ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN FASHION AND BRANDING

by Irene van der Heijden
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN FASHION AND BRANDING

Research Report

International Fashion & Branding

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For my graduation project I decided to combine the finalising of my education at the AMFI with my passion for entrepreneurship and make a start on the future. The following report describes the process to realise a company. The company is called ‘A little bird told me...’ and can be seen as an “idea-factory”; it is a company that keeps her eyes and ears open and absorbs information, signs and signals, to create new fresh concepts out of it. Those signs turned into ideas turned into concepts will eventually turn into brands.

The company will start off its branding passion by realising three different brands that all need to undergo phases to become viable. This ‘sign-becomes-brand’ process is clearly described for each of the three brands; from idea to prototyping/sampling to production to distribution. The first brand realised by A little bird told me... is MANCHE. MANCHE is a laptop sleeve with a sense of style. It distinguishes itself from other laptop sleeves by having sense of style and always is in fashion. The second brand is LaZe is a new brand that responds to the trend that had forms itself out of our economical slug; it will sell products that adds comforts to your home, in form of the cosy blanket, the warm cardigan, the perfect lounge pants and the ugly, but more than comfortable woollen socks. The third brand, SLEAP, is a brand in its early stage of development. It is a brand that had sprung from a love for art and a day of bed sheet shopping; the day it turned out bed sheets are usually quite boring.

The conclusions derived from this research report, are based on the process I went through the past couple of months and the experience I have gained by daring and doing.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>01. Introduction</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>02. A little bird told me... // The Brand</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03. A little bird told me... starting a company</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.01 Entrepreneurship in theory</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.02 Entrepreneurship put into practice</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.03 A little bird told me... put into practice</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.03.01 Dutch Chamber of Commerce</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.03.02 Administration</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.03.03 Opening a bank account</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.03.04 Promotion and communication</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03.03.05. Registration of Trademarks</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04. MANCHE</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.01 MANCHE // The brand</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.02 MANCHE put into practice</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.02.01 The name</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.02.02 Target groups</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.02.03 Product and production</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.02.04 Price</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.02.05 Place</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04.02.06 Promotion and communication</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme; Entrepreneurship in fashion and branding

I have always known I would one day be an entrepreneur. I have seriously started to focus on starting a business from the first day I entered the Amsterdam Fashion Institute in 2006. I knew AMFI and HVA would open doors for me to learn all about my specialisation concepts and branding, and offer me opportunities to actually start my own company. I have had the taste of private enterprising during the Minor Entrepreneurship, and have learned a lot during my internship at Responsible.

A little bird told me...
...we live in a world where everything happens for a reason. People are individuals and groups at the same time. We want to be part of a group: a society, and be in tune with one another. But at the same time we all seem to have an urge to be that unique individual personality. To realise differentiation we focus on mentality, ambition and style. Brands are ever so usable to become a member of a tribe, and simultaneously distinguish yourself from others.

For me this is a world full of opportunities and open doors. Brands and products that are adaptable to any kind of target audience are challenging and ever inspiring.

My mind is a busy little bee. I always have a fountain of ideas splashing my mind. Small ideas, big ideas, non-feasible ideas... And every once in a while very usable and most likely, even profitable ideas.

Problem analyses
For my graduation product, I want to combine my ambition in entrepreneurship, with my specialisation in fashion & branding and passion in concepts. I have a bunch of product ideas and brand ideas; with the start of my own company I will be able to place those brands. A company that will allow them to have solid ground to start and flourish from, a company that kicks of with three brands.

Research question
How do I set up this company and realise three brands?

Objective
The objective of my graduation project will be to start a company that makes it possible to construct and realise the ideas I have now, and the ideas that will probably form themselves in the (direct) future. The end result will not be a conventional business plan, but an actual business. In the end I will be able to show the status of the company at that moment, the process I have gone through to get there, and the company’s future goals and ambitions. An additional personal motive for this project is that I want to maintain this company after graduating.

The end product
The end products of my final thesis will consist of three products. First there will be the research report, wherein I describe the process I have gone through to rea-
The research report for my graduation project will inform you on the process I went through to realise my company and its new brands.

**Research methods**

The research methods I have used are both field research and desk research. Before starting my company and developing the new brands, I have searched for information on the internet. Especially the Dutch Chamber of Commerce has a huge database with information on their website. After reading loads of facts and figures, I have started asking around for information amongst friends, family and acquaintances.

**Research report**

The research report for my graduation project will inform you on the process I went through to realise my company and its new brands.

The second chapter will include the 'company/brandbook'. The third chapter will include the 'checklist' I have used to actually start the entrepreneurship, i.e. the legal background of starting a company. The first brand real brand of my company will be on the agenda in chapter four. As will the second brand in chapter five, and the third brand in chapter six. The seventh chapter is about the future perspectives of my company and its three brands and also includes the financial plan. The conclusion of this all can be read in chapter eight.

"Even great towers start at ground level" - Chinese saying
Imagine a factory hall with only one conveyor belt running through it... A little bird told me... (also known as ALBTM) is a company that can be seen as an idea-factory. There is only one conveyor belt running through that factory, but that conveyor belt is always switched on, and there are always new creations on it. First one in line is almost falling off, and ready to be launched. Second idea is getting there soon. Third idea is making its run too... And after that third... there are more; many more. A little bird told me... is a company that creates brands.
**Vision**
* A little bird told me... has ideas. Ideas that seem to come from nowhere, anywhere, everywhere. Because the signs are everywhere; identify them while sitting in the train, while doing groceries, while having a drink, while surfing the internet, between the lines of the newspapers and magazines, while listening to what people actually have to say... Signs are everywhere and signs can show and pinpoint significant changes in behaviour. Those changes are key, restructures in people's behaviour, offer opportunities and form new ideas.

**Mission**
* ALBTM has a way to pick up signs, identifies the changes, uses those changes to recognise opportunities and take those opportunities to form ideas. This is based on intuition and intuition only. No need for surveys, information is just there to pick up and pick out. That is where the obsession to always know the ins and outs comes to use. This curious company is first in line to make out changes and turn them into ideas. With the knowledge of people's behaviour and with adding branding skills, those ideas can be turned into brands and products. It makes ALBTM an 'idea-factory'; put in one or more signs, spot the opportunity, form idea, add branding skills and put brand in jar. The product or brand is ready to hit the market. From that point on, intuition and skills must be trusted.

**Ambition**
* The conveyor belt has been installed, the jars are awaiting and a few ideas are already approaching the exit of the factory and ready to mix and mingle with the world. This factory is ready to test its products and brands on the market. It will launch its first brand MANCHÉ within a few weeks, has planned to launch its second brand at the end of the summer, and the third brand, SLEAP is halfway of that conveyor belt as well. The next challenge will be to trust its intuition and find a way to the actual market. A little bird told me... is planning on having its brands and products in at least 30 offline and online stores before the end of this year. 2011 will be a year for new opportunities, new ideas and new brands.
Core Value; Information Collector
Core Value; Curious & Observant
Core Value; Putting things together – mix and mingle
**Brand (company) Personality**

*What kind of person would A little bird told me...if it were an actual person? After analysing the following brand template and effectiveness model you will definitely be able to see this company as a person.*

**Brand (company) template**

A brand template shows three types of brand (company) values; the functional and emotional personal features, and expressive brand (company) value. But also; the brand (company) essence. The brand essence is the most important value for the brand, or in this case company. The essence for ALBTM is “Keep that conveyor belt with ideas running”. *A little bird told me...* is an idea factory and will need to produce ideas, while the first brands are rolling of. It will use its skills it has picked up at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute and the Minor Entrepreneurship (Hogeschool van Amsterdam), those are its functional personal features. Secondly, by revealing emotional personal features – intuitively and curious. Thirdly it will express itself as attentive, observant and skilled.
What kind of person would A little bird told me... be?

**Personality**

What kind of person would *A little bird told me...* be? It would be a person you want to share your experience, feelings and emotions with. It is someone that is there to listen to you, as she is very attentive and observant. It uses its intuition to get that information. With that information this someone will find a way to discover your needs and wants, and will have ideas to fit those. With its skills it will be able to actually give form to those ideas and creates brands.

What would *ALBTM* do? This person would be so curious; it would probably be searching for information and facts all the time. It would be out on the train, spending time in the park, talking to everyone to find out what is going on in the world, and where are all the changes? It would be surfing the Internet, reading newspapers and magazines and watching the news on the telly all the time. It is a person that is hungry for facts and figures.
Imagine a factory hall with only one conveyer belt running through it... Well; that is my head.
As said in the introduction of this report, I have always wanted to be an entrepreneur. I am not sure why I feel that need – because I grew up in an entrepreneurial family or is it in my DNA? Point is that it just is. I have always felt the need to be on my own two feet, and make my own decisions in business. But to start a business you have to have an idea. And indeed... I have one. I have more then one, I have a lot. I have decided to create an idea that can encompass multiple ideas. That is how the idea for ‘A little bird told me...’ was born. It is a company that can be seen as an idea-factory. There is only one conveyer belt running through that factory, but that conveyer belt is always switched on, and there are always new creations on it. First one in line is almost falling off, and ready to be launched. Second idea is getting there soon. Third idea is making its run too... And after that third... there are more, many more.
Before starting a business, with all its legal obligations and financial pitfalls, I figured it would be wise to do some (read: a lot) of research on what entrepreneurship actually implies. This chapter includes a short piece on entrepreneurship in theory, a short piece on entrepreneurship put into practice, which includes interviews with my personal enterprising friends, and even more important, my own entrepreneurial adventure at its beginning steps are summed up in the third paragraph of this chapter.
Entrepreneurship in theory

Entrepreneurship is a process whereby, in my case, an individual, uses organised efforts to pursue opportunities to create value and growth by fulfilling wants and needs through innovations and uniqueness, no matter what resources the entrepreneur currently has. This is the definition as quoted from the widely respected book ‘Management’ by Stephen P. Robbins. According to this book there are three important themes can be seen in this definition of entrepreneurship, namely; the pursuing of opportunities, innovation and growth.

The first one, the pursue of opportunities, implies that entrepreneurship is about pursuing environmental trends and changes that no one else has seen or paid attention to. Innovation, the second theme, involves changing, revolutionising, transforming, or introducing new products or services or new ways of doing business. And the final theme is about growth. Entrepreneurs pursue growth, as they are not content for their organisations to stay small or to stay the same size. Entrepreneurs want their businesses to grow and work very hard to pursue growth as they continually look for trends and continue to innovate new products and new approaches.

Entrepreneurial ventures are organisations that are pursuing opportunities, are characterised by innovative practices, and have growth and profitability as their main goals. Being entrepreneurial means being innovative and seeking out new opportunities. Even though entrepreneurial ventures may start small, they pursue growth.

To sum this theory up; “Entrepreneurs risk time and money in pursuit of opportunities to create value, and grow through innovations.”

This theory is one that I personally love. Growing up as the daughter and sister of entrepreneurs I have seen that this theory is the basic outline of entrepreneurship. Pursuing opportunities, innovation and growth are characterising my father and brother. Also my good friends and former supervisors of my internship, both of them brilliant entrepreneurs, meet those definitions.

A similar definition was stated a few years ago by then state secretary Bruno Bruins. Although this speech was pronounced four years ago, I think he made a good point. He stated that business has changed in the past decennium. We nowadays must not think of the classic businesspersons; that time seems to be over. We must think of modern business; the entrepreneurship. Small, flexible companies are the trend. It is the turn of small, flexible and innovative, small businesses. As Mr. Bruins calls it; “It is the era of entrepreneurial economy”. In the old economy, big companies used to focus primarily on continuity, in the new entrepreneurial economy small companies focus on change. And, as Mr. Bruins opinionated in his speech...
It is also the world of entrepreneurial professionals. A world of people that see opportunities and exploit opportunities. People that take risks and try things. Undertaking is fun, and gives opportunities in ambition and creativity. “Do not shy away from risks”, is his advice.

03.02 Entrepreneurship put into practice

So this is the theory of entrepreneurship. But what about the reality; the real story of entrepreneurship? How do actual entrepreneurs experience entrepreneurship? Obviously entrepreneurship is about taking risks and about the uncertainty of the future, the market and, not unimportant, income. There is a lot to loose when you start a business and when pronouncing plans to start a company, people seem to feel the need of summing up pitfalls, telling you that at least 50% of starters failure within the first year or that “it is not at easy as it seems”. It is unbelievable how many people think they know all about entrepreneurship, most of them armchair critics, with unasked for say-so’s. But, someone told me once to never take advise from someone who has not had your kind of trouble, so I will not.

I have questioned a bunch of entrepreneurs that I know personally, and have read loads of interviews of established and starting entrepreneurs in the magazine “Starters Magazine”, published by the Chamber of Commerce to actually have a true and objective view on the life of entrepreneurship. Advice that is based on actual experience.

And to be realistic; entrepreneurship is not all sunshine and roses. One of the most memorable tips I got was from Kees-Jan Diepstraten; he told me to be well prepared, but to never have the illusion to have everything covered. “You will bump into things, you never even knew existed, but are to be solved.” Other tips that I have picked up are to be aware of the fact that no success ever comes without setbacks, to trust intuition, and to work hard. Robin van de Putte, my former supervisor, entrepreneur and personal friend, tells me that its key not ever doubt yourself.

All of the entrepreneurs are unanimous on one thing; trust yourself, trust your concepts and just do it!

To summarise what is actually important in entrepreneurship;
Entrepreneurship is not easy. It is about pursuing opportunities, innovations, growth, ambition, and risks versus fun. But; entrepreneurship is most importantly to dare and to do!

03.03 A little bird told me...

Put into practice

So entrepreneurship is a lot about daring and doing. I must admit, starting a company with all its legal obligations and financial matters is quite scary. Not to mention, not knowing how things will turn out; will my brands and their product actually sell?

When starting a company, I will have to deal with a lot of issues. For example, the obligations that go hand in hand with registering and all other activities in undertaking. Plus, all the financial matters,
taxes, insurances... A lot to find out and to keep in mind. But, as I have kept in mind, entrepreneurship is to dare and to, so I will dare and do. Let’s take the plunge!

03.03.01
Dutch Chamber of Commerce
To start with The Dutch Chamber of Commerce (in this report also indicated as DCOC). This is of course the best place to start my search for information on entrepreneurship with. The DCOC is an organisation for and by entrepreneurs. Most people working there have entrepreneurial backgrounds, mainly active traders. Employees have daily contact with entrepreneurs, and many are active in the region to help entrepreneurs and business climates to improve. Thus; the place to be.

Their website is full of information for entrepreneurship. In appendix (...) on page (...) is a summary of what was important for me as a starting entrepreneur. This is the list that I have read thoroughly before registering “A little bird told me...” at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce and the Dutch Tax Administration. On the 2nd of March 2010 I headed to the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in The Hague, and registered “A little bird told me...” as my company. Since that day I am officially an entrepreneur.

Having a significant trade name is one of the obligations when registering at the Trade Register. A trade name is the name under which a company is driven. One company is allowed to use multiple trade names. Choosing a good name can prevent confusion with other companies. There are legal requirements for a trade name; Firstly, the name must be distinctive. A name that consists solely of individual letters or numbers held mostly insufficiently distinctive, and therefore useless as a trade name. Secondly, the trade name must not be confusing or misleading. You cannot register a name that is already used by another company, or one that is similar. And thirdly, the trade name cannot conflict with existing brands. My company is registered as “A little bird told me...” It is a name that is not ever used before in The Netherlands, and thus significant from other Dutch company’s and brands.

However, after doing analyses on the internet, it turns out that the name is used outside the borders or our humble country. In the UK there is this adorable toys manufacturer. It is quite different from my “A little bird told me...”, as it makes
toys for infants. And in the US there is the web shop a-littlebirdtoldme.com, seller of handmade jewellery, and that also has its weblog at alittlebirdtoldme.blogspot.com.

Another requirement while registering is to choose a legal form. My company is registered as a “Sole Trader”. I am the only owner and only founder of the company. The owner of a Sole Trade is liable for all operations and capacity issues. There is no distinction between private and company assets. Creditors can recover private property and private creditors can appeal to my business.

I choose for my business to be a sole trader because it offers tax benefits when profits are relatively low, as my company’s profits will be; at least in the starting years.

An entrepreneur does not need special qualification to start or run a business. Back in the days you would have to have an entrepreneurial middle class diploma, but this obligation no longer exists. Other qualifications you need, depends on the type of business you will start. For example, when starting a catering, or a bar, you will need diploma’s in “Social Hygiene and Safety”. Or a druggist who needs a professional qualification required for the sale of medicines. Opening a business in retail, as I am, does not require diplomas at all, provided that this company is not actually opening a physical store.

It is also important to have the proper permits when starting. Those depend on the type of business and activities. General permits are permits that apply to all companies, regardless of the industry in which they work. Like a planning permission, when you are going to do (re) building, or an environmental permit, to keep pollution within legal requirement. And when you want to advertise on you building, you would need an advertising permit. None of these points are applicable to A little bird told me..., so there is nothing to worry about. But helpful to keep in mind in the future.

### 03.03.02 Administration

A smooth administration captures periodically what happens in a company. It is a way to keep track, identify trends and enables you to make decisions in time. An administration is not only important for business, it is legally required to keep and store records. It is the basis for tax returns.

Carefully kept records provide a wealth of information about my company. The more topical; the better.

**With good kept records I can understand:**
- Actual costs, to compare to budgeted costs or average costs within my industry.
- The ins and outs of the company. Do profits increase and do costs stay within margins?
- My credit management. With a carefully kept administration you can tell when your customers neglecting their payments.
- Inefficient products; what products or services do you need to remove from your portfolio?
- Inventories; what items must be ordered and which items are not selling.

**What records should I keep as an entrepreneur?**
- A company will have costs before the start of the company. It is important to record those costs, because of the tax deductions. The hours I have made prior the start of my business should also be recorded. These hours count for the hour criterion of the “zelfstan-
Each entrepreneur is legally obliged to keep records 7 years. It should contain at least the basic information as:

- General ledger;
- The debtor and creditor administration;
- Stock records;
- The purchasing and sales records;
- The payrolls

**Of what records does an administration exist?**

All information I submit on paper or electronically, include the administration of my business. For example:

- Cash registers and receipts;
- Purchase and sales journal;
- Invoices received and copies of invoices sent;
- Bank statements;
- Contracts, agreements and other agreements;
- Software and databases;
- Calendars and events listings.

**To what must my invoices comply?**

An entrepreneur should number invoices continuously and sequentially. Bills must include the invoice date;

- A unique invoice number;

- My tax identification number;
- The name and address of my business;
- The name and address of my customer;
- The VAT identification number of my customers if I will supply to another EU Member State. If my customer under a reverse charge is responsible for the payment of tax I should also mention:
  - The quantity and nature of the goods or the extent and nature of the services rendered;
  - The date of delivery or service has occurred or has been completed, or the date a payment is made where it differs from the invoice date;
  - Price excluding VAT;
  - The amount of tax payable;
  - The amount including VAT;
  - My registration with the Chamber of Commerce.

**The administration records should show how much tax I must pay. This implies the following at:**

- Invoices I unsubscribe;
- My pay bills;
- Expenditure;
- Revenue;
- Private use of goods and services.
03.03.03
Opening a bank account
After a registration I needed to have a business bank account. I had made an appointment at the Rabobank, the bank I have my personal financial matters with. Rabobank was founded over one hundred years ago as a bank with no shareholders. That is the idea of the cooperative, its vision is that together they are one bank; by working together everyone will be able to develop as he or she wants. I choose to open a business bank account at the Rabobank because I have my personal bank account with them as well. I experience the bank as a bank with excellent service and help.

I initially only went to open a bank account, but left with more then that. I got a huge amount of information as well. Out of curiosity I asked if there are possibilities for me to get a loan. I assumed that in this day and age, with this economical climate, no one was able to get a starting loan, but it turned out I was wrong. Obviously they would need a lot more information before actually give a loan, but in broad strokes, the Rabobank advisor told me I would definitely be able to loan. Because I am young, ambitious, have a bachelor degree (almost) and have my parents to back me up financially. But... the interest rate would be 8% to 15%. Oeps.. Way to high. I will just stick to a 'Tante Aghaat'-loan. I also asked for information on insurance’s, which the Rabobank advisor strongly advised. For me it would be necessary to have a few. In particular a fire

and theft insurance to keep my stocks safe. The main reason I was there was because I needed a bank account. I opened one and the magic number is.... 1175.29.583. Feel free to donate!

03.03.04
Promotion and communication
A little bird told me... is an umbrella organisation/agency. It will be the company that launches brands. Those brands are to be seen as independent brands; they communicate and promote themselves by themselves. Therefore promotion and communication of the company A little bird told me.. will be subordinated to the promotion and communication of the company’s brands. It will have its own website, but the website function is to inform the customers more about the brands rather than the company; in the end, the brands are the ones that need paying customers.

03.03.04
Registration of Trademarks
Intellectual property is a collective term for a number of specific legal areas. It relates to having a right to a non-material thing. A little bird told me... is a company that forms ideas into brands and thus registration of ideas, concepts, designs and trademarks are important to this company. The Benelux Office for Intellectual Property (BOIP), is the official institution in the Benelux region responsible for the registration of trademarks and designs. The office carries out all work connected with the implementation of the legislation for intellectual property rights; trademark rights, patent rights and copyrights but also ideas and designs. Everyone is entitled to have an idea. Therefore it is impossible to protect ideas. However, it is possible to give some protection to ideas through the i-DEPOT of the BOIP. It allows anyone with an idea, an concept, an format, an invention, et cetera, in its early process, to prevent anyone else to walk off with it. This i-DEPOT is inexpensive, which makes the barrier to deposit an idea quite low. A little bird told me... has its own i-DEPOT, but has not made use of it yet. Due to the reason that it is not important for me yet. The concepts for its brands are original and the brands will be unique, but the ideas are not one-of-a-kind. In the beginning of the creation of the brands I have just decided to keep the ideas quiet, up until they actually began to form shape.

A trademark is a symbol that sets products or services apart from those of competitors. This symbol can be the name of the product or service or the logo of the product or service. A trademark is a company’s or brands calling card. It allows others to recognise products or services. Problems can arise if others use a trademark that can confuse consumers. The process to register a trademark is very easy, as it is a matter of filling in a form. However, it is a very expensive matter. The fee to register a trademarks costs about €240,-. For each registering. I have decided not to register my brands yet, as I think it is quite an investment for products that have not proven to be successful yet.
MANCHE is that brand that you want to be seen with. It is the laptop-sleeve with new stylish attitude. It is a product that is both practical and stylish; protection for your laptop, but can and will be seen as your new favourite accessory to finish an outfit with. MANCHE is fashion; MANCHE is the new fashion accessory you cannot do without. It is a fashion garment, and will profile itself suchlike.
Vision

Chic with an idiosyncratic edge. Life seems to go faster and faster, and no one seems to want to slow down. We need to work and work, and career and having a good job is more important then ever. We find ourselves on the road and on the go all the time. As a result, functionality and flexibility are getting more and more important to us. Hence the increasing the popularity of laptops vs. the reducing popularity of desktop computers. Bring them everywhere and work everywhere. Be careful with them though, they are quite fragile, and you would not want to loose the work you have done!

Mission

Fortunately, MANCHE will always be around to ensure protection and fashion. Because even though functionality and flexibility are getting more and more important to us, that does not mean design, style and appearance are no longer important! We all want to look our best, in detail! But we need protection for the electronically instrument we need to always have with us. MANCHE is the brand that offers protection and style. It is what we were missing in day to day life.

Ambition

The ambition of MANCHE is to create products to offer style and protection to the product that are important to us on the road. It will start with only one product in two different designs, but has the ambition to design more products in the direct future. It will distribute its product through a bunch of shops in The Netherlands. Plan big, but start small.
Core Value; In tune (style)
Core Value; Offering protection
Core Value; Always there to come with you
**Brand Personality**

What kind of person would MANCHE be if it were an actual person? After analysing the following brand template and effectiveness model you will definitely be able to see this brand as a person.

**Brand template**

The brand template shows three types of brand values; the functional and emotional personal features, and expressive brand value. And also, the brand essence. The brand essence is the most important value for the brand. In case of MANCHE it is “Adding style to the protection of your personal things while on the road.”. MANCHE thinks there is a need for products that can help that goal. And the best way to do that is, firstly, by using the skills it has picked up at the International Fashion & Branding-study at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute (functional personal features). Secondly, by revealing emotional personal features – protective and always around. And thirdly; by expressing yourself as stylish and idiosyncratic (expressing brand values).
Effectiveness Model

**Who am I?**
Protection, with style, for the personal things you take with you while travelling around.

**Is all of this consistent with my core values?**
Tallies with being in tune, with offering protection and the fact I am always there to come with you.

**How does that impact my effectiveness?**
The effects of my products are that they create comfort; they fit their style, are always there for them and offer protection.

**How do people experience me?**
As a person that they trust with their personal belongings and fit their personal style.

**How does my behaviour impact people around me?**
They want me around them all the time.

**How does my behaviour impact my behaviour?**
I am the person that offers protection, is always around, but finds style utterly important.

What kind of person would MANCHE be?

**Personality**

So what kind of person do you think MANCHE would be? MANCHE can be seen as one of your closest co-workers. The one that travels along, you spend a lot of time with on a daily basis, and is always around to back you up; she would be able to protect you personal belongings. She would even be the person you work and become friends with; she fits your style.

MANCHE loves fashion. Her hobby’s are style and vogue, and finds her inspiration in history. She loves to travel, meet new faces and keep in touch with everyone. She spends her time on the internet, to be updated at all times.
MANCHE is a brand that you want to be seen with. It is the laptop-sleeve with new stylish attitude. It is a product that is both practical; protection for your laptop, but can and will be seen as your new favourite accessory to finish an outfit with. MANCHE is fashion; MANCHE is the new fashion accessory you cannot do without. It is a fashion garment, and will profile itself suchlike.

The brand initiated as a brand for females. Derived from the fact that women involve a larger and growing part of the labour force in the Netherlands. They travel around a lot and want to do that in style. The laptop sleeves that are on the market at this point are not that stylish as they could be. After asking around amongst my friends it turned out that my male friends also feel the need to actually have a stylish laptop sleeve as well.

04.02.01 The name
Brand names are hugely important for branding, and have an immense impact on what your brand will express. For my brand of laptop sleeves I did not have to think long. MANCHE its name derives from the word laptop-sleeve; it is the French translation of “sleeve”. It combines the classic French language and his stereotyped background, with the trendy and modern features of the computer and its attributes. The word is a perfect one for a product that is modern, cool and chic. MANCHE will have two different lines; MANCHE Le Moustache (male) and MANCHE La Maîtresse (female).

04.02.02 Target groups
The new meaning of ‘mistress’.
MANCHE La Maîtresse is designed for the modern woman. The woman who’s life is getting busier and busier. The woman who is an increasing part of the labour force in the Netherlands (From 53% in 2005 to 57% in 2007. Source: Central Office of Statistics), and envisions a larger role. Women are ambitious, detail oriented, and love design and beautiful things. And she does not mind spending money on appearance. Although career and society are important to her, she also loves to have joy in life, and small things can add small piece of fun. This woman is confident, has studied, and is working full- or part-time. She is financially independent and has her own life, her own career and enjoys it too. With positive mental state she has the world in her hand and holds on tight. With a tongue-in-cheek to the mistresses in the glorious French past, (business women also ;), the MANCHE especially designed for her is called MANCHE La Maîtresse.

The new dandy.
MANCHE Le Moustache is designed for the young man. The man, who despite the growing proportion women on the work floor, still wants to see himself as the wage earner. The man for who work is an important part in life. But with pleasure. For a growing part of men it is important to have a career that suits him best, that is challenging and fun. The modern man is always searching for a way to climb the labour ladder and thus create the perfect career for himself. Not only for his own pleasure, but also to create that bit of status.
This is the man who wants to show how beautiful his career is, how fast his car can go and how well he dresses himself. Yes, the modern man is vain, a contemporary dandy. Therefore the name with a tongue-in-cheek to the moustache, the typical man characteristic that comes and goes in fashion every once and a while, but had over the years expressed male vanity, whether by absence, or presence.

MANCHE has two target groups that actually grow closer to each other. A modern young woman with her interest in fashion and beauty that walks alongside her ambition for independence and career. And the young man focussed on career but secretly interested in status, design and accessories. There is a clear overlap, easily to see in, for example, magazines. Lifestyle magazines for women also pay attention to work and office, men magazines write about beauty, fashion and accessories (ok, and still a lot about gadgets and cars).

**04.02.03**

**Product and production**

**Designing**

I am definitely not a designer, but I have a clear idea on what my products must look like. Fortunately I have a fairly good knack with Adobe Illustrator. I improvised, but was able to make two designs for MANCHE.

The brand and product MANCHE will have two designs. One is called MANCHE La Maîtresse and is for women. I wanted it to be fashionable feminine. The outside of white leather and wanted the inside lining to be salient pink. The second design is for men, the outside of grey leather and I wanted the inside to have a pinstriped lining, tongue-in-cheek to business suits.

**Prototyping**

Next step; prototyping. And that is when the trouble started. I started to ask around in my personal network; my mothers’ friend who is very adept with stitching leather was the first to make a prototype. This did not work out very well, and I knew I had to find a more professional way to produce my prototypes.

By asking around I found my address. The cousin of a good friend of mine is manager in her families business company in small leather goods. Our first meeting was absolutely brilliant. Petra van der Spek is my age and knew exactly what I was going for. She instantly read my design and in our conversation we decided on the leathers, the lining (unfortunately no striped lining available) and the clasp.

Too bad the company was in a period in where they had to visit a lot of exhibitions and fairs. It took quite a few weeks until I could pick up my prototype. But waiting was worth it. I have to say, the sleeves are not as I had in mind... they were better. The company “Van der Spek kleinlederwaren” can take on the production, with a minimal quantity of 50 pieces per design and per size.

**Sizes**

There will be three sizes laptop sleeves produced by MANCHE; they are being based on the Apple laptops, the Mac Books.

**04.02.04 Price**

The cost price of the laptop sleeves will be €49.08. My margin on the sleeves will be 0.3 and I will therefore sell the sleeves to retailers for €63.80. Retailers on their turn will sell them for €146.75, (excl. VAT) considering a margin of 2.3 – 2.5. MANCHE will be in a fairly high segment. This will fit the target group that is one with a career and has money to spend, and – quite importantly – wants to spend.
**04.02.05 Place**
MANCHE is working its hardest to find selling points. She will start with a small web shop, but hopes to find physical shops and retailers to distribute her products to. The product and brand are as good as ready to hit the market. Up until now I have planned to find outlets for my brands myself, but with the advise of a personal friend I am now considering to address an agency to represent MANCHE. They will have a much larger network and knowledge of the shops MANCHE would fit in. I do have an idea on in what kind of shops MANCHE should be though.

MANCHE is a brand that would certainly feel at place in the shelves of De Bijenkorf. De Bijenkorf is the leading department store with a passion for its customers. It is unique with events, a magazine and is famous for its well-visualised shop windows. The department store, with 12 stores all over The Netherlands, has an innovative brand and product portfolio. All 12 stores are stylish in its appearance and their employees have passion for its customers. De Bijenkorf is definitely the department store where MANCHE’s target group can be found. They are hard workers and would be shopping a department store where they can find everything they need within a relatively short amount of time, rather then walking all around town.

De Bijenkorf would be perfect for MANCHE.

Another store that would be absolutely great for MANCHE are the Apple stores like iCentre. This is a company with 13 physical stores in The Netherlands and an online store. It offers a complete range of Macs and iPods and has a wide assortment in software, accessories and laptop cases. Since MANCHE is focussing on Apple users, this would be a perfect outlet for MANCHE.

There is one store that will definitely add MANCHE to its collection. My cousin’s wife is opening her own store at the Haarlemmerkade in Amsterdam at the 2nd of July. The store will be called SUHKA and is a small ‘department’ store with a focus on lifestyle. Here you can find fashion, interior, accessories, gifts, beauty products, art and photography, vintage and workshops under one roof. SUHKA is commercial, timeless and fashionable.

**04.02.06 Promotion and Communication**

**Communication goals**
MANCHE is a new label and at this point, has no name- or brand awareness. She wants to inform her target group about her products (protective and design), the brand (stylish and in vogue), her website and her points of sale.

**Strategy**
As a beginning brand, MANCHE has a limited budget that she can spend on marketing- and communication. The brand will especially focus on creating a perfect website and ‘free publicity’. To create free publicity she will have to use her contacts in the worlds of fashion and media. Plus, she will have to find her way in the world of wonders of the World Wide Web. The brand will find the way to socialize and mingle with her target group.

**Tone of Voice**
The tone of voice of MANCHE will be informal and personal. She owns the killer combination of looks, humour and intelligence, like she sees her target group. And that will be the way to approach that group.

**First campaign / photo shoot**
MANCHE will start with building brand awareness right from the start. It is a new and beginning brand, and she wants to make an impression right away. A little bit of provoking is more then welcome!
Campaign MANCHE La Maîtresse
With a tongue-in-the-cheek to the meaning of the word mistress, MANCHE La Maîtresse will start her battle in building up brand awareness, in a tempting yet sophisticated style. Go back in time, imagine Madame Pompadour, Maîtresse en Titre (leading mistress) of King Lodewijk XV of France. Image her in present time, a little less prudish, and a little more provoking, et voilà; the style of MANCHE La Maîtresse.

Campaign MANCHE Le Moustache
Le Moustache will take you back in time too, about 200 years back to the time of Oscar Wilde, protagonist of l’art pour l’art (art for art). Both mocked and praised in life, but always in style. Combine him with the contemporary modern man that cares as much about style as dear old Wilde, and the new dandyism is born.

The imagery of this campaign will be used for all the brands communication.

Recourses
The nature of the use of recourses is especially in writing. Our target group is always on the run, and very busy all the time. But, she finds it important to be up-to-date and to be informed. For example via Magazines and newspapers, but the most important source of information is the internet. Obviously MANCHE does not have the budget to actually buy advertising space, in any form or shape. She needs to start small. Considering the budget MANCHE is limited by, it will have to find a way to gain free publicity. A press release will be send to magazines, newspapers, blogs, shops and web shops to make sure that she is there and ready to be bought. Social media will also be immensely important for MANCHE; this is were her target group is! MANCHE will find her way on Facebook, Hyves and even Twitter.
Home is a pleasant warm place for you. LaZe is the brand that will offer products that connect to this. Think of magnificent warm Norwegian wool socks, warm blankets to cosy under on the couch, and that fantastic sweater that is not suitable for everyday life, but is fantastic walk around in at home. Pleasurable, comfortable and cosy!
Vision

The next few years we will be baking apple pies, have dinner at home with our family and we'll watching feel good movies again. Domesticity is making a comeback. It’s not surprisingly, though, it is common knowledge that in times of a difficult economic climate, we feel the need to create a safe harbour. Especially women have a need of creating that warm, cosy place to retreat to. A place where we can be ourselves and calm down from the stressed out outside world. Home is in vogue!

Mission

Domesticity is an old-fashioned concept, with a new twist. LaZe is a brand that will fit this course and actually meets the traditional feeling of the cosiness at home, but has that contemporary style and vogue; always important. The intention of the brand is to offer products that will contribute to the need for warmth and comfy feeling, which we would all love to create at home.

Ambition

The ambition of LaZe is to create products that contributes to create a feeling and experience of warmth and comfort at home. It will start with only four products, but will have the goal to expand its label to a range of new products as soon as possible. LaZe is determined to create a reputation of a trendy, cool label and hopes to find small stores all over The Netherlands to distribute its products before the end of the summer.

Home is in vogue!
Core Value; helping domesticity with its comeback.
Core Value; traditional with a contemporary vogue
Core Value; adding warmth and comfort
**Brand Personality**

What kind of person would LaZe be if it were an actual person? After analysing the following brand template and effectiveness model you will definitely be able to see this brand as a person.

**Brand template**

The brand template shows three types of brand values; the functional and emotional personal features, and expressive brand value. And also, the brand essence. The brand essence is the most important value for the brand. In case of LaZe it is “Adding comfort, style and warmth to your domestics”. LaZe thinks there is a need for products that can help that goal. And the best way to do that is, firstly, by using the skills it has picked up at the International Fashion & Branding-study at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute (functional personal features). Secondly, by revealing emotional personal features – warmth and domesticity. And thirdly; by expressing yourself as soothing and comforting (expressing brand values).
**Effectiveness Model**

**Who am I?**
The cozy feeling you want at home

**Is all of this consistent with my core values?**
Tallies with domesticity, traditional but contemporary, and with warmth & comfort.

**How does that impact my behaviour?**
I am a person that comforts you, I will always make sure you are soothed and will bring warmth and style to your home.

**How does that impact my effectiveness?**
The effect of my products are that they create comfort, warmth and a feel of soothe in your house.

**How does my behaviour impact people around me?**
People will always feel comfortable with me in their homes. They can always cosy up with me and will create a feeling of warmth in their interiors.

**How do people experience me?**
People experience me as a warm and trustworthy person, that you would love to have in your home. We don’t need to talk to feel comfortable, because we always feel at ease with each other. I will be experienced as someone who you can sit snugly with, no matter how cold the outside world gets.

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**What kind of person would LaZe be?**

**Personality**

So what kind of person do you think LaZe would be? LaZe can be seen as a warm, traditional and stylish person you can just hang out with. He is the one that is comfortable with anyone. Someone like your best friend or partner you can cosy up with on the couch while watching TV, or spend a lazy Sunday afternoon with.

Because that is what its main’s hobby’s is; lazing around the house. Having a good time at home, roaming through the rooms, chilling on the couch and making itself comfortable in front of the fire place. It is the brand that has the laziest, most comfortable and relaxing personality of all times.
The second brand of A little bird told me... is LaZe. Domesticity is no longer of this time, you would think. In a fast life where everything is prompt, the house-life is not seen as trendy. But this is untrue. It is generally known that in times of poor economic conditions, the safe harbour of home is found very pleasant. The need for cosiness and warmth of family or partner at home is increasingly appreciated. Need for safety and security in a domestic environment is especially there when everything seems to revolve around status and career. Slowing down seems to be the key for the coming year.

LaZe is a brand that responds to this trend. Home is a pleasant warm place for you. The brand will offer products that connect to this. Think of magnificent warm Norwegian wool socks, warm blankets to cosy under on the couch, and that fantastic sweater that is not suitable for everyday life, but is fantastic walk around in at home. Pleasurable, comfortable and cosy! The brand is not really about (the design of) the product, but more about the feeling the brand will give. The product itself are not that special, you would be able to buy a blanket at IKEA or a cardigan at MANGO. It is the brand that will be special. It will profile itself as the friend you need to have at home, you want to watch Grey’s anatomy with and drink tea and eat chocolate with.

The status of the brand is that everything is there, but... no products yet. That will say that I do have the samples, but no production is in process yet. The brand is more of a winter brand, so no stress yet. I am sure that with the right amount of help, I will be able to have this product in store before autumn starts, as is planned. Read more about product and production in paragraph 05.02.06.

05.02
LAZE PUT INTO PRACTICE

05.02.01 The name
LaZe was not the first name I came up with for this concept. That is most likely because the concept did not start as a concept for home wear, but for winter essentials. I wanted to import earmuffs and scarves as well, but I did not think that was a clear or special concept. The first working title was simply ‘Winter essentials’. When the idea started to develop further I decided that the brand should be about home life more then winter life.

The concept started to evolve around domesticity, and the products that came to mind were blankets, cardigans, vests, shirts, sweaters and socks. The next working title was ‘White Wash’ based on the fact that it all should not be too much hassle, and be comfortable. In my opinion White Wash would fit that because doing your white laundry is not that much of a hassle either. I asked around amongst friends and... they all disagreed. Especially my sister, who hates chores around the house, did not like it at all. Since she is exactly what my target group is, I agreed it was a horrible name.
LaZe was the next name that came up. It fits the concept of making a comfortable home; after a long day of work, you want to laze around the house in the most comfortable and soothing outfit. LaZe is here to stay. The name of the brand and the letters is has are smooth and sound calm.

05.02.02 Target group
The target group of LaZe actually matches half of the target group of MANCHE. The modern woman who’s life is getting busier and busier. Women are an increasing part of the Dutch labour force, and envision an even larger part of it. This woman is confident, has studied, and is working full- or part-time. She is financially independent and has her own life, her own career and enjoys it too. With positive mental state she has the world in her hand and holds on tight.

Although career and work are important parts of her life, so are leisure, fashion and style. She loves to spend time at home after a long day of work, finds it relaxing to just read a book or magazine or watch TV or a movie. And LaZe would be perfect for her to keep her warm. It can be the brand that can help her relax at home, but of course in style.

05.02.03 Product and production
As said before, LaZe is a brand that is not really about the design of the product, but more about the brand. For this brand I want to import the basic clothing you need to create a homely feeling. My friend and former internship supervisor has is own brand in Beanies. I knew he was in contact with HIC, a company that imports from Morocco. His contact man was Hans Krielen and I decided to make an appointment with him for some advise.

We had a great conversation. Hans instantly understood the concept and gave me a few advices. One was to minimize the product line to two or three products at the start-up of a brand, with view on budget. Another advise was not to import the products I need from Morocco, but from Turkey, as Turks are much more agile with those sort of products. Fortunately he does business with factories in Turkey as well. And the last advice was to actually go to Turkey. He said it is really important to exactly know what kind of fabrics they use, what quality clothes they make, and to search for samples.

I took his advice and a week later, I went to Istanbul. I flew on a Thursday night and flew back on Friday night. I have spent my Friday in Turkey strolling on bazaars, markets and shopping streets. It really was a rough day, but I made it through all by myself, and found all the samples I needed. I have never been so happy to come home, I decided to never go to Istanbul again. Not my favourite place to be.

Hans Krielen will organise the rest of the production for me, based on my samples. As he is really busy right now, and I am very busy right now, we will postpone our further meetings after the eleventh of May.

05.02.04 Price
Since the production of the products of LaZe is not decided yet, I have not been able to calculate the exact cost price of the products yet, thus no prices known yet. But I did make an estimation based on the prices the samples had cost me. All is calculated in my widespread financial plan in chapter (...) on page 9 (...).
05.02.05 Place
As soon as LaZe’s production is known, it will be searching for its selling points. For this brand too I am considering an agency to represent LaZe as well, as I am for MANCHE. SUHKA is also willing to add this brand to her collection. LaZe would absolutely fit this store because of the focus on lifestyle. The primary audience for this shop is the modern woman between 25 and 55 years. She is self-conscious, has been studying and works full- or part time. She has her own life and enjoys it. She has a positive attitude to life and enjoys what society has to offer. Attention, quality and sincerity are important features of her.

Other stores that would fit LaZe are shops in lifestyle, fashion and interior, both online and offline. The general feelings of those shops should be serenity, style and modernity.

05.02.06 Promotion and communication
Communication goals
LaZe is a new label and at this point, has no name- or brand awareness. She wants to inform her target group about her products (warm and cosy), the brand (domesticity in style), her website and her points of sale.

Strategy
As a beginning brand, LaZe has a limited budget that she can spend on marketing- and communication. The brand will especially focus on creating a perfect website and ‘free publicity’. To create free publicity she will have to use her contacts in the worlds of fashion and media. Plus, she will have to find her way in the world of wonders of the world wide web. The label wants to profile herself as a friend, the one you can be yourself with. The brand will find the way to socialize and mingle with her target group.

Tone of Voice
Again, LaZe wants to be your new best friend, the one you want to hang out with and want to be yourself with. She will communicate in an informal and very personal tone of voice.

First campaign / photo shoot.
Domesticity is making its comeback, but that does not mean we all have to be dowdy. We want to bring style in our home wear, and LaZe will be the first and only brand that does so. She will start with building brand awareness right from the start. It is a new and beginning brand, and she wants to make an impression right away. A little bit of provoking is more then welcome! The first campaign will be homely, stylish but very sexy, thus; very personal. It will pronounce that LaZe is the one you can be yourself with, your personal friend at home.

Recourses
LaZe will make use of the same resources as MANCHE does, because, as said before, LaZe has the same (female) target group as MANCHE has. Busy and on the road all day, happy to be home at night. A press release will be send to magazines, newspapers, blogs, shops and web shops to make everyone know LaZe has arrived. And social media will be as important as they are for MANCHE. It needs to mingle and socialize in order to make friends with her target group.
SLEAP is the brand that is at the beginning of the conveyor band in the idea-factory. The idea is here, the brand is developing, but the product and the solid plans are not sparked off yet.

SLEAP is a brand that is invented by my friend Bas, but will be devised by A little bird told me...

Bed covers take a lot of space in the room. We figured it would be a waste not to use all that space. To spice things up in the bedroom (wink, wink), we want to create bed covers with art on it.
Vision

Baking applepies, make sure to get home before 6 to have dinner with the family, hang out on the sofa to watch feel-good movies in the evening, and hitting the sack early; domesticity is back! Although this is no surprise – it is a commonly known fact that in times of economical slouch have the need to go back to basics – it is a fact were SLEAP wants to make use of. The need to create that special place at home is an important fact. One of the most comfortable place in home, must be, of course, the bedroom. Being at home is good, but that does not mean that that has to be boring or dowdy.

Mission

Home is in vogue; that is a fact. It is fairytale that being home is boring or dowdy. SLEAP is going to contribute to optimise that nice, safe place at home. She want to make sure that home is not old-fashioned at all, but can be nice and have style at the same time. A traditional product will have a modern and outspoken twist. Fine arts and design is utterly important to be added to this concept.

Ambition

SLEAP will offer products that are arty, add style to your room and have an innovating and original concept. Within a few weeks it will be able to be bought on its online webshop. It will use its network of artists, designers and illustrators to design home textile. The brand will start with bed covers, but hopes to expand its collection to all sorts of home textile. But for now; finally some bed cover that are original and cool!
Core Value; originality in your home
Core Value; add art and style to your home
Core Value; domesticity on its comeback
06.02 SLEEP PUT INTO PRACTICE

SLEEP is the brand that is at the beginning of the conveyer band in the idea-factory. The idea is here, the brand is developing, but the product and the solid plans are not sparked off yet.

SLEEP is a brand that is invented by my friend Bas, but will be devised by A little bird told me...

Bed covers take a lot of space in the room. We figured it would be a waste not to use all that space. To spice things up in the bedroom (wink, wink), we want to create bed covers with art on it. With the help of befriended illustrators, artists and designers, bed covers will be soon be cooler then the art on your walls. In the direct future we want to attract more prominent artist to work with SLEEP.

SLEEP does not want to slob or loose interest – it just would not fit a bed cover to be messy. The brand wants you to keep interest in her and therefore will have an exclusive edge; each edition of SLEEP will only have ten press runs. About those press runs; SLEEP is a spoiled little brat, as she only want silk-screen printing, the only thing that is good for her.

06.02.01 The name

When Bas first asked me to think of the brand for his idea I immediately came up with the word ‘sleep’. Bas made it into SLEEP with ‘EA’. He has a personal reason for using the ‘EA’, and I think it works in the word. It is short, distinctive, will stick in your mind, and it is deliciously obvious.

06.02.02 Target group

The target group for SLEEP are people who are ready for something new. They care about culture, art and style. But they also care about their homes and make sure home is where the heart is. The vision of SLEEP is quite similar to the vision of LaZe; the fact that domesticity is working on its comeback. There is this need of creating a warm, cosy place to retreat to, after a long day of work. A place to be yourself; completely styled to you own personal taste. Home is in vogue. The people that would want to buy bed covers by SLEEP are those who are up-to-date and in style, make long hours on the work floor and feel the need to create personal space at home.

06.02.03 Product and production

As said; the product, and thus production, and solid plans have not sparked off yet. Obviously we do have a production line in mind, but no clue whether they are realistic or not. Our idea on it is at this point, in broad strokes, obviously;

Step one; import blank, simple but of high quality of sheets from Turkey (or Morocco, or India, or China or...)

Step two; ask ten or more illustrators to collaborate with in return for tagging their name to SLEEP and compensation.

Step three; print bed covers

Step four; put them on a web shop

Step five; gain free publicity!

06.02.04 Price

Since production is not known yet, price is not known yet. We assume that the price for SLEEP covers will be quite higher then the traditional covers on the market now. This considering the limited editions, the high quality of sheets, the compensation for the artists and the silk-sheet printing.

06.02.05 Communication

“SLEEP with me”

06.02.06 Place

SLEEP will start with a web shop, but keeps an eagle eye on other ways of distribution.

06.02.07 Promotion

Not known yet. That can help her relax at home, but of course in style.
“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” - Elanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)

“Idealism and realism meet in the actual.” - Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933)

“Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future.” - Niels Bohr (1885-1962)

“The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.” - Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)
Starting a business has always been my dream. For my graduation I decided to kill two birds with one stone (but not the little bird that tells me stuff!). My ambition in entrepreneurship is a perfect subject for my final project, with my sights on the future. This project is the start-up for my company, and will have a continuation.

Entrepreneurship is a progress whereby an organisation uses efforts to pursue opportunities. By fulfilling wants and needs, through innovations and uniqueness, it will create value and growth. And that is my ambition with my company exactly. No matter what resources I have, as they are little at this time.

Obviously I hope the brands I am working on at this point will be successful. Although I really strongly believe in the products that I am creating, it still will be a guess whether my target groups will actually feel the same way, and they are the ones that will eventually have to buy my products; their opinion will affect the future of my company.

My company is a company that uses an idea as a starting position. Its vision is that an idea comes from somewhere, from signs. I can do hundreds researches, examinations and surveys, but no result will ever predict the future. I have chosen to spend my time not to research those kinds of unpredictable results and spend time on creating good products and fine brands. I have decided to trust intuition and the signs.

To make a long story short, I am placing a bet. We will just have to wait and see. If I wanted security, I would not be starting a company. “The future belongs to these who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” As Eleanor Roosevelt once said.

Assuming that the first three brands that I am creating right now all will be successful, suggests a bright future in prospects. I will give me opportunity to put in other signs in my factory and those will be able to run down that conveyor belt. It would be my dream to create one or two brand per year. It will give great options for A little bird told me... Some ideas might be able to sell as a concept to third parties, and some might be able to hit the market on behalf of A little bird told me.

But the first step into the future is to make the three current brands work.

07.01.01 Future MANCHE
MANCHE is a brand with possibilities to expand. For now it will just make laptop sleeves, but sleeves for IPads are already in production as well. The future will hold sleeves and covers for other products that the target group want to bring along on the road. Like their cameras, their iPhones, their pens and pencils, and so on and so on. It would also fit MANCHE to expand to wallets, bags and agenda’s.

As MANCHE is a fashion brand, it will have to create a new collection next year. It is something that is very important, but is a step to far ahead for now. Firstly MANCHE will have to find a way to sell the first collection. With the lookbook, I will have to find a way to distribute the brand. I will address the shops I want MANCHE to be in and hope they will want to adopt its products into their collections. Another option that I am considering is to have an agency to distribute those products for me.

07.01.02 Future LaZe
LaZe is a product that starts small. It will start with a collection of only four pieces,
this on the advice of Hans Krielen (considering budget). Within a year I want LaZe to expend it products from a cardigan, sweatpants, socks and blanket to products like comfortable shirts, bathrobes, sweaters etc. What I would really love for LaZe is its own collection of tea. Yes, you have read correctly. LaZe will have its own teatime. It will create tea that fits the brand; its vision, mission and targetgroup.

The first next step for LaZe will be to start its production. After the commotion of graduation is over, I have another meeting with Hans Krielen. The step after that is distribution, finding the right shops and test the brand on the market.

**07.01.03 Future SLEAP**

SLEAP is the third brand by A little bird told me...It is the brand that is least developed yet. All options are open. When I will meet with Hans Krielen again, I will be able to start this brand to continue. I am sure he has ideas on how and wherefrom we will be able to import sheets. After that step we will be able to look ahead. Meanwhile we are contacting befriended artist and pitching the idea amongst friends, acquaintances and family.

What the future holds for SLEAP? Art on towels, tea towels, table wear, blankets, etc, etc. (a cooperation with LaZe?)

**07.01.04 Financial Plan**

I have decided to add my financial plan as a digital file, as it is much easier for the readers to look through. Find it in appendix 0.2, on page 74.
“How do I set up this company and realise three brands?”
The research question as stated at the beginning of this process was “How do I set up this company and realise three brands?”

Starting a business has always been my dream. A little bird told me...is a company that brings ideas. It will profile itself as an idea factory and is working on three brands at this moment. The company works out from an idea into a brand. It is the key and strength of A little bird told me..., but can also be its pitfall. My mind is full of ideas all the time and one of them is matured into a brand and on its way to hit the market, a second is on his way to become a brand with products in production and a third is still in progress to become a brand. During the planned success of these brands in 2010 and 2011, I will be able to start working out new ideas and have resource to create those. Expending the three brands that are starting right now will also be making use of those resources.

All I can conclude about setting up a company, is that it has accomplished to become a company. It is registered as a sole trader, is allowed to do business and is starting to do business. With a thorough research I had found out how to start a company, next question is, how to keep that company.

In the past period I have created three brands, which are very viable. They are ready to, almost ready to or needs work done to conquer the world. MANCHE is in the position of almost hitting the stores. LaZe is in the position of finalising its production, but can be presented to the outside world. SLEAP is still in its concepts phase, but I have true faith in the brand.

The prototype of MANCHE is so far very well received by the audience. Everyone seems to be impressed and excited about the product and brand. The same goes for the samples of LaZe. All the people that fit the target group profile are enthusiastic and look forward for the brand to go on sale.

The past period had made me look at things differently. Entrepreneurship is a lot about doing, as stated in the second chapter of this report. My parents raised me with the motto; “where there is a will, there is way”. I stepped into this project with that statement in the back of my mind; I want it, so I will do it, and I will fulfil it.

I have learned one great deal about entrepreneurship that no one really told me about; not all is in my hands. As much as I would have wanted to be in control at all times, I do not. You find yourself still very dependent on others. When the company that was making the samples for my laptop had to go to Italy for a week, I did not have anything to say in that process. But it did mess up my planning for MANCHE. And the second prototype was not to my liking, and it is still not done yet. And Hans Krielen is not able to make a new appointment with me in the week of the 10th of may, otherwise LaZe would perhaps have been in production already. And when you organise a photo shoot, but your model cancels, just a few hours before, you have to cancel every one involved in the shoot too. These are things you cannot control, but can consider. No real damage is done, fortunately. Except for the fact that the look book for MANCHE is not complete yet; as I could not have done a Le Moustache photo shoot without a prototype yet. Fortunately, I will be able to present MANCHE La Maîtresse.

So did I realise three brands? Well, almost three brands. As MANCHE and LaZe are in their production phase, and almost ready for distribution; SLEAP is still in its “branding phase”. That branding phase is what MANCHE and LaZe both also been through. Because during this process of the past few months I have noticed that the idea factory in my mind is build up in clear structures phases;
Phase # one (sign phase); always look out for signs;
Phase # two (combining phase); combining signs will clear out changes in people's behaviour;
Phase # three (idea phase); idea pops up in my mind;
Phase # four (research phase); ideas get researched by looking around and asking around, and if they seem viable they go to;
Phase # five (branding phase); starting to think on how the idea can be turned into a brand; create a vision, mission and personality;
Phase # six (prototyping phase); make prototypes
Phase # seven (look & feel phase); create the look and feel of the brand
Phase # eight (production phase); find out where your products can be produced
Phase # nine (distribution phase); get them on the market
Phase # ten (promotion and publicity phase); working on the brand awareness
Phase # eleven (wait and see phase); winning bet... or not?
Phase # twelve (decision phase); is the brand hitting it off at the market? Or is it best to pull back?

SLEAP is still in its branding phase, but very much looking forward to its prototyping phase! LaZe is in the look & feel phase, but it is making a start on the production phase. MANCHE is in the exciting but scary eighth phase – that of distribution. These are phases that can now have function in future “A little bird told me...”-ideas.

Websites / E-zines

Imagery
## Appendix 01.

### “CHECKLIST” OF THE DCO C

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<th>Part one; Chamber of Commerce</th>
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I have learned a lot about entrepreneurial skills during the minor entrepreneurship. But still there is a lot to learn. Therefore I have decided to go through the complete website of the Chamber of Commerce.

### Two.1 Obligations and permits

**Obligations at the start of your business.**

Entrepreneurs have certain obligations. You are obliged to register your company at the Chamber of Commerce. You must also register revenue. But there are more things to consider. A checklist of the main obligations.

#### Two.1.1. Select a business name

Choosing a name is part of the start of a business. It is wise to check whether the name of choice is not already used by another company.

**Demands company name**

You cannot just choose any name for your business. A trade name cannot be confusing because it sounds like another existing company. Your name can also not be misleading or in conflict with an existing brand.

**Badly chosen names – consequences**

Badly chosen names for a company can have unpleasant consequences. A judge can even impose a business name.

#### Two.1.2. Diplomas

Qualifications you need depend on the type of company in what industry you start.

#### Two.1.3. Legal Form

Your company requires a legal form.

#### Two.1.4. Licenses

It is important to have the proper permits, depending on the type of business and activities.

**Two.1.5. Registering**

When starting a business, you must report you business to a number of institutions. Trade register. You must register at the Chamber of Commerce. All businesses of each company are registered here.

**Register Procedure**

You can register your company one week before start to one week after the start of your business. You need to personally come to one of the offices of the Chamber of Commerce, with a valid ID.

**KvK-number**

When you register, you will receive a KvK number. This is a unique 8 digits number that you specify in your business letters, order, invoices, websites and emails.

**VAT number**

When you start a sole proprietorship, partnership (VOF), a limited partnership (CV) or a partnership, you will receive a VAT identification number.

**Invoice from the Chamber of Commerce**

Registered businesses pay a contribution to the Chamber of Commerce every year. The amount of the payment depends on the type and size of your company.

**Subscription to industry board or marketing board**

If your business has a product or industry, mandatory membership is common law. You will have to pay contribution, but on the other hand these organisations represent your interests and carry out activities, including training and publicity.

#### Two.1.6. Administration

In a good administration you can determine periodically what your business has done. You can create oversight, identify trends and take decisions in time. Administration is not only important for your own businesses, you are legally required to keep and store records. Administration forms the basis for your tax returns.

**Benefits of good administration**

Carefully kept records provide a wealth of information about your company. The more topical, the better. With good kept records you
can understand;
Actual costs, to compare to budgeted costs or average costs within your industry.
Ins and outs of the company. Do profits increase and do costs stay within margins?
Your credit management. With a carefully kept administration you can tell when your customers are paying too late.
Inefficient products; what products or services do you need to remove from your portfolio?
Inventories; what items must be ordered and which items are not selling.

Record initial costs
You will probably have cost before the start of your company. It is important to record those costs, because of the tax deductions. The hours you have made prior the start of your business should also be recorded. These hours count for the hour criterion of the “zelfstandigenaftrek”

Requirements for administration records
Each entrepreneur is legally obliged to keep records 7 years. It should contain at least the basic information as:
- general ledger;
- the debtor and creditor administration;
- stock records;
- the purchasing and sales records;
- the payrolls

Data from real estate properties must be kept for 10 years.

Of what records does your administration exist?
All information you submit on paper or electronically, include the administration of your business. For example:
- cash registers and receipts;
- purchase and sales journal;
- invoices received and copies of invoices sent;
- bank statements;
- contracts, agreements and other agreements;
- software and databases;
- calendars and events listings.

To what must you invoices comply?
Number your invoices continuously and sequentially. On your bill must be:
- the invoice date;
- a unique invoice number;
- your tax identification number;
- the name and address of your business;
- the name and address of your customer;
- the VAT identification number of your customers if you supply to another EU Member State.
If your customer under a reverse charge is responsible for the payment of tax you should also mention;
- the quantity and nature of the goods or the extent and nature of the services rendered;
- the date of delivery or service has occurred or has been completed, or the date a payment is made where it differs from the invoice date;
- Price excluding VAT;
- the amount of tax payable;
- the amount including VAT;
- your registration with the Chamber of Commerce.

Administration of sales tax (VAT)
Your records should show how much tax you must pay. This implies the following at:
- invoices you unsubscribe;
- you pay bills;
- expenditure;
- revenue;
- Private use of goods and services.

If you do business with other countries, keep the following records:
- importation of goods;
- export of goods

2.1.7. Mandatory Fees
As an entrepreneur you ought to pay mandatory fees. These fees are legally required and you have to pay them on your own initiative. There are several organisation that charges fees.
- Fees for music and video
- Fees for copying

2.1.8. Not mandatory, but very useful
Some things are not required, but convenient to have arranged.
- General terms & conditions
- Premises
- Register you domain name
- Protect your products an ideas

2.2. Entrepreneurship in economical slump –
how to avoid debt.

2.2.1. Entrepreneurial skills

Financial Acumen
Administration
Financial administration is utterly important for a company. It shows how healthy a company actually is. Administration shows the bottlenecks, and thus give the change to intervene in time. A good overview of the financial affairs partly determines the success of your business. So do not wait too long to organise your finances and move the business certainly not for you.

Payments by clients
Not all entrepreneurs are accountants or administrators. Entrepreneurs want to do business and want to win contracts. For example, the financial settlements should never be underexposed. The clients behaviour of meeting the costs is important. What to do if the payment of goods or services are long overdue? Pursue them, or wait to keep the peace? These are your sales and company, and waiting around does not make headway. You will have to go after your money and encourage your clients to pay the bills. It is an unwanted situation that can be very hard, but there are no alternatives.

Sell yourself - One customer is no customer.
A company should not depend on just one consumer. What if your single consumer gets in trouble and will not purchase anymore or can not pay? It will be your problem. With multiple customers and sales you will be able to spread risks. You will have to search for not just one, but more customers.

Building up a network
A customer can be build up in several ways. Word of mouth is still the best advertisement. But to start that, I will have to build up a network base. A network are acquaintances, friends and business contacts who are familiar with your business and activities.

Dealing with setbacks
If you own a business, you will also face financial setbacks. What to do when things do not go as planned? Entrepreneurs often have a positive attitude and therefore do not recognise setbacks in time. It is very important to take action in time in order to be successful.

2.2.2. Revenue

Budget
Estimating costs and revenues is difficult for all entrepreneurs. You can estimate your monthly sales to determine whether you can afford your costs and also make revenues and profits. However, the sales budget is often prepared to be too optimistic by starting entrepreneurs. If the estimation is significantly different from the actual sales, you have a “liquidity problem” (= too little money) and you can not pay your costs. If this occurs occasionally, the damage is usually limited. If this problem is more common, you have a big financial problem. Thus, estimating revenues should be based on realistic estimations (better too high rather than too low).

Assessing sales
Many entrepreneurs start preparing their budgets by estimating revenues. With estimations, the costs and the eventual result is calculated. But, this assessment is based on uncertainties; possible new customers or potential sales.

Advise
When setting a financial forecasting, it is best to reason from the minimum net income you need to meet your personal obligations. To this you add all costs. This is the minimum turnover to you need, to meet your obligations. This is called “task-setting budget”. If you find it difficult to make such an estimate, is is best to contact an accountant. It is also always possible to request a custom call with the business consultant of the Chamber of Commerce.

Income on the long term
Entrepreneurs usually make a daily balance on their receipts and payments. It is also important to know how these revenues are spread over the years. It may be that in some months of the year, sales peak or fall, or that the turnover will depend on a season. It is important to reserve money for the periods the turnover is low. If you not do this, your long-term liabilities might not comply. Most entrepreneurs
seek to increase sales. It it important that revenues grow steadily and that your long term earning have a fixed pattern.

2.3. Expenditure
Retirement
Entrepreneurs have their own pension arrangements. You will receive a state pension at 65, but that is a minimum. You probably want a higher amount to live from, so you must provide a supplement to the AOW. Regulate this as soon as possible, when the premium is still affordable. The older you get, the higher the premium gets. Arrange your own pension or get advice from an accountant or insurance advisor.

Insurance
Insurance will cover accidental damage and risk. Entrepreneurs often postpone their insurance. This is unwise. Some policies guarantee your income, such as disability. A damage insurance, such as a business damage insurance, reimburses the damage when your company might come to a halt by e.g. fire. A liability insurance covers the damage that you might cause to third parties, including clients. A claim might endanger your company. You do not need all insurance, but a sickness, disability and business life insurance are utterly important because they affect your income.

Funding; inform your bank
As your business grows, and the turnover and number of clients increase, costs also rise. In debtors is more money, when they pay slowly. The bank can provide you with a ‘current-account credit’ provision; you will be allowed to be in the red. The bank will, however, ask for security. In commerce it is most important to honour your agreements with suppliers. If you can not pay, you name is deteriorating. Contact your bank in time to discuss payment problems. With your accountant you can determine how much money you need, and set prognoses, so the banker can assess whether he can provide credit.

Investments
You definitely need a good balance before you invest in your business, in forms of e.g. in car, inventory or property. You can finance your investments yourself, or through a bank or finance. See whether the investments is necessary for your business, or merely a wish. Estimate the added value for your company (have more customers, work more efficiently). If you are sure that the investment is required, and you can back up this up, present your finances to your bank. If the bank is willing to finance the investment, it saves you money. Your own money remains in the company and the bank will be additional money. Prepare well when you need money and make an appeal to a financier. A financier always needs underpinning for the credit.

Personnel (not applicable)

Premises Costs
The rental of premises is governed by the rent law. Rent-increases and termination of the rent have legal conditions attached. Make sure you know how and when you can cancel your lease. Consider a cheaper or smaller rental property, and note opportunities for flexible rent. This is particular important if you can not predict your companies financial growth in the coming years.

Credit management and debt collection
When your customers are too late with their payment (debtors), you yourself are in financial trouble. A good credit management prevents this. Good credit management in ten steps:
Step 1: organise your credit management.
Debtors can post a significant loss for your business. long-standing claims will have a direct impact on the liquidity of your business. If customers do not pay, your profit forecast turn into losses. There will always be persistent defaulters, but well defined debtors can reduce damage to you company significantly.

Debt management as a fixed task
Spend time on debt management, even if you prefer not to. Organise your credit management, in order it to be an integral part of the business. Make sure it is part of someone’s task that handles clients well, can make hard appointments and have power to make payment arrangements.

Step2: client check-up
Make sure you know with whom you are doing
business beforehand. If you have a new customer, it is wise to establish that this actually is the one is says he is. The client might not be authorised, its proprietary accounts can be questionable, or he might be bankrupt. In the database of the Chamber of Commerce you can easily and quickly find information about entrepreneurs and their businesses. If there are uncertainties regarding the financial situation of your clients, you can check commercial providers of credit information. These providers also provide more information into trends in payment behaviour, financial developments and calamities in an industry.

Step 3: Note the term of payment
When doing business, it is wise to make a deal with predefined agreements. For example in an invoice, contract or order confirmation, or in general terms & conditions. The legal presumption is that a customer must pay immediately upon delivery. In practice, customers often grant each other payment deadlines. Considerations in payment deadlines; Handle a maximum of 30 days, Be strict on the noted span of time to your customers. If you are flexible with deadlines, your customers do the same, Be very clear on the payment deadlines in your quotations, order, order confirmation and invoice, Put the agreements on paper and ask the customer to sign the agreements, Flexible payment deadlines Depending on your products or services and your risk (e.g. due to a pre-investments in your industry) you can customise the payment deadlines. In a large project where you need to invest, you can ask for a instalment plan. You can also agree to periodically charge your client during the duration of the project. It allows you to spread the risks and you can suspend your work if the customer does not pay.

Step 4: Handle general terms & conditions
It is not easy to start about an contract concerning financial conditions you state. These conditions often come back in your contracts, it is customary and straightforward to include them in your Terms & Conditions. Terms & Conditions. Conditions are ways to avoid difficulties at later stage. You can e.g. state standard payment terms, collection terms and currency risk control. Make sure that you contract-partner is aware of your conditions.

Step 5: Fast invoice
The faster you invoice, the faster your customers will pay. Send your invoice punctual and make sure the bills go to the right party. Content bills In the invoice you set when and what payment you made and indicate the original agreements. Interim agreements Often the final project differs from what was initially agreed. Confirm interim agreements with the customer in writing and make report of the drafting of the bill.

Step 6; payment elapsed
If the first payment has expired and a customer has not paid an account, you can take several steps. If the first one is to call your customer and ask why you have not received the payment yet. Whether it is possible to ring all your debtors depends on your debtors files. If you have many debtors, then the outsourcing of dept collections might be wise. Next steps Depending on the telephone information and customer relationships you have built, you can proceed to the next steps. If you did not receive the payments in a week you can proceed to the next step; reminders Own payment terms If the company uses its own payment terms (which is quite often with large companies) then, this term only applies when it is agreed. If you do not want to lose the customers, it is obvious not to remind them immediately. It is probably wise to wait until the dat the payment is promised and to take this into account in your financial management. The customer can not pay If the client does pay, it is important to determine whether there is unwillingness or inability to pay. The customer will not pay Find out what is wrong with the delivery and
Step 7: Exhortation
If the payment has expired and the debtor has not paid yet, then it is in default. Previously you had to first send a formal notice. That is not necessary anymore. It is customary (but not required) to first send a summon to warn, before you call in a collection agency or bailiff on your customer.

Reminder
It is wise to first write a friendly, but pragmatic letter with a reminder, when your clients had not paid. Name the date for which the money must have been received, e.g. two weeks after the letter date.

Summation
If your clients still had not paid after those two weeks, it is time for an official warning. This summons should be send by registered letter with acknowledgement as well as by regular mail. In the letter you indicate that you have send that letter by regular mail as well as registered, and that you have copies of both of them. De addressed can deny that he had received the letter and can refuse to accept registered mail. But still he can formally and legally no longer deny.

Statutory rate
When a payment is not paid in time, the client owes you statutory interest. This should be mentioned in your letter summation.

Step 8: Other legal resources.
Besides telephonically options a and summations there are different ways to ensure that the damage is limited if a debtor does not pay. Before you do, it is wise to first consult a legal advisor.

Retention
Retention is a term and common clause in general term & conditions. This means you are the owner of the delivered material until the customer has paid.

Right of publicity
Even if you leave your terms & conditions unlisted, you can reclaim goods if the customer does not pay (right of publicity). Also applicable with receivership or bankruptcy. You will have to recover the goods within 6 weeks after the expiration of the payment.

Suspension Law
The general suspension law allows to suspend the fulfilment of your obligations to the counterpart, until he had paid. The suspension should be (taking all circumstances into account) reasonable and fair.

Instalment plan
If your customer has a temporary inability to pay, you can propose a instalment plan. Put this plan on paper. Always make agreements that when your client stops paying, the instalment plan stops.

Step 9: Factoring; subcontract credit management
Because factoring is only useful when you speak of amounts from about €250,000 incl. VAT, it is not applicable for my businesses for now.

Step 10: Request for tax refund
If over the past years you have had customers that will not pay (bad debt), you can ask the inspector to refund your tax, you had to pay because of these clients.

Supporting documents
You need evidence of the bad debts to claim summation, e.g. collection measures you have taken.

Request in time
Make your request in the last declarations of that year, or at least immediately after adoption of the accounts. This request is reasonable if you are certain that your customer will not pay. For example when a company is declared bankrupt. Do not wait to long, otherwise the tax authorities refuse refund.
Appendix 02.

FINANCIAL PLAN