather taken some jeans, but they were not included in the web store option. This should be taken into consideration also in the web store offer that customers are able to buy the whole outfit. Especially since Internet shopping is becoming more and more popular. X2 Was able to find things she liked in the collection, however she had to make quite many changes to fit them to her body type e.g. higher waistline shorter sleeves. X3 Was able to find things she liked from the collection, but kept referring to word "neat", which I interpreted still meant the business-style in the collection. X4 had to change the length of many products because she is, in her own words, quite short. Here there could be seen how Sinco was able to give information on how clothes could be modified to specific needs of a customer as if "tailoring" them. The interviewees were able to draw their ideas on the smartboard. Here the potential of the smartboard for collective designing was on test. In this assignment I was able to pick tips on what things I could take into consideration when designing the new collection. When it comes to older consumers, their needs and wants concerning the cut and fit of the models are completely different from what younger consumers require. Here can be seen how Sinco could gather information on specific needs to be used in clothing design. Also the interviewees were able to show what they prefer by marking and drawing them on the smart board with the red pen, and to modify the combinations. This could be used as a tool in prototyping phase, saving the time and money of producing garments, which do not serve the target group's criteria. It is easier to work on a big smart board when there is more than one person in the designing process. The chosen outfits of each interviewee can be found from appendix 1.

Brand

The question for brand in part 4 was: What is the overall picture of the brand, what are your final thoughts and how would you finally describe the brand in short?

X1 (age24) said the brand is classical, little pricier, businesslike, and not too experimental. On the other hand according to the marketing material it gives a little more different image than what one can see in the shop. She said she could buy some of the clothes, as she is not so brand-loyal. X2 (age 60) said the clothes are practical; probably have a good quality and easy to take care of. X3 (age 30) said it fits for a thirty year old businesswoman, who

wants to dress classic, but with some edge. Her connotations were doctor or a lawyer. She said she would not necessarily buy the clothes of the brand. X4 (age 49) described the brand to be Finnish and safe, quite basic products, but then again she said that there could be found something different. She would consider them for office wear and basic wear. X5 (age 54) said, that as a whole it is not very original. It was hard for her to describe the brand as she said that there are many different kinds of elements there. She gave as an example Marimekko, which you can easily describe as a brand and what the image of the company is, also the products. However the interviewee said that the shop space and the marketing material are quite clear, because there are just a few things picked there. However the collection gives an incoherent image, but maybe in shop space they have thought what you can fit with what. "Maybe because the brand is not familiar to me in this stage I cannot really point out what is typical of this brand." In the end X5 said that the brand is young and stylish. X6 (age 39) said it seems to be young and clean. X7 (age 50) found the brand to be pretty timeless, classic and stylish. She said that when she is sixty she might go and check the brand. There were some products she said she could wear, but all in all it is for an older person.

SUMMARY

Colour

What has to be taken into consideration when it comes to colour, is that this research was conducted in springtime, when people, in general, tend to pay more attention to colour. This in fashion is especially valid as in springtime shops are mostly more colourful than in Autumn/winter collections. However I was not able to use spring collection in the interview, as I was not able to get the whole collection and marketing material on time to build the Sinco interview with spring collection. I was able to use the spring collection in the questionnaire as this was done later in spring.

Based on what I found out is that colours are what draw the attention of a customer in a shop space, and colours are important criteria when buying a garment. Even if the Finnish customer prefers to buy neutral colours such as black and grey, this is not necessarily what makes them come to a store and buy products. What this means to a designer is that one needs to choose key colours of the season which can work as an attraction in the shop space, and the visualist of a shop space needs to scatter these products so that customers can spot them easily.

Space planning

When it comes to shop space the stylist has a big influence on the customer as the first thing that most interviewees saw were the mannequins. This however does not come as a surprise to many working in clothing industry. However it proves that in Sinco laboratory also this kind of area could be tested. What could be the key items that make the customers buy the brand's products the most? Another thing that draws attention, and which already came up earlier, is colour. This should not be forgotten when designing a new collection, how colours could be exhibited in the shop space and how do the combinations look when they are finally shipped to the department? This is another fact that could be first modelled in Sinco laboratory, putting the sketches of the garments in Sinco screens to see whether they create a harmonious shop space.

The laser pen helps when checking the transcription as the interviewees are talking about certain garments in the shop space. (Appendix 1, e.g. picture 6) With most interviewees the order of how they observed the shop space was more or less the same. First mannequins, then they spotted some colours, and after that depending on ones preferences they either started to look for accessories or sales-signs. This method could be used when changing the shop space as you can also move the elements in the Sinco screens, by say adding objects to the PowerPoint which is reflected on the Sinco-screens. In Sinco the changes can be tested in almost real-live size, as a way of prototyping the shop space.

Collection

Most of the interviewees picked simple models, when I gave them the assignment to mark the things they wanted and did not want, the simple models were the most liked, and models with prints and "disliked" colours were marked out. This could be interpreted that the prints and patterns in Autumn/Winter collection were not the most successful ones, which also counted in the Spring/Summer collection, according to the questionnaire. This can be fixed either by paying more attention to what kind of prints are picked, or then the collection should focus more on simple models and colours, which are trendy at the current season.

Age

Part two of the shop space gave the interviewees a much older perception of the target group for Cristelle & Co. In part 3, where I showed the marketing material, some of them

were a bit perplexed by the change. Some of the representatives of the age group 40 to 60 said they would still buy the clothes of the brand, but some said they would not. There was also a difference between the marketing materials; the picture on the left (appendix 2) gave many an older target group image than the picture on the right. However even though the image of the age was interpreted to be meant for younger people, this was not necessarily a ground changing matter whether they would buy the clothes or not. Many from the older age group could still wear the clothes in the picture and would be interested in checking what else the brand has to offer.

Brand

In part two the crucial question was whether the interviewees were able to identify the brand with another one. This task proved to be difficult for many. However the answers varied from expensive brands to H&M, which means that the brand is not comparable to other brands and is hard for the customer to position when it comes to other, more known brands. In part three the image of the brand was equivalent with the brand strategy set by Stockmann. Therefore the marketing material is in line with the original brand image. However in this part many interviewees said they were confused about the change of the image, and were not necessarily ready to check the brand's offering.

Part 4 proved to be tricky as the interviewees had to form an image of the brand, based on what they had seen during the whole interview. The problem was in my opinion as a researcher that based on the shop space many of the older interviewees were quite open to the brand, also interested in what it had to offer. Then the marketing material confused them, as it gave a much younger image of the brand, yet many said that they would still be open to check the brand, despite the image. When it came to the collection assignment on the smart board, they were able to find clothes they liked. For example X4 said there can be found basic wear, but also something different, and she would consider buying them for work. Mostly they chose the more simple models from the collection.

Analysis questionnaire

I go through the analysis of the questionnaire based on more or less the same themes as I used in the analysis of the interview. However they are not exactly comparable as the interview was much more in-depth than the questionnaire. As the space is limited I am not

going to go through each and every section of the questionnaire and its results, rather try to focus on the key points and questions which came up, and which could be relevant when figuring out the new image of Cristelle & Co. I will refer to the people participating in the questionnaire as consumers, as here they are evaluating the brand as potential customers of the brand as they have to answer questions such as would they buy a product, why, why not? Etc. The whole questionnaire can be found from appendix 2.

Age

Questions 21 and 23 can be comparable as question 21 (picture 5.) was about the shop space and the age group it is meant for, and question 23 (picture 6.) was about age group communicated through the marketing material. While the shop space made most consumers think that the brand is targeted to people aged 20-30 and 30-40, the marketing material however gave a much younger impression on the consumers.
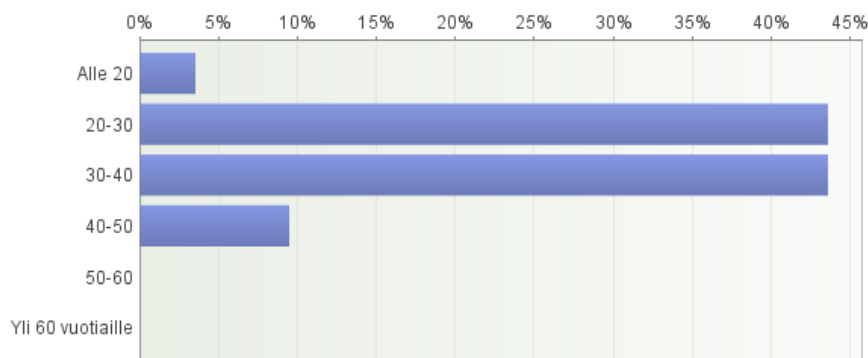
Graph 5. Question 21. Webropol analysis
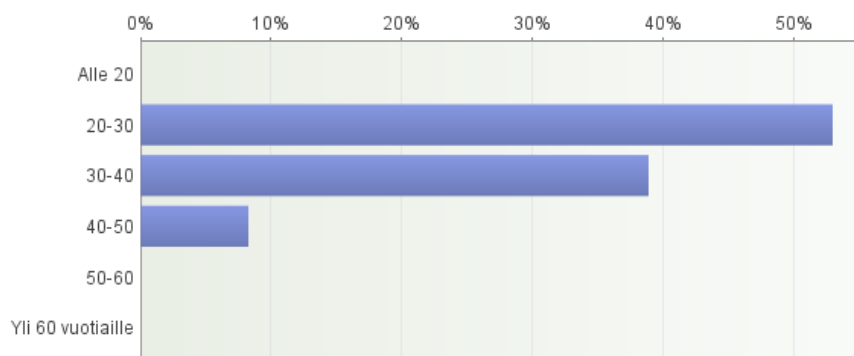
Graph 6. Question 23. Webropol analysis.

56

As one can see based on the shop space answers were divided more equally between the age groups 20-40 when based on the marketing material more than 50% (52,94%) found that the image was now much younger. This confirms what already came through based on the interview that the marketing material communicates a much younger image of the brand than what the collection or the products in the shop let customers believe.

However in the interview, the notion based on the shop space was that the age group is higher. In the questionnaire the image seemed to be much younger. (pictures 4-5.) This could either be because I used two different seasons and pictures in the questionnaire and the interview, or the bigger scale of participants in the questionnaire simply gave more truthful information of what the brand is about. However when I checked who would actually buy the products, 20-30 were a little more indecisive about whether they would actually buy the products or not.

Collection

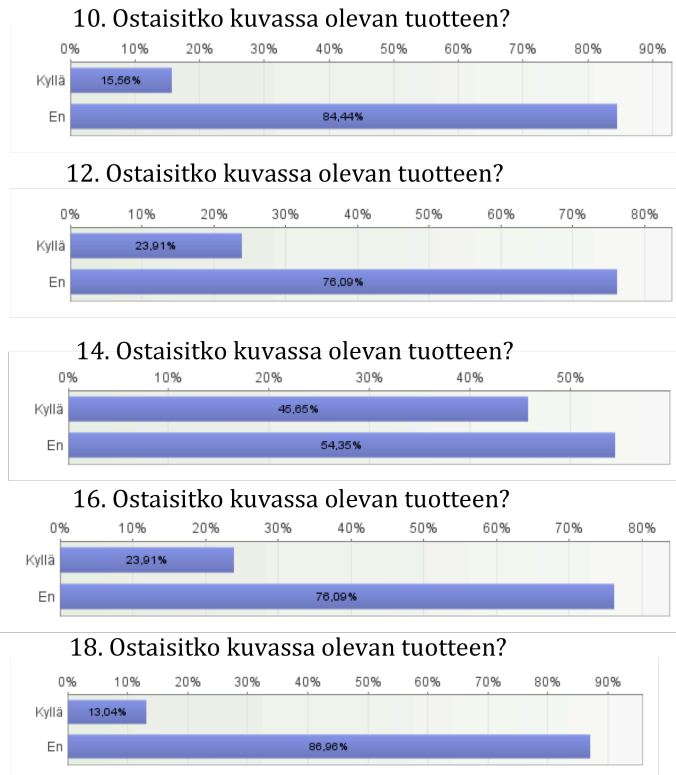Questions of the collection were in questions (10,12,14,16,18) where answerers had to choose whether they would buy the product, and later, why they did or did not buy the product. (Appendix 2) This question was added to simply test which kind of products the consumers would like, and dislike. Stockmann design manager Luisa Laine especially requested this type of questions for the questionnaire.

11. Merkitse ne tuotteen ominaisuudet joiden
perusteella annoit vastauksesi kohtaan 10.
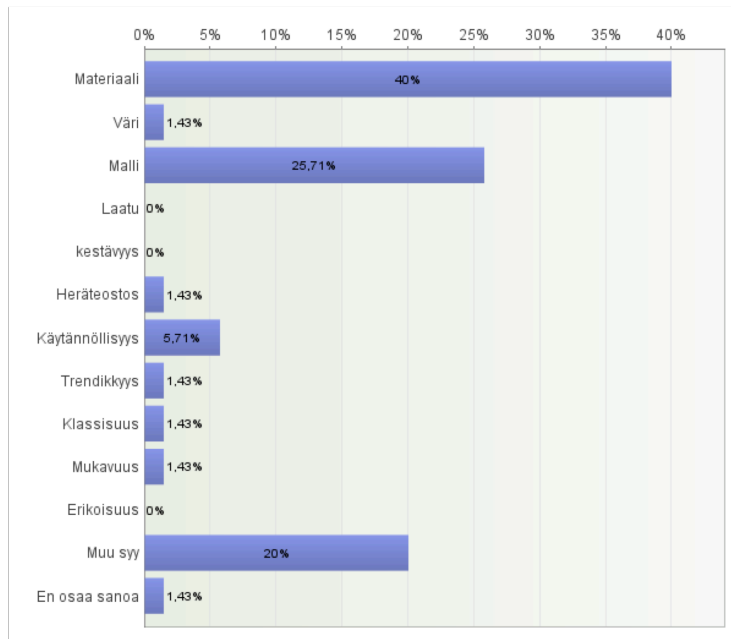
Graph 7. Question 11: Mark the reasons why you did or did not buy the product in part 10 (leather skirt). (see Appendix 2 Question 10)

In question 11 71/85 (83,5%) said they would not buy a product and for most of them the reason was the material (40%). (Graph 7) 25,71% of the no answers was given because of the model of the skirt or as can be read from the open ended answers, just because it is a skirt. After each question there was the possibility to add an open-ended answer to why they would or would not buy the product. These varied between "it does not look presentable in the photo" to "not my style". The problem with this question was that I was not able to change the settings so that you could pick multiple options to why you would or would not buy the product. This gave me a few feedbacks during the process, however I was not able to fix the problem. When I checked this same question with only loyal customers of Stockmann the percentage of not buying the product increased with most products. (Graph 8.) According to Cristelle & Co brand book, brand book is what originally was stated to be the Cristelle & Co image, the private label is mostly targeted to loyal customers. (Cristelle & Co brand strategy; in researcher's possession) As conclusion the loyal customer base, which is set to be the target group, is less eager to by the brand's products.

10. Ostaisitko kuvassa olevan tuotteen?

Kyllä	15,56%
En	84,44%

12. Ostaisitko kuvassa olevan tuotteen?

Kyllä	23,91%
En	76,09%

14. Ostaisitko kuvassa olevan tuotteen?

Kyllä	45,65%
En	54,35%

16. Ostaisitko kuvassa olevan tuotteen?

Kyllä	23,91%
En	76,09%

18. Ostaisitko kuvassa olevan tuotteen?

Kyllä	13,04%
En	86,96%

Graph 8. Loyal Customers 46 out of 85. Who did or did not want to buy the products in questions 10, 12, 16 and 18. (see products in appendix 2, parts 9,11,13 and 17)

There were many factors, which I was able to change when analyzing the questionnaire, such as choosing the age group. As an example question 19 where was presented a dress, I changed the age group to +30, after that I noticed that none of them wanted to buy the dress. (Graph 9.) When I checked why, there were three major reasons: firstly the model, then "other reason" (muu syy) and finally colour. I was able to check from open-ended answers that the "other reason" was that the dress was too short and one answer was that it does not have sleeves. This I was able to then reflect to my interviews, where I got the exact same feedback from the older interviewees concerning the collection. Out of consumers ages 30 to 60, 0% wanted to buy the dress (Appendix 2, Question 18.)

19. Merkitse ne tuotteen ominaisuudet joiden
perusteella annoit vastauksesi kohtaan 18
En 67/85

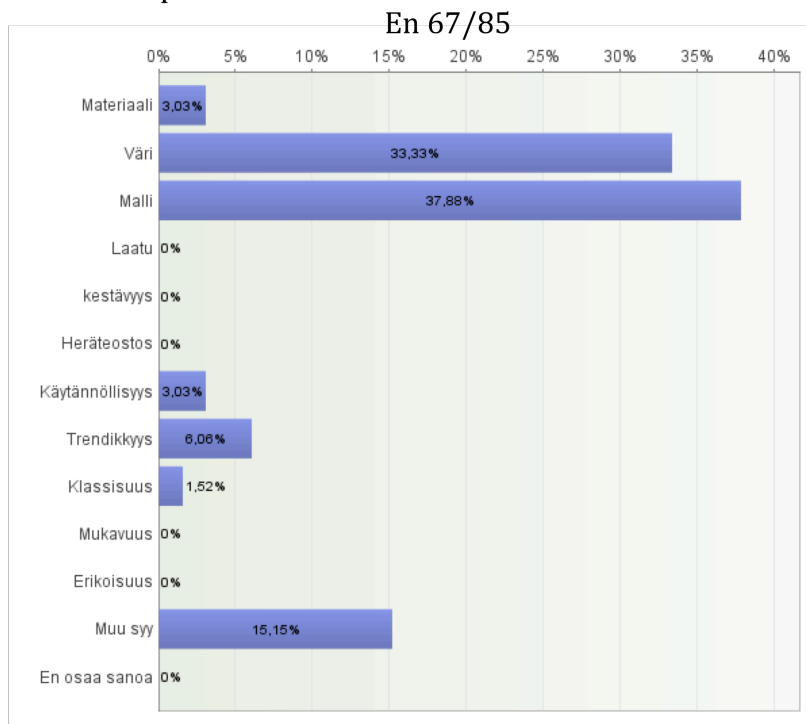|	
Materiaali	2,99%
Väri	40,3%
Malli	35,82%
Laatu	0%
Kestävyys	1,49%
Heräteostos	1,49%
Käytännöllisyys	2,99%
Trendikkyys	0%
Klassisuus	0%
Mukavuus	0%
Erikoisuus	2,99%
Muu syy	11,94%
En osaa sanoa	0%
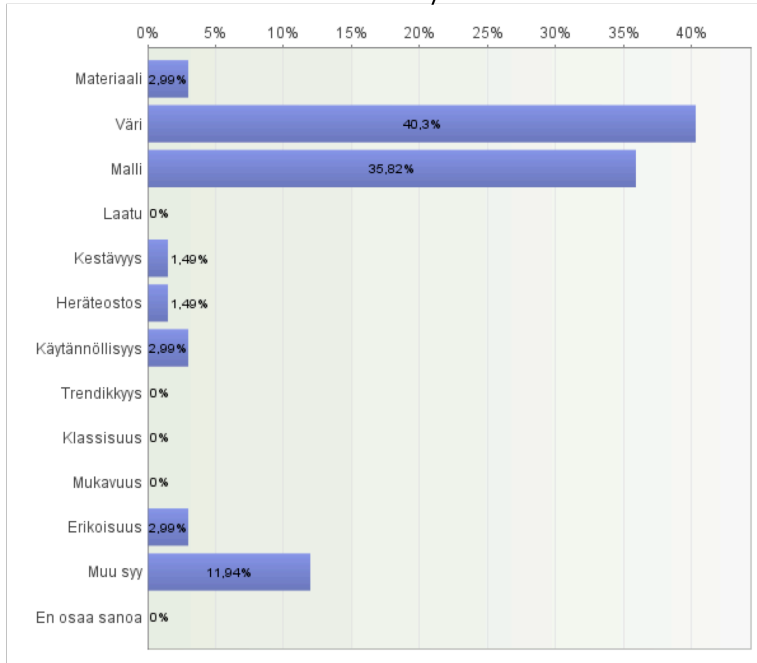
Graph 9. Mark the features why you did or did not buy the dress in part 18. (see product in appendix 2 question 18.) 78,82% did not want to buy product.

As the questionnaire did not include separately the option pattern I include patterns in the same option with colour. In the open-ended answers I found out that mostly the consumers chose option colour when they wanted to refer to patterns. Patterns were for most in the questionnaire the most crucial fact, which affected their interest in buying the product. In Cristelle & Co collection the prints were either liked or disliked. As an example in question 15 (Appendix 2, product shown in question 14) consumers wanted to buy the shirt because of its pattern, especially people aged 20 to 30. However in question 18 (picture 9), which presented a dress, for most consumers the fact why they did not want to buy the product was the pattern. The dress has a bright yellow pattern with a darker decoration. (Appendix 2, question18.) If this analysis is reflected on the interviews assignment 4, where the interviewees had to choose which products they wanted to buy and which not, they mostly did not want to choose the products with patterns. This can be interpreted that the patterns in Cristelle & Co collection are not consistently the most successful ones. In the collection I made I left out patterns for this reason, as they proved to be risky to add in the collection. (Appendix 3) In conclusion the material and the pattern choices in Cristelle & Co collections are not the most successful ones, as this was mostly the reason why the

consumers did not want to buy the products. In Graph 10, which presented a shirt this was also the factor that made the consumers reject the product. When I checked the open-ended answers in question 27 (appendix 2) there was one consumer who said that the materials make the garments look shapeless. Therefore in the future Cristelle & Co should change the material and pattern choices in their new collection and choose patterns, which are more neutral and commercial to fit for a wider customer group.

13. Merkitse ne tuotteen ominaisuudet joiden perusteella annoit vastauksesi kohtaan 12.
En 67/85

Ominaisuus	Prosentti
Materiaali	3,03%
Väri	33,33%
Malli	37,88%
Laatu	0%
kestävyys	0%
Heräteostos	0%
Käytännöllisyys	3,03%
Trendikkyys	6,06%
Klassisuus	1,52%
Mukavuus	0%
Erikoisuus	0%
Muu syy	15,15%
En osaa sanoa	0%

Graph 10. Mark the features why you did or did not buy the product in part 12. (see appendix 2, question 12) 78,82% did not want to buy the product.

Brand

Brand theme covers questions from competitors to the image consumers structured based on the shop space and the marketing material with the comparison of these two. Here I had the same result, which I also got from the interviews, that the marketing material builds a different image of the brand than the shop space and the collection. In the graphs 11 and 12 can be seen that the percentages, which I marked in red, show how the maximum percentage change between the marketing material and the shop space. This is not surprising that the marketing material communicates a slightly more radical image of the

brand, but in Cristelle & Co case it should be considered whether communication through the marketing material appeals to their loyal-customer group and target customer.

	1	2	3	4	5		Yhteensä	Keskiarvo
Laadukas	11,76%	44,71%	37,65%	5,88%	0%	Huonolaatuinen	85	2,38
Edullinen	1,18%	14,12%	38,82%	38,82%	7,06%	Hintava	85	3,36
Konservatiivinen	0%	23,53%	40%	31,76%	4,71%	Moderni	85	3,18
Kokeileva	1,18%	29,41%	32,94%	23,53%	12,94%	Tavallinen	85	3,18
Naisellinen	46,43%	42,86%	5,95%	3,57%	1,19%	Maskuliininen	84	1,7
Värikäs	18,82%	56,47%	14,12%	9,41%	1,18%	Väritön	85	2,18
Trendikäs	7,06%	50,59%	31,76%	10,59%	0%	Ajaton	85	2,46
Klassinen	0%	23,53%	48,24%	28,24%	0%	Muodikas	85	3,05
Arkinen	7,14%	20,24%	46,43%	26,19%	0%	Juhlava	84	2,92
Business	0%	12,94%	30,59%	49,41%	7,06%	Casual	85	3,51
Leikkisä	3,57%	41,67%	28,57%	19,05%	7,14%	Tylsä	84	2,85
Suomalainen	7,06%	5,88%	45,88%	35,29%	5,88%	Kansainvälinen	85	3,27
Yhteensä	8,65%	30,48%	33,43%	23,5%	3,93%		1017	2,83

Graph 11. Question 20. Evaluate marketing material- image with adjectives.

	1	2	3	4	5		Yhteensä	Keskiarvo
Laadukas	9,41%	51,76%	27,06%	9,41%	2,35%	Huonolaatuinen	85	2,44
Edullinen	3,53%	12,94%	32,94%	42,35%	8,24%	Hintava	85	3,39
Konservatiivinen	2,35%	14,12%	38,82%	41,18%	3,53%	Moderni	85	3,29
Kokeileva	1,18%	41,18%	31,76%	20%	5,88%	Tavallinen	85	2,88
Naisellinen	27,06%	62,35%	8,24%	2,35%	0%	Maskuliininen	85	1,86
Värikäs	4,71%	31,76%	37,65%	22,35%	3,53%	Väritön	85	2,88
Trendikäs	7,06%	45,88%	36,47%	9,41%	1,18%	Ajaton	85	2,52
Klassinen	1,18%	20%	44,71%	30,59%	3,53%	Muodikas	85	3,15
Arkinen	3,53%	23,53%	38,82%	34,12%	0%	Juhlava	85	3,04
Business	1,18%	7,06%	32,94%	44,71%	14,12%	Casual	85	3,64
Leikkisä	11,76%	41,18%	30,59%	10,59%	5,88%	Tylsä	85	2,58
Suomalainen	4,71%	10,59%	43,53%	32,94%	8,24%	Kansainvälinen	85	3,29
Yhteensä	6,47%	30,2%	33,63%	25%	4,71%		1020	2,91

Graph 12. Question 22. Evaluate shop space material with adjectives.

Based on the Cristelle & Co brand strategy book the marketing material is consistent with the original image, however does not in my opinion appeal to their biggest consumer group of women aged 34-55 and 55+, which are Stockmann's two biggest age groups covering 50% of sales. (Information from Luisa laine 2012)
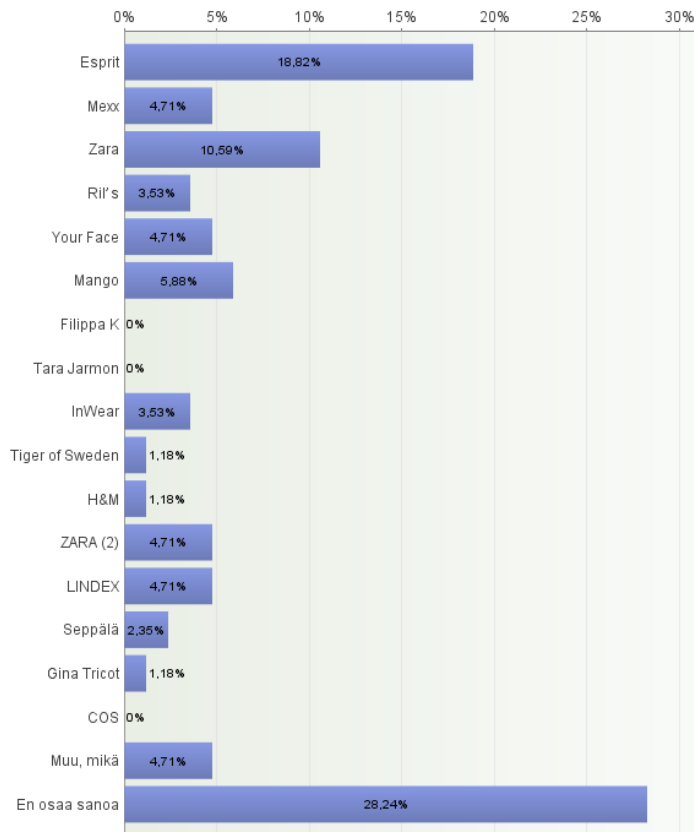
Graph 13. Question 27. Webropol analysis.

In graph 13, question 27 where the consumers had to choose which brand Cristelle & Co resembles the most, the most common answer was; En osaa sanoa (28,24%), which means no answer or cannot say in Finnish. This tells something about how difficult it is for the consumers to compare the Cristelle & Co brand with other brands in the market. This means either that the collection does not have a clear image or is just a mixture of different type of styles, which makes it hard to fit into one certain image, or that creating a perception of what a brand is like is not possible within an online questionnaire. However during the interviews the test interviewees had the exact same problem. Also in the Cristelle & Co brand strategy a few brand examples include for example COS which was also in the questionnaire, however none of the consumers picked this brand as an equivalent for Cristelle & Co. 18,82% of the interviewees chose Esprit to be the closest to Cristelle & Co. (Graph 7) In Stockmann department store Cristelle & Co is also situated right next to this brand, so this answer did not go so far from the truth and can be seen as a positive factor. Although when I excluded the age 20-30 out from the answers, then there was 0% for Esprit. However one factor that needs to be taken into consideration in the

analysis of this question is the fact that the consumers might have picked the brands that they know and find familiar, not necessarily what they think Cristelle & Co resembles the most.

Questions from 6-9 were about evaluating the price of certain products from Cristelle & Co, and here the consumers were able to guess quite closely to how valuable the products of this brand are. (Appendix 2) A small amount of the answers were targeted over the actual price range. In the interviews the perception of the brand was slightly more expensive than what came through in the questionnaire. However even though the consumers chose the prices in a moderate scale, still in the adjective assignment they considered the brand to be more expensive on scale 1-5 as number 4. Adding to this the marketing material lifted the "expensive" image even higher to 42,35%. Whether a pricy image is good or not, is hard to tell.

Summary survey

In many questions I did not add the possibility to choose I do not know, or indecisive. This feedback I got from the open-ended answers in the questionnaire. This shows especially in the question 26 when I asked whether in the end they would buy Cristelle & Co products. Most of them informed me in the open-ended questions that they possibly could buy them or maybe could buy them, based on the circumstances and the collection, so I am sure that if there would have been an option maybe, this would have been the most chosen one, however I can only speculate. What is confusing is that questions 10. (No-answers 84,52%)12. (No-answers 78,82%) 14. (No-answers 58,82%) 16. (No-answers 69,42%) and 18. (No-answers 78,82%) were about whether they would or would not buy the product in the picture, and in most cases the answer was no, as can be seen in the percentages. Shop space was over 50%, in average 74,08% said no to these 5 products, but still 64,71% (question 26) said they would buy Cristelle & Co products. (Appendix 4.) Apparently in the end the brand image of the label was relatively appealing and it did raise some interest even outside the Stockmann loyal customers.

5. Research Outcome

5.1. Comparison

Already in the beginning of this research it was quite clear what the problem in Cristelle & Co brand was. The problems became clearer when the research advanced first through the interviews and was then finally clarified in questionnaire. From my point of view and what came up from this research is that the brand image is not consistent with the original brand strategy of Cristelle & Co. Based on the questionnaire and the interview, there were different kind of images. At first I was wondering why I get two types of answers in the adjective task. In the interview what mostly came through was that Cristelle & Co is a serious, feminine businesswoman, and in the questionnaire the emphasis was more on colourful, trendy casual collection. Then I figured, that this only adds to the notion that Cristelle & Co is lacking of a consistent brand image, and their collections and the style changes every season. Autumn season was business and serious while the spring season is more casual and trendy. Inside the seasonal collection the marketing of the brand was inconsistent as the marketing images were still communicating the original marketing strategy of Cristelle & Co, but was not followed by the design of the collection. This I realized in the interview as the answers in the part 3 gave different information on the brand image than in part 1 and 2, where I presented the shop space. (Appendix 1)

Even though Cristelle & Co is set to provide the trendy key items of the season, this does not mean, that they should lack the Cristelle soul. The brand needs a line to follow, which also makes the customer's choice easier; they know what they get when they buy Cristelle & Co products, but are also offered something extra, the key items of the season. Therefore doing a research with two different seasons was actually a benefit to the research. Although what needs to be taken into consideration that the interview was conducted with only 7 people and the questionnaire with 85, which does not necessarily give such a reliable outcome.

In table 14 I included the outcome of the interview and questionnaire comparing it to the original brand strategy of Cristelle & Co. The last section is where I present my proposal for the new Cristelle & Co brand image and line.

Criteria	Cristelle before (intended brand image)	Cristelle interview	Cristelle Questionnaire	Cristelle future (based on research)
User (persona) - age	Individual Self-confident Fashion oriented	40-60+ (See marketing)	30-60 (See marketing)	Stockmann loyal customer 30+, mainly 30-50+ 2 personas: S-Stockmann loyal H- Trendsetter
Marketing	Edgy, attitude, Dressing with a point of view	Young 20-30, sporty girl, social and energetic, casual	Modern, trendy, feminine	Woman with a confidence and elegance
Style	Modern, individual, up-to-date, style with a feminine twist	Business, Feminine, Classic	Casual, Feminine, Trendy	Feminine, clean, casual business, Simplicity, quality
Collection - colour	Key looks, key colours, trends and silhouette	Basic wear, with some special products. For older consumers 40+ Grey and dark colours, special patterns	Basic wear. Prints and special models. Colourful collection with special patterns	Basic wear with key silhouette and colours of the season. Fit for office wear (Stockmann loyal customer) Neutral colours, minimum amount of patterns
Brand	Young, trendy and affordable	Young, business woman	Trendy, young and innovative	Clean and graphic, but feminine

Table 14. Comparison.

As the idea of this research was to find out how a fashion designer can make use of this kind of research, I try to take into consideration the information I gathered from the interview and questionnaire, when it comes to the new collection. I concentrate on the direct feedback of the consumers. As it is easier to change the brand according to the image perceived by the consumers.

What came through from the data was that Cristelle & Co is mostly seen as a brand for women +30, preferably 40-60. However I want to keep the soul of Cristelle & Co as a brand that provides the key looks, trends and silhouette of the season, but reduce the quota to the minimum. Therefore the base of the collection is on basic styles, but there is the key looks part to attract customers and provide them with the latest trends. This new direction aims to please the loyal customers of Stockmann. Which, according to the interview were less enthusiastic to buy Cristelle & Co products, than those outside loyal customer base.

The age is not the emphasis of the collection rather focusing on what the brand stands for, what are the key adjectives that describe it? What is the Cristelle woman like? As many in the interview pointed out, women aged 40-60 are not necessarily all alike. The older age groups can enjoy the same style as the younger generation, mostly it is all about the cut and size chart of the collection. In the collection I tried not to exclude the loyal customer base of Cristelle & Co, which is currently older women, but to create a cleaner and more consistent look for Cristelle & Co collection. Rather than creating special, new and fresh, I focused on creating a classic and trendy collection, which would suit a wide group of consumers, not just those who look for something different. Where consumers could find something casual to wear at the office, yet something comfy and stylish for their spare time. The final collection is presented in appendix 3.

In the new collection I tried to avoid risk taking. As a private label I figured the most important thing would be to sell in high volumes, rather than creating special products, which might appeal to a marginal target group. Especially in economical downturn the fashion industry creates classic, safe style, which appeals to a wider consumer group, rather than taking extra risks. This does not mean that the collection needs to be boring or lack trendiness and style, on the contrary. Even though in the questionnaire question 27, some consumers found the fact that the brand has some special products a positive fact, there were almost as many answers where this was seen negative that the products are "too special" this was said to make the products hard to combine with other garments. (Appendix 2) Even though there are customers who appreciate design that is different and new, it does not mean it necessarily fits for a private label, which wants to sell in high volumes.

According to the interviews and the feedback I got from there the sizing of the collection would have to be changed to a bigger one, as the concern was whether the right sizes could be found for older age groups. However what needs to be taken into consideration is that Stockmann does have other private labels too and this decision might collide with the other brands. This research does not cover the other private labels, which is a hindrance when it comes to the whole picture of Stockmann private label brand development in ladies fashion sector.

User-centred design enables to target the right customer group and possibly provide them with products with more meaning. This might bring also a sustainable aspect to the products, as there are not so many products, which do not appeal to any of the target group and therefore are not left in the store. Sinco could also be used for prototyping new products, and in the early stage evaluating whether it is valuable for customer. Prototyping is a vital part of the design process, where new ideas can be tested, evaluated and optimised, before committing budgets and resources to final (and costly) delivery stages. 'Prototyping' the making, modelling or 'mocking up', in tangible or visible form, of particular stages of the design process in order to think about the design idea further. (Best 2010, 48)

Strategic design is mainly meant for the recognition of the brand or the 'appearance' of the brand. This form of design is closely linked to the brand identity (the core values) and is relevant to all forms of design that are used both internally and externally for the identification of the brand. Strategic design has a long-term character and is relevant to so-called 'permanent-media': the logo, the product form and packaging/house style. (Riezebos 2003, 132) The most important aim here is consistency in appearance, resulting in consistency in recognition. This from the researcher's point of view is what is lacking in Cristelle & Co currently and should be improved in the future brand development.

Market uncertainty reflects the fact that before a new product is actually launched, there will exist some degree of doubt as to whether consumers perceive the benefits that the new product/products can provide to be large enough to offset any adoption obstacles-such as switching costs and (risks of product failure.) (Loch & Kavadias. Elie Ofek, 49-50) As Cristelle & Co is going through a change in their product strategy; this might bring out these kinds of threats before mentioned. Conducting a market research with a customer

survey diminishes the risks of the concept change, and also concludes the customer in the process.

When designing the collection I used the information I acquired through this research, but also conducted fashion forecasting, which is the practice of predicting upcoming trends based on past and present style-related information, the interpretation and analysis of the motivation behind a trend. This I did in order to bring the key trend elements to the collection with the needs of the consumers. This combination enables me to design and later for the company to produce products that consumers will want to purchase and profits can be made. (Rousso 2012, 7) However the difference of a trend report is that a report is an account describing in detail something that already exists or has happened. (Rousso 2012, 7) Through a variety of methods, fashion forecasting is the practice of looking for clues that help in predicting the mood, actions, and retail habits of consumers by focusing on their current wants and needs and then anticipating consumers' future wishes, which I found out through the research I conducted. Successful forecasting depends on up-to-date information and sensitivity to the ever-changing desires of fashion consumers. Forecasters use up-to-date market information, and fashion knowledge developed from years of watching fashions come and go. Fashion forecasters or trend forecasters make predictions based on an array of observations, data, and fashion intuitions. (Rousso 2012, 8-9) In this sense the Sinco-interview could be a part of fashion forecasting or at least a base for a forecaster to use the data for analysis of sales and consumer data. (Rousso 2012, 9)

Underhill on the science of shopping is going through how to observe people while buying. (Underhill 2009, 62) Sinco is able to create a similar observation channel. Underhill says however that observation is best to be done on the floor of the store, but I believe, and the feedback I got from the interviewees, Sinco is able to create a real-life feeling outside the actual space, therefore could be used as a ground to conduct this kind of research also in the future and should be considered as a tool for conducting further research in the field of fashion design.

5.2. Conclusion

To answer main research question, the image of Cristelle & Co according to the consumer research is scattered. Forming an altogether coherent image of the brand is not possible. However this proves that there is work to be done to improve the image of this brand, and making it clear to the consumers to facilitate their choice. However there are some qualities, which makes Cristelle & Co what it is. It is, without a doubt, a feminine collection, which includes both basic wear and something different, which could be called the key looks. One end result of this research is also the final collection, which is consistent with the new image I drew together based on the research and my view as a designer. The final collection can be found in the appendix 3. A positive factor what came out from this research was how the Sinco-laboratory proved to be beneficial for conducting research also in clothing design, as this has not been tested before. Service design in general, and what is written of it, could in many ways be utilized in marketing and especially in clothing industry. Service design methods are quite flexible and a perfect base for co-design and bringing the user or the customer into the design or the brand development process.

Design thinking, included as a practical instrument to the process of improving the brand image, proved to be fruitful as it pointed out the inconsistency of the brand image and also gave some elements and keys for the designing process. However the role of the user or consumer could have been more valuable, if the Sinco situation was structured in a different way giving more space to the input of the user and not just asking the opinion of the consumer of the current brand. For example asking the interviewee to give their own notion of what the user persona of the brand would be like, or in the smart board assignment draw their own idea of what kind of products the collection would consist of. What kind of products they would like to add the collection? What key garments they think are missing from the selection? Design managers could utilize sinco-laboratory as a method in order to test the coherence of the design and the brand image of a clothing brand.

5.3. Reflections

This study gave me, as a designer, the understanding of a user; what are their needs, and how they see a brand. This should help me whether I perceive a designer career. Sinco laboratory as a method enables to design better for the specific needs of a target group, and to keep a clear line for collection design.

What could have been done better? The questionnaire was the first I have conducted in Webropol, and the science of structuring a questionnaire was quite new to me. Even though I tested the questionnaire during class with at least 15 people, there were still gaps, which I was not able to realize until I had already conducted the questionnaire. Also the Sinco interviews could have needed a couple of more test rounds, before conducting the interviews with the actual interviewees, as they were not consistent in the end. A larger quota of interviewees would have brought more grounded data. Both of the methods were new to me, and especially since this kind of research was the first one in Sinco, it would have needed further testing before the actual performance. However this was also a matter of time, as the interviews were supposed to be finished during spring when I was still in Rovaniemi and was able to use the Sinco laboratory for my own purposes.

In the questionnaire, as one of the consumers wrote, there was no information on the materials of the garments, which were in the questionnaire. This I do acknowledge, and in the future with this type of questionnaire it is important to mark also the product information, because for most consumers this makes a difference whether they buy a product or not, the decision is hardly ever made only based on the looks or the colour of the product. Photos used in the questionnaire were not in such high quality that interpreting the material only based on the photos could have been possible.

One part of taking the consumer in the design thinking process is to include them in the prototyping phase. However before this Lockwood recommends first developing an understanding of the consumer based on fieldwork. This could have been integrated to this research so that firstly the questionnaire (survey) could have worked as a base to conduct this information on the consumer, and later the target group could have been invited to the Sinco interview to take part in the prototyping and development process.

All in all interviews went as planned, however there were new parts and tasks coming to the interview along the way. This can be seen so that some of the interviews do not have the exact same structure. There should have been more test rounds, because some questions I forgot to ask from everybody, and it was not always systematic. There were new ideas coming from the interviewees themselves, which I could have used later on in all interviews. However if this would be considered as a test round, then the improvements could be integrated to the future interviews. However I find that Sinco laboratory is full of possibilities and there would come up new ways from the interviewees themselves to add to the given agenda in each interview. This is also the positive aspect of the laboratory as it frequently helps to find new areas, which are not necessarily what I considered in the beginning. Sinco laboratory is interactive so it would be impossible to keep all the interviews the same, as people are different and they are creating new ways to find out information through the laboratory. The quota of seven (7) people is not enough to give reliable information on the topic. However this is the reason why the questionnaire was conducted to give a quantitative back up for the interviews, and prove whether it would be possible to come to the same conclusion with these two research methods.

Sinco laboratory was able to give data to back up the hypothesis, which was that the brand image is not consistent and does not fit to the original target group set by Stockmann. The Sinco laboratory proved to be suitable also for conducting research within fashion area, even though its main purpose is the ground of service design. This interview was meant to find out how the brand is now, but I could have used it more to find out together with the interviews, how it could be improved. For example, based on part 1 and part 2 the interviewees could have been asked to describe how they see the user of the brand, and what kind of marketing material they think the brand could have, before actually showing the marketing material. Additionally there could have been asked to create the image on the smart board. Possibilities for further assignments and areas for further research are endless. When I was left to design the collection, there were not that many strings to grasp to use in the new creation of the brand. However I believe I was able to design a consistent collection fitting the image of Stockmann. I collected sufficient amount of data through this research, however the problem was that in the length of a Pro Gradu thesis I was not able to go through all the data and the analysis includes only a fraction of the information collected.

5.4. Further Research

Based on my knowledge acquired through this research I find that Sinco laboratory could work as a research ground for further projects in clothing and textile industry. Sinco-laboratory can simulate a space, such as a room, therefore it could be utilized for example in interior design. The laboratory provides different kinds of technology, which makes it a flexible complex that can be modified for different projects also for fashion research. Especially the smart board could work as a tool in the sketching phase of a collection.

If this research would have advanced, the new collection and the success of it could have been tested in the Sinco laboratory and together with the test group developed a new and coherent image for the new Cristelle & Co brand. This type of research using Sinco laboratory could be used when developing a new brand, structuring the brand image and finding out how the new collection works. This could be done for example providing a test group, which could test the success of the brand before even launching it. As this research was done with only seven interviewees I suggest that in the future the minimum amount of test people should be at least 15 persons to provide valuable research data with sufficient amount of participants. This in my opinion provides a more truthful result and then the quantitative part, such as a questionnaire, is not necessary to conduct.

Private labels as brands could be further explored especially in the field of clothing, as they are becoming more popular and are seen as an important economic asset for a store. Private labels are an important asset for any retailer, and should be treated as proper brands. Design thinking and using it in fashion and in the management of fashion would be beneficial to improve image of a fashion brand, and research in this field is quite scarce. Design management in clothing area is rarely mentioned, but used in many companies. Clothing design should be seen as one field of design, which needs a strategic management to form a coherent image, and this could be further explored in future research conducted in clothing industry.

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Picture references

Picture 1.Photographer: Marianna Suhonen.30.04.2013. Sinco laboratory, Rovaniemi TTK.

Picture 2.Photographer: Marianna Suhonen. 30.04.2013.Sinco laboratory, Rovaniemi TTK.

Picture 3.Photographer: Marianna Suhonen 30.04.2013. Sinco laboratory, Rovaniemi TTK

Picture 4.Photographer: Marianna Suhonen 30.04.2013. Sinco laboratory, Rovaniemi TTK.

Graph 5. Webropol Analysis. Question 21. 30.09.2013

Graph 6. Webropol Analysis. Question 23. 30.09.2013

Graph 7. Webropol Analysis. Question 11. 30.09.2013

Graph 8. Webropol Analysis. Loyal customers. 30.09.2013

Graph 9. Webropol Analysis. Question 19. 30.09.2013

Graph 10. Webropol Analysis. Question 13. 30.09.2013

Graph 11. Webropol Analysis. Question 22. 30.09.2013

Graph 12.Webropol Analysis. Question 20. 30.09.2013

Graph 13. Webropol Analysis. Question 27. 30.09.2013

Table 14. Comparison. 6.11.2013