

# Acquiring Heritage

## A case study of Lexington Company & Morris Stockholm

---

Anna Hagander 920125–3268

Supervisor: Mats Urde

Angelika Johansson 930103–2968

Word count: 6913

Cecilia Lidén 920618–1209



**LUND UNIVERSITY**  
School of Economics and Management

# Table of Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION.....5
  - 1.1 BACKGROUND.....5
  - 1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION .....6
  - 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION .....7
  - 1.4 AIM .....7
- 2. METHODOLOGY .....8
  - 2.1 INDUCTIVE APPROACH.....8
  - 2.2 QUALITATIVE METHOD .....8
  - 2.3 CASE THEORY .....8
  - 2.4 DATA COLLECTION.....9
- 3. THEORY.....10
  - 3.1 THE BRAND STEWARDSHIP MODEL.....10
  - 3.2 SEVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING BRAND AUTHENTICITY .....11
    - 3.2.1 Tell rich stories.....11
    - 3.2.2 Appear as artisanal amateurs.....12
    - 3.2.3 Stick to your roots .....12
    - 3.2.4 Love of production.....12
    - 3.2.5 Immerse yourself in the consumer's world.....12
    - 3.2.6 Connecting to place/space .....13
    - 3.2.7 Building cult-like devotion among staff.....13
- 4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS.....14
  - 4.1 LEXINGTON COMPANY.....14
  - 4.2 MORRIS STOCKHOLM.....15
- 5. ANALYSIS .....18

5.1 LEXINGTON: BRAND STEWARDSHIP MODEL .....	18
5.1.1 Longevity .....	18
5.1.2 Track Record .....	18
5.1.3 Core Values .....	18
5.1.4 History important to identity .....	19
5.1.5 Use of symbols .....	19
5.2 MORRIS: BRAND STEWARDSHIP MODEL .....	19
5.2.1 Longevity .....	19
5.2.2 Track record .....	19
5.2.3 Core values .....	20
5.2.4 History important to identity .....	20
5.2.5 Use of symbols .....	20
5.3 LEXINGTON: 7 HABITS OF ICONIC BRANDS .....	21
5.3.1 Tell rich stories .....	21
5.3.2 Appear as artisanal amateurs .....	21
5.3.3 Stick to your roots .....	21
5.3.4 Love of production .....	22
5.3.5 Immerse yourself into the consumer's world .....	22
5.3.7 Building a cult-like devotion among staff .....	23
5.4 MORRIS: 7 HABITS OF ICONIC BRANDS .....	23
5.4.1 Tell Rich Stories .....	23
5.4.2 Appear as artisanal amateurs .....	24
5.4.3 Stick to your roots .....	24
5.4.4 Love of production .....	24
5.4.5 Immerse yourself in the consumer's world .....	24

5.4.6 Connecting to place/space .....25

5.4.7 Building cult-like devotion among staff.....25

6. DISCUSSION & CONTRIBUTION .....26

7. CONCLUSION .....29

REFERENCES .....30

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Today, we are surrounded by brands in our everyday life. A brand can be associated with a certain class, lifestyle or time epoch in history and even make people emotionally attached. As the globalisation increases, so does the choices of brands for consumers, which have resulted in a search for brands that have a *genuine history* and *authenticity* (Steward-Allen, 2002).

Previous research have shown that using a brand's heritage in communication, gives the impression of stability, trust and continuity, which there is a strong demand for in times of economic crises to reduce risks (Wiedermann et al, 2011, Ballantyne, Warren & Nobbs, 2005). In addition, companies are recommended to go back to their roots when in trouble, to identify their origin success factors and what they really stand for (Aaker, 2004). Due to the rapid development of globalisation and the unpredictable and effective market today, *brand heritage is more relevant than ever*. Using a brand's heritage as a part of its identity is therefore a way to create a competitive advantage (Kapferer, 2012).

The meaning of brand heritage is “A dimension of a brand's identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particular in an organisational belief that history is important.” (Urde et al, 2007:4)

In addition, it is important to distinguish between a heritage brand: “one with a positioning and a value proposition based on its heritage” (Urde, 2007:5) and a brand with a heritage –a brand which possesses a heritage but do not use it in its value proposition. Heritage can also provide *authenticity* to a brand's value propositions as well as to their customers (Urde et al, 2007)

## 1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION

*Authentic* is a word that derives from both Latin and Greek and means ““worthy of acceptance, authoritative, trustworthy, not imaginary, false or imitation, conforming to an original” (Cappannelli & Cappannelli, 2004:1).

Authenticity is a well debated topic and many scientists have done research about what significance it has to society and humans (Grayson and Martinec 2004). A recent study found that *brand heritage* is one of three significant attributes that brands need to have to be perceived as *authentic* by customers (Napoli et al., 2014). Therefore, some young companies try to invent, adopt or fake their brand heritage, and according to Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster (2008), it is possible to be successful in this approach. However, it is also very risky due to the current market environment where customers might detect the faked heritage and loose trust in the brand. One example of a company that ended up in trouble is the American ice-cream brand Häagen Dasz, which was exposed as an imposter because of making the brand’s name and origins sound European.

On the other hand, Greyser and Martinec (2004) mean that there are two types of authenticity in marketing, indexical and iconic. Indexical authenticity is when an object actually has a connection to a certain era or time epoch, whilst the iconic authenticity is when an object's physical vision *reminds* of something that is indexically authentic (Greyser and Martinec, 2004).

Furthermore the authors mean that the two types of authenticity do not exclude each other (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). For example a chair that is made during the Victorian Era (Indexical) can also be seen as an example of a Victorian style during this epoch (Iconic). In other words, every history is relative and contextually driven, therefore authenticity is dependent on a person's previous experiences and perceptions and not historical facts (Grayson and Martinec, 2004).

This leads us to investigate if there is a possibility for young brands that have no genuine heritage, to adopt heritage and still gain authenticity.

### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

How can young brands in the home furnishing and clothing industry adopt heritage to gain authenticity?

### 1.4 AIM

Our aim is to investigate if young brands can adopt heritage to gain authenticity and to provide more knowledge about brand heritage by studying Lexington Company and Morris Stockholm.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 INDUCTIVE APPROACH

When choosing method design, there are two alternatives; deductive and inductive approach. Deductive approach connects theory to empirics and is thereby testing a theory through empirical data whilst inductive approach connects empiric results to theory, which means theories being developed by the patterns and observations gathered in the study (Bryman and Bell, 2007). An inductive approach has been used as the study has started with the observation of heritage brands with seemingly little genuine heritage. During the study, the explorations of patterns of these brands have been sought and, lastly, a conclusion has been presented. However, theory will be used to conduct our study, which is acceptable according to Bryman and Bell (2007) since an inductive study can contain some sections from a deductive approach.

### 2.2 QUALITATIVE METHOD

There are two types of research methods, quantitative and qualitative. *Quantitative* research method has a deductive approach and can collect a bigger amount of data due to the standardized short questions and the easy procession of collected data. A *qualitative* research method is appropriate when the researcher values a large amount of detail that provides a context for the study, which is important for understanding the social behavior of the subjects. The research strategy is also often connected to an inductive approach and therefore, a qualitative research method has been chosen, also due to the reason for this study which is to gain an in-depth perspective (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

### 2.3 CASE THEORY

This study contains an in-depth investigation of two brands: Lexington and Morris Stockholm. Bryman & Bell (2007) describe *case studies* as favorable in a qualitative study because they are “viewed as particularly helpful in the generation of an intensive, detailed examination of the case.” When conducting a case study, the researcher tries to conduct an in-depth study where the goal is to gain a deeper understanding of a certain situation, and not focusing on generic issues, hence it's usually not transferable.

## 2.4 DATA COLLECTION

Primary data is collected from the original information source and can be collected by interviews and surveys. Secondary data is collected by someone else and is useful when having time and cost limitations as well as a need of high quality data (Bryman & Bell, 2007). We have used primary data in the form of discussions and input from experts, as well as secondary data. The literature used as a basis for this study has been collected from official websites and other sources, including Lund University Library, Google e-books, scholarly articles, and course literature.

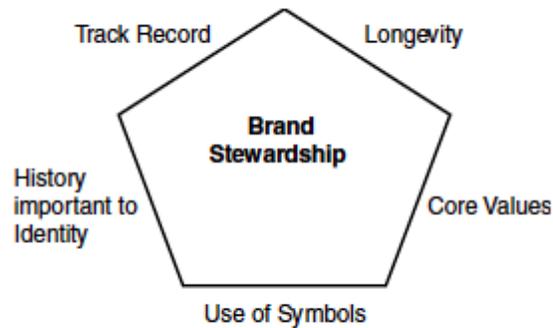
# 3. THEORY

## 3.1 THE BRAND STEWARDSHIP MODEL

Since the aim of this report is to find out how young brands can acquire authenticity by the use of brand heritage, it is crucial to clearly define what criteria a brand must meet to be considered a heritage brand, which is done in this model by Urde (2007). The model will be used when analyzing Lexington and Morris to see if they have met the criteria to become heritage brands.

Urde (2007) has created a model defining the necessary elements to nurture, maintain and protect a brand heritage. All or some of these elements can be found in various degrees in a heritage brand and surround the concept of “brand stewardship”. The model consists of five elements; longevity, core values, use of symbols, track record and history being important to the brand's identity (Urde et al, 2007).

The brands *track record* shows the brand's credibility, which it has accumulated over time by continuously showing consumers and stakeholders that they can be trusted and that they stay true to their values. In heritage brand's, *core values* need to be consistent over time, be incorporated in the brand's strategy and guide the brand's behavior. Brands can also show heritage by the *use of symbols*. These symbols give a deeper meaning to the brand and can have an identity of their own. In heritage brand's, *history is important to the brand's identity*. Heritage brand do not only cherish their history as a memory, but incorporates it into their present marketing strategy and future prospects. When the brand consistently shows these heritage elements over time it is referred to as *longevity*. That is, even if the company replaces its employees and management over time, brand heritage remains a vital part of the organizational culture. This is an important element for brands that have been operating for many years (Urde et al, 2007).



**Figure 1** The elements of brand heritage

## 3.2 SEVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING BRAND AUTHENTICITY

*Building Brand Authenticity, 7 habits of iconic brands* is written by Michael Beverland who through research found seven habits that are performed by authentic brands (Beverland, 2009). These habits may serve as guidelines to achieve this authenticity but do also mere describe how some companies have managed to build their brands successfully. Since the purpose with this paper is to examine how young brands can achieve authenticity, Beverland’s (2009) principles serve well. Lexington and Morris will be analyzed using these 7 principles, which can be found below.

### 3.2.1 Tell rich stories

Beverland (2009) suggests that marketers should tell “rich” stories to build authenticity, in contrasts to the usual brand stories that marketers build that are made up, shallow, and evade conflicts, intrigues and other negative elements. Beverland (2009) promotes stories that include troubles to create “rich, multilayered stories” featuring a brand hero who succeeds against all odds against misfortunes along the way. The author also presses the significant value of having multiple themes in these stories, tragedy and humour, cleverness and stupidity.

Another difference between regular and authentic stories is that the latter are written not solely by marketers, but also by society and consumers (Beverland, 2009).

### 3.2.2 Appear as artisanal amateurs

This habit speaks of the people behind the brands, such as marketers or founders, and their communication with the public. Usually, marketers press professionalism, expertise and business practices –something that should be avoided (Beverland, 2009). If instead doing the opposite, the company seems more human and more relatable by the public. A few examples of an amateurish quality could be a lack of training or commercial motivation. Other gains are a higher awareness, a higher loyalty amongst customers and stronger and more favourable brand equity (Beverland, 2009).

### 3.2.3 Stick to your roots

This, somewhat self-explanatory habit, means to stay true to where the brand originated. This does not mean to never change or to do the same thing over and over Beverland (2009) explains; companies can feel free to reinterpret their core values or other elements that make up the original foundation. The same can be said for activities that the brand performs or for the subculture surrounding the brand, and the outcome is a stronger story, a richer history and reaffirmed traditions (Beverland, 2009).

### 3.2.4 Love of production

The 4th habit Beverland (2009) explains as the passion of craftsmanship. In other words, it is important for brands that are looking to build an authentic heritage to actually be passionate about what they are doing, and skilled in their craftsmanship, personated in every employee within the firm. If the firm does not craft the product themselves, or sell a service, being enthusiastic about the product works in the same way. The primary gain from this is that enthusiasm is infectious and will transfer to customers who will feel strongly for your product as well (Beverland, 2009). This is important since both customers and other stakeholders will see the clear contrast to other brands where the brand enthusiasm, and hence brand equity, is not as strong. One way to communicate this love of production is to include stories around it in the heritage reservoir.

### 3.2.5 Immerse yourself in the consumer's world

Beverland (2009) explains the 5th habit in terms of innovation: How to produce innovations that immediately are accepted, and loved, by the public without allowing for any form of customer influence? The answer seems to be to live with the customers, and by that *knowing* what they

need and want without having to ask. The key is hence to see the need before an explicit thought has formed in the consumer's mind. Beverland (2009) notes that prominent heritage brands have fallen due to consumer involvement and questions the potential gain of this. He also speaks of “timeless innovation” on this matter, originating from the immersion in the market and from closing the distance to the customers.

### 3.2.6 Connecting to place/space

Continuing to a connection with a place or space, Beverland (2009) draws a clear definition between contributing to the society that the corporation is a part of, and to exploit it. It is essential, he argues, to contribute on both macro and micro levels to be viewed as authentic in the company heritage. The primary value in becoming one with the specific, relevant community is that the local bonds get stronger as well as creating sincerity in the customer’s mind, as well as creating a distinct contrast to other companies who try to exploit the cultural context they are immersed in.

### 3.2.7 Building cult-like devotion among staff

Lastly, Beverland discusses the leadership within many successful authentic heritage brands, which in many cases can be described as “cult-like”. It is also common that this devotion spreads to the employees in the firm, which in turn answers to why employees keep up with the from the outside perspective ungrateful, demanding leader. Such a leader may also be able to create an environment in which innovation is flowing freely, and therefore building the staff enthusiasm and devotion even more strongly in the company. One criterion which is crucial in this last habit is the story of failure early in the brand history. Employees must feel like they are working towards the impossible to, in turn, be able to feel like the brand hero and build the passion within the firm.

## 4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

We have chosen to do a case study on the two brands Lexington and Morris, since they are two quite young brands, yet they communicate heritage in the same way that brands that have existed a long time do.

### 4.1 LEXINGTON COMPANY

Lexington Company is a Swedish company selling clothes, home furnishing and textiles. The first store was launched in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1997 but originated in Borås (Leijonhufvud, 2008). Since then the company has expanded throughout the world. Today, it has stores all over Europe as well as a few stores in China, Africa and the US. Lexington is built on what the CEO Kristina Lindhe calls “a gap in the market and a huge potential”, as well as the idea that shirt fabric could be used for bedding to provide a very fine quality linen (Lexington Company: The Brand Movie, 2014). When it comes to CSR, Lexington Company focuses mainly on environmental issues in local areas.

The name Lexington has its origin in Boston, Massachusetts, where a small town named Lexington is located. It is from this small New England town that Lexington draws inspiration when designing textiles and clothes (Lexington Company: The Brand Movie, 2014). The town is filled with houses made from white-painted cedar wood, which Lexington uses in its store entrances as well as associations with the sea, such as boats and lifebuoys. Also, the town Lexington has a rich history; it was there the American Revolution started. The rich history and tradition is the reason for choosing the name Lexington (Lexington Company: About Us, 2015).

Lexington has a New England inspired look, using references from the classic American college style. CEO and founder Kristina Lindhe says she wants to associate the brand with “casual luxury” (Leijonhufvud, 2008), other core values are also quality, tradition and community (Lexington Company: The Journal, 2015). Quality is a repetitive scheme in Lexington’s products and only the best raw materials are used (Lexington Company: About Us, 2015). The products, such as bed linens, pillow cases, throws, aprons and clothes, follow the same color scheme: the American flag colors navy blue, red and white. It is stated clearly on many of the products that they are “Authentic American goods”, “From 1993” or “A brand with American Heritage”. Many

of the products are also marked with stripes or a star, much like one of the fifty stars on the American flag (Lexington Company, 2015).

Consistent in all Lexington's advertising is that it is filmed or photographed in a real New England setting. Some of Lexington's advertising videos also display old mansions in black and white, giving the impression that it was filmed a long time ago (Lexington Company, 2014).

The Lexington logo bears a strong resemblance to the American flag. Next to the red and white stripes a navy blue square is situated, where the white stars have been replaced by the word "Lexington". Lexington also has an alternative logo for its *Superior Collection*. This logo also has a strong resemblance to the American flag, but in this instance it is transformed into a coat of arms. This logo looks old-fashioned and the text is written in an elegant font (Lexington Company, 2015).

## 4.2 MORRIS STOCKHOLM

Morris Stockholm is a Swedish brand launched in 2004 by Jan and Eva Alsén (Westholm, 2006). As the brand was launched, it quickly became successful and Morris put up more stores in Sweden as well as other European countries and Japan.

Morris is a clothing company selling fashion with a classic, preppy style targeting a younger audience compared to other similar brands selling preppy classic looking clothes. The younger segment is drawn to the preppy and raw look of the brand, says the creator Jan Alsén. According to Alsén, what sets Morris apart is "the love for well-tailored clothes with a timeless design". The collections include red trousers, club jackets and colorful wool sweaters (Thescholar.se, 2014).

The brand name, Morris, was bought because of its rich history. Morris was originally the name of a well-renowned menswear boutique located on Hamngatan in Stockholm in the 1950s to 1970s. Back then, it was the destination for anyone wishing to dress like a true gentleman and attracted appreciators of well-tailored clothes. At the time, Morris sold British quality brands (Thescholar.se, 2014).

Much like the original Morris store, Morris Stockholm focuses mainly on well-tailored menswear, with the difference that the clothes and design are Swedish-made. Morris Men is

characterized by its classical ideals meeting contemporary style. Many of the sweaters in the collection are adorned with a large knitted British flag (Morrisstockholm.se, 2015)

Originally, Morris only sold menswear, but as the brand became successful it added *Morris Lady*, a women's collection (Westholm, 2006). Morris Lady was launched in 2013 and has the same characteristics as Morris Men, but with a female touch. In addition to Morris' male and female collections, Morris has also created a line called Morris heritage. The Heritage collection is a more exclusive line of clothes and claims to be "elegantly nonchalant" (Morrisstockholm.se, 2015). This collection uses better fabrics and has an even more classic look than the other collections (Thescholar.se, 2014). Throughout its collections of clothes and its marketing Morris constantly draws reference to history and heritage. As stated by Morris:

*"Fashion is a funny thing. The word implies constant change – always moving on to the next big thing, the next trend and the next look. That's not Morris. We prefer the word curious – and as a brand you could say that we're style curious. That means that Morris prefers to rush slowly. The results are always better that way. We know who we are, where we're coming from, and also where we're going."*

In this situation, "where we come from" is the long-stemming tradition of making well-tailored, high quality British menswear (Morrisstockholm.se, 2015).

The Morris website contains a page called "Meet Morris" where Morris explains the heart and soul of the brand. Here, Morris talks about how they are "tirelessly attracted to the allure of past" and reminisce about what Britain and mainland Europe was like many years ago. For instance, Morris talks about famous icon such as the Kennedy brothers and Marlon Brando and describes the fashionable life in the French Riviera in the 50s. It is in these types of places Morris wants their clothes to be worn (Morrisstockholm.se, 2015). Morris' advertising also brings history to mind. In the advertisings, Morris' models can be found posing in front of old manors or next to a 1920s car. The models are wearing Morris fashion, which is paired with natural classic make-up on the female models and a slick combed back hairstyle on the male models.

The Morris logo has the brand name "Morris" in the center. Below it, "Stockholm" is displayed in a smaller text. At the top of the logo is a fleur de lys, an old heraldic mark depicting a lily. The fleur de lys has a rich history and has been used for centuries (Heraldica.org, 2015). It is a

recurring element on the products, and marks all the shirts in the collection, among other products. Another mark that can be found on the products is Morris' coat of arms (Morrisstockholm.se, 2015).

# 5. ANALYSIS

## 5.1 LEXINGTON: BRAND STEWARDSHIP MODEL

### 5.1.1 Longevity

Lexington Company was, as described earlier in this paper, founded 1997 in Borås (Lexington Company, 2015). Hence, it is not even 20 years old and could hardly be described as a company with longevity even if this concept does not have a fixed age. Lexington does however draw references to the year 1993 on a lot of their textiles and products, as well as connections to a much earlier age via the commercial pictures that often come in black and white outside old mansions (Lexington Company, 2015). Neither of this is then completely true as the company was founded four years later than the mentioned year and the retro-inspired photos seem to have a connection further back than 1993. Another graphical detail on Lexington Company's products is the words "American Heritage" that are printed on several collections, which creates associations with longevity.

### 5.1.2 Track Record

Because the longevity side of the model is strongly connected to the track record, Lexington Company will not be able to produce a track record for any substantial amount of time. Hence, it does not meet the criteria for "track record".

### 5.1.3 Core Values

The main concept that Lexington Company speaks of in interviews and online is "casual luxury", which comes as a recurring theme through their marketing. Other than that, the core values according to the CEO Kristina Lindhe (Lexington Company, 2014) are "tradition" and "community", which are connected to New England. Other communicated values may be seen on Lexington's fabric, clothing, and other textiles, where the words "original", "heritage", "American" and "quality" are a recurring theme (Lexington Company, 2015). The Lexington Company seems to have stayed true to these core values since the beginning since the seasonal collections and business practices have not changed substantially over time.

#### 5.1.4 History important to identity

Lexington Company collects its identity mainly from the references to New England and the American seaside which permeate the whole corporation. The history of the town Lexington and the way of life of New England is thus very important to the identity of Lexington Company and this is where inspiration is drawn from in the company (Lexington: The Brand Movie, 2014). However, since these references have little to do with the real origins of the company, the true history cannot be said to be important to Lexington's identity.

#### 5.1.5 Use of symbols

The symbol that Lexington Company uses in its marketing campaigns and advertising is mainly the American flag. The logo of Lexington has strong influences from this flag, as well as many products having stars in the colors of the flag. Stripes are also a recurring theme and this entire set of features is mainly in the colors navy, white, and red. Symbols connecting to the seaside, such as boats, lifebuoys and the white painted cedar are also frequent in Lexington's concept stores, on their online website and in all their marketing material. In their recent product line "Lexington Superior", a coat of arms has also been used to distinguish this more luxurious collection from the original products.

## 5.2 MORRIS: BRAND STEWARDSHIP MODEL

#### 5.2.1 Longevity

As Morris was created in 2004 it does not have longevity. However, Morris has made British tailoring part of the brand and, since the tradition of tailoring has existed a long time, Morris has been able to transfer the longevity of British tailoring to their brand. Though they lack true longevity, Morris attempts to communicate adopted longevity by stating: "We know...where we're coming from". The use of the old trademark "Morris" assists in associating Morris Stockholm with longevity, since it gives the impression that Morris will continue on selling high quality British fashion like its predecessor.

#### 5.2.2 Track record

Because Morris is such a young brand it has not yet built up a significant track record.

### 5.2.3 Core values

The core values of Morris can be described as classic and preppy, with a modern twist. Throughout its lifetime, Morris has stayed true to these values. The collections Lady and Heritage that were added to the menswear collection stayed true to the core values of Morris and had the same stylistic characteristics. Morris does not follow every new trend. They prefer to stick to the classic look with small changes in for example color. As they put it themselves, Morris likes to “rush slowly”.

### 5.2.4 History important to identity

The identity of Morris is bringing the great craftsmanship, quality and style of the British classical fashion up to date and adding a modern touch. Morris continuously stresses the history of making great clothes, and history is thus a crucial component in Morris’ identity. Morris draws reference to history in their products and promotion by creating clothes with a classic preppy look and styling the models in an old fashioned way, and by having the models pose in front of old manors or next to vintage cars. Morris further connects to history by referencing to old icons and to what life was like in the past. However, though the identity of Morris is connected to history and though their communication focuses on historic elements, the history is not Morris’ own history. Morris has simply drawn inspiration from the rich history of Britain and Europe and made it their own. The true history of Morris is its origin in the small Swedish town Borås, which is not mentioned anywhere in Morris’ communication and in this aspect Morris does not fulfill the criteria of history being important to identity.

### 5.2.5 Use of symbols

Morris uses symbols in their marketing, such as the fleur de lys. By using such an old and iconic symbol as the logo, Morris reinforces the impression of history and heritage connected to the brand. As the fleur de lys is found both in the logo and as a mark on all shirts it has become an important symbol for the Morris brand. Another important symbol used by Morris is the coat of arms. As previously mentioned coats of arms have a long and rich history and have been used for centuries. By developing their own coat of arms, Morris wants to give the impression that they have a rich history and heritage.

## 5.3 LEXINGTON: 7 HABITS OF ICONIC BRANDS

### 5.3.1 Tell rich stories

Lexington Company tells a story of New England, and a small town called precisely Lexington where the sea is just next door and the nature is ever present. The creative director and founder, Kristina Lindhe, features in their brand movie which can be found on their website, telling “the story about where Lexington originates from” but not mentioning Sweden once in this almost six minutes long movie. Hence, Beverland’s (2009) criterion of a brand hero/heroine and the fact that failures and troubles along the way should be included cannot be fulfilled. Lexington is on the other hand a good example of those traditional marketing stories that Beverland (2009) uses as the opposite as of what iconic brands do in his first described habit. The story is solely written by the Lexington Company itself without involvement from the public or the society, and because of this it does not tell the tale of difficulties that the corporation might have had along the way.

### 5.3.2 Appear as artisanal amateurs

This habit is difficult to answer when from outside, as a customer, but when Kristina Lindhe, the CEO of Lexington, answers the question “What is Lexington?” she foremost mentions globalization, strategies and different markets they are present in and want to enter (Lexington Company, 2015). According to Beverland (2009), business practices like these should be downplayed to appear as amateurs when it comes to marketing. When looking at the section “About us” at the Lexington Company’s home page, the reader is immediately confronted with the vision, the strategy, the brand and the different markets that they are in and which they want to enter; these are also examples to why Lexington does not fulfill the criterion of being called artisanal amateurs (Lexington Company, 2015).

### 5.3.3 Stick to your roots

Since Lexington Company has rooted their organization into an identity that is not theirs, the question of if they are sticking to their roots or not depends on whether defining their roots as in the U. S. or in Sweden. Lexington has during the years stuck to their starting point with the New England style, their core values of quality, tradition and “casual luxury” and while their seasonal collections may vary, they all go in the American theme that Lexington started off with. In the case with their real heritage, however, the Swedish culture and their city of origin, Borås, are not

mentioned anywhere in their brand film, on their webpage or in any of their communication towards their stakeholders (Lexington Company, 2015). In total, Lexington Company can be said to stick to their made-up roots rather than to their true roots when analyzing this habit.

#### 5.3.4 Love of production

Since the beginning, when Lexington Company only produced bedding, they have maintained the fact that their products always are of fine quality, something that is also felt in their pricing. As they grew and added more segments to their collections, quality and good craftsmanship has always been central for Lexington, regardless if referring to clothing, bedding or home furnishing. The company was launched in the idea that bed linen could be made out of shirt fabric, to produce a very high quality and “crisp feel”, which then blossomed into all the other products that Lexington fabricates and sells (Lexington Company Brand Movie, 2014).

Lexington Company themselves explains quality through the following statement from their website (Lexington Company, 2015): “Every item is produced to the highest standard using only the best materials, design, workmanship and packaging” (Lexington Company, 2015). The love of production does thus stretch to not only the products but also to the packaging and the design around it.

#### 5.3.5 Immerse yourself into the consumer’s world

This habit is described by Beverland (2009) as to know what the consumers want by living in the same world and surroundings as them, rather than to ask them straight away when it comes to inventions. This is difficult knowing without inside information but the CEO Kristina Lindhe mentions that they collect their inspiration from the American east side for all their collections, and that the original idea behind Lexington Company was based in “a gap at the market and a huge potential”, where the New England style was not well represented but wanted by the customers (Lexington Company: The Brand Movie, 2014). Accordingly, Lexington seeing the gap in the market where customers knew what they wanted rather than the company introducing something radically new, this seem like a more customer-based innovation approach than the one Beverland (2009) suggests for iconic brands.

#### 5.3.6 Connecting to place/space

Lexington has various sponsored events in and around their flagship stores, such as a charity event for the local *Group for the East End* in Southampton and a summer event to show the new collection to customers in Munich (Lexington Company, 2015). As per Lexington's journal at their website, it seems like the majority of these kinds of events are in association with a new collection launch, a new collaboration with an artist or other strategic moves from the corporation (Lexington: The Journal, 2015). When it comes to CSR within Lexington, the Code of Conduct discusses mainly environmental issues and equality issues. However, the Code also clearly states that the selection of production sites is determined above all because of the quality that the suppliers are able to comply with, rather than if they are devoted to CSR. It is therefore difficult to determine whether Lexington exploits or contribute to the society around them, but the majority of facts indicate that they cannot be classified as "contributing".

### 5.3.7 Building a cult-like devotion among staff

To know what an organization looks like from the inside is always difficult to distinguish from the outside. The conclusions that can be drawn from the Lexington Company's case is that they have a CEO that is also the founder, and that is very visible in the press. If she is a strong and very devoted leader is however very difficult to say. Beverland (2009) describes the leaders of such a company as seen from the outside as "overbearing, demanding, and seemingly ungrateful", which does not seem to be the case with Lexington's CEO and founder, neither with her co-founder and husband. The author also describes this climate of creativeness as a result of a problematic past with a poor performance, something which Lexington Company is lacking. The conclusion is that Lexington Company probably doesn't have a cult-like devotion either in their leaders or in their employees.

## 5.4 MORRIS: 7 HABITS OF ICONIC BRANDS

### 5.4.1 Tell Rich Stories

In some aspects, Morris tells stories. Throughout their communication, Morris talks about the history and heritage of old British and European lifestyles lived by iconic persons the past century. The stories talk only about the positive and aspirational attributes in past lifestyles. The stories, however, do not qualify to Beverland's idea of "rich stories". According to Beverland, rich stories have to be multilayered. The stories should have a hero that encounters both trials and

fortune and should balance multiple themes, such as tragedy and humor. Morris' stories are not complex, deep and "rich" enough to qualify to the principle of telling rich stories.

#### 5.4.2 Appear as artisanal amateurs

Morris does not act like an authentic brand, according to Beverland. Authentic brands are characterized by appearing to put little effort in their marketing and communication, thus appearing to be artisanal amateurs. Morris does the opposite of this by consciously using marketing tools and business strategies. Jan Alsén, CEO of Morris, openly discusses how he chose the style of the brand, the target segment, the store staff, the financial plan, and choice of retailers. Alsén stresses the professionalism and expertise practiced by Morris, which is the opposite of what an authentic brand would do.

#### 5.4.3 Stick to your roots

There are two definitions of sticking to the roots in the case of Morris: sticking to the true roots from Sweden and Borås or sticking to the fabricated roots of classic British style. The only time Morris used its Swedish roots is when they named the brand Morris Stockholm. Apart from that, there is no mention of Morris' true history or heritage. The other way of seeing it is that Morris has a very strong connection to its roots; only it is to the fabricated ones. Throughout the brands marketing and communication the history of classic British style and tailoring is prominent.

#### 5.4.4 Love of production

By putting immense effort into crafting their products Morris fulfills the principle "Love of production". As they have a passion for making great clothes, both in the aspect of style and quality, they engage consumers in their products. Morris handpicks its manufacturers and retailers, making sure they live up to their standards.

#### 5.4.5 Immerse yourself in the consumer's world

According to Alsén, Morris was launched because of the potential consumer demand in the fashion market for preppy, modern clothes targeting a younger segment. This implies that Alsén saw a gap in the market and has used a consumer-based approach in the strategy. According to Beverland, an innovative approach creating a demand previously unknown to the consumers themselves is necessary to be considered immersing yourself in the consumer's world. Thus, Morris does not meet the criteria.

#### 5.4.6 Connecting to place/space

During the production process of its products, Morris makes sure that they work in an environmentally friendly manner. This is also important when Morris chooses what suppliers and other actors to work with. This can be seen as a way of connecting to place, which is one of Beverland's principles. However, being environmentally friendly is the only contribution to society Morris has made and it is not actively communicated to consumers. Morris can therefore not be seen as connecting to place and space to any great length. Since Morris' care for the environment is not actively communicated, it is unlikely that it has created a stronger bond between the consumers and the brand or that Morris has created sincerity in the minds of consumers, which it needs to do according to Beverland.

#### 5.4.7 Building cult-like devotion among staff

In authentic brands, Beverland defines the leader of the brand as someone who inspires the staff to the point where they devote themselves completely to the brand. From the outside, the leader is supposed to appear ungrateful and demanding, but this is not the case with Morris. There is nothing indicating that Morris has a cult like devotion among its staff. Since we have not been able to study Morris from inside the organization, it is difficult to tell whether they live up to Beverland's principle.

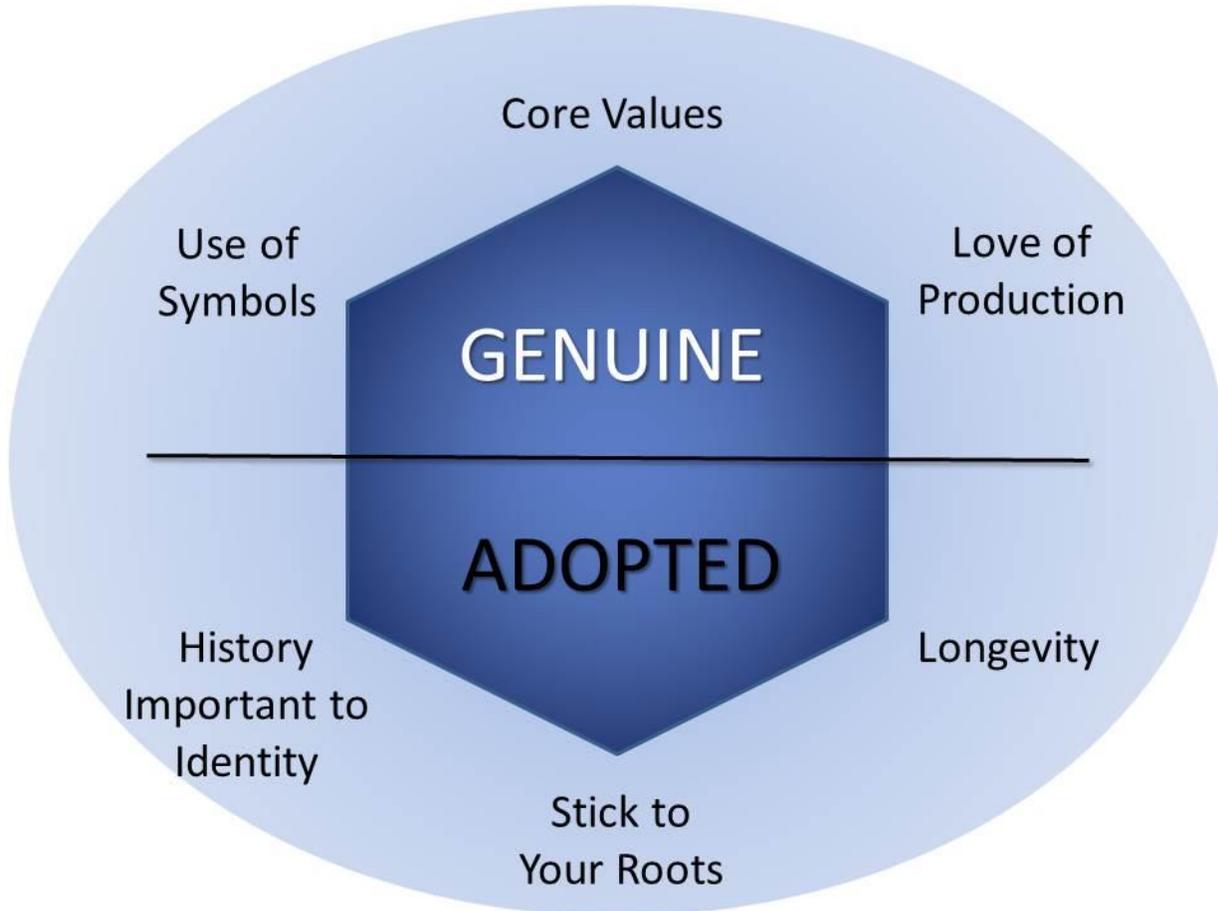
## 6. DISCUSSION & CONTRIBUTION

After analyzing the case study of Lexington Company and Morris Stockholm we realized that the key issue in discussing whether the heritage is “true” or not, lies in what approach one uses. For example, when talking about the criteria “History Important to Identity” in Urde’s (2009) Brand Stewardship Model, it is crucial to determine if analyzing the “true” or genuine history, or the by Lexington/Morris communicated history. In Lexington’s case, the genuine history is Swedish, while the adopted history is American and also the one which is communicated. The adopted, American history is very important to Lexington’s identity while the genuine, Swedish history plays little or no role. To summarize, we added these approaches in a table featuring both Urde’s criteria and Beverland’s habits, see below:

				
	Genuine	Adopted	Genuine	Adopted
Longevity	✗	✓	✗	✓
Track Record	✗	✗	✗	✗
Core Values	✓	–	✓	–
History Important to Identity	✗	✓	✗	✓
Use of Symbols	✓	–	✓	–
Tell Rich Stories	✗	–	✗	–
Appear as Artisanal Amateurs	✗	✗	✗	✗
Stick to Your Roots	✗	✓	✗	✓
Love of Production	✓	–	✓	–
Immerse Yourself into the Customers World	✗	✗	✗	✗
Connection to Place/Space	✗	✗	✗	✗
Building Cult-like Devotion Among Staff	✗	✗	✗	✗

To be able to answer our research question, we formed three groups from the table above; “Genuine”, “Adoptable” and “Non-adoptable”, where “Genuine” represents the criteria and habits that are possible for Lexington and Morris to do genuinely, the “Adoptable” group represents the criteria and habits that are possible to adopt from a history that does not necessarily connect to the brand, and “Non-adoptable” are the criteria and habits that Lexington and Morris fail to comply with. For young brands, which are our primary focus, the “non-adoptable” section is of lesser interest since it is out of bounds. We have therefore focused on the two other groups and merged them into a new model:

### Heritage acquisition model



In this model, the “Genuine” group contains “Use of Symbols”, “Core Values” and “Love of Production”. As represented in Table 1, these criteria and this habit was fully complied with both by Lexington and Morris and not extracted from an adopted background story. The “Adopted” group contains “Longevity”, “History Important to Identity” and “Stick to Your Roots”. These criteria and habit was presented in Table 1 as non-genuine since both Lexington and Morris build these on history and roots that does not connect to the true origins of the brands.

Lastly, as mentioned in the problem discussion, there are two types of authenticity; Indexical and Iconic. Different people with different backgrounds may accordingly view authenticity in different ways, and there is therefore no absolute truth in what is seen as authentic and not by the consumers, therefore the adopted heritage may be authentic to some people and not to others.

However, the model presented above could lay as a foundation for further, quantitative, studies in the authenticity and heritage field to evaluate whether it could be applied generally and to different industries. If generally applicable, this model could determine what fields young companies in the textile industry could focus on to acquire authenticity through genuine and adopted heritage. Theoretically, this model could contribute to new knowledge in how companies use different criteria to acquire authenticity regardless of when they were established.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Lexington and Morris have used some of the criteria and habits presented by Urde (2007) and Beverland (2009) to gain authenticity through heritage, but this case concludes that there are some criteria and habits that are “non-adoptable”, hence it is not possible to adopt a background story to achieve every element when not having a long tradition. However, some elements were also classified as “adoptable”, meaning they could be used by Lexington and Morris in their communication without connecting to their origins, and “genuine”, which habits and criteria were possible to genuinely create. The latter two were presented by the authors in a Heritage Acquisition Model, clearly showing how Lexington and Morris created their heritage.

# REFERENCES

Aaker, D.A. (2004). leveraging The Corporate Brand. *California Management Review*, Vol. 46, Iss. 3 pp. 6 --18.

Ballantyne, R., Warren, A. & Nobbs, K. (2006). The evolution of fire choice. *The Journal of Fire Management* Vol. 13, Iss. 4/5, pp. 339-352.

Beverland, M. (2009). *Building brand authenticity: 7 habits of iconic brands*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bradford T. Hudson, (2011),"Brand heritage and the renaissance of Cunard", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45 Iss 9/10 pp. 1538 - 1556

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2007). *Business research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Capannelli, G. A., & Cappannelli, S. (2004), *Authenticity: Simple Strategies for Greater Meaning and Purpose at Work and at Home*. Emmis Books: New York.

Encyclopedia Britannica, (2015). *coat of arms / heraldry*. [online] Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/coat-of-arms> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2015].

Fisher-Buttinger, C., & Vallaster, C. (2008). *Connective Branding: Building Brand Equity in a Demanding World*. London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Grayson, Kent and Radan Martinec (2004), 'Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality and their Influence on Assessments of Authentic Market Offerings', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 296–312.

Heraldica.org, (2015). *The Fleur-de-Lys*. [online] Available at: <http://www.heraldica.org/topics/fdl.htm> [Accessed 18 Oct. 2015].

Kapferer, J.N. (2012, Fifth Edition), *The new Strategic Brand Management*, London: Kogan

Leijonhufvud, J. (2008). *Från sängkläder till modekläder - DN.SE*. [online] DN.SE [Accessed 18 Oct. 2015].

Lexingtoncompany.com, (2015). *About*. [online] Available at: <http://www.lexingtoncompany.com/sv/about> [Accessed 10 Oct. 2015].

Lexingtoncompany.com, (2015). *Home Collection*. [online] Available at: <http://www.lexingtoncompany.com/sv/home> [Accessed 10 Oct. 2015].

Lexingtoncompany.com (2015). *The Journal*. [online] Available at: <http://www.lexingtoncompany.com/sv/journal> [Accessed 10 Oct. 2015].

Lowenthal, D. (1998). Fabricating Heritage, *History and Memory*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 5-24

Morrisstockholm.com, (2015). *Morris Stockholm Official: Experience the latest collection*. [online] Available at: <http://www.morrisstockholm.com> [Accessed 18 Oct. 2015].

Napoli, J., Dickinson, S. J., Beverland, M. B., & Farrelly, F. (2014), "Measuring consumer-based brand authenticity", *Journal of Business Research*, 67(6), 1090-1098.

Postrel, Virginia (2003), *The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value is Remaking Commerce, Culture, & Consciousness*. New York: HarperCollins.

Stewart - Allen, A. L. (2002). Heritage branding helps in global Markets. *Marketing News*, Vol. 36, No. 16, pp. 6.

Thescholar.se, (2014). *Mannen bakom Morris / The Scholar*. [online] Available at: <http://thescholar.se/2014/12/mode/mannen-bakom-morris/> [Accessed 18 Oct. 2015].

Urde, M., Greyser, S.D. & Balmer, J.M.T. (2007). Corporate Brands with a heritage. *The Journal of Fire Management* Vol. 15, No. 1 pp. 4-19.

Westholm, E. (2006). *Preppyframgång för Morris - Realtid.se*. [online] Realtid.se. Available at: [http://www.realtid.se/ArticlePages/200608/15/20060815164755\\_Realtid192/20060815164755\\_Realtid192.dbp.asp?sAction=lk#k1](http://www.realtid.se/ArticlePages/200608/15/20060815164755_Realtid192/20060815164755_Realtid192.dbp.asp?sAction=lk#k1) [Accessed 18 Oct. 2015].

Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N. Schmidt, S. & Wuestefeld, T. (2011). Drivers and outcomes of Fire Heritage: Consumers' Perception of Heritage Brands in The Automotive Industry. *The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 19, Iss. 2 pp. 205-220