

**Global Branding for Fashion Entrepreneurs:  
How Womenswear SMEs Design Their Firms  
to Grow Internationally**

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the resources and capabilities utilised for brand development and internationalisation of entrepreneurial womenswear designer fashion enterprises (DFEs). This thesis presents an original contribution to knowledge by using the concept of dynamic capabilities as a 'lens' to explore the creation of brand identity in the context of the international fashion system. In the pursuit of its aim, this research defines a dynamic capability process of DFE brand development through the codification of elements of brand identity, recognising the influence of co-creation experiences. Furthermore, this thesis identifies the characteristics of DFE internationalisation behaviour, defining how the processes of brand development and internationalisation are related to each other and embedded in the capabilities of the DFE.

Entrepreneurial DFEs, recognised within the fashion media as 'emerging designers', are increasingly identified as key sectors for economic growth. These enterprises are largely wholesale, highly internationalised operations within the SME sector, strengthened and supported by a broad network. However, significant focus within academic literature centres on branding or internationalisation in relation to fashion retail or established luxury firms, ignoring entrepreneurial DFEs who are sources of innovation and creativity for the fashion industry. This research fills a gap in the academic literature by examining the brand development and internationalisation processes of entrepreneurial DFEs operating in the contemporary context of the global fashion industry.

Using grounded theory to examine the practice of entrepreneurial DFEs based in London and New York, this research incorporates theoretical sampling to direct data gathering from semi-structured in-depth interviews, observation at London, New York and Paris fashion weeks, and analysis of websites, social media and press. Constant comparative analysis refined emerged concepts into sub-categories, properties and dimensions surrounding the core category of the 'collection lifecycle'. The findings of this research are organised according to aggregate dimensions of brand identity elements, and a hierarchy of operational routines, dynamic capabilities and organisational learning.

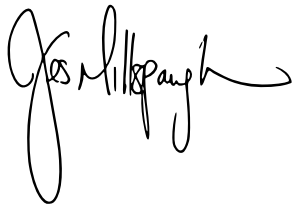
This research finds that for DFEs, the development of brand identity is a dynamic capability process embedded in and emergent from operational routines and capabilities. As a resource, the brand guides internationalisation. In turn, internationalisation behaviour requires interaction within the global fashion system that operates as a source for organisational learning, further adapting the DFE's brand to align with market opportunities. In the explanation of this process, this research presents a theoretical framework and a series of eight propositions defining the product development activities, operational resources and capabilities, dynamic brand development capabilities and process of organisational learning that impacts brand identity creation and internationalisation.



## Declaration of Authenticity

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by research at the University of the Arts London, London College of Fashion.

I declare that this document embodies the results of my own work and that it is composed by myself and has not been included in another thesis. Following normal academic conventions, I have made due acknowledgement of the work of others.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer E. S. Millspaugh'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer E. S. Millspaugh

22 June 2016



## **Supervisory Team**

Simon Thorogood, Director of Studies

Professor Ian King, Supervisor

Chitra Buckley, Supervisor

Wendy Malem, Special Advisor

Professor Tony Kent, Special Advisor





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A total of 24 companies were interviewed for this study.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Rationale & the Research Question

In just over a decade, designer Stacey Bendet built her firm, Alice + Olivia, into an international business with \$200 million in annual sales (Mellery-Pratt 2015). Bendet's story of organic growth, 'almost exclusively through product category expansion and adding wholesale channels' throughout the initial years of expansion is not an uncommon development process for entrepreneurial designers currently operating in the fashion industry (ibid.: para 16). Christopher Kane, Altuzarra, 3.1 Phillip Lim, Erdem, Roksanda, Jason Wu, Nicholas Kirkwood, Simone Rocha, Mary Katrantzou and Peter Pilotto are other examples of entrepreneurial designer fashion enterprises (DFEs) that have developed established brands in the ten years, or less, they have been in business (Fitzpatrick 2013; Abnett 2015; Signer 2015). These companies are increasingly identified as key sectors for economic growth regardless of their need for promotion and support to achieve sustainability (Karra 2008; BFC 2012).

Previous research related to brand development of DFEs examines the evolution of business models and the challenges of global brand image inconsistencies of large established firms (Moore & Birtwistle 2004; Matthiesen & Phau 2010; Moore & Doyle 2010). This research explores entrepreneurial DFEs, typically profiled in the fashion media as 'emerging designers', and characterised as non-established new entrants to the fashion industry. Entrepreneurial DFEs are defined as fashion design firms that produce products within the upper market segments between designer luxury and contemporary

price-points, and are in the earliest stages of development (typically in operation less than ten years). Academic research on the development and growth of entrepreneurial DFEs remains scarce.

Within the creative industries, entrepreneurial DFEs operate within the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector on an international level, developing extraordinarily influential connections with fabric and material suppliers, manufacturers, sales and PR agents, trade fairs and retailers on a global scale (Karra 2008). Innovations in manufacturing, communication, economic environments and consumer preferences have created new opportunities for small firm internationalisation despite unequal competition for resources (Corbellini & Saviolo 2009; Burns et al. 2011; Hutchinson & Quinn 2012). But few studies explore SME fashion design brands that may internationalise outside the individual retail outlet (Fionda & Moore 2009; Hutchinson & Quinn 2012; Kapferer 2012).

Additionally, the fashion industry is in a dynamic state of flux, currently experiencing significant change resulting in established and entrepreneurial enterprises introducing business model innovations that alter the fashion schedule and product price-point segmentations (Singer 2015; Amed 2016a; CFDA 2016). For example, in early 2016, established firms such as Burberry, Tommy Hilfiger and Tom Ford announced dramatic changes in their presentation schedule, shifting their fashion shows to feature products immediately available for sale (Amed 2016b; Amed & Abnett 2016; Amed & Sherman 2016; Conti 2016; Friedman 2016; Pike 2016; Sherman 2016; WWD Staff 2016). This product-focused, direct-to-consumer, 'see now, buy now' strategy signals a 'new world order' for the fashion system, which is splintering into diverse business models that now offer 'brand specific' solutions to DFE development in alignment with individual firm resources for both established and emerging brands (Amed 2016a; CFDA 2016).

Due to the lack of literature in relation to entrepreneurial DFEs, the contributing factors to their success remain unknown. Despite the recognition within the fashion media that these enterprises grow internationally from the earliest periods of development, the process by which these enterprises develop their brands is yet to be explored.

Using an exploratory and qualitative approach, this investigation uses grounded theory methodology to explore how designer womenswear SMEs create their brand identities and pursue international growth. This project finds its foundation in the contemporary context of the industry's current situation, exploring the interconnection between entrepreneurial DFEs, brand development and internationalisation. Using theoretical sampling to direct data gathering, this research incorporates the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews with womenswear designer fashion brands, along with their support network of PR agents, showroom managers and sales agents. Additionally, observation at New York, London & Paris fashion weeks, and analysis of websites, social media and press is used for the triangulation and verification of emerging concepts within the data. The central question for this thesis is born out of the identified gap between the contemporary context within the industry and a survey of academic literature in the fields of fashion brand management, internationalisation and SMEs.

While previous research has demonstrated the necessity to understand the successful internationalisation process of the apparel firm, the lack of studies exploring internationalisation within the context of branding leaves an imbalance between academia and the current situation of the fashion industry (Moore et al. 2000; Fillis 2001). By examining the connection between brand development and internationalisation of the apparel firm, this thesis contributes to knowledge about how entrepreneurial DFEs generate resources and capabilities in the pursuit of economic sustainability. Examining internationalisation and brand development through the theoretical lens of dynamic capabilities provides a new perspective on the growth of DFEs in a globally competitive marketplace.

## **1.2 Aims & Objectives**

This research aims to identify the resources and capabilities of SME womenswear design firms with studios based in London and New York founded between 2005 and 2014, and their effect on brand development and internationalisation. The thesis explores the role of brand development and internationalisation within the fashion industry, focusing on activities, capabilities and organisational learning of entrepreneurial design firms that operate within the gap between new talent and established businesses.

To meet its aim, the research will achieve the following objectives, exploring within an international context, how entrepreneurial DFEs:

- Define success in global markets, identifying immediate and long term goals;
- Create and define their brand identity within the firm;
- Translate their brand identity into brand messaging;
- Utilise communication activities to convey their brand vision;
- Develop brand capabilities for growth.

These objectives highlight important aspects of the development of entrepreneurial fashion design SMEs. In defining brand success of entrepreneurial DFEs in global markets, the research will describe their immediate and long-term goals, offering and clarifying a definition of what it means to ‘succeed’ within the fashion industry. Overall the objectives act as a channel that further focus the study to understand the intricacies of operating as an entrepreneurial DFE, recognising that these firms, in some way and through a process, create and define their brand identity within the firm and context of the fashion system. Once the essential parts of the brand are discovered, the identity is then translated and promoted, again through a process, into the fashion industry and consumer market. This research will identify how the promotion of the brand is done via communication activities and the development of brand identity, and how those capabilities interrelate with the growth process on an international level. Through meeting each of its objectives, and ultimately achieving its aim, this thesis provides greater understanding of the entrepreneurial designer fashion brand development process and presents a theoretical framework of the interdependence of branding capabilities on product development, internationalisation and growth.

### **1.3 Research Design & Methodology**

Grounded theory provides a methodological framework for exploring the interconnection between internationalisation and brand development within the field of fashion. This research seeks to build a substantive theory of how DFEs develop their businesses within the global fashion system (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Grounded theory’s exploratory and open nature provide the foundation for exploring the development of entrepreneurial DFEs from a holistic perspective.

The philosophical approach of this research is situated within symbolic interactionism. As a combination of intended meaning and meaning interpreted out of an environmental situation, 'symbolic interactionism is a complex interplay between social action, the reflexive nature of the self and the negotiations of one's character in daily society' (Ligas & Cotte 1999: 612). By assuming that people interpret the actions of others instead of simply reacting, symbolic interactionism highlights the processes of how individuals understand their world (Solomon 1983).

Researching internationalisation from a holistic perspective calls attention to the dynamic ways in which firms develop in practice (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998; Coviello & McAuley 1999; Bell et al. 2004). This holistic approach to the research can be achieved by incorporating multiple methods of data gathering and analysis, diverse participants and geographies, and integrating the literature during each research stage (Coviello & McAuley 1999). The use of grounded theory methodology, combined with the incorporation of diverse sources from the literature, pragmatically creates connections and understanding for the examination of DFE practice within the fashion industry.

This research utilises semi-structured in-depth interviews with entrepreneurial DFEs based in London and New York, and a series of support organisations that assist in the development of these firms within the industry. Data gathering and analysis was organised into four phases, which coincided with specific points in the fashion schedule, as interviews were predominately conducted in the months immediately following New York and London fashion weeks. The interviews from each phase were transcribed, coded and analysed, producing a series of concepts and categories that were refined iteratively throughout the project. Additionally, the interview phases of the project made use of activities and a qualitative survey to assist in the verification and analysis of the core category, its sub-categories and the theoretical understanding derived from it.

This analysis produced the foundation from which a final phase of research was conducted that extrapolated the findings to a larger sample set of DFEs based in London and New York, using publicly available data from websites, social media and press articles to verify and extend specific theoretical findings. It is important to note that while the interview participants who participated in the first three phases of the research were

anonymised in the interview transcripts and analysis process, the brands comprising the DFE database developed for Phase IV are not anonymous in the research results, as all the information obtained about these companies is publicly available. However, the entire research process, and aim of this project, is not to understand the development of a single brand for a particular company, but to explain the pattern of brand development generalisable to the population of entrepreneurial DFEs.

At each stage of the research, the literature was incorporated as new themes emerged. Research literature beyond the explicit fields of fashion, branding and internationalisation was integrated to understand emergent concepts within the data and situate the research within context. However, the contribution of this thesis remains within the fields of brand development and internationalisation, specifically in relation to DFEs. This allowed the data to be continually checked against existing understanding within the literature, incorporating diverse academic areas such as dynamic capabilities and co-creation to understand connections between internationalisation, fashion management and brand development. In this way, the literature was used to confirm findings found within the research data, just as the data was used to extend understanding derived from the literature to build theory from the practice of the organisations under study (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Schultz & Hatch 2005).

Triangulation of concepts across companies of various sizes, ages, locations and multiple data sources (interviews, surveys, observations and online) ensured validity and reliability of the results (Miles & Huberman 1994; Locke 2003; Miles et al. 2014). Additionally, the iterative process of open, axial and selective coding, and the use of analysis software assisted in the creation of an 'audit trail', tracing emergent concepts back to incidents in the raw data (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin 1994, 1998). The theoretical contributions of this work are introduced in the following section.

#### **1.4 Research Contribution**

This thesis makes a contribution to knowledge through the creation of a theoretical framework and a series of eight propositions that explain the development of the entrepreneurial DFE brand in the context of the international fashion system. This research focuses on the capabilities related to the development of brand identity and internationalisation within entrepreneurial firms because of their significance to the

economic development of their home countries and the global fashion industry. Their emergence into the market is a driver of innovation.

Through the development of the theoretical framework, the aim of identifying the resources and capabilities related to branding and internationalisation of DFEs is achieved. Grounded theory assisted in the development of the theoretical framework as its purpose is not to simply *describe* the complex reality of the operation of these enterprises in the industry, but to *explain* its central elements (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Corbin & Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin 1998; Birks & Mills 2001). A theoretical framework or model is an abstract representation of reality which seeks to classify relevant variables and explain their relationships to each other (Bacharach 1989; Douglas 2003; Teece 2007). The theory presented in this thesis explains the relationship between concepts that are important in the growth of DFEs, originating from their product development process. However, it is important to note that ‘a causal relation between two variables does not mean that one determines the other; only that one influences the other, usually in combination with other variables’ (Johanson & Vahlne 2009: 1415). Indeed, the theoretical framework presented in this research serves as a guide for new or existing entrepreneurial DFEs operating within the industry. It also serves as an evaluative framework to assess the success of existing enterprises in the pursuit of their goals. Finally, it fills a clearly identifiable gap within the literature, providing new insight about the practice of entrepreneurial SME designer firms within the fashion industry.

Various fields of research define both internal and external factors which contribute to the success of established fashion industry businesses, including the identification and service of target markets and the achievement of competitive advantage (Kunz 1995; Fernie et al. 1997; Wigley et al. 2005; Wigley & Moore 2007). The broad array of competencies necessary are often beyond the scope of resources available to entrepreneurial DFEs, who form collaborative networked relationships to take advantage of market opportunities (Wigley & Provelengiou 2011). The central focus of this project is on the brand development and internationalisation of these companies operating within the fashion system. As such, the research explores the intersections of these themes through a multidisciplinary approach to the literature, consistent with grounded theory’s ‘openness to inquiry’ (Glaser & Strauss 1967). This research extends existing

understanding of these concepts in relation to co-creation and dynamic capabilities, through the re-examination of service-dominant logic and the concept of competitive advantage, connecting brand development and internationalisation processes. Specifically, this research presents the theoretical foundation for how the process of brand development is a dynamic capability that guides operational capabilities, such as internationalisation.

The strength of branding lies in its ability to necessitate a firm's 'greater awareness of medium-to-long term strategies, clear marketing positioning, more consistent product innovation and product range policies' (Saviolo 2002: 9). Brand development's connection to the successful internationalisation process of fashion firms has yet to be clearly explained within the literature (Doherty 2000). Through the theoretical framework illustrating the basic social process of DFEs, this thesis fills an identifiable gap within academic research. Insights derived from this evaluative understanding present new ideas about the strategic management of SMEs in an international context. Brand development and internationalisation are each concepts that fall within the field of strategic management, and the use of the term *strategy* in this thesis is used within the context of organisational planning, decision-making and implementation. This thesis incorporates the terms *brand strategy* and *sales strategy* specifically in relation to the context in which they are used by the research participants and in the academic literature related to branding and internationalisation.

In summary, this thesis provides a contribution to knowledge to the fields of brand management and internationalisation in the following ways. This thesis presents a theoretical framework about the creation and use of resources and capabilities for brand development and internationalisation. In doing so, this thesis connects understanding between brand management and internationalisation through common variables such as networking capabilities in the fashion industry, dynamic capabilities and organisational learning. Furthermore, the concept of co-creation is identified as a process of organisational learning in which the DFE interprets and reacts to interaction experiences. This thesis also identifies the internationalisation characteristics of DFEs, providing further evidence between stage and born global models. In the practice of its day-to-day activities, the process of brand development is created as a dynamic capability



which changes the DFE's brand for the alignment and adaptation of brand identity elements to fit with the international market environment. In the context of this practice, this thesis provides new insight about the concept of competitive advantage, highlighting that DFEs measure their success in terms of achievement of their own personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals, and that they validate their positioning within the fashion industry in relation to their peers/competitors.

The structure for how this thesis will present and substantiate its original contribution to knowledge is summarised in the following section.

### **1.5 Thesis Structure**

Using a grounded theory approach raises questions regarding the structure of the thesis and the placement of the literature review in relation to the development of the theory (Dunne 2011). While the literature was incorporated throughout the entire data gathering process, in constant comparison to the development of the theoretical framework, the literature review is presented in this thesis prior to a discussion of the research findings. This approach provides a contextual foundation for the results of the study. Structuring the thesis in this manner situates the theoretical framework in the context of the existing literature, even though discovery of the theory and comparison to the literature occurred as an iterative process throughout the entire project.

The first chapter introduces the research problem, presenting the rationale for the project, and the aims and objectives. The second chapter provides an overview of the contemporary context of operating as an entrepreneurial DFE within the fashion system. This section is separate from the literature review because it relies on fashion news media sources to fill gaps unable to be examined within the academic literature alone. This chapter is important because it illustrates the contemporary context which inspired the design of the research study.

Building from this understanding, the third chapter reviews the existing literature using a multidisciplinary approach to draw connections, make comparisons and situate this research in an academic context. This chapter discusses the intersections within the literature between fashion management, brand development and internationalisation research. Additionally it highlights the gaps and limitations within the existing literature that this thesis addresses, and makes the argument for using the concept of dynamic

capabilities as a lens to examine the relationship between brand development and internationalisation within entrepreneurial fashion design firms. In doing so, it presents of a series of three research questions.

Overall, the thesis contributes to knowledge of the process entrepreneurial womenswear DFEs undergo in the course of brand development and international growth. It examines the ‘birth of the brand’ and how brand development emerges from, is embedded in and influences operational activities. Moreover, it discusses how brand development is impacted by the network, industry and market in which the DFE operates, further highlighting the interconnection of brand strategy on business development and growth. It contributes to marketing and design studies presenting an original theoretical framework of the development of resources and capabilities within entrepreneurial DFEs, defining distinct steps of organisational learning, operational and dynamic capabilities, and their relation to the development of brand identity within an international environment.

Chapter Four discusses grounded theory as the methodological approach, explaining the reasons, strengths and implications of its adoption. It concludes with the delineation of the methods used for data collection and analysis, sample selection, recruitment and categorisation of the interview participants. Chapter Five presents the research findings, providing the initial demographic and defining data of the participants, and the development of concepts and categories throughout the four-phase research process, along with an exploration of DFE activities surrounding the core category of the collection lifecycle.

The analysis of concepts and categories related to brand development and internationalisation is presented in Chapter Six. This chapter is organised according to the resources and capabilities related to Urde’s (2013) elements of brand identity, delineating the properties of the emergent categories while providing supporting evidence from the data. Chapter Seven integrates the research findings and analysis with existing literature, presenting the theoretical framework and research propositions. Lastly, this thesis presents its final conclusions in Chapter Eight.

Ultimately this thesis examines the connection between brand development and internationalisation, presenting a theoretical framework of how entrepreneurial DFEs

create, use and refine resources and capabilities to establish their companies within the global fashion industry. The following two chapters present the contemporary context and existing theories within the academic literature, which relate to the findings of this research project.



## Chapter 2: Contemporary Context

### 2.1 Chapter Overview

Designer fashion enterprises (DFEs) often operate within the designer-luxury through contemporary retail price-point segments. As independent fashion design firms, they produce conceptual pieces for editorial placement, as well as commercially desirable and wearable garments. In the earliest stages of development, these companies experience considerable marketing expenses and higher manufacturing costs disproportionate to initial turnover, often requiring the designer-founder to seek out support initiatives, high street licensing partnerships and freelance design collaborations (Karra 2008). These opportunities are typically outgrown within a few seasons, illustrating the need for DFEs to quickly establish self-sufficient viability as a brand within the marketplace (ibid.). The global fashion cities in which these companies operate ‘function as centres for the production and assignment of brand value’ (Jansson & Power 2010: 902). Specifically, London and New York offer unique opportunities for DFEs who locate businesses in these global fashion cities, providing clusters of support (Ashton 2006; Amed 2009, 2011; Rieple & Gander 2009; Leslie 2014; Rieple et al. 2015). The DFE’s founder, who may serve as creative director of the collections, is paramount to the success of these firms as they interact within the fashion system (Bobila 2015). Each of these elements emerged during integration of the literature with data analysis and are discussed in the following sections.

This chapter begins with an overview of the fashion industry, followed by an introduction to the fashion capitals of London and New York, and the emergence of

support initiatives for entrepreneurial DFEs. Then, the concept of the DFE is explored in an overview of the creative director, followed by a section defining the term *designer fashion enterprise*. This chapter closes by drawing initial conclusions in preparation for the literature review.

This chapter turns to articles from the fashion media in addition to academic sources to illustrate the current landscape of the fashion industry. References are pulled principally from the fashion business news source, *The Business of Fashion*, an online media outlet which covers a variety of issues in-depth relating to the operation of fashion businesses, including emerging designers. These references are used to provide additional context and an orienting perspective where academic literature is lacking. In addition, they illustrate how prevalent issues surrounding emerging designers are within the fashion media, highlighting not only the current problem of these enterprises, but also how these problems transcend the enterprise and impact the industry as a whole. In doing so, it creates a justification for the research based on the current situation of entrepreneurial DFEs.

## 2.2 The Fashion Industry, Network & Machine

DFEs are 'path-dependent' organisations within the global fashion system that interact in a networked based industry (Djelic & Ainamo 1999; Wenting 2008a). The high level of creativity and innovation within the fashion industry is attributable to the large number of SMEs (Crane 1997; DCMS 2001; Crane & Bovone 2006; Wenting 2008b; BFC 2009). The fashion industry is considered to be a creative and cultural industry which produces goods and services with highly symbolic content (DCMS 1998, 2001; Glover & Caves 2000; Hirsch 2000; Cunningham 2002; Lawrence & Phillips 2002; Wenting 2008b; Wenting & Frenken 2011). The cultural industries are characterised by the experiential response of consumers, the need for disposable income for consumption, the competitive and organisational pressure of local clusters, and the global distribution of products (Sproles 1981; Power & Scott 2004). Like other creative industries, the individuals starting companies within fashion are plagued by a stereotype of lacking serious business acumen, making the fashion industry appear inherently risky for investment (Burrows & Ussher 2011). Fashion enterprises have been identified as having a 'creative enterprise', 'creative business' or 'fashion industry' orientations (Mills 2011a, 2011b, 2012)

<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Creative enterprise (CEO)</b>	<b>Creative Business (CBO)</b>	<b>Fashion Industry (FIO)</b>
<b>Motivation</b>	To realise designer's creative potential	To work for oneself	To participate in the fashion industry
<b>Aspirations</b>	Renown: to become known as a designer	To make a living by building a successful label	To be successful in the industry
<b>Self-identity</b>	Creative person	Creative business person	Creative and/or style focused business person

(Table 2.1). This continual separation of business and creativity may explain the lack of academic research, particularly from a business and management perspective, into entrepreneurs who launch new enterprises within the fashion industry.

Indeed, much of the research exploring the fashion industry focuses not on the development of business (fashion retail is an exception) but on the sociocultural aspects of fashion (see Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002; Entwistle 2009). As much as it is a social world, fashion is also an industry focused on furthering the business interests of enterprises that operate within it. This research examines the creation and development of DFEs from a strategic management perspective. While it acknowledges contributions of the sociocultural studies of fashion, this research takes a different approach, limiting the scope of analysis to be within the field of business management research. This is supported by the fact that cultural industries make a significant contribution to the economy (Wenting 2008a, 2008b; BFC 2009). Euromonitor (2017) measures the total size of the US and UK apparel and footwear markets in 2016 to be approximately £250 billion and £51 billion, respectively (Table 2.2).

<b>Currency</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>USD (\$MN)</b>	USA	323746.3	331492.2	343478.3	353,372
	UK	67144.4	68419.9	69052.7	69,596
<b>GBP (£MN)</b>	USA	48965.8	49896	50357.5	50,753
	UK	236095.8	241744.6	250485.6	257,701

**Source: (Euromonitor 2017). 'MN' abbreviation for 'millions'**

The fashion industry was originally defined by the high-fashion brands that exclusively produced couture and ready-to-wear lines, followed by mass-targeted diffusion lines created by the largest companies and identified as ‘agents of growth’ for the industry (Moore et al. 2000). More recently, emerging designers have been identified as new opportunities for growth (BFC 2009, 2012; Anaya 2013; Chitrakorn 2014; Mellery-Pratt 2014b; CFDA 2016). DFEs are agents of change within the industry, presenting new products, price-points and brands with global niche appeal (Burrows & Ussher 2011; Kansara 2011; Singer 2015; Amed 2016a). The increasing value of the emerging fashion brand is illustrated by the continual purchase of independent DFEs, characterised as ‘emerging designers’, by larger fashion conglomerates (Solca 2015).

Indeed, it can be argued that the luxury aesthetic is no longer defined by fashion conglomerates, but also by small entrepreneurial fashion designers actively competing within new niches of the various segments of the fashion industry (Hoffman & Lecamp 2015). Additionally, ‘luxury’ goods are no longer defined by their price-points, as companies are now targeting consumers through the openness to affordability and accessibility known as the ‘democratisation of luxury’ (Truong et al. 2008). In order to grow, luxury brands must expand into adjacent product categories or by entering new markets (Reddy et al. 2009). Because of the large amount of time and investment in communication and distribution channels required to build a brand from scratch, large luxury groups have taken to acquiring historical or emerging brands with insignificant sales but market potential based on their ‘heritage’ (Saviolo 2002). The growth potential for these companies lies not necessarily in their ready-to-wear lines but in the power of brand extension to other product categories, such as accessories and fragrances. A notable example is Christopher Kane, a London based label that celebrated its ten-year anniversary and is growing due to the majority stake the luxury conglomerate Kering took in the business (Abnett 2015). Indeed, with the proliferation of emerging brands, the market has seen a shift to investment in and acquisition of these entrepreneurial firms by luxury groups (Amed 2007; Chitrakorn 2014).

Through its network of relationships, the fashion industry provides some would-be entrepreneurs with experience prior to the founding of new enterprises (Wenting 2008a). These ‘spin-off dynamics’ provide a possible point-of-entry and contribute to



the creative potential and success of new DFEs (*ibid.*). The designer-founder's learning and experience within the fashion system teaches them how to predict the behaviour of others in order to strategise (Fitzpatrick 2013). The experience and knowledge gained from this cultural learning (Solomon 1983) becomes a unique asset and resource for the firm. The strength of partnerships between individuals, built on their backgrounds and personal histories, and the process of relationship building over time is most important to the structure of power dynamics between major fashion retailers and their suppliers (in some cases DFEs) (Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Hines & McGowan 2005).

Emerging designer enterprises are innovating within the fashion system by creating new sources of heritage and defining new product price-point segments. The product categories for the fashion industry begin with designer ready-to-wear, followed by designer diffusion or secondary lines, 'bridge' products, and the mass market which is characterised by its low price-point and a broad, controlled distribution strategy (Saviolo 2002). The segmentation between designer collections and the mass market are well defined, but emerging designer labels are introducing products outside of existing segments, blurring the divisions between price-point categories (Apparel Search n.d.; Saviolo 2002). As a relatively new category, the 'contemporary' market segment is defined by a price-point between the 'better' (\$100-\$250) and 'bridge' (\$250-\$350) categories (Rantisi 2002). DFEs within this category produce up to eight collections per year (*ibid.*). But the contemporary segment is also defined broadly to describe designer labels 'belonging to the same period of time' (Apparel Search n.d.: para 8). The concept of market segmentation becomes increasingly indistinct when emerging designers introduce their own categories. For example, 3.1 Phillip Lim is recognised as the pioneer of the 'contemporary' price-point category of designer labels undercutting established luxury brands (Abnett 2015; Singer 2015). In the ten years since 3.1 Phillip Lim's launch, a number of emerging designer labels have filled the gaps in-between, introducing prices in the 'advanced contemporary' or 'entry designer' categories, all of which lack clear definitions and boundaries in relation to monetary values. Regardless, DFEs within these mid-range product price-point segments are identified for their potential of global growth and direct retail expansion once they receive private equity investment (Amed 2007; Solca 2015). The price-point segments identified and defined during data gathering

and analysis within this research include *contemporary*, *advanced contemporary*, *entry designer* and *designer-luxury* (see Table 6.6 on page 189). These segments provide a sliding scale within the high-end designer segment (as opposed to the mass market segment).

Within the fashion industry, DFEs are connected to their environment because they are tied to consumer culture, neighbouring brands, seasonal fashion cycles and industry-led processes. The fashion system is a complex set of actors and geographies that exerts power over a DFE's opportunities, activities and survival (Power & Hauge 2008; Thompson 2010). The fashion system encompasses the interconnections and interdependencies between individuals, organisations and specific tasks involved in the design, production and distribution of products (Hirsch 2000). Within this thesis, the term *fashion system* refers to the global fashion economy, encompassing all elements related to the creation, production, distribution and consumption of fashion products. The fashion system includes the fashion 'industry', 'network' and 'machine'.

The *fashion industry* is defined as the organisations and individuals that participate in economic activity related to the manufacture and distribution of fashion products (BFC 2009, 2014b; Burrows & Ussher 2011). The *fashion network* is the web of relationships within the system that form the supply chain for individual organisations within the industry. It is 'the business "ecosystem" — the community of organisations, institutions, and individuals that impact the enterprise' (Teece 2007: 1325). The network of relationships within the fashion industry help small firms compete (Crane 1997). Within the fashion capitals, these networks offer competition and collaboration with peer companies, enhancing learning and experience (Hamel et al. 1989; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Rieple et al. 2015).

The grouping of peer companies in specific areas creates a 'cluster', providing support for the development of the firm (Audretsch et al. 2000; Porter 2000; Rantisi 2002; Ashton 2006; Rieple & Gander 2009; Anaya 2013). The global fashion industry is one of the most geographically concentrated, with a majority of designer-founders basing their companies, or showcasing, in either of the top four fashion capitals: New York, London, Milan or Paris (Wenting 2008b; Wenting & Frenken 2011). Fashion capitals provide an intensive local network of public relations agents, sales agents, manufacturers, sample

makers, textile distributors, warehouse and final product distributors in addition to their major, internationally renowned stockists. The proliferation of brands within these cities requires firms to create innovative organisational structures and processes to maintain a competitive advantage, and develop or exploit new product segments and consumer groups (Wigley & Provelengiou 2011).

As a source of learning and experience, network relationships with customers, suppliers, competitors and peers are sources of innovation; the ability of the firm to integrate into a network is essential to successful innovation (Porter 2000; Lawson & Samson 2001; Zahra et al. 2006; Newey & Zahra 2009; Rieple et al. 2015). Through network integration, the success of the enterprise is dependent upon the discovery and creation of opportunities throughout the supply chain (Cohen & Levinthal 1990; Ashton 2006; Zahra et al. 2006; Teece 2007; Bettiol et al. 2012).

The supply chain for fashion products is long, complex and spread throughout the globe (Johnson 2002). Global sourcing is the process of identifying how and where products will be produced and obtained, and the sourcing of materials and manufacturers is considered important to achieving a competitive advantage (Dickerson 1999; Shelton & Wachter 2005; Swoboda et al. 2009; Muhammad & Ha-Brookshire 2011). The buying process begins early; once fashion week takes place, many of the established designer fashion labels have already initiated buying appointments or orders with retail stockists prior to the current season's runway show (Rantisi 2002). Within the sales process, retail buyers 'edit' the collection via the sample selection process prior to their production (ibid.).

These activities illustrate the supply chain partnerships between supplier and retailer. Hines and McGowan (2005) cite globalisation as a cause of the shift in power from the retailer to the manufacturer, which has caused suppliers to change how they work with other companies in the customer value chain. However, for entrepreneurial DFEs (who are the focus of this research), large manufacturers hold power within the relationship due to size and scale economies which provide power over supply chains and distribution channels (Weitz & Jap 1995). Indeed, the power dynamic cited by Hines and McGowan (2005) may not always be the case for entrepreneurial DFEs who lack the

knowledge and/or resources necessary to make significant demands in the negotiation process (Adams 2013).

Behind the scenes, the fashion ‘machine’ is a subset of far-reaching and tightly linked personal network relationships with individuals — key buyers and editors — who influence a DFE’s acceptance and integration into the overall fashion system. The designer fashion market exhibits seasonal product lifecycles, where products are designed to capture the ‘spirit of the moment’, despite their development beginning at least a full-year prior to their retail availability (Sproles 1989; Wenting 2008b). The fashion retail market experiences high volatility where demand is influenced by weather, films, celebrities and other cultural phenomenon, and low predictability and high impulse purchasing decisions by its consumers (Christopher et al. 2004; Mellery-Pratt 2014a). Indeed, the fashion industry’s calendar of wholesale sales, production and distribution provides some consistency and stability in an otherwise turbulent, dynamic and hyper-competitive environment.

In summary, the innovations that take place within the fashion industry, whether they are based on aesthetic, price-driven or business model changes, are influenced by the industry’s vast global supply chain. Within that supply chain, the network of personal and professional relationships provides support and resources for entrepreneurial DFEs. But in addition to this, the support of ‘emerging’ designers is highly curated by an elite group of industry influencers — investors, editors, buyers and support organisations — who operate as a ‘machine’ within the world’s fashion capitals. In particular, the fashion capitals of London and New York operate as a resource for the entrepreneurial designer-founder launching a new brand.

### **2.3 Fashion Capitals: London & New York**

For DFEs, London and New York are the top two fashion centres in which to base a company, surpassing Paris, Milan and Florence (Amed 2011; BOF Team 2012b). Locating in London or New York provides DFEs access to the global fashion network and internationalisation opportunities. These centres also offer support programs assisting with and promoting the growth and development of emerging designers on an international scale (Amed 2009, 2011).

New York and London both function as global ‘image-producing’ cities where ‘place-based associations, images, and brands with very real market values are created, negotiated, and attached to products, firms and sectors’ (Jansson & Power 2010: 890). The intensely competitive industry has contributed to an environment whereby emerging designers are likely to utilise their personal identity for marketing communications, distinguishing the brand’s niche identity, and ‘demonstrating their status as “hip” and “cool”’ (Crane & Bovone 2006: 323). The cities in which designer-founders base their companies possess their own identities and associations, which are important for product development (Moore & Fernie 1998; Rieple & Gander 2009). Such associations of place ‘rub off’ on brands who originate in these cities. The associations are even appropriated and used by individual companies providing validation and context to the entrepreneurial firm’s activities and positioning (Jansson & Power 2010). New York and London operate as hosts to important components of the highly globalised fashion system, which allows knowledge to be introduced, developed and shared (DCMS 1998, 2001; Jansson & Power 2010). For example, London Fashion Week operates as an event ‘to produce, reproduce and legitimate the field of fashion and the positions of the players within it’ (Entwistle & Rocamora 2006: 736). London is renowned for its continual fountain of new young talent (Amed 2009; BOF Team 2012b; Mellery-Pratt 2014b; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014). But New York also maintains an established image as a ‘hotbed’ for emerging designers (Amed 2011; BOF Team 2012b).

In addition to this ‘production of brand’, fashion capitals also serve as centres for elite fashion consumption by creating an aspirational environment for ‘fashion fantasy’ (Power & Hauge 2008). For example, by creating a ‘space for dreams’, it is argued that American companies are able to ‘price beautiful but rather standard ready-to-wear products at a level comparable to that of their French haute couture competitors’ (Djelic & Ainamo 1999: 632). Indeed, New York based designers are often assumed to create ‘American sportswear’, despite the fact that they may design and produce their garments in accordance with techniques and quality standards, infused with innovation, assumed to define their European counterparts (Sherman 2016). For fashion, New York is viewed as the ‘commercial market’ (Amed 2011; Cordero 2012).

The strong domestic distribution network provides New York brands an advantage with its size and buying power within the national market (Djelic & Ainamo 1999). Additionally, the New York City Garment District is a design-intensive, established localised cluster, which once solely acted as the nation's centre for women's ready-to-wear design and production, but now also hosts a diverse set of specialised, supporting activities including design schools, trade associations, marketing, distribution and production services (Rantisi 2002). Wenting & Frenken (2011) use an organisational ecology approach, examining yearly entry rates, to explain the evolution and geography of the designer fashion industry, finding that the growth of clusters was facilitated by high-end designers and their 'legitimation' within the local environment and network. Locating within fashion capitals, such as London or New York, provide designer-founders with the feedback and encouragement necessary to start a new business (Rieple & Gander 2009; Campaniaris et al. 2011; Wenting & Frenken 2011).

Within fashion retail, New York and central London share the same locational patterns and developments of designer fashion retailers in recent years (Moore et al. 2009). The fashion sector exhibits the greatest amount of internationalisation of all UK retail sectors (Doherty 2000; Wigley & Moore 2007). This mirrors the plethora of reports on the UK fashion industry, illustrating a shift in stakeholder's perspectives about the contribution of this vast and important industry to the overall national economy (DCMS 1998, 2001; Burrows & Ussher 2011; BFC 2012). This is in comparison to the US which shows very little scientific study and measurement of its own fashion economy; the CFDA's (2016) report is an exception.

In short, both London and New York infuse brands with the image of place, for better and worse, considering the alignment of image with that of the individual DFE and their aesthetic goals (Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). Basing a firm within a fashion capital offers DFEs the benefits from the co-localisation of competing, or peer firms, directly in the form of shared learning of the 'production culture (conventions, norms, and common expectations)', as well as indirectly via competitive monitoring (Rantisi 2002: 442). Thus, fashion capitals are sources of localised learning and innovation. Part of that learning develops from the emerging designer support initiatives that offer publicity, management and financial support for entrepreneurial DFEs, which is discussed in the next section.

## 2.4 Emerging Designer Support Initiatives

For the assistance of emerging designers, the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) officially launched the Vogue Fashion Fund endowment in 2003. In 2008, the British Fashion Council (BFC) followed suit launching its own fund. These two initiatives are prominent examples of the increasing focus on the generation of young talent within the fashion industry. According to Steven Kolb, the CFDA's chief executive officer, the fund began out of the encouragement of Anna Wintour and the recognition she had 'that there was a lot of young talent working in New York and the States that didn't really have a road map or direction of how to move their business forward' (CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund 2012). Since then, every major emerging designer in the US has participated in the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund (CFDA 2012).

A number of other programs, incubators and awards have launched, or re-launched, to promote and support what the industry terms 'emerging designers' on both a national and international level (Table 2.3). Along with the increased exposure of

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Founded</b>	<b>Location</b>
British Fashion Council Designer Fashion Fund	2008	UK
CFDA / Vogue Fashion Fund	2003	USA
Centre for Fashion Enterprise	2003	UK
Designer-Manufacturer Innovation Support Centre	2012	UK
Fashion East	2000	UK
Fashion Innovation Agency	2013	UK
Fashion Scout	2006^	London, Paris & Kiev
LVMH Prize Young Fashion Designer	2013	International
MADE New York	2009	USA
British Fashion Council NEWGEN Sponsored by Topshop	1993	UK
Swarovski Award for Womenswear	1981	USA
UKFT   UK Fashion & Textile Awards	2007	UK
International Woolmark Prize	1936 (Revived in 2008)	International, with regional sub-divisions: Asia; Australia & New Zealand; British Isles; Europe; India, Pakistan & Middle East; USA
WORTH	2015^	UK

^Estimated date

existing entrepreneurial DFEs, new designers are launching businesses at an increasing rate (Chritakorn 2014; Solca 2015), saturating the market.

Many designers are launching their brands right after graduating from university creating a potential flux in the market whereby established businesses have trouble acquiring skilled entry-level talent (BFC 2012; Birrell 2014). This influx of new brands into the market with a potentially high failure rate is calling some to encourage recent graduates to gain much needed experience in the industry prior to starting their own brand (Mills 2012; Birrell 2014; Conti 2015a). Paralleling the high saturation level of emerging designers in the market, there is a shortage of skilled talent in other areas of the industry in the UK (BFC 2012). This calls into question the role of education in fashion as either catering to students' desires to be the 'next big thing' and pushing students through design programs at an increasing rate, or, in contrast, providing a diverse curriculum showcasing the array of opportunities for employment within the fashion industry (BOF Team 2012a, 2012b; Mills 2012; Wang 2013).

Understanding the development process of emerging, entrepreneurial DFEs, with and without the additional aid of support initiatives, can help the industry collectively address the issues these firms face, providing valuable and sustainable support where necessary. The BFC's (2012) report on strategic considerations for growth of the fashion industry, spotlighted several key trends, including the need to nurture creative talent through development to successful, sustainable businesses; the resurgence of domestic manufacturing due to demand for high-end, artisan merchandise; and the need to support and promote British fashion brands globally. Additionally, Fischer and Reuber (2003) provide an analysis of support needed by and available to SMEs operating internationally, identifying that while resources are available to assist SMEs with the internationalisation process, there is often low awareness of the programs, a lack of usage of them by the owner, and little impact on the management behaviour of owners who do take advantage of support resources. Rather, a significant predictor of internationalisation success is the individual managers' past experience (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Fischer & Reuber 2003; Weerawardena et al. 2007; Brennan & Garvey 2009; Casillas et al. 2010; Altinay & Wang 2011).



Despite the plethora of support initiatives, many of these programs are highly regarded within the industry, particularly those which are sponsored or partnered with the predominant professional organisations within London and New York: the BFC and CFDA, respectively. As the dominant professional organisation for their respective countries, the CFDA and BFC continuously highlight the needs of the emerging designer: the requirement of financial capital in order to grow, skilled mentorship and increased publicity (Amed 2009, 2011, 2015; Sherman 2014; Tremblay & Yagoubi 2014).

Each of the initiatives provide support at various levels of development for the emerging designer, from the launch of the company to the establishment of the business. While some initiatives are industry awards, others are formalised competitions, incubators, mentorship programs or collaborative partnerships with retailers.

Regardless of receiving formal industry support, entrepreneurial DFEs are operating within a global environment which requires their interaction. This enhances the importance of the designer-founder's image within the fashion industry. The importance of the creative director is discussed in the next section.

## **2.5 Centrality of the Creative Director**

Fashion is a visual industry. The aesthetic appearance of DFEs and the centrality of the creative director(s) is a basic component of interactions within the industry, providing a platform for meaningful dialogue (Solomon 1983). In the creation of a brand, the visual aesthetic presented by the DFE defines the parameters of meaning to be interpreted (Ind & Watt 2005). The survival of the firm is dependent on appearance and social norms surrounding the business, as well as performance: 'formal decisions and financial calculations are necessary rituals to demonstrate conformity to local cultural expectations' (Whittington 2001: 63). This creates legitimacy and validates the firm within the socio-dynamic environment of the fashion industry.

For a DFE, 'the image and success of each house [is] closely dependent upon the unique creative power of its designer, who [is] in charge of running the business' (Djelic & Ainamo 1999: 628). As the leaders of their enterprises, creative directors 'must provide the discipline to decide which industry changes and customer needs the company will respond to, while avoiding organisational distractions and maintaining the company's distinctiveness' (Porter 1996: 29). They are directors of the firm's activities, responsible

for the end result of products and messaging, and development of the brand (Gromark & Melin 2011).

Designer's primary motivations are often defined in terms of intrinsic versus financial values in their pursuit of creative rather than commercial factors (McRobbie 2003; Malem 2008; Mills 2012; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014). It is argued that the main concern of designers is with maintaining cultural and creative relevance (Wenting 2008a), and that they place varying degrees of importance on market orientation and business operations (Mills 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Rieple et al. 2015). Furthermore, there exists a popular assumption that creatives:

Whether computer programmers, writers, designers or musicians — are preoccupied by their art rather than the mechanics of their business, which implies that they are a high-risk option for creditors and investors. In addition, it is argued that businesses based on design and intellectual property by their nature produce hits, but past performance has little correlation to future success, so it is therefore harder for start-ups in the creative industries to succeed (Burrows & Ussher 2011: 11).

In reality, the creative industries do not exhibit higher failure rates in comparison to other industries, which may be due to the flexibility and resilience of these micro-sized companies, led by a creative director who is able to alter resources and capabilities to minimise expenses and overcome challenging transitions (*ibid.*). Creative directors are visionary individuals who are the focal points of the firm, intimately connected to its development of brand identity (Spence & Essoussi 2010). It is their focus on both creative and financial capital that drives profit for the enterprise (Burrows & Ussher 2011). The creative director is responsible for managing both what products are produced and how they are marketed (Rantisi 2002). For DFEs, the brand is exhibited in the 'consistency of quality and meaning associated with a designer's collections that will carry over from year to year' (Durrell 1998: 176).

The highly connected environment that allows designers to operate as international firms from the launch of the enterprise, also requires their public interaction (Audretsch et al. 2000; Trudgen & Freeman 2014; Langseth et al. 2016). As a result of the technological and social developments that make it easier for entrepreneurs to introduce collections into the fashion system and develop global brands, there are

heightened standards for designer-founders. Part of this includes the necessity for public interaction according to Anna Wintour: ‘You can’t be some difficult, shy person who is not able to look someone in the face; you have to present yourself’ (Birrell 2014: para 5). Indeed, because designers have more control and opportunity to curate their own message, they have to know how to talk about their vision, focus and ‘what they stand for’ (Bettiol et al. 2012; Birrell 2014). The ability to communicate and ‘present themselves’ is more important than ever before, and yet with this ease of communication comes the entrapment of chasing notoriety; while it is possible to become rapidly well known, it’s another matter to be financially successful in the long term (Birrell 2014). This illustrates the significant difference between the growth and survival of the enterprise, in that survival does not necessarily require growth, nor does growth guarantee survival (Sapienza et al. 2006; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Prange & Verdier 2011).

The centrality of the creative director for the emerging brand is demonstrable via the predominance of new labels naming the company after themselves (Bobila 2015). For these personality brands, ‘there is a considerable sense of identity and attachment that comes with building a brand under your own name’ (ibid.: para 2). From a marketing perspective, a namesake label creates an instant story or heritage surrounding the brand that guides the organisation (Gilmore et al. 2001; Bobila 2015). As the face of the label, it is the strong personality of the designer that captures the personality and essence of the brand.

While DFEs place varying degrees of emphasis on the creative director, focus on the designer of emerging brands highlights the importance of developing a clear brand identity. The ability to successfully represent the face of the label can be connected to the increasing focus on relationship management and marketing orientation in the pursuit of value creation (Moore & Fairhurst 2003; Iglesias et al. 2013; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). As the DFE’s founder, the creative director is a key influencer of the brand identity (Gromark & Melin 2011).

Given each of these elements surrounding and interacting with the DFE — namely, the structure of the fashion industry, the support programs that facilitate their growth, and the centrality of the designer — the next section provides a definition of the DFE.

It pulls from the insights gathered from the previously presented themes and sources to define the boundaries of the enterprise under study within this project.

## 2.6 Defining Designer Fashion Enterprise

Within the industry and fashion media, new fashion designer firms are defined as *emerging designers* referring to companies who have just launched until some unspecified point in time when they are no longer 'emerging' but are considered an established brand (or out of business). Academically, Rantisi (2002) defines the composition of these companies, regardless of size or age, as manufacturers who perform the marketing and design functions in-house, while many other capabilities are out-sourced. However, the term *manufacturers* can be confused with the factories, textile mills and other companies who assist with the actual production of product. Additionally, the term *manufacturer* does not differentiate between the retail price-point category of the companies, and can therefore refer to companies who do not promote the designer as the face of the label, which broadens the subject area beyond brands situated within designer price-point segments of 'contemporary' through 'designer luxury'. Within the UK, the designer fashion segment is defined as 'creative originals', encompassing 'couture', 'international designers', 'diffusion' and 'high fashion' (DCMS 1998, 2001; Flew 2012). Each of these overlapping segments introduces confusion as to what term to use to describe the population under study within this research.

The term *entrepreneurial designer fashion enterprise (DFE)* is used to describe the unique group of companies within the industry that operate in the SME sector, are newly launched, and are creating and producing products in the designer product price-point segments. These enterprises are characteristically different from others operating within the industry. Additionally, to provide clarity to the industry's 'emerging designer' definition, a 'fashion designer' is an individual. A 'designer fashion enterprise' is a company that produces *designer fashion* by a *fashion designer*. These companies can be established or entrepreneurial in the same way that a SME can be either an established small firm or an entrepreneurial new brand. Not defining the enterprises as 'emerging' within this study provides space to clarify the definition of what it means to be 'emerging' based on the data gathering and analysis derived from the participants. Furthermore, the

use of the term *entrepreneurial* as opposed to *emerging* is academically consistent with a defined field of study.

Therefore, the term *entrepreneurial DFE* is used to define the segment of newly launched companies producing product in the designer fashion price-points of the fashion industry (defined within this study as contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry designer and designer-luxury). This study specifically looks at firms that are less than ten years in development. This figure, used to define the parameters of 'newly launched', is supported by the Centre for Fashion Enterprise's report on the *UK Designer Fashion Economy*, which details that these companies mature to the point of establishment within the industry after about eight to ten years (Karra 2008). Additionally, this ten-year mark is highly regarded within the industry (Abnett 2015; Conti 2015b; Singer 2015). Therefore, this is the parameter used to define the limits of what it means to be entrepreneurial within this study. Focusing on the firm, rather than individual, *entrepreneurship* is the creation of a company and *entrepreneurs* are individuals who launch companies (Gartner 1988).

Micro businesses, which operate with less than ten employees, dominate the designer fashion sector of the industry (DCMS 2001; Malem 2008). These firms are characterised by their lean in-house production activities (samples and limited production runs) and the possible outsourcing of the remainder of activities, including sales, production, distribution and/or public relations, to contracted factories and agencies. British DFEs are largely wholesale, highly internationalised operations within the SME sector, and are strengthened and supported by a broad industry network encompassing all levels of manufacturing, distribution and communication activities (Karra 2008). The use of public relations and sales agents provides access to much needed experience and knowledge in selling across borders via exporting (Morgan et al. 2003). In addition to a wholesale based approach, in the earliest periods of development these companies may generate sales via a network of private clients (Sherman 2014). Advancements in technology potentially provide the DFE the ability to manage their own e-commerce operation, providing new avenues for growth (Kansara 2011; Johnson 2013; Mellery-Pratt 2014c). In addition to their products, the critical success factors for DFEs includes manufacturing technologies, distribution processes, and the intangible

and symbolic elements surrounding the brand (Saviolo 2002). The DFE's rapid growth, or evolution, within the industry can be partially attributed to knowledge and experience gained through organisational processes and capabilities, daily practices and network interaction within the fashion system (Djelic & Ainamo 1999; Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Teece 2007; Ellonen et al. 2011). Malem (2008) highlights the importance of the designer-founder's personal background (defined as their 'philosophical approach'), the emphasis on innovation and creativity, their approach to the business aspects of the enterprise, and understanding of brand equity.

Defining the entrepreneurial DFE in relation to both academic fields and the contemporary context in which they operate provides an orienting perspective for the research project. The gap between academic research and the fashion media in the discussion and understanding of launching a new DFE supplies the initial justification for the research.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of the contemporary context in which DFEs are situated, highlighting the structure of the fashion industry, the importance of fashion capitals in facilitating the development of the enterprise through clustering, and proliferation of emerging designer support initiatives. Before providing a definition of the entrepreneurial DFE, this chapter also discussed the crucial role of the creative director as the face of the label for many of these emerging brands. Collectively these points of discussion, along with the academic literature review exploring the interrelationship between brand development, internationalisation and SMEs, demonstrate a clear deficiency in the explanation of the growth of these enterprises within the industry. The next chapter draws on this contemporary context to explore the theories and models of brand development and internationalisation in relation to each other and the fashion industry.

## Chapter 3: Literature Review

### 3.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter introduced the contemporary context in which this research is situated, focusing on the configuration of the fashion industry, the benefits of operating within the fashion capitals of London and New York, the emergence of support initiatives, the importance of the creative director, and the defining characteristics of entrepreneurial designer fashion enterprises (DFEs). The purpose of this chapter is to draw connections between the contemporary context and existing academic literature on brand development and internationalisation.

Despite growing interest in mainstream media on ‘emerging designers’, significant focus in the current academic literature focuses on retail internationalisation or established luxury firms. The existing literature generally ignores design firms operating within the earlier stages of development that may initially internationalise via wholesale exporting, not the opening of individual retail stores (Fionda & Moore 2009; Hutchinson & Quinn 2012; Kapferer 2012). Research that explores the internationalisation and brand development capabilities of entrepreneurial DFEs is surprisingly scarce given their identified contribution to national economies (Karra 2008; BFC 2009, 2012, 2014b; Burrows & Ussher 2011). The historical context for this thesis begins in the fields of fashion retailing and branding, SME internationalisation, and global brand management research (Coviello & McAuley 1999; Fillis 2001; Cholatpinyo et al. 2002). The highly branded, global fashion marketplace is a result of the industry’s transformation, once

defined by haute couture, through mass-production, to the creation of international conglomerates centred on the brand (Power & Hauge 2008). In its continued evolution to the next era of fashion (Amed 2016a; CFDA 2016), the industry produces not only tangible items for consumption but creative ideas, stories and legacies on an increasingly global scale (Bell et al. 2004).

This research incorporates the literature in a multidisciplinary, yet targeted approach to identify the convergence between fashion, brand development and internationalisation. This intersection begins with literature related to luxury fashion branding and fashion retail. However, the current research on fashion retail and luxury branding is restricted in its generalisability to entrepreneurial DFEs that operate under unique conditions and with minimal resources in comparison to larger corporate cases reviewed in these subject areas. This research utilises literature relating to brand identity (de Chernatony 1999, 2001; Urde 1994, 1999, 2003, 2013; Hatch & Schultz 1997, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2010; da Silveira 2013), brand symbolism (Ligas & Cotte 1999; Power & Hauge 2008; Atwal & Williams 2009), co-creation (Payne et al. 2008; Grönroos 2008, 2011; Payne et al. 2009; Helm & Jones 2010; Frow et al. 2011; Ind & Coates 2013; Frow et al. 2015; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016) consumer behaviour (Evans 1989; Fournier 1998), cultural studies (Crane & Bovone 2006; Entwistle & Rocamora 2006; Entwistle 2009), dynamic capabilities (Teece et al. 1997; Teece 2007, 2012; Weerawardena et al. 2007; Barreto 2010; Caniato et al. 2013), economic geography (Rantisi 2002; Campaniaris et al. 2011), globalisation (Douglas & Wind 1987; Crane 1997; Aaker & Joachimsthäier 1999), SME internationalisation (Coviello & McAuley 1999; Bell et al. 2003; Bell et al. 2004; Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Cavusgil & Knight 2015), and supply chain management (Cox 1999; Hines & McGowan 2005).

The multidisciplinary approach incorporates relevant insight from a variety of sources while remaining consistent with the aim, objectives and philosophical underpinnings of the research project (Schultz & Hatch 2005). The theoretical framework for this research is informed by Urde's (2013) *Corporate Brand Identity Matrix* (CBIM) and co-creation models (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Payne et al. 2009; Hatch & Schultz 2010; Helm & Jones 2010; Tynan et al. 2010; Frow et al. 2015; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016), in combination with international entrepreneurship literature relating to



'network', 'born global' theories and the updated Uppsala Model, which converge within the concept of dynamic capabilities (Moore & Fairhurst 2003; Bell et al. 2004; Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Johanson & Vahlne 2009; Newey & Zahra 2009; Cavusgil & Knight 2015).

While prior research into the contemporary context and existing theoretical understandings informed the broader designs of the research project, it did not lay out a prescribed framework to be tested within the field. Rather, the research design remained open and exploratory, allowing the data to inform continual reading within the academic literature (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Dunne 2011).

This chapter is organised around two main elements: brand development and internationalisation. The first section presents research relating to the definition and development of brands, exploring both organisational brand identity development and co-creation perspectives. Following this, research relating to fashion and brands is combined to provide context regarding the importance of both fashion and brand meaning creation through interaction. The third section describes the elements enabling the rapid global expansion of SMEs and presents the internationalisation theories informing this research. The fourth section draws connections between brand, fashion and internationalisation to provide a theoretical foundation for this research. This chapter finishes with conclusions drawn from the literature and justifications for the research.

### **3.2 Brand Development**

Brands are often described as a source of sustainable competitive advantage because they create a distinctive identity (Moore et al. 2000; Wood 2000; Brun & Castelli 2008; Ghodeswar 2008; Spence & Essoussi 2010), which can be a driver for internationalisation (Evans et al. 2008). Global brands are defined by being driven by a singular strategy requiring the firm to focus on structures and processes which align with its ultimate vision (Porter 1996; Aaker & Joachimsthäier 1999; Johansson & Ronkainen 2005; Abimbola & Vallaster 2007). As points of differentiation, brands are important because they allow firms to maintain consistency while their product offering continually evolves, assisting in the diversification into new markets, product categories and, once established, the formation of an 'umbrella' protecting organisational change (Douglas & Wind

1987; Doyle 1989; Power & Hauge 2008). Brand development has expanded beyond consumer-centric marketing capabilities to encompass not only its supportive activities, but also its significance to overall firm structure, culture and essence (Hatch & Schultz 1997; de Chernatony 2001; Reid et al. 2005; Wilden & Gudergan 2014). In the pursuit of extensions into new markets or product categories, brands build on their history, tradition and story to pursue growth in alignment with short- and long-term goals and opportunities (Urde 1999; Ind & Watt 2005; Reddy et al. 2009).

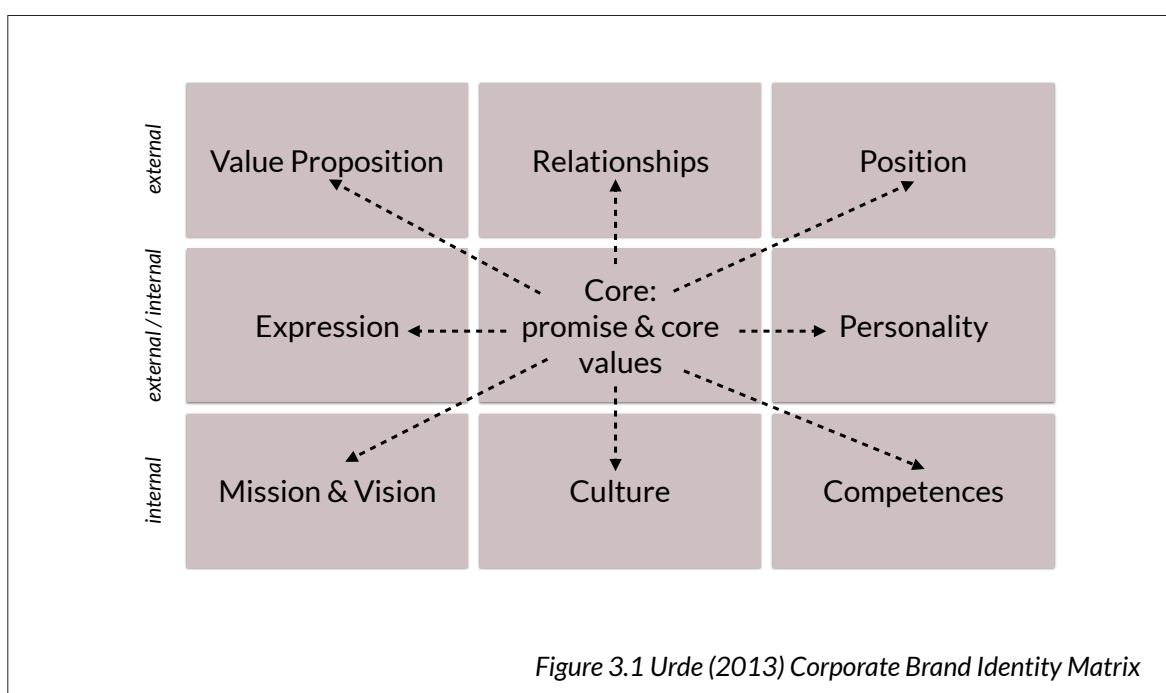
Brand development theories can be divided between organisational and consumer behaviour models. However, the research has become complex, so that terms used to describe various components of a brand are not mutually exclusive or clearly designated. This section discusses what a brand is, what it is for and how it is built using internal development and external co-creation perspectives.

The organisational perspective initially argues for an internal focus because of the significance of brand identity in the development and management of unique brands (Urde 1994, 1999; de Chernatony 1999). The conceptual view of the firm in regard to its culture and vision guides decision-making for relationships, personality and product positioning (Hatch 1993; Urde 1994; Hatch & Schultz 1997, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2010; de Chernatony 2001; Ind & Watt 2005). The internal creation model for building brands involves identifying the brand vision, organisational culture, brand objectives, auditing the 'brandsphere', and defining the brand essence and brand resources (Urde 1994, 1999; de Chernatony 2001; Balmer & Gray 2003). A brand's vision is defined by its envisioned future, purpose and values, and can be thought of as the ultimate goals for the firm, driving the organisational culture and artefacts (Collins & Porras 1996; Heding et al. 2009; Urde 2013). A brand's physical attributes provide a language for describing the brand, so that consumers (and other stakeholders) are able to distinguish, recognise and compare products (Ligas & Cotte 1999; Balmer & Gray 2003). Together these provide the brand a strategic direction in short- and long-range planning (de Chernatony 2001).

Internal oriented models historically focused on product branding prior to corporate brand development. Product branding, dating back to the 1950s and immersed within the marketing mix, emphasises the development of individual branded products and the service of consumer wants and needs utilising a market orientation (McCarthy

1960; Borden 1964; Grönroos 1994; Bennett 1997; Urde 1999; Zontanos & Anderson 2004; Balmer & Greyser 2006; Morgan et al. 2007; Fang & Zou 2009; Drucker 2014). In contrast, corporate branding considers the identity of the organisation as a whole, regardless of the size or age of the company, transitioning brand development to take a holistic perspective (Hatch & Schultz 2001, 2002, 2003; Knox & Bickerton 2003; Rode & Vallaster 2005; Merrilees 2007). The corporate brand perspective now foregrounds the alignment of internal and external elements, stemming from the core values that influence the creation of a brand identity (Hatch & Schultz 2010; Urde 2013) (Figure 3.1). Corporate branding highlights the importance of internal brand consistency as well as external communication activities and customer relationship management (Keller 1993, 2001, 2008; Harris & de Chernatony 2001; Urde 2003, 2013; McColl & Moore 2011). The internal and external brand elements becomes the platform for brand strategy, implemented through key artefacts, expressed core values, and the activities of the enterprise (Gromark & Melin 2011; Järventie-Thesleff et al. 2011; Urde 2013).

Core values are defined as the guiding principles for all internal and external brand building processes that sum up the brand identity (Urde 2003, 2013). Brand vision and identity are the initial elements used to develop a brand strategy (Heding et al. 2009).



The brand identity is a stabilising and consistent construct that defines ‘what the brand stands for’ (Balmer & Soenen 1999; Buck et al. 2003; Abimbola & Vallaster 2007; Heding et al. 2009; Urde 2013). Brand identity becomes a resource for the firm, designating a distinctive name, sign of ownership, functional capabilities, intellectual property, and symbolic personality and lifestyle characteristics (Hall 1992; Aaker & Joachimsthäier 1999; de Chernatony 2001; Keller 1993, 2001, 2009; Heding et al. 2009; Helm & Jones 2010).

The internal and external branding process is defined around the idea that brand identity is created as a ‘continual and ongoing interaction between the identity of the organisation and the customer’ (Urde 2003: 1023). This approach begins to combine both the internal perspective of the organisation and that of consumer behaviour in the development of brands by exploring the added value of consumer-based brand equity to the creation of the corporate identity (Keller 1993, 2001, 2008, 2009; Urde 2003; Ghodeswar 2008).

The consumer behaviour perspective indicates an evolution in the research literature to broaden the definition of brands to encompass value co-creation between organisations and stakeholders, particularly consumers (Payne et al. 2008; Atwal & Willams 2009; Merz et al. 2009; Payne et al. 2009). This perspective emphasises the importance of brand image, the impression held by consumers, in the pursuit of brand equity (McCracken 1986; Biel 1992; Fournier 1998; Hatch & Schultz 2003; Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Boyle 2007). Rather than prioritising the firm’s brand identity and vision, brand equity defines the relationship between customers and brands (Wood 2000; Urde 2003; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Payne et al. 2008; Payne et al. 2009). Brand equity is the set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, including its name and symbol, that add or subtract value provided by a firm (Keller 1993, 2001, 2008; Saviolo 2002). Brand image reflects current positive and negative consumer (and stakeholder) perceptions that result in a brand reputation, defined as the collective of brand perceptions that accumulate over time (de Chernatony 1999; Harris & de Chernatony 2001; Brown et al. 2006; Petkova et al. 2008; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016).

The focus on brand image and reputation has moved brand development to facilitate connecting with and empowering the customer, who actively creates and

determines value (brand equity) (Boyle 2007; Tynan et al. 2010; Grönroos 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2011, 2013; Choo et al. 2012). Within the luxury sector, the active engagement of consumers is exhibited in their multiple points of interaction with brands (Pralhad & Ramaswamy 2004; Choo et al. 2012). Atwal and Williams (2009) argue that the recognition of consumer involvement in the process of creating value dictates that the basis of marketing shifts to focus on the co-creation of consumer experience. This approach to brand development stipulates that brands are aesthetic experiences that are merely symbols of an enterprise's activities and ambitions (Urde 2003; Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Hirschman 2010). From this perspective, the purpose of brand development is to create an indistinguishable connection between an object and its image (Power & Hauge 2008). The act of branding, therefore, is the 'production and distribution of symbols which need to be consumed, contextualised and mobilised in order to become meaningful' (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004: 237). In this perspective, brands are cultural symbols in which consumers assign meaning, and the collective assigned meaning at a point in time creates a brand image (Urde 1999; Holt et al. 2004; Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004).

Within the consumer behaviour approach to brand development, the symbolic quality of products are determinants of product evaluation and adoption (Solomon 1983). The interaction of brand and consumer is a process of negotiation whereby the meaning behind brands are mediated in a reciprocal, socially embedded process (Power & Hauge 2008; Gyrd-Jones & Kornum 2013). The prevailing argument is that:

The marketer controls the amount and type of information about the brand as it first enters the market; however, once in the marketplace, both the individual consumer and the social system can alter the information and change brand meaning (Ligas & Cotte 1999: 609).

This has shifted the focus of marketing away from organisational brand development to the co-creation of brand equity, recognising the importance of consumer experience, influence and power (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Atwal & Williams 2009; Choo et al. 2012; Iglesias et al. 2013; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). The thread of literature on co-creation emphasises the value creation of brand equity based in relationship marketing, personalised consumer experiences and service-dominant logic,

thus taking the focus away from the firm and placing it on the consumer, in a service orientation, examining their interaction with the brand (Catulli & Gander 2004; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Lusch & Vargo 2006; Grönroos 2006, 2008, 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2011, 2013; Skålén & Hackley 2011).

Emphasising the centrality of the consumer in developing brands, co-creation can actually be described as the creative ways in which users adapt brand meanings to fit their personal lives (Ligas & Cotte 1999). The concept of co-creation is broader than consumer value creation (Ind & Coates 2013), and can be categorised into various forms, including co-production and co-design (Sanders & Stappers 2008; Frow et al. 2015), among others (Frow et al. 2011). The perspective of co-creation most applicable to this research relates to co-meaning creation (ibid.) and falls within relationship marketing, specifically service-dominant logic (Grönroos 1994; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Finne & Grönroos 2009). From a marketing perspective, co-creation is defined as a process in which:

The firm does not create and deliver value to the passive customer, but rather through interaction and dialogue embeds value in the co-creation process between the firm and its active customer [so that there is] a process of co-creating value through the exchange of knowledge and skills with customers and partners (Tynan et al. 2010: 1158).

Co-creation, as part of the marketing framework of service-dominant logic, advocates for consumer involvement at every stage of product development (Grönroos 2008, 2011; Payne et al. 2008; Merz et al. 2009; Grönroos & Voima 2011; Ind & Coates 2013). Service-dominant logic ‘implies that value is defined by and co-created with the consumer rather than embedded in output’ (Vargo & Lusch 2004: 6). Within this paradigm of marketing, skills and knowledge are units of exchange, and brands are a knowledge-based resource for the firm through the co-creation of value (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Jansson & Power 2010; Tynan et al. 2010).

However, this broad application of marketing recommendations presents challenges for firms within the fashion industry. For entrepreneurial DFEs, especially in the earliest stages of development, access to consumer information is in short supply. More significantly, the designer fashion brand is often defined by the underlying aesthetics of each collection carried over from season to season. It is the designer’s vision, or unique point-of-view, that is the brand’s point of differentiation within the fashion

industry. These are two conflicting points about the development of brands within the fashion industry: that brand value is created through the identification and service of consumer needs, and that designer fashion brands are valued for the unique contribution of fashion designer(s) who create their vision, unveiling their collections during fashion week. Furthermore, the emphasis and focus of co-creation on consumer behaviour ignores the firm's reaction and response to co-creation experiences as a result of market interactions.

Service-dominant logic is considered a continuous learning process in which the firm develops core competences, identifies potential customers that could benefit from the competencies, cultivates relationships through the development of customised value propositions, and interprets feedback from the marketplace (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Tynan et al. 2010). Within this perspective, co-creation is a recognition of the 'informed, networked, empowered and active' nature of consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004: 5). While much of the marketing literature on co-creation focuses on the consumer's interaction with the brand (Payne et al. 2008; Atwal & Williams 2009; Payne et al. 2009), the influence of stakeholders is beginning to be recognised (Hatch & Schultz 2010; Helm & Jones 2010; Frow et al. 2011; Iglesias et al. 2013; Vásquez et al. 2013; Frow et al. 2015).

Overwhelming focus on the influence of end users in the co-creation of brands, ignores the systems in which firms operate (Frow & Payne 2011). Products are the interface within a broader social system that connects consumers to organisations (Solomon 1983). This highlights the symbolic value brands cultivate within that system through the meanings derived from brand image (Ligas & Cotte 1999; Urde 1999). Within the fashion industry, DFEs are tied not only to consumers, but neighbouring brands, collaborators, seasonal fashion schedules and industry-led supply chain processes. The global fashion system is a dynamic set of individuals and environments which collectively exert power over the DFE's opportunities, activities and survival (Power & Hauge 2008). This research examines co-creation as the interactions with stakeholders that cumulatively produce new knowledge and meaning (co-meaning creation) over time, influencing the development of brand identity (Frow et al. 2011; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016; Voyer et al. 2017).

The point of differentiation for entrepreneurial DFEs is not only their products, manufacturing management or distribution processes, but the unique brand identity that results from the designer's innovative approach to the intangible characteristics of the collections (Malem 2008). The aesthetic approach to brand positioning creates the brand's exclusivity within the market (Power & Hauge 2008; Miloch et al. 2012). This aesthetic innovation is born from the designer-founder's personal background, emphasis on creativity, approach to the business management of the enterprise and understanding of brand equity within the market (Malem 2008).

Brand equity and the perceived value of products, developed through the process of co-creation, creates the justification for the premium price associated with luxury goods positioned within the highest product category segments (Keller 2008; Tynan et al. 2010). Kunz (1995) identifies the target market as the central focus of the organisation, reflecting the perceived management style and role of merchandising within apparel firms. However, the designer sector of the fashion industry is dominated by micro businesses, which operate with less than ten employees (Karra 2008; Malem 2008). In practice, the ability and extent to which entrepreneurial DFEs can principally and accurately focus on their target market is slight given their extremely limited resources. The development of the entrepreneurial designer fashion brand can be explained through a combination of co-creation within the fashion system and a corporate brand identity approach (Lusch & Vargo 2006; Frow et al. 2011; Urde 2013), which has yet to be explored in the literature.

Therefore, this research incorporates understanding of the co-creation process from the perspective of the organisation, rather than a consumer behaviour orientation, recognising that the brand is a knowledge-based resource for the entrepreneurial DFE (Urde 1999). Rather than using co-creation to examine brand image, this research focuses on the co-creation of brand identity as the entrepreneurial DFE develops capabilities and interacts within the fashion system (Nandan 2005; Hatch & Schultz 2010; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016; Voyer et al. 2017). But because this research explores brand development from an organisational perspective, it also utilises theoretical frameworks that emphasise the creation of brand identity through interaction of the internal activities and processes of the enterprise (Urde 2003, 2013; Järventie-Thesleff et al. 2011; Vásquez et al. 2013). This combined approach, emphasising the internal and external brand elements and



stakeholder interactions — defined collectively as a brand orientation — argues for a holistic view of brand development as embedded in the routines, processes and activities of the organisation (Urde 1999, 2013; Brüdson & Evans 2004; Reid et al. 2005; Gromark & Melin 2011; Järventie-Thesleff et al. 2011; Iglesias et al. 2013; Vásquez et al. 2013; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). It is the interrelated internal and external elements that form a brand identity and provide strategic direction for the firm (Urde 2013). Table 3.1 provides a summary of the existing research on brand development. The intersection of brand and fashion is discussed in the next section.

### 3.3 Fashion & Brand

As an industry, fashion is a powerful representation of brands that illustrates the connected loop between product and brand development (Hatch & Schultz 1997; Djelic & Ainamo 1999; Ind & Watt 2005; Power & Hauge 2008). Fashion brands are not defined by the tangible features of their products, but the underlying brand culture and meaning which influences the physical materialisation of their vision (Ind & Watt 2005; Wigley et al. 2005). Brand development and fashion theory are connected through the acknowledgement of the ability of a fashion brand to create and ‘become synonymous with a particular lifestyle’, yet there remains a lack of research on the process by which fashion brands achieve such significance (Ferne et al. 1997: 152).

Brands are a cultural phenomenon paralleling fashion that serve as symbols, reflecting the spirit and taste of the time (Robinson 1958; Blumer 1969; Sproles 1981; Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Brun & Castelli 2008). These symbols are developed through action and interaction within the system. From an economic perspective, fashion initiates revolutionary change through its product lifecycle that maintains a dynamic environment and ensures profitability over time (Sproles 1981; Saviolo 2002).

There is a continual interaction between socio-dynamic forces and the individual which can be illustrated by how the field of fashion changes over time (Cholachatpinyo et al. 2002). Social life is a process that is in a constant state of change based on the dynamic interactions between individuals and their need to create meaning and communicate (Ligas & Cotte 1999). As a social system, the fashion industry’s network of relationships provides structure to the process of developing products and brands. It is the designer’s creativity, ‘a complex process based on stakeholders relationships [that] results in the

**Table 3.1 Summary of Key Literature on Brand Development**

<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
<b>Organisational (Internal)</b>	de Chernatony (2001)	Emphasises the internal process of the enterprise in brand development. Brand built through communication and culture. Differentiation should be emotionally based.
	Hatch & Schultz (1997)	Blurring of lines between internal and external aspects of the company requiring a combination of marketing and organisational perspectives. Identity and image.
	Keller (2009)	Customer-based brand equity model emphasises integrating marketing communications to achieve desired brand awareness and brand image.
<b>Marketing Mix, Orientation and Capabilities</b>	McCarthy (1960) Borden (1964)	Marketing Mix: Product, Price, Place, Promotion. Branding impacts distribution, sales, packaging, promotional activities and advertising.
	Grönroos (1994)	Market orientation: firm activities to fulfil needs and desires of customers, transitioning from a product-focused (marketing mix) to relationship marketing.
	Moore & Fairhurst (2003)	Dynamic environment requires successful development and use of capabilities that support marketing strategies created via marketing mix.
	Vorhies & Morgan (2005)	Marketing capabilities based in organisational learning: product development, pricing, channel management, communications, selling, market information management, marketing planning and implementation.
	Morgan et al. (2007)	Marketing capabilities (derived from marketing mix) enhance market orientation.
<b>Corporate Brand</b>	Balmer & Gray (2003)	Corporate marketing: identity, image, reputation, communications, and branding; resource-based view. Corporate brands are resources because they are rare, durable, inappropriable, inimitable and non-substitutable.
	Hatch & Schultz (2003)	Corporate brand requires alignment between vision, culture and image in a dynamic process of development and adaptation.
	Spence & Essoussi (2010)	SME brand development based in founders' beliefs and values, which provide basis for the development of competencies expressed through brand identity. Influence of country of origin and brand associations.
	Järventie-Thesleff et al. (2011) Vásquez et al. (2013)	Corporate branding is a process embedded in the day-to-day activities of the firm.
<b>Co-creation (External)</b>	Vargo & Lusch (2004) Lusch & Vargo (2006)	Service-dominant logic emphasising intangible resources, co-creation of value, and relationship marketing in the service of customer wants and needs.
	Payne et al. (2008) Payne et al. (2009)	Manage the co-creation of value through engagement with and learning from customer.
	Grönroos (2008, 2011)	Co-creation of value-in-use. Consumers and firms have different (conflicting) goals.
	Hatch & Schultz (2010)	Marketing-based reframing of co-creation in the context of corporate branding, utilising stakeholders in the creation of brand meaning.

**Table 3.1 Summary of Key Literature on Brand Development**

Perspective	Study	Contribution
<b>Co-creation (External) cont.</b>	Frow et al. (2011)	Typology of co-creation: co-conception of ideas, co-design, co-production, co-promotion, co-pricing, co-distribution, co-consumption, co-maintenance, co-outsourcing, co-disposal, co-experience and co-meaning creation.
	da Silveira et al. (2013)	Brand identity is dynamic and developed over time through interaction between a firm and consumers.
	Iglesias et al. (2013)	Brands are organic entities built via interactions with stakeholders.
	Kennedy & Guzmán (2016)	Co-creation strengthens brand identity, involving multiple stakeholders and all elements of the firm.
<b>Brand Orientation (Internal &amp; External)</b>	Urde (1994)	Brand orientation combines dimensions of brand and marketing (corporate name, brand vision, corporate identity, positioning, product, target market, and trademark).
	Urde (1999)	Brand orientation defined as ‘an approach in which the processes of the organisation revolve around the creation, development and protection of brand identity in an ongoing interaction with target customers’ (p. 117). Within market orientation, brand identity is adapted to satisfy customers in the present, perhaps conflicting with long-term development that strengthens the brand as a resource. In contrast, brand orientation argues for not ignoring customers’ wants and needs, but also not using them to direct brand identity development. Rather, brand identity should be based in a firm’s core values.
	Brüdson & Evans (2004)	Brand orientation for fashion retailers, combines elements of marketing concept and resource-based view. Brand orientation is a construct that encompasses an organisation’s values, beliefs, behaviours and practices oriented towards brand development capabilities in providing distinction, functionality, added value and symbolic meaning.
	Reid et al. (2005)	Market orientation fits within brand orientation, which translates long-term goals into actionable activities. Brand orientation focuses on vertical integration or alignment of activities with long-term vision, whereas market orientation is concerned with horizontal integration of marketing mix elements in coordinating business functions such as production, sales and distribution in the short-term.
	Gromark & Melin (2011)	Brand development is associated with business development and financial performance. Brands are dynamic resources that permeate all processes within an organisation.
	Urde (2013)	Corporate brand viewed from both an internal and external perspective. The <i>Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM)</i> is used to describe and align elements that define a brand’s identity: value proposition, relationships, position, expression, core (promise and core values), personality, mission and vision, culture, and competencies.

generation of ideas deemed to be original and valuable within their context' (Ind & Watt 2005: 63-4). Thus, the creative director's design knowledge is central to how firms create value and differentiation for their offerings; such knowledge is connected to the branding process (Jansson & Power 2010). For the DFE, brand development and fashion design are intertwined:

The marketing of designer fashion ensures that this shared international understanding of brand identity and meaning is developed and preserved through the standardisation of communications strategies, and by the exercising of tight controls over merchandising, distribution and pricing strategies (Moore et al. 2000: 919).

Like fashion, brands are social indicators that reflect the identities and aspirations of individuals and society as a whole (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Power & Hauge 2008). Fashion and branding are both progressively acknowledged as the production and distribution of symbols that create meaning and value, ultimately leading to the development of personal and brand identity (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Power & Hauge 2008; Choo et al. 2012; Voyer et al. 2017). It is brand identity, formed partly from designer and entrepreneurial vision, that differentiates brands, making them unique, and contributes to the overall success of the organisation (de Chernatony 1999; Malem 2008; Hutchinson & Quinn 2012).

Literature relating to the branding and internationalisation strategies of fashion retailers highlights that high fashion is a representation of branding (Ferne et al. 1997; Moore et al. 2000). The identity and differentiation of fashion brands is:

Founded on the creation of a distinct visual "brand surround". This "brand surround" is developed through the adoption of a distinctive brand name, an array of advertising images selecting the values of the brand and the target consumer group, personality endorsement, product packaging, as well as through the promotional activities of fashion shows and print editorial (Ferne et al. 1997:152).

While Ferne et al. (1997) focus on established luxury fashion brands operating within the retail market, the connection of the aesthetic elements of fashion to brand development, especially as the key point of differentiation, makes a significant contribution to understanding how fashion companies develop products and brands. The luxury industry, which includes the upper segmentations of DFE price-points,

among other industries beyond fashion, produces design, materials, merchandising and packaging innovations that influence the remainder of the marketing sphere (Ko & Megehee 2012). As the pinnacle of the fashion industry, the designer sector includes contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry designer and designer luxury price-point segments (Saviolo 2002; Apparel Search n.d.). The designer fashion sector of the fashion industry is an ever-evolving source of inspiration and products to the wider market of distribution through retail channels. It is the central source from which the rest of the fashion industry follows. The latter part of the noughties has shown a growing research interest into the development and management of luxury brands (see Truong et al. 2008; Atwal & Williams 2009; Fionda & Moore 2009; Reddy et al. 2009; Matthiesen & Phau 2010), and yet little research has explored the DFE sector in relation to brand development or internationalisation. However, there are notable exceptions related to DFE product development (see Au et al. 2003; Karra & Phillips 2004; Ashton 2006; Rieple & Gander 2009; Mills 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014; Rieple et al. 2015).

Components inherent to the creation of the luxury fashion brand are defined as marketing communications, product integrity, design signature, premium price, exclusivity, heritage, environment and service, culture, and a clear brand identity (Bridson & Evans 2004; Fionda & Moore 2009). Often the in-house core-competencies for fashion companies are those related to product development, which define the materials, style and aesthetics of the products and marketing capabilities (Gilmore et al. 2001; Rantisi 2002; Moore & Fairhurst 2003; Morgan et al. 2003; Rust et al. 2004; Vorhies & Morgan 2005; Morgan et al. 2007; Fang & Zou 2009; Caniato et al. 2013). Kunz (1995) identifies the target market as the central focus of the apparel design organisation, mirrored in the marketing concept whereby 'the ability of a firm to meet its goals is particularly dependent on satisfying the needs and wants of external coalitions that are exchange partners, particularly their customers' (255). Rather than being prescriptive, the behavioural theory of the apparel firm reflects current trends in the management style and role of merchandising within established fashion design companies (ibid.).

For established luxury brands who grow through brand extensions into other product categories, profitability is driven by a cohesive brand portfolio and the extent to which consumers are willing to pay a premium price because the brand is perceived to

offer greater quality in comparison to other products (Reddy et al. 2009). These luxury products are defined by their 'psychological value', 'function as a status symbol', and the 'highly involved consumption experience' that is reflected in the consumer's 'self-concept' (Fionda & Moore 2009: 349). However, other definitions of luxury focus on their exquisite quality, high price, aesthetic beauty, pleasure (experience) and/or exclusivity (Choo et al. 2012). But as Atwal and Williams (2009) argue, the expression of luxury is 'a celebration of personal creativity, expressiveness, intelligence, fluidity and above all, meaning' (340).

DFEs are notably different from other luxury products because of their emphasis on the seasonal investment in innovation and product development, the importance of designer image as creative director, and their involvement in one of the main fashion weeks at London, New York, Milan or Paris (Fionda & Moore 2009). By focusing on the fashion industry, Power and Hauge (2008) illustrate how an enterprise's brand strategy has 'profound effects on the industry and how strategically focusing on brands ties firms and their respective commodity chains closely to consumers and their geographies' (126). This highlights the importance of branding in creating meaningful connections with individuals, while also having broader effects on overall industry trends.

The marketing environment provides buyers, editors, consumers and other stakeholders with information that they combine with their personal goals and histories to derive meaning on an individual level (Ligas & cotte 1999). As a societal structure, 'the advertising system enables marketers to frame a product in a way that is appealing to certain segments of society, who can view the advertising and identify with unique or personalised symbols' (ibid.: 610). Likewise, the fashion system, through buyers, editors and support programs, frames emerging designers and their collection to appeal to certain segments of society. As part of a communication and marketing strategy, fashion week and the fashion media behave as advertising systems for the DFE.

Indeed, for a company, the development and implementation of strategy is "embedded" in a network of social relations that includes cultural norms, class and educational background, religion and so on' (Porter 1996: 9). Bell et al. (2004) define business strategy as an umbrella term referring to a range of capabilities and practices within organisational management, marketing and product diversification. Strategies

of diversification (branding) offer enterprises profitability, but also power, security and prestige within a social system (Whittington 2001).

The initial common denominator between research on brand development, internationalisation and SMEs in relation to fashion falls within the fashion retail branch of management research. Research within the fashion retail sector also provides a natural launching point because it makes up a substantial part of the fashion industry. The BFC's (2009) report on the value of the UK fashion industry evaluates that the retail sector provides £21 billion in direct value to the UK economy annually. This figure was updated in 2014 to £26 billion (BFC 2014b). An estimated 22.5 percent of all retail in the UK can be attributed to the fashion industry (BFC 2009).

Fashion retailing research within the UK focuses on an array of topics such as consumer behaviour, branding, merchandising and internationalisation (Doherty & Alexander 2004; Wigley et al. 2005; Hutchinson et al. 2006; Wigley & Moore 2007; Završnik 2007; Evans et al. 2008; Goworek 2010; McColl & Moore 2011; Hutchinson & Quinn 2012). The growth of established fashion and apparel brands has been examined within case studies of Burberry (Moore & Birtwistle 2004; Power & Hauge 2008), Hugo Boss (Matthiesen & Phau 2004), Prada (Moore & Doyle 2010) and Under Armour (Miloch et al. 2012). The studies focus on the importance of achieving brand consistency, especially through wholesale channels; maintenance of control throughout the growth process by developing a clear brand positioning, coordinated distribution strategy and public relations initiatives; and the establishment of a growth platform within the top fashion boutiques and departments stores in Europe and the USA (Matthiesen & Phau 2004; Moore & Birtwistle 2004; Moore & Doyle 2010). The success factors for fashion retail internationalisation include the importance of a strong external brand image and internal brand identity, and the experience created by the brand within the retail environment, highlighting the importance of lifestyle aesthetics and characteristics (Wigley et al. 2005; Hines & Bruce 2007; Wigley & Moore 2007; Završnik 2007; Fionda & Moore 2009; Hutchinson & Quinn 2012). While these works make significant contributions to fashion internationalisation through retail, they also call for research focusing on branding in relation to internationalisation, specifically drawing attention

to the lack of such perspective in the current literature (Moore et al. 2000; Wigley et al. 2005).

Because fashion is a global industry, fashion retail provides insight relating fashion brands and internationalisation, highlighting the importance of brand consistency, control and a coordinated distribution strategy. Together these three intertwined elements — the fashion system, luxury brands and fashion retail internationalisation — offer points for comparison in understanding the brand development and internationalisation of entrepreneurial DFEs. Table 3.2 highlights significant literature in relation to the intersection between fashion and branding. The models of SME internationalisation are discussed in the following section.

### **3.4 Internationalisation**

Small firm internationalisation is increasingly recognised in the literature due to its important contribution to employment, wealth creation, economic activity and innovation (Bell et al. 2004). Systemic drivers for internationalisation include changes in consumer preferences, manufacturing developments, innovations in communication and information technologies, and alternative competitive conditions due to globalisation (Douglas & Wind 1987; Audretsch et al. 2000; Bell et al. 2004; Holt et al. 2004; Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Trudgen & Freeman 2014; Langseth et al. 2016).

The instant internationalisation behaviour of SMEs is a result of the advances in technology that have contributed to globalisation, shorter market lead times and shorter product lifecycles, all of which increase competition and market saturation (Fillis 2001; Tallman & Fladmoe-Lindquist 2002). While SMEs are generally considered to compete with larger counterparts within industry, differences in their internationalisation behaviour can be explored and explained via research at the interface of entrepreneurship and marketing because these firms are entering international markets in increasing numbers despite limited resources (Baird et al. 1994; Morris & Lewis 1995; Zahra et al. 2000; Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Barney et al. 2001; Fillis 2001; Morris et al. 2002; Knight et al. 2004; Casillas et al. 2010; Schweizer et al. 2010; Bettiol et al. 2012; Langseth et al. 2016).

SMEs are active participants in internationalisation processes, illustrated in the marketing, international business, exporting and entrepreneurship literature (Coviello



**Table 3.2 Summary of Key Literature on Fashion and Brand**

Perspective	Study	Contribution
<b>Fashion &amp; Brand Symbolism</b>	Cholachatpinyo et al. (2002)	Fashion transformation process model: symbolic nature of fashion, role of fashion designers in interpreting emerging lifestyles translated into fashion products.
	Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård (2004)	Symbolic nature of brands. Brand development is a process of aesthetic expression.
	Ind & Watt (2005)	Brand creates boundaries for the organisation, spurring innovation and creativity for market positioning.
	Power & Hauge (2008)	Importance of brands within the fashion industry in the creation of brand meaning between consumer and firm via quality, utility, symbolic and cultural worth.
<b>Luxury Fashion &amp; Brand</b>	Fionda & Moore (2009)	Key luxury brand characteristics: clear brand identity, communications strategy, product integrity, brand signature, prestige price, exclusivity, heritage, environment and consumption experience, culture.
	Atwal & Williams (2009)	Brand-related experiences with luxury consumers are imperative for long-term success of luxury companies.
	Reddy et al. (2009)	Degree of adjacency between product categories in the development of luxury brand extensions.
<b>Fashion Retail Branding &amp; Internationalisation</b>	Fernie et al. (1997)	Connection between internationalisation and brand development of large established fashion retailers, requiring a clear brand identity due to globalisation.
	Moore et al. (2000)	Internationalisation of designer fashion retail fuelled by diffusion lines via wholesale with department stores, ready-to-wear flagship stores, large diffusion flagship stores, opening of stores in provincial cities.
	Wigley et al. (2005) Wigley & Moore (2007)	Elements important to international fashion retailer success: brand management, product development, distribution control, consistent presentation and differentiation.
<b>Designer Apparel in the Fashion System</b>	Rantisi (2002)	Design innovation process within New York's garment district: the importance of clustering in the development of best practices and resources, and the benefits of cooperation among competitors.
	Rieple & Gander (2009) Rieple et al. (2015)	Clustering as a means of encouraging interactions and resource development in the globalised fashion industry for London-based apparel designers.
	Malem (2008)	Processes and survival of London-based fashion designer businesses: understanding the business, managing slow and sustained growth, consultancy with other brands, restricted contracts, balance retail and wholesale channels, control, relationships, communication, internationalisation, role models.
	Caniato et al. (2013)	Determinants of innovation for luxury-fashion companies: drivers (market domain, business domain, and external domain), type of innovation (product, supply-chain, organisational) and dynamic capabilities (vision and strategy, competencies, organisational intelligence, creativity, culture and climate, technology).

& McAuley 1999; McDougall & Oviatt 2000; Hadley & Wilson 2003; Hutchinson et al. 2006; Brun & Castelli 2008; Spence & Essoussi 2010). The internationalisation literature has taken several divergent directions, including that of the SME, the introduction of frameworks (the Uppsala Model, network perspectives and born global theories), relating to (fashion) retail and the development of brands across international borders. Each of these strands intersect at various points within the research. As brand development and fashion retail were discussed previously, this section focuses on the models of internationalisation.

The concept of internationalisation can be defined within the academic literature by the examination of 'businesses that cross national borders and comparisons of domestic business activity in multiple countries' (McDougall & Oviatt 2000: 902). However, this definition characterises internationalisation as an activity of the firm without regard to the process by which it is achieved. In addressing this, internationalisation can also be defined as an 'entrepreneurial process that is embedded in an institutional and social web which supports the firm in terms of access to information, human capital, finance' and other resources (Bell et al. 2003: 341). From a behavioural approach, it is an ongoing evolutionary process for the firm, which can experience growth and contraction with internationalisation activities (Coviello & McAuley 1999; Prange & Verdier 2011).

International entrepreneurship is a 'combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-seeking behaviour that crosses national borders and is intended to create value in organisations' (McDougall & Oviatt 2000: 903). Within internationalisation and entrepreneurship, the competencies and practices of the firm are sources of innovation and competitive advantage (Zahra et al. 1999; Fillis 2001; Jantunen et al. 2005; Kasim & Altinay 2016). While McDougall & Oviatt (2000) focus on the generic SME, they highlight artisan companies who rely on historical and manual production methods and their rapid internationalisation behaviour due to relationship networks, adaptability of products and flexibility in their internationalisation approach. These concepts potentially shed light on the internationalisation of SMEs in the creative industries, like DFEs.

The uniqueness of SME internationalisation highlights the importance of the size and structure of the enterprise undergoing the internationalisation process. Thus, there are a myriad of influences on the internationalisation behaviour of SMEs, including

where they are located prior to internationalisation. In their work connecting fashion, branding and internationalisation, Wigley et al. (2005) defined the strategies of British retailers as 'proactive opportunistic' in contrast to their American counterparts which were 'reactive opportunistic' in that domestic circumstances pushed the US based retailers into internationalisation. They defined the 'proactive opportunistic' fashion retailer as a firm with an 'innovative approach to product and brand dynamics achieving competitive differentials as part of an integrated marketing strategy', and therefore more likely to succeed in entering foreign markets (ibid.: 539). However, the proliferation of research on fashion retailing and internationalisation ignores the entrepreneurial origins of these now globally established brands.

In examining the unique enablers and influences of the internationalisation process, Coviello and McAuley (1999) identify three common strategies of internationalisation beginning with foreign direct investment, which requires substantial commitment by the firm and finds its foundations within rational economics. Within fashion, this practice may be more applicable to retailers with vast resources, not entrepreneurial DFEs. Diverging from this is the stage model of internationalisation, or the 'establishment chain process', founded within a behavioural approach, whereby the firm selects international opportunities based on locations with the least amount of risk and psychic distance (ibid.). Related to this, Moore et al. (2000) identify 'push' and 'pull' factors of internationalisation decision-making, noting the difference between reacting to limited domestic opportunities in contrast to actively seeking opportunities abroad. The third approach to internationalisation discussed by Coviello and McAuley (1999) is the network perspective, drawing from social exchange and resource dependency theories (Wernerfelt 1984; Barney 1991; Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Barney et al. 2001; Galbreath 2005). Housed within the resourced-based theories of strategic management is that of dynamic capabilities, which is argued to enable entrepreneurship and innovation (Teece et al. 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Luo 2000; Winter 2003; Jantunen et al. 2005; Sapienza et al. 2006; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Newey & Zahra 2009; Barreto 2010; Prange & Verdier 2011; Teece 2012).

The theory of stages of internationalisation was introduced by Johanson and Vahlne (1977) and is often referred to as the Uppsala model. These 'traditional' firms establish

within their domestic market prior to internationalisation, gradually evolving into international trade (Bell et al. 2003). Chetty (1999) explores the internationalisation of apparel manufacturing firms (not necessarily design firms) based in New Zealand, using the stages model as a basis for introducing dimensions of internationalisation, including the exportation approach ('operation method'), product concept ('sales objects'), target markets and organisational capacity, while also citing the systemic influences of industry competition, government regulations and regional trading agreements. Within this perspective, as globalisation increases and global trade is liberalised, international markets open up, making domestic markets vulnerable to imported products. The implications of this are that a firm must internationalise without the safety net of the strong domestic market (ibid.). While the study highlights the, at times, lack of continuity in a firm's approach to internationalisation — that it can grow and contract as necessary — it uses an overly broad framework to explain the internationalisation of apparel manufacturing firms, basing the internationalisation model on traditional stage models of distribution. For DFEs operating in global fashion capitals such as London and New York, this framework is limited in its applicability to their growth and development process.

However, Johanson & Vahlne (2009) engage with criticisms of the original Uppsala model highlighting the importance of experiential learning to develop knowledge during the internationalisation process, trust and commitment building during network relationship interactions, opportunity development during the on-going business activities, and the declining validity of the establishment chain. Their original research identified companies that internationalised with 'ad hoc' exporting, followed by the formalisation of entry model via agents who acted as intermediaries between the buyer in the foreign market (Johanson & Vahlne 1977, 2009). In the later article the authors note:

Companies have frequently switched from relying on an agent — that is, relying on external resources — to an internal operational mode when their performance makes that possible and there are prospects for growth and better efficiency (Johanson & Vahlne 2009: 1422).

Once sales increased, these agents were able to be replaced by an internal sales team. This is similar to how the authors described the establishment chain when it

was originally introduced (Johanson & Vahlne 1977). They defined psychic distance as 'factors that make it difficult to understand foreign environments', which was connected to the concept of 'liability of foreignness', explaining the offsetting 'firm-specific advantage' with the increased risk inherent in international activity (Johanson & Vahlne 2009: 1412). The model is founded in the assumptions of bounded rationality and uncertainty requiring the firm to initiate change by gaining learning and experience with the strategic management of the company in foreign markets, and through their commitment decisions, which work to strengthen their market positioning (ibid.).

Importantly, the problems associated with entry into international markets are the same as those associated with entry into any other market; it is highly reliant on the network in which the firm operates (Luo 2000; Johanson & Vahlne 2009). This helps to explain the use of agents in the internationalisation of SMEs. As a development to the Uppsala model, the importance of networks to the internationalisation process is incorporated. The business network is a structure in which the international company is embedded, connecting the enterprise to commensurate business relationships in the target foreign market (Altinay 2001; Johanson & Vahlne 2009).

Business networks create a series of relationships so that exchange in one is associated with exchange in another, providing firms with an extended knowledge base (Forsgren 2002; Zahra & Filatotchev 2004; Brennan & Garvey 2009; Johanson & Vahlne 2009). Bell et al. (2004) explored the growth of SMEs from a broad perspective, identifying a difference between 'knowledge-intensive' (firms with scientific knowledge embedded in their process or products) and 'traditional' firms' patterns, processes and pace in relation to internationalisation. Johanson & Vahlne (2009) argue that the business network view begins with the resource-based view (RBV) assumptions that a firm's individual bundle of resources leads to value creation regardless of market conditions, but adds that network exchanges are sources of knowledge about partners' needs, resources, capabilities and further relationships. This 'relationship-specific knowledge' is key to the experiential learning that is a central factor to a firm's internationalisation success because it is related to the context, culture and characteristics of the situation in which it is learned (Luo 2000; Hadley & Wilson 2003; Jantunen et al. 2005; Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Sapienza et al. 2006; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Casillas et al. 2010; Prange &

Verdier 2011). Therefore, the network in which a firm operates provides an opportunity for experience to be gained about the foreign marketplace, which then 'translates into knowledge that can be used to resolve problems or select alternative options relating to international operations' (Hadley & Wilson 2003: 698). Thus, internationalisation opportunities are linked to individual firm resources, organisational learning and the development of dynamic capabilities (March 1991; Collis 1994; Zahra et al. 1999; Zollo & Winter 2002; Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Jantunen et al. 2005; Sapienza et al. 2006; Cepeda & Vera 2007; Ambrosini et al. 2009; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Prange & Verdier 2011).

From an organisational perspective, dynamic capabilities emphasise fit between a firm's resources, structure and processes (Winter 2003; Teece 2007; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). Dynamic capabilities are strategic and essential for (though they do not guarantee) competitive advantage (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Zahra & George 2002; Zahra et al. 2006; Cepeda & Vera 2007; Teece 2012). Within the dynamic capability perspective, the organisation can be viewed through a hierarchy of capabilities in which operational capabilities (1st order) are those required in the deployment of resources in the day-to-day activities, while dynamic capabilities (2nd order) are those that extend, reconfigure or modify operational capabilities as a result of organisational learning (3rd order) (Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Zahra et al. 2006; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Ambrosini et al. 2009; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009; Pandza & Thorpe 2009; Newey & Zahra 2009). As higher-order competences, dynamic capabilities 'determine the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources/competencies to address, and possibly shape, rapidly changing business environments' (Teece 2012: 1395). Dynamic capabilities are systematic routines embedded in the organisation that modify existing resources and capabilities in the pursuit of future profit (Zollo & Winter 2002; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009).

The concept of dynamic capabilities brings to the forefront the management proficiencies and inimitable collection of resources that permeate all aspects of the firm (Lawson & Samson 2001). As a result, the firm is not a set of product-market positions, but a collection of resources and capabilities (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Lawson & Samson 2001; Aramand & Valliere 2012). Resources are not only tangible assets but fluid,

intangible and dynamic functions of inventiveness and evaluation which can be applied to the supply chains of the luxury and fashion industries (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Caniato et al. 2013).

The concept of dynamic capabilities defines the firm's ability to create, change and leverage its resources, including those that aid in the internationalisation process, such as the company's network and business model, improving upon its path dependent nature to actively explore and exploit opportunities (Luo 2002; Tallman & Fladmoe-Lindquist 2002; Zahra et al. 2006; Yalcinkaya et al. 2007; Chen et al. 2009; Pandza & Thorpe 2009; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Prange & Verdier 2011). Thus, the relationship development approach to internationalisation requires a firm to transition from opportunism to strategic management, which is a process that is strongly evident in UK fashion retailers who use franchising to enter into foreign markets (Doherty & Alexander 2004). However, a strategic approach to management is not always feasible depending on the organisation's structure and culture (Wood 2000). Business model decisions include technological choices, market segments to be targeted, financial terms, sales strategies, supply chain relations, and in-house and out-sourced activities all of which help to capture value and determine the design of the business and creation of its dynamic capabilities (Jantunen et al. 2005; Teece 2007; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009).

Prior to Johanson & Vahlne's (2009) updated approach, the Uppsala model was challenged for its limitations in regard to actual firm activity, especially by SMEs who begin internationalising from the earliest stages of development. These firms are described as 'born globals' (Fillis 2001; Bell et al. 2003; Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Knight et al. 2004; Trudgen & Freeman 2014; Cavusgil & Knight 2015; Knight & Liesch 2016). Knight and Cavusgil (2004) define born global enterprises as:

Organisations that, from or near their founding, seek superior international business performance from the application of knowledge-based resources to the sale of outputs in multiple countries (124).

However, Johansson & Vahlne (2009) argue that their recent work on the Uppsala Model is not very different from born global theories, which actually depict 'born regionals' as the firms are not actually distributed globally. In practice, firms

may experience periods focused on international growth, followed by periods of de-internationalisation (Bell et al. 2003).

Coviello & McAuley (1999) and Bell et al. (2004: 24) note a call in the research literature for a more holistic approach 'to conceptual thought, empirical work and methodological development' in regard to internationalisation research on the small firm. The holistic perspective of examining internationalisation behaviour of smaller firms includes evaluating the decisions of the firm in the process of internationalisation, incorporating those related to products, market choice and entry modes (Bell et al. 2003; Swoboda et al. 2009; Prange & Verdier 2011). Knight and Cavusgil (2004) found a positive correlation between the knowledge intensity of entrepreneurial firms and international sales growth. Their research supports the holistic approach to internationalisation by identifying innovation, research and development, knowledge development, and organisational capabilities as important activities which leverage the born global firm for successful international market penetration (ibid.). Additionally, this research answers Cavusgil & Knight's (2015) call for research in relation to born global firms (Table 3.3).

The growing interest in born global firms is important in the context of business management since the key practice for these entrepreneurial firms is rapid growth within international markets from the outset of the enterprise (Madsen & Servais 1997; Bell et al. 2004; Knight et al. 2004; Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Fan & Phan 2007; Trudgen & Freeman 2014). The agility of entrepreneurial firms allows them to transform product and process innovations into superior performance enhancing business activities (Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Jantunen et al. 2005; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Prange & Verdier 2011; Cavusgil & Knight 2015; Knight & Liesch 2016). In drawing the connection between overall business capabilities and internationalisation behaviour, Bell et al. (2004) highlight several key themes including product and marketing strategies, operational processes, and the input of individuals within the decision-making process. It is 'knowledge-intensive' firms that tend to be more proactive, seeking out rapid internationalisation in a variety of markets, designing products with a broader global applicability, often working within a network of an individual's relationships (Weerawardena et al. 2007; Krzakiewicz 2013).



<b>Table 3.3 Born Global Firms: Call for Research</b>	
<b>Adapted from Cavusgil &amp; Knight (2015)</b>	
<b>Call for research</b>	<b>Contributions of this research</b>
The use of other theoretical frameworks to explore the early and rapid internationalisation of firms	This research utilises brand identity frameworks to examine the connection of brand development within the internationalisation process of DFEs
Mastery of internationalisation and survival as young firms: identification of industry and firm level factors that provide support, and resources, capabilities and strategies that enhance performance	The aim of this research is to identify the resources and capabilities of DFEs, and their impact on brand development and internationalisation processes
Drawing connections between theoretical disciplines to develop new perspectives and frameworks	This research uses an exploratory approach to draw connections between branding and internationalisation literature to explain the development and growth of DFEs
The role of industrial clusters and ecosystems in the growth of born global firms	From the perspective of the firm, this research explores the interaction of DFEs within their local and industry environment
Characteristics of companies that are truly global, from or near their founding	This research examines the characteristics of DFEs in comparison to existing literature on born globals
Characteristics of companies once they are established	Although this research focuses on the development of the DFEs within the first ten years of founding, it examines the establishing of these brands within the fashion industry
Comparison of born global firms from small and large domestic markets	This research examines and compares DFEs from London and New York, and how the different characteristics of their respective domestic markets contribute to their development

The born global firm can be connected to the internal routines rooted in an evolutionary economic perspective that involves the ability of some companies to sustain innovation, creating new knowledge that influences the development of capabilities consisting of core competencies and embedded practices (Knight & Cavusgil 2004). Indeed, the essential finding of Johanson & Vahlne (2009) is arguably the explanation of the types of knowledge that is developed through experiential learning during the internationalisation process. Thus, internationalisation is an act of innovation based on the resources and capabilities of the firm, notably the firm's knowledge and routines (Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Borch & Madsen 2007; Ellonen et al. 2011). Knowledge resources are 'unique, inimitable, and immobile', which reflect the 'distinctive pathways of each individual firm' (Knight & Cavusgil 2004: 126). Knowledge-based capabilities are intangible; they are the source of flexibility and agility entrepreneurial SMEs exhibit.

Experience and learning produce knowledge that becomes a resource for the firm in the course of internationalisation (Johanson & Vahlne 2009; Hutchinson & Quinn 2012; Altinay et al. 2015). Experience and knowledge, either within or externally accessed, allow a firm to span psychic distance. Therefore, because the internationalisation process is closely connected to individuals' experience, born globals are often firms who have access to prior knowledge, allowing them to overcome the obstacles and risks illustrated in the Uppsala model (Johanson & Vahlne 2009). Therefore, whether an enterprise internationalises through specific stages or as a born global firm, learning and experience act as an important knowledge-based resource, underlying the development of both operational and dynamic capabilities. This approach to internationalisation mirrors key themes highlighted by the literature on brand development. Table 3.4 provides a summary of key literature related to internationalisation. The intersection of brand development and internationalisation in relation to DFEs is discussed in the following section.

**Table 3.4 Summary of Key Literature on Internationalisation**

<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
<b>SME Internationalisation</b>	Fillis (2001)	Creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and marketing critical for SME internationalisation.
	Hutchinson et al. (2006) Hutchinson & Quinn (2012)	Characteristics of international SME retailers: strong brand image and identity, niche, vertical integration from manufacturing to retailing.
<b>Uppsala Model</b>	Johanson & Vahlne (1977, 2009)	Revision of Uppsala model (incremental internationalisation) based on the importance of the network, and the concept of outsidership, rather than psychic distance, as a barrier to internationalisation.
	Forsgren (2002)	Applies a broader concept of organisational learning and knowledge to the Uppsala Model, emphasising experiential learning.
	Casillas et al. (2010)	Internationalisation is a process of learning; knowledge in individuals, organisational and supra-organisational levels; prior knowledge is combined with unlearning and exploration.

**Table 3.4 Summary of Key Literature on Internationalisation**

<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
<b>Born Global</b>	Bell et al. (2003)	Recognises that there are multiple pathways to internationalisation, including 'traditional', 'born global' and 'born-again' global.
	Knight et al. (2004)	Born globals exhibit marketing capabilities, emphasising customer focus, marketing competence, product quality and differentiation.
	Bell et al. (2004)	Compares the motivations, patterns, pace, methods of distribution, and subsequent internationalisation behaviour of 'knowledge-intensive' versus 'traditional' firms.
	Knight & Cavusgil (2004) Cavusgil & Knight (2015)	Born globals defined as young firms with integration of marketing, entrepreneurial orientation and capabilities for exporting.
	Brennan & Garvey (2009)	Links 'born global' theory to knowledge, which influences the pathway and pace of internationalisation behaviour.
<b>Internationalisation, Entrepreneurship &amp; Networking Capabilities</b>	McDougall & Oviatt (2000) Jantunen et al. (2005)	Intersection of internationalisation and entrepreneurship.
	Hadley & Wilson (2003)	Network model linked to organisational learning and experiential knowledge.
	Mort & Weerawardena (2006)	Connection of international entrepreneurship (born globals) to the marketing concept within SMEs. Networking capabilities for identification and exploitation of opportunities, knowledge creation and product development.
<b>Dynamic Capabilities</b>	Eisenhardt & Martin (2000)	Dynamic capabilities are routines, such as product development, strategic decision-making and relationship development, which are connected to experiential learning.
	Teece (2007, 2012)	Microfoundations of dynamic capabilities: distinct skills, processes, procedures, organisational structure, rules for decision-making and disciplines. Enterprises that possess dynamic capabilities are entrepreneurial because they adapt to and shape their environment through innovation and collaboration.
	Newey & Zahra (2009) Zahra et al. (2006)	Dynamic capabilities are the ability to reconfigure resources and routines, and are developed because of network integration activities, competitive surveying abilities and market environmental change.
	Zollo & Winter (2002) Sapienza et al. (2006) Yalcinkaya et al. (2007) Pandza & Thorpe (2009) Prange & Verdier (2011)	Importance of creative search, strategic sense-making, exploration and exploitation capabilities within dynamic capabilities, and their connection to internationalisation, product innovation and marketing capabilities.

### 3.5 Intersecting Themes

Much of the research on internationalisation fails to incorporate brand development theories (Spence & Essoussi 2010). But within the study of fashion management, brand development and internationalisation intersect. For established fashion retailers, 'ingredients' of internationalisation success include developing a global advertising strategy, focused product development and controlled distribution via flagship retail locations (Moore et al. 2000). As a rare connection of brand and internationalisation processes, Hutchinson et al. (2006) cites the lack of 'brand control' as one of the main barriers to successful internationalisation, in addition to financial commitment, complexity of international markets, market information and management resources. Placing importance on protecting brand image in foreign markets, retailers maintain exclusivity through organic growth within flagship stores or in-store concessions (ibid.). However, this approach to internationalisation requires an extensive financial commitment not available to entrepreneurial DFEs.

Hutchinson et al. (2006) calls for research in relation to the connection between branding and internationalisation of SMEs, in addition to exploring the importance of the owner/manager/entrepreneur in the decision-making processes of the firm. Driven by the vision and network relationships of the entrepreneurial founder, SMEs are able to triumph over challenges using strategies of differentiation (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Lloyd-Reason & Mughan 2002; Hutchinson et al. 2006; O'Dwyer et al. 2009; Altinay & Wang 2011). For the DFE, the development of relationships within the network ties the firm, to some extent, to the other party. Each member of the relationship shares responsibility for their mutual future benefit and growth. As the relationship evolves they may exercise varying degrees of power over each other as control mechanisms shift (Weitz & Jap 1995; Cox 1999; Johanson & Vahlne 2009), possibly negatively constraining activities (Gulati et al. 2000; Gander & Rieple 2002; Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Tyler et al. 2006). Success is dependent upon the firm's establishment in the relevant networks because as an 'insider', 'it is to a large extent via relationships that firms learn, and build trust and commitment — the essential elements of the internationalisation process' (Johanson & Vahlne 2009: 1415). For a firm to succeed internationally in the fashion retail sector, they must possess a compelling brand narrative that can be consistently

expressed across international borders, the distribution strategy must place emphasis on fit with brand positioning and maintain control and/or exclusivity over the supply chain, and the retail operations must be representative of the brand imagery (Wigley & Moore 2007).

As a knowledge-based resource for the enterprise, brands are created through the action and interaction of the firm within its network, in the pursuit of a competitive advantage (Moore et al. 2000; Wood 2000; Brun & Castelli 2003; Ghodeswar 2008; Spence & Essoussi 2010). Similarly, a firm's resources, including knowledge-based resources in addition to other core competencies, are created, modified and enhanced through dynamic capabilities that provide unique points of differentiation in the pursuit of a competitive advantage during the day-to-day activities of the firm, such as internationalisation (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Teece 2007, 2012; Tynan et al. 2010; Caniato et al. 2013). The essence of competitive advantage within the industry, 'rests on distinctive processes, shaped by the firm's asset positions and the evolutionary paths followed' (Lawson & Samson 2001: 379). Competitive advantage is measured through revenue, profit, added value or market share (Wood 2000). Despite these connections, the two research fields of brand development and internationalisation remain separate.

With the recognition of knowledge as a key resource in the development of operational and dynamic capabilities, innovation and creativity are increasingly viewed as essential for competitiveness and internationalisation (Lawson & Samson 2001; Ind & Watt 2005; Borch & Madsen 2007; Ellonen et al. 2011). Innovation capability is defined as 'the ability to continuously transform knowledge and ideas into new products, processes and systems for the benefit of the firm and its stakeholders' (Lawson & Samson 2001: 384). In comparison to larger firms, the innovation of smaller firms is born out of their limited resources, lack of vast brand extensions into other product categories, and flexibility in exploiting opportunities rather than operating at high levels of competitive efficiency (Crane 1997; Ind & Watt 2005; Campaniaris et al. 2011). Within the fashion industry, innovation is not about engineering considerations or technological advancements, but intangible elements such as aesthetics, imagination, taste and creativity (Bianchi & Bortolotti 1996; Malem 2008). Innovation is connected to structural product changes, as when designers reflect new cultural influences in

product designs; production process innovations, as when DFEs exploit the supply chain and technology, developing their own unique approach to the production process; new product uses, as when designers reinterpret and reintroduce designs for new seasons and/or into new markets; and new material innovations, as when DFEs source and develop new textile materials (Bianchi & Bortolotti 1996; Malem 2008). All of these are rooted in the capabilities of the enterprise (Collis 1994; Zahra et al. 1999; Luo 2000; Yalcinkaya et al. 2007; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Caniato et al. 2013; Gyrd-Jones & Kornum 2013).

Innovation is also defined as the brand's ability to evolve, as it is the brand that is the essential product produced in connection with consumer equity (Merrilees 2007; Power & Hauge 2008). Thus, the infusion of meaning is a goal of branding, where marketing and advertising are not supportive functions but the principle purpose of the firm (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004). Innovation and creativity require constraints to flourish, and brands provide these essential boundaries that create consistency in product development and internationalisation decision-making (Ind & Watt 2005).

The development of a brand based in core-values establishes a 'unifying common thread' which influences 'continuity, consistency and credibility' for the organisation (Urde 2003: 1035-6). The centrality of the brand to DFEs means that the 'competitive advantage for firms is to be found primarily in the creation and exploitation of fashion and design knowledge that is embedded in various types of marketable' activities, (Jansson & Power 2010: 890-1). A differentiated marketing approach for each brand is now crucial for their survival, illustrating the central role brand development plays within a firm (Atwal & Williams 2009).

Because of globalisation and the networked relationships entrepreneurial DFEs form within the global fashion industry, they provide an ideal case for exploring the intersection of brand development and internationalisation. Their business models, relationships, individual skills and approach to innovation create the unique core competencies for the organisation. This section explored these corresponding themes within the literature, highlighting the gap between brand development and internationalisation research. The next section draws conclusions based on the review

of the literature, and provides a justification for the research project, as well as a series of research questions.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents understanding about the existing literature related to brand development and internationalisation, highlighting intersecting themes that emerged during the course of data gathering and analysis in constant comparison to the literature.

Beginning with the literature on brand development, both organisational and consumer behaviour models of branding were explained. From an organisational perspective, there remains a lack of research into how entrepreneurial companies develop brands. The new paradigm of marketing argues that brands are co-created through action and interaction, and the focal point of the firm is to identify consumer needs and fulfil them. While literature relating to co-creation is a growing field in connection to the fact that co-creation *should be* addressed, there remains a lack of understanding about *how to* explore the process of co-creation (Payne et al. 2008). Furthermore, there remains a lack of evidence into how firms, in this context, entrepreneurial DFEs, react to, manage or encourage the process of co-creation during the development of their products, services and companies. What remains clear, is that once created, the brand is a knowledge-based resource for the firm that provides a competitive advantage.

In relation to internationalisation, a consistent brand is a requirement for successful internationalisation activity whether developed through a staged process, network model or as a born global enterprise. However, there is an identifiable gap in the research that explores the internationalisation behaviour of entrepreneurial fashion companies. The process of internationalisation for DFEs operating within the global fashion system has yet to be understood. While, on the surface, these companies can be described as 'born global' (Knight & Cavusgil 2004), few studies have attempted to illustrate the processes by which fashion design firms achieve international success in spite of their limited resources. Diverging from stage models, which assume that firms are well established in their domestic markets prior to internationalisation, this research extends understanding of what it means to be a born global firm, identifying companies that are ushering in a new era of fashion commerce (Bell et al. 2004; Johanson & Vahlne 2009; Amed 2016a).

Although not expressly stated previously in the literature, the main intersecting point is that the brand is a knowledge-based resource that provides a competitive advantage for the firm, and is therefore related to the theoretical concept of dynamic capabilities — the ability of the firm to create, modify and leverage its resources and capabilities — in the pursuit of internationalisation (Moore et al. 2000; Wood 2000; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Teece 2007, 2012; Brun & Castelli 2008; Ghodeswar 2008; Jansson & Power 2010; Spence & Essoussi 2010; Tynan et al. 2010; Caniato et al. 2013). Both the concept of dynamic capabilities and co-creation emerged during the research as a way of understanding the connection between brand development and internationalisation processes. The understanding derived from the literature review provides the foundation for a series of research questions related to the aim and objectives of the project:

1. How is the DFE brand identity developed internally within the organisation, as well as externally through co-creation experiences?
2. What are the characteristics of DFE internationalisation behaviour?
3. How are the processes of brand development and internationalisation related to each other and embedded in the capabilities of the DFE?

The theories and concepts discussed in this chapter relating to brand development, internationalisation, and the DFE collectively work together to provide fragments of understanding about the birth and creation of these companies. The lack of research exploring the development of entrepreneurial DFEs provides the initial justification for this research project. While theoretically it can be argued that there is a link between the designer-founder and the brand identity, empirically this is yet to be demonstrated. Additionally, while there are several calls in the research to look at internationalisation from the holistic perspective of the firm, there remains a lack of research that has followed through with this perspective. Given the influence of the brand in relation to decision-making processes of the firm, it is surprising that there remains a disconnect between the two within the literature. Indeed, while sources highlight the importance of decision-making in relation to either brand or internationalisation, each within separate instances, few are able to make the connection between brand development and internationalisation activities.



Therefore, because fashion firms are such pronounced examples of the power of brands, which function as a significant point of differentiation, and internationalisation activities are closely related to the dynamic capabilities of entrepreneurial firms, the DFE represents an exemplary case for studying the intersection of branding and internationalisation activities of an organisation functioning within a global market. Thus, the exploratory nature of this research takes a holistic view of the firm, examining the practice of DFEs to discover the internationalisation and brand capabilities of these firms, uncovering possible connections between the two. Because the purpose of this research is to develop a theoretical framework of the development of these firms, a grounded theory methodological approach is used. The methodology is discussed in the following chapter.



## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter acts as fulcrum within the research project providing the overall methodological approach and details of the individual methods used for data gathering and analysis, connecting the results of this study to the literature review previously discussed. This is an exploratory study to determine the connection of brand development and internationalisation within a substantive area. This research explores the entrepreneurial development of designer fashion enterprises (DFEs) based within two major fashion capitals, London and New York. Due to the nature of the fashion industry and the private holdings of the enterprises under study, the potential participant population is only able to be estimated to a limited degree. In addition, the review of the literature established a significant lack of research on entrepreneurial DFEs. For these reasons, a grounded theory methodology was chosen (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

This chapter begins with a discussion of the methodological approaches considered during the proposal development period of this study. Following this, the justification for the use of grounded theory is explained in the proceeding sections, beginning with an overview of the methodology and three main approaches considered: Glaser's classic grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory, and Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory. Each of these were explored prior to beginning data collection and analysis. The next two sections provide an overview of grounded theory and explain the philosophical approach to the research in connection with the considered approaches

to the methodology. Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach to grounded theory was determined to be the most appropriate fit given the philosophical assumptions and nature of the research question. Then, the essential components of grounded theory and their application are discussed, followed by sections defining the research participant group.

This chapter explains and justifies the pragmatic approach to the situation under study for which there is lacking significant theoretical explanations of correlations between the internationalisation and brand development process of entrepreneurial creative companies, such as DFEs. This chapter concludes with a brief summary derived from the use of grounded theory as the methodological approach to this research project.

#### **4.2 Considered Approaches to the Research**

Several methodological approaches to the study were considered. Because the research question involves exploration of phenomena currently existing in the industry for which there is lacking previous research or exact population data, an exclusively quantitative study was rejected.

Within the menu of options it was important to choose a methodology that provided an in-depth understanding of the research participants, was compatible with the research topic and flexible in the process of field work (Saunders et al. 2009; Creswell 2013). These ideas set the foundation for choosing a methodology which would inform the overall design of the study (Birks & Mills 2011). While the methodology 'provides a sense of vision' or direction for the research, the methods 'furnish the means for bringing that vision into reality' (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 8). Building from this, a number of methodologies were considered to determine suitable procedures for data collection and analysis, including case study, a general qualitative approach (qualitative data analysis), grounded theory, and mixed methods (qualitative in-depth interviews and quantitative surveys).

Overall, the majority of the methodologies provided unnecessary limitations. Many of the possible approaches were generally descriptive and narrowly focused methodologies that centred on preconceived areas of the research participant's lives and situations that may or may not be relevant to the field. For example, despite providing an in-depth analysis, a case study approach would greatly limit the potential number of participants, thus limiting the generalisability of the research phenomenon across the

population of entrepreneurial designers working in London and New York. Additionally, qualitative data analysis and mixed methods approaches, while providing for diversity of methods, lacked the comprehensively open perspective to the research, potentially limiting the theoretical value.

Grounded theory is a challenging and meticulous methodology dedicated to the generation of theory across a substantive area and the explanation of a phenomenon most important to the research participants, which is discovered in the field during data collection (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1994; Suddaby 2006). This methodology was chosen because the research question is based in the contemporary context of what is currently happening in the fashion industry. Within grounded theory, data is generated and/or collected from the initiation of the research project, and the overall methodological approach is focused on discovery not verification, explanation not description and emergence rather than forcing via deduction or application of existing theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). This lifts the research from description to abstracted theoretical development.

Indeed, given that the focus of this research is to understand how SME fashion design firms use branding capabilities in the pursuit of internationalisation, it is vital to use a methodological approach that moves beyond description, to the discovery and generation of a theory grounded in data (Creswell 2013). Based in the field of sociology, grounded theory has been adapted for use in many areas of inquiry, including business and management research, because of its suitability to management topics, its ability to capture complexity and link well to practice and its underlying support for theorising new areas of concern (Locke 2003). Grounded theory has been cited as well suited to research on organisations (Turner 1983; Martin & Turner 1986; Mehmetoglu & Altinay 2006; O'Reilly et al. 2012), marketing and entrepreneurship (Carson & Coviello 1996; Douglas 2003, 2004a, 2004b) and internationalisation (Altinay 2001; Thai et al. 2012). At its root, grounded theory is a practical method for conducting research.

Because of its comprehensive and rigorous approach, flexibility in data gathering during fieldwork and purpose of theory development, this thesis uses grounded theory methodology, which is a compatible fit with the aim and objectives of the research.

### 4.3 Understanding Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory is most often used within qualitative research studies (Birks & Mills 2011), though, notably, it can be used as a quantitative research methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978; Glaser 2007; Evans 2013). Distinctively, grounded theory is a methods and methodology bundle that must incorporate all of its essential components so as not to be confused with a descriptive, qualitative data analysis study (Suddaby 2006; Glaser 2012). It is a clearly defined, yet flexible and iterative process of data generation, collection and analysis, dedicated to finding a latent pattern of behaviour consistent with developing a theory of practice (Charmaz 2006; Birks & Mills 2011). Its primary objective is to generate theory from a ‘basic social process’ and the underlying problems of research participants (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Most grounded theory studies focus on the generation of a ‘substantive theory’ or a middle-range theory that falls ‘between the “minor working hypotheses” of everyday life and the “all-inclusive” grand theories’ (Glaser & Strauss 1967: loc. 569). Substantive and formal ‘grand’ theories operate along distinct points of generality, which are distinguishable in terms of degree along a spectrum (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Because the nature of this research question deals with a specific group — entrepreneurial DFEs — this thesis seeks to generate a substantive (Strauss & Corbin 1994), or mid-range theory, within a clearly defined field: the processes of internationalisation and brand development within the fashion industry. As briefly mentioned in the introduction, a substantive theory of the resources and capabilities DFEs generate and use in the process of brand development, internationalisation and integration into the global fashion economy is lacking in the current academic literature.

The methodology is ‘a way of thinking about and studying a social reality’ (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 4). The essential components of grounded theory are: coding and categorisation of data, concurrent data generation, collection and analysis; memo writing; theoretical sampling; constant comparative analysis; theoretical sensitivity; identification of a core category; and theoretical integration of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Birks & Mills 2011). This project incorporates all of these criteria to generate a theory explaining the situation, including its potential variation, from the perspective of the core category (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978). Theoretical sensitivity, advanced coding practices,

theoretical saturation of the core category and its subsidiaries, and theoretical integration (i.e. generalisation of the data) raise data analysis beyond qualitative description to a level of abstraction (Birks & Mills 2011).

Often cited as an inductive approach (Charmaz 2006; Locke 2003), grounded theory is actually a process of both inductive and deductive research methods (Glaser 1978; Strauss & Corbin 1998), or an abductive approach to research (Suddaby 2006; Fendt & Sachs 2008). It is inductive in the goal of building theory from slices of data, but deductive through the process of constant comparative analysis, deducing conceptualisations from the data to achieve theoretical saturation (Glaser 1978; Birks & Mills 2011). Strauss and Corbin (1998) observe that induction has been previously exaggerated within the methodology, and that the process of conceptualising data is a deductive process demonstrating that effective grounded theory recognises the interplay between inductive and deductive reasoning (Aminian et al. 2013). This method of consistently transitioning between inductive analysis of data and deductive reasoning is a practice of abduction, generalising and amplifying the theory beyond the data while remaining true to the social situation under study (Suddaby 2006). As a logical process of forming an explanatory hypothesis, abduction is the 'flash of insight' which introduces and generates new conceptual perspectives (Reichertz 2004). The process of theoretical sampling demonstrates this by flexibly exploring variabilities in data collection by following leads illustrated during data analysis (Glaser & Strauss 1967). For example, theoretical sampling directed the research to include designers' support network (PR and sales agents) within the participant group to understand the interaction with fashion industry networks and their influence on brand development.

Because of its flexibility, grounded theory has developed several confusions and misconceptions surrounding the use of the literature review, presentation of data, data analysis techniques and its role within an overall methodological paradigm (Suddaby 2006; Birks & Mills 2011). Regarding the literature review, while Glaser & Strauss's (1967) call to enter the field without preconceived theoretical bias has led some researchers to ignore the literature completely, others now understand that the key is to allow the theoretical framework for the study to emerge from the data and concurrent study with the literature (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Charmaz 2006; Suddaby 2006; Aminian et al.

2013). Grounded theory's commitment to theoretical discovery 'through direct contact with the social world studied coupled with a rejection of priori theorising' does not mean that general guidance cannot be provided by an 'orienting theoretical perspective' throughout the research process (Locke 2003: 34). Indeed, in their original text, Glaser & Strauss (1967) argue that a discovered, grounded theory, will 'tend to combine mostly concepts and hypotheses that have emerged from the data with some existing ones' (loc. 822). This project incorporates the literature not with the purpose of verification of what is already published, but in comparison and concurrent analysis with the data (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Charmaz 2006, Suddaby 2006). This approach is adopted because the research question itself was born out of a general analysis of the literature surrounding fashion brand management and internationalisation, and observation of current business development trends operating within the industry (Aminian et al. 2013).

Secondly, this project does not simply present raw data findings; doing so would indicate a failure during constant comparative analysis to 'lift' the data to a conceptual level, producing findings that are tautological (Glaser 1978; Reichertz 2004; Suddaby 2006). This research uses comparative analysis to produce accurate evidence, empirical generalisation, clearly defined concepts, theory verification and finally, theory generation (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Unlike other research designs, grounded theory requires the collection of data from the beginning of the project, which forms the foundation of the theory through constant comparative analysis of data incident to incident, incident to concept, concept to concept, concept to category, and category to category (Charmaz 2006). In this way, the methodology is an interpretation of both data and theory for which the goal is not voluminous description or verification but the generation of 'a theory that accounts for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved' (Glaser 1978: 93).

Finally, when grounded theory is simplified to only its commonly used data analysis techniques, it has failed to solidify its perspective within an overall methodological paradigm (Suddaby 2006). In other words, as a methodology, grounded theory is not only the use of constant comparative analysis or other methods used individually. The structure of the methodology is created from the incorporation of all of its components (concurrent data collection and analysis, initial coding and categorisation



of data, memo writing and diagrams, theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis, theoretical sensitivity, intermediate coding, core category identification, advanced coding and theoretical integration, theoretical saturation and theory development) iteratively interwoven in order for a grounded theory study to be accurately identified and criticised (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Suddaby 2006). Despite the inclusion of these components, grounded theory remains a set of 'systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories "grounded" in the data', for which there are several approaches (Charmaz 2006: 2).

#### **4.4 Philosophical Assumptions & Approaches to Grounded Theory**

In their seminal presentation of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) encouraged researchers to adapt the methodology to their own uses. While the methodology is ever-evolving, three notable types of grounded theory have emerged. Understanding the various approaches is important because the chosen overall methodological approach effects the use of the methods package (data collection and analysis) and philosophical framework used throughout the study. While there is no 'right or wrong' set of grounded theory approaches, there are significant differences between them (Birks & Mills 2011).

In recent years there has been a progression towards defining the epistemological, ontological and axiological beliefs of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). It is the researcher's ontological beliefs which influence the assumptions made about the way in which the world works and how entities exist (Saunders et al. 2009). This in turn impacts the researcher's epistemological assumptions about the way in which knowledge is created or interpreted (Creswell 2013). Finally, the analyst's individual values, their axiological beliefs, regarding aesthetics, ethics, and social enquiry, impact choices made during the course of research (Saunders et al. 2009). Together, these create an overall paradigm; 'a set of basic beliefs about the nature of reality, the nature of the relationship between researchers and the worlds and subjects they study, and the methods through which knowledge can be achieved', for the research and researcher (Locke 2003: 5). Stemming from this is the vision for where the researcher wants the study to go, or its methodology, which is 'inevitably interwoven with and emerges from the nature of particular disciplines and particular perspectives' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005: 191-192).

Upon reading *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss 1967) there is a notable absence of any defining philosophical perspectives. In fact, Glaser dismissed the applicability of any fixed disciplinary or philosophical positions, including Strauss & Corbin's (1998) symbolic interactionism, 'in his belief that adopting a perspective reduced that broader potential of grounded theory' (Birks & Mills 2011: 5).

Early works lacking explicit philosophical paradigms speaks to the inherent flexibility of grounded theory, leaving the researcher to incorporate the methodology into a process designed to 'fit' with both the researcher and research problem under investigation (ibid.). Despite this, all research approaches have foundational philosophical assumptions that guide the researcher (Creswell 2013). Glaser is often cited as a critical realist operating within the post-positivist paradigm (Suddaby 2006; Birks & Mills 2011; Creswell 2013). However, Charmaz (2006) cites Glaser as operating within the positivist framework, regardless of Glaser & Strauss's (1967) explicit rejection of positivism, the dominant philosophical paradigm of the time.

The original grounded theory methodology introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) left a great deal of room for elasticity and interpretation by the researcher. In addition to initially defining the essential components of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss outline a two-phase coding process that consists of open coding and selective coding. Emphasis in this approach to the methodology consists of the identification of a basic social process and a core variable which is central to that process (Glaser 1978). Open coding is simply 'coding the data in every way possible', which is followed by selective coding where 'the core variable becomes a guide to further data collection and theoretical sampling' (ibid.: 56 & 61). The coding procedures exist prior to constant comparative analysis, which takes place in stages of (1) identifying incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory from memos. Codes are used to identify categories; it is the process of comparing categories and codes that is 'constant comparative analysis' (Glaser & Strauss 1967). It is through the researcher's own theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation that the theory is delineated and divulged thoroughly (Glaser 1978).

Without outlining highly specific techniques Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduce and define the parameters of the methodology, which are used to produce new theory and critique grounded theory studies (Christiansen 2007). It is the definitions of the elements of grounded theory that act as guides for the researcher in conducting a project, while constantly focusing on the research problem. Finally, Glaser (2012) defends that ‘all is data’, maintaining an openness of inquiry which includes the naturally reflective approach to the research through comparative analysis that considers researcher bias, the use of literature in the development of theory, and ‘slices of data’ (interviews, observations, content analysis, documents, anecdotal comparisons and memos) (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

This ‘menu of methods’ approach allows the researcher to theoretically sample in the most workable way possible, understanding that different research phenomenon require variety in data collection because of ‘diverse structural conditions of each group’ under study (for example, differences in schedules, restricted areas, work tempos, personal perspectives and availability of documents) (ibid.: loc. 1117). Consistent with this openness, the interview process consists of the researcher at first taking a largely passive position, whereby they ‘lay a spill’ or ‘introduce an accident’ by beginning interviews with a broad statement that permits participants to talk freely about their most important issues (Glaser 1978; Nathaniel 2008). Following this, after initial coding of categories, the development of questions is aimed at identifying properties to achieve theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Strauss & Corbin (1998) moved to a pragmatic method of abductive verification with their version of grounded theory, placing emphasis on new technological procedures rather than the original comparative methods in the earliest version of the methodology (Charmaz 2006). Indeed, throughout each edition of *Basics of Qualitative Research*, the authors engage with discussions of the methodology, positioning it within current research concerns and considerations, addressing criticisms, and incorporating technological advances to fit with its application (see Strauss & Corbin 1990, 1998; Corbin & Strauss 2008). Strauss & Corbin (1998) begin their approach to the research process by outlining multiple levels of questions, including abstract, theoretical, substantive and mundane. In contrast to Charmaz (2006), while they don’t list example

questions per se, they outline for the analyst what constitutes a 'good question', which they define as being directed by relevant knowledge and sensitivity of the researcher, implying an investigatory stance to determine 'what is missing' during the process of an interview (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

In their pragmatic qualitative framework, Strauss and Corbin introduced the three phase coding process which begins with open coding, followed by axial coding, and finally selective coding. Derived from the original grounded theory, open coding is the process of identifying concepts and their properties directly in the data (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Axial coding is the transitional phase of coding where 'coding occurs on the axis of a category' by relating categories and their subcategories while linking them 'at the level of properties and dimensions' (ibid.: 123). It is during the third phase, selective coding, when research findings take the form of theory, through the process of 'integrating and refining categories' (ibid.: 143). Finally, within analysis, they describe specific procedures for understanding data, including the use of a coding paradigm (Strauss & Corbin 1994), comparison of two or more phenomenon (for example, comparing incident to researcher experience or academic literature), and the 'red flag' method (obtaining a level of objectivity by not accepting interview responses at 'face value') (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Thus their distinctive methods produce a slightly more structured, defined and technical approach to grounded theory analysis, while maintaining the methodology's flexibility and rigour.

Over time, there has been a movement away from a positivist orientation toward a more interpretative, postmodern and criticalist approach to practice and theorising, leading to a blurring of genres, or interbreeding, of paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Corbin and Strauss (2008) embrace this paradigmatic convergence in their 3rd edition with Corbin explaining her personal movement toward a more constructivist framework, like that of Charmaz (2006), noting that their approach to the methodology is still significantly influenced by the pragmatist philosophy of knowledge and symbolic interactionism.

In opposition to Corbin's personal shift (Corbin & Strauss 2008: loc. 454) to the idea that 'concepts and theories are constructed by researchers out of stories that are constructed by research participants', the researcher is not creating the story that the

research participants tell, rather they are telling the story through levels of abstraction. There is a need to maintain a sense of impartiality in the approach to the research question, data and analysis to understand phenomenon not through researcher bias but through the experiences of those impacted by the phenomena under study, verifying its existence in the field. While constructivism and other philosophical frameworks are valid perspectives suited to specific research questions, placing too much emphasis on the researcher's paradigm can in itself bias the research.

#### **4.5 Justification for Straussian Grounded Theory**

After review of the various literature on the philosophical paradigms of qualitative research and grounded theory in particular, this research question aligns with the interpretivist framework of Strauss and Corbin (1998) recognising their relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology via the understanding that knowledge is created through action and interaction, reflecting a pragmatist and symbolic interactionist approach to research (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Aldiabat & Le Navenec 2011; Levers 2013). This project is an appropriate fit with the symbolic interactionist and pragmatic position because this research seeks to determine how entrepreneurial DFEs advance through the process of internationalisation. The global fashion industry is inherently a dynamic and meaning-laden world in which social interaction within and among the fashion network is very important. Therefore, in unison with symbolic interactionist and pragmatic assumptions (Aldiabat & Le Navenec 2011), this research is conscious of the fact that entrepreneurial designer-founders act and react towards things based on meanings, and these meanings arise from the actions and interactions of other people and the environment, which is a dynamic process.

Because of this, the researcher is not a completely subjective and active participant in data generation with participants, nor are they a completely objective instrument of data collection from participants. While the approach to this research is to impartially seek out what is happening in the world of the research participants (Strauss & Corbin 1994; Aminian et al. 2013), there is also the recognition that part of data collection includes generation of information created in the process of interaction with participants (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Corbin & Strauss 2008). This approach to objectivity stems from a strategy to gain multiple perspectives and seek out alternative viewpoints. In this

sense, the perspective on objectivity is very much related to the pragmatic approach of grounded theory, whereby the researcher obtains multiple perspectives through theoretical sampling and sensitivity, building variation into the analytical schemes the research produces (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Birks & Mills 2011). Therefore, it is possible to be both pragmatic and reflective as a researcher, maintaining a sense of impartiality with the research question.

Straussian grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990, 1998) evolved from Glaser and Strauss' (1967) original text, is the methodology chosen for this study because it is both rigorous and flexible while providing the research project structure. Based in classic grounded theory's 'openness of inquiry', Strauss & Corbin's (1998) approach provides room for leads to be followed, ideas to emerge, and variation in cross-comparing a variety of data suitable for the individual situation, clearly defining guidelines and strategies for maximising methods to successfully address the research problem.

The methodology finds strength in its naturally interpretative framework and self-reflective perspective of incorporating researcher bias via the activity of writing memos, while allowing the researcher to approach coding and constant comparative analysis from a perspective best suited to the research problem. Strauss and Corbin's approach balances the subjectivity of the researcher with the objective analysis of the data through clearly defined methods such as constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling. Objectivity of the researcher needs to be maintained so that the context in which something is expressed is examined. However, it is recognised that the context is interpreted through symbolic interaction (Aldiabat & Le Navenec 2011). In the case of this project, this requires interpreting and maintaining the true intent of the research participants (designers and their support network of employees, PR agents, showroom managers and sales agents). This is balanced against the intent and goals of the research, which in turn influences the interpretation of the data (Corbin & Strauss 1990).

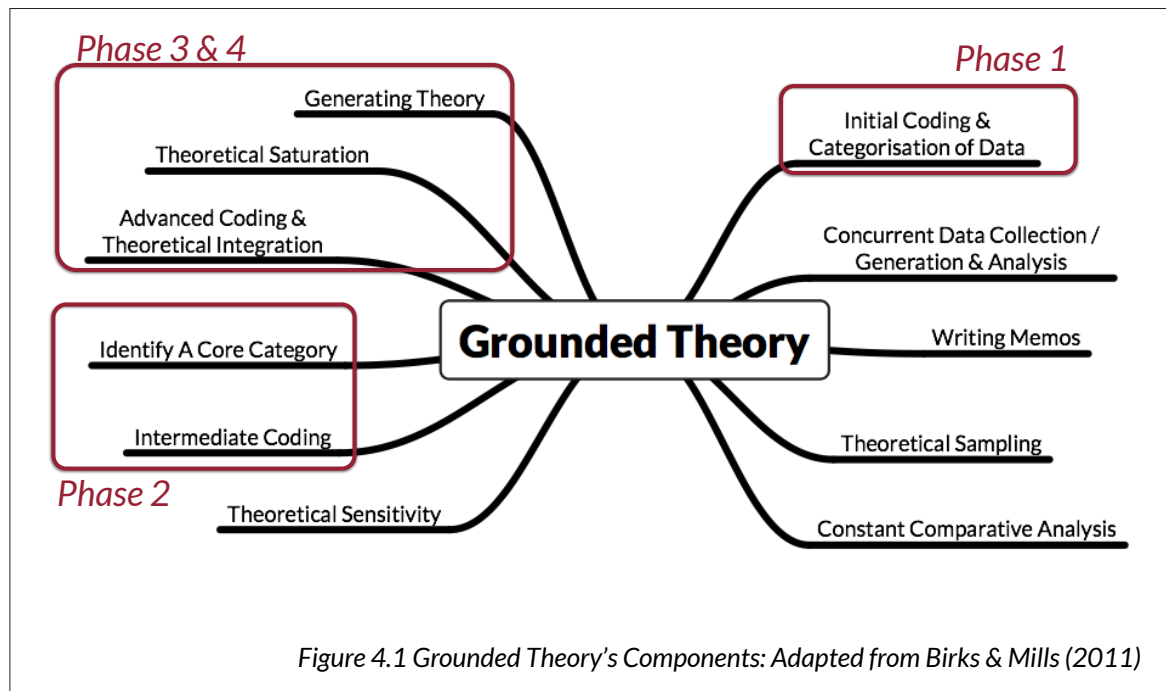
Additionally, Strauss and Corbin's texts actively engages with and address criticisms of their approach, continually developing the methodology to utilise advances in technology (the use of computer software, audio recordings, etc.) and increased understanding (ontological and epistemological frameworks) since its creation over 40 years ago. This is in comparison to Glaser (2012) who rejects the use of audio recordings,

transcriptions, and data analysis software for original methods of fieldnotes and analog analysis of data, maintaining that the methodology must be applied in the same manner in which it was created. Classic grounded theory's lack of evolution and engagement with other influences leave the methodology stagnant, limiting and rigid when it was originally designed to be exactly the opposite: active, open and adaptable.

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach remains pragmatic and open in recognising new methods for data analysis and considers evolutions in the creation of knowledge, incorporating relevant assumptions into the continued development of grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) and later Corbin and Strauss (2008) maintain that their advances in the methodology are not designed to be prescriptive or directive, but emphasise that the procedures and techniques explained in their texts are tools for use in the dynamic and fluid nature of qualitative analysis. When applicable, these procedures and techniques can be used to help facilitate the progression of the research through all of the essential components (Urquhart 2012).

#### **4.6 Grounded Theory's Components**

Grounded theory operates as both a methodology and methods package incorporating all of its elements throughout the research (Figure 4.1) (Birks & Mills 2011; Suddaby 2006; Walker & Myrick 2006). This section begins by providing an overview of the concurrent data collection and analysis process, which is broken down in a step-by-step sequence of phases as an approachable mechanism for explaining the overall research process. Although not perfectly sequential and linear, this project began with the initial coding and categorisation of data in Phase I, intermediate coding and the identification of a core category within Phase II, and theoretical integration and saturation in Phases III and IV, completing with the generation of a theory. Other elements essential to grounded theory, such as concurrent data collection, generation and analysis; memo writing; theoretical sampling; constant comparative analysis; and theoretical sensitivity were incorporated continuously throughout the entire project, in an iterative approach. Each of these methods are tools and techniques used to assist in the procedural analysis of the data; they did not drive or direct the research process (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The evolution of the research progressed by following leads as they emerged. Overall, the process of data gathering and analysis was a back-and-forth



approach to uncover new concepts which were explored in-depth with each re-entry into the field.

Within this project, data collection began in the early stages of research after defining the aims and objectives. Theoretical sampling directed data gathering, incorporating the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews, observation and document analysis. Data was compared in a continuous process, examining individual incidents and keywords, the concepts they generated and overarching categories, which informed the creation of the theoretical framework. This section discusses the use and application of each of the grounded theory components implemented throughout the project.

Each of the grounded theory components is explained and examples are provided for how they were applied in the research. The process of initial coding and categorisation of data is discussed, followed by the use of memos and diagrams and theoretical sampling. The next sections include the use of constant comparative analysis, theoretical sensitivity, intermediate coding and identification of the core category. The development of the theoretical framework is described through advanced coding and theoretical integration, theoretical saturation, and theory development.



#### 4.6.1 Concurrent Data Collection, Generation & Analysis

Within grounded theory, data collection and analysis are interrelated (Corbin & Strauss 1990). Ideally, the concurrent data collection, generation and analysis procedure can be applied — in the case of using in-depth interviews — as conducting an interview, analysis of that interview, followed by a return to the field for the next interview, in a continuous process until reaching the point of theoretical saturation. However, this project was organised to fit with the nature of the fashion industry, which operates under a formalised schedule bookended by bi-annual fashion weeks. This approach was also used to balance the feasibility of conducting research on brief research trips to New York with data gathering in London. Therefore, conducting research in an interview-analysis-interview approach was not feasible because of the ebb and flow of participant workload in creating the collections for each season. Data gathering using in-depth interviews was broken into three phases conducted at specific periods of the year — just following fashion week — to increase the opportunity to include as many potential participants as possible before they were too involved in the development of next season's collection. Therefore, within this project, the concurrent data collection, generation and analysis was facilitated through a broader approach in combination with designated phases of research that correlated with optimum periods within the fashion industry schedule. This was done to ensure maximum opportunity to diversify the sample set as a means of infusing the research with variation through theoretical sampling. In total, four phases of research were used to systematically facilitate data gathering and analysis, balancing both the flexible process of grounded theory and the schedule of the fashion industry.

Phase I operated as a pilot of the initial field questions and began with theoretical sampling of potential participants. This phase consisted of four semi-structured in-depth interviews with three participants who established their womenswear labels in either London or New York. The participants for this phase of the research were selected from a network of contacts who could help make connections with womenswear designers who recently started a fashion label and were selling internationally. The identified designers, four in total, were contacted via email and invited to participate in a one-hour interview (see A.3 on page 365). Due to scheduling conflicts, one designer was unable to participate. The interview consisted of a three-stage process in which the participants

were first introduced to the general subject area of the research project (growth and development of fashion labels) and asked to review an information sheet about the project and sign a consent form electronically via an iPad. A copy of the information sheet and consent form (see A.1 on page 363 and A.2 on page 364) was emailed to the participants after the interview for their records. The identity of the participants was anonymised in the transcriptions of the interviews so that they would be able to talk freely about their experiences during the course of the interview (see 4.7.2 on page 103).

After obtaining consent, the semi-structured interview was conducted as a conversation that explored the participant's own experiences and activities in the course of creating their firms (Table 4.1). At the conclusion of the interview, designers were asked to complete a survey (via iPad app *Quick Tap Survey*) which collected demographic information and quantitative details about the firm (number of years in business, annual turnover, number of employees, etc.) (see A.5 on page 368). All the interviews in this phase of the research were conducted in-person. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and imported into qualitative analysis software. Immediately after each interview, a memo was written about the general impressions and memorable ideas expressed during the conversation. Open coding of the data incorporated line-by-line coding and the use of in-vivo codes, highlighting significant phrases and keywords (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Memos were also written throughout analysis. Broad themes were identified during analysis. By the conclusion of Phase I, 1,100 codes were produced and grouped into over-arching categories. This research phase acted as a test of the initial field guide, providing further focus to the semi-structured question list.

Research conducted during Phase II was key to discovering the majority of the codes, categories, and properties. In preparation for this phase a potential participant database was created of those eligible to take part in the study (see 4.7.1 on page 99). The eligible firms were contacted in the weeks following New York and London Fashion Week in September 2014. Interviews with New York participants were scheduled to take place in the first and third weeks of October 2014, immediately following the hectic schedule of fashion week and prior to the next collection development and production period. In total, ten New York interviews were conducted with eight DFEs (one brand included an interview with both its marketing director and also its sales director) and one

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**Table 4.1 Interview Questions**

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**Phase I:** *These questions were a launching point for the conversation. Follow up questions were used throughout the interview to explore concepts introduced by the participants.*

- Tell me the story of how the company was started.
- How would you describe the company's identity or story? How has it evolved?
- How do you share the story? What methods do you use?
- What is it about this brand that no one else is doing? What makes it unique?
- Tell me about the collection lifecycle.
- Tell me about the sales and distribution process - what is that like? Do you source internationally or sell internationally?
- What is the ultimate vision or goal for this company?

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**Phase II:** *For new participants, some of the Phase I questions were used as well. Not all of these questions were used in every interview, depending on time and the discussion that took place.*

- Is there any news that you'd like to share? (for repeat participants)
- What are the major milestones that the company has evolved through?
- What are some of the things that you've done to help your company to grow and develop? What's worked? What hasn't? Why?
- What are the things that make you able to grow?
- How do you know when you're ready to take the next step?
- Have you ever been in a position where you felt like the company's development or growth was out of control? When? What was it like?
- Are you a brand? At what point did the label become a 'brand'?
- What is it about this brand that no one else is doing? What makes it unique?
- Do you want the brand to be consistently viewed as representative of particular elements? How do you control that when distribution is so diverse?
- What's your next major step in the development of your company? Immediate & long-term goals? What resources do you need to achieve them?
- What do the collections & individual garments say about the designer? What do you want them to say? How does it change/evolve? What stays the same?
- Social Media: Why is it so important? What do you use it for? What do you say? How do you say it? Is there a connection between social media consumers and financial success? Or is it just a form of PR/awareness or editorial success? Is it a community of people interacting with each other or do they just interact with the brand?
- The fashion community is often viewed as very 'cut-throat' but it's also so collaborative. What makes this brand 'good enough' to be a part of the community?
- How important are the relationships that the company develops with collaborators? Can you give me an example of when a relationship made a big difference?
- What are some of the stages of growth the company goes through?
- What is a branding strategy? What are some of the branding strategies that you incorporate in your business?

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**Phase III:** *For new participants, some of the Phase I & Phase II questions were used as well. Not all of these questions were used in every interview, depending on time and the discussion that took place.*

**Primary Questions:**

- How does the company's identity impact the strategies and decision-making processes of the firm?
  - How important is it to be defined by where you create the product or where it's produced? To what extent does that influence and impact the identity of the company?
  - To what extent are the buyers, editors, industry, and network influential in defining what the brand is? And ultimately opening up or limiting access to consumers?
  - How important it is to have a girl/woman? Does the girl/woman describe the consumer or muse or both? or reflect the brand?
  - Is being commercial, wearable, desirable in opposition to being creative, conceptual, editorial worthy?
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**Table 4.1 Interview Questions**


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**Phase III (cont.) Secondary Questions:**

- At what point did the identity of the company begin to solidify? Did anything change at that point? Such as the approach to thinking about the company?
  - How important are imagery and visuals for communicating?
  - When you mention a brand that you admire to what extent does their business model or aesthetic influence the decisions you make?
  - What's a better strategy: focusing on creating great product, or creating an image in the industry and market? Should you focus on sales or PR? One more than the other or both equally?
  - When is it a good idea to expand into other product categories?
  - How would you describe the approach to decision-making? Has it changed over time?
- 

**Support Agent: Sales, PR, Showroom:** *These questions were a launching point for the conversation. Follow up questions were used throughout the interview to explore concepts introduced by the participants.*

- Please tell me how and why you started your company?
  - How many clients do you have?
  - How would you describe the growth of your company?
  - What are your goals?
  - What makes you unique?
  - Do you support designers branding and growth efforts? How?
  - When you're bringing on a new designer and discussing your plan with them, what are those conversations like? Do you notice things about their brand that maybe they don't notice? Do you point it out to them?
  - Do you notice things about their growth and distribution that maybe they don't notice? Do you point it out to them?
  - Most important part of your job?
- 

PR agent. Whenever possible, the interviews were conducted in person; one interview was conducted via Skype. The seven London interviews were conducted throughout November and early December 2014. Again, the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and coded. Memos were written as ideas emerged. At the conclusion of Phase II, 2,500 codes were produced which were consolidated into a final 1,500 codes, grouped into 35 initial categories.

Phase III was somewhat of a repeat of Phase II, and included participants from Phase II and additional participants as necessary. However, Phase III was directed at verification and refinement of the emerging theory versus the initial discovery of it. Prior to Phase III, contextual observation was conducted at New York, London and Paris fashion weeks in February and March 2015. New York interviews from Phase III included seven fashion labels and one support organisation. London interviews from Phase III included six fashion labels and two support organisations. Phase III also included the use of a qualitative survey and feedback activities exploring their development timeline, network of relationships and collection lifecycle activities.

At the conclusion of the interview portions of the research a total of 38 interviews were conducted involving nine fashion labels and two support organisations from New York, and 11 fashion labels from London with an additional two support organisations (Table 4.2). A total of 20 DFEs and four support organisations were included in the study (Table 4.3). All of the interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed using constant comparative analysis with the assistance of *Atlas.ti* software. Both the demographic survey and the qualitative survey conducted throughout the research process included structured questions to gather data for classification purposes. Because the overall process is working towards theoretical saturation, the option existed to alter data collection as necessary, including interviewing more or less people than originally anticipated and as needed, or asking questions in different ways to see if any new information surfaced.

Incorporating photographers into the study was considered. After exploring the opportunity, one email question-and-answer session with a photographer was excluded from the final data analysis as the individual did not respond to requests for a further discussion via phone and to sign the consent form. No further photographers were included in the study as reflection upon the Q&A did not provide any new and relevant information. It was decided that including photographers would unnecessarily expand the participant pool and scope of the study to include stylists, set designers, makeup artists, hair stylists and other contracted employees that perform often one-time hired tasks. These types of contracted services are not as involved in brand building and management decision-making in comparison to externally contracted PR and sales agents. For this reason they were considered beyond the scope of analysis for the purpose of this study.

Phase IV operated as a period of constant comparative analysis of a larger group of womenswear design firms to help generalise the theory using readily available sources such as social media, websites and press. Phase IV was conducted simultaneously with continued constant comparative analysis of the codes, categories, memos and write-up of the first three phases of research. This final phase of the research served as a means to verify existing concepts and for the theoretical saturation of sub-categories, properties and dimensions using publicly available information. To expand the database of firms,

Table 4.2 Length of Interviews

Interview	Brand	Participant(s)	Location	Research Phase	Recorded Length
1	1	1	New York	Phase I	0h 35m 8s
2	2	2	London	Phase I	0h 45m 13s
3	3	3	London	Phase I	1h 22m 27s
4	2	2	London	Phase I	0h 59m 14s
5	4	4	New York	Phase II	0h 56m 27s
6	5	5	New York	Phase II	0h 57m 22s
7	6	6	New York	Phase II	1h 7m 22s
8	7	7	New York	Phase II	0h 48m 14s
9	1	1	New York	Phase II	1h 1m 45s
10	4	8	New York	Phase II	0h 59m 38s
11	8	9	New York	Phase II	0h 58m 54s
12	9	10	New York	Phase II	0h 38m 30s
13	10	11	New York	Phase II	0h 25m 10s
14	11	12	New York	Phase II	0h 46m 11s
15	12	13	London	Phase II	1h 22m 25s
16	13	14	London	Phase II	0h 51m 43s
17	14	15	London	Phase II	0h 52m 42s
18	15	16 & 17	London	Phase II	1h 15m 25s
19	16	18	London	Phase II	0h 43m 29s
20	3	3	London	Phase II	0h 39m 33s
21	17	19	London	Phase II	0h 26m 5s
22	19	21 & 22	London	Phase II	0h 44m 47s
23	20	23	London	Phase III	0h 54m 27s
24	21	24	London	Phase III	1h 18m 17s
25	3	3	London	Phase III	0h 59m 16s
26	19	21 & 22	London	Phase III	1h 10m 20s
27	22	25	London	Phase III	1h 8m 56s
28	4	4	New York	Phase III	1h 0m 30s
29	8	9	New York	Phase III	1h 25m 53s
30	6	6 & 29	New York	Phase III	1h 43m 10s
31	10	11	New York	Phase III	0h 34m 6s
32	1	1	New York	Phase III	1h 8m 49s
33	23	26	New York	Phase III	0h 16m 20s
34	24	27	New York	Phase III	0h 25m 29s
35	5	5	New York	Phase III	1h 39m 57s
36	17	19	London	Phase III	0h 34m 12s
37	15	16 & 17	London	Phase III	0h 36m 33s
38	25	28	London	Phase III	0h 57m 42s
<i>Note: The total meeting time ranged from 30 minutes to two-hours. The discussion portion of the interviews (not including activities, surveys, setup and closing) were recorded within the timeframe provided.</i>					
				Average	0h 55m 34s
				Total	36h 7m 15s

	Method	Number of Participant Brands		Total
		New York	London	
Phase I	Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews	1 - Fashion Label	2 - Fashion Labels	4 Interviews
Phase II		8 - Fashion Labels 1 - Support	7 - Fashion Labels	17 Interviews
Phase III		7 - Fashion Labels 1 - Support	6 - Fashion Labels 2 - Support	17 Interviews
Interviews Total		9 - Fashion Labels 2 - Support	11 - Fashion Labels 2 - Support	38 Interviews
Phase IV	Websites, Press, Social Media	71 - Fashion Labels	78 - Fashion Labels	149 Brands

a directory on New York Magazine’s *The Cut* blog was data-mined for designers that matched the same participant profile as for the interviews.

Within grounded theory, concepts are the labels used to describe phenomenon and are abstract representations of events, objects, or actions and interactions (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Concepts are identified by codes in the data. The phenomena or themes are central ideas that emerge from the data. These are grouped into similar, mutually exclusive connections, or categories. The relation of categories to other categories is the process of integration to develop a theory. Additionally, concepts vary in depth and breadth and these elements are represented by the category’s properties and dimensions. Properties can be described as the characteristics — the who, what, where, when, why, how and consequences — of categories (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The variation, built into the theory is developed through the identification of dimensions of the properties, which are often illustrated by outlying cases within the research. It is through the concurrent data gathering and analysis process, iteratively facilitated, that dimensions, properties and categories emerge piece-by-piece to create a theoretical framework.

At each phase of the research, as new data was gathered, it was organised and examined through the initial coding and categorisation process, or ‘open-coding’, which is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.6.2 Initial Coding & Categorisation of Data**

The initial coding and categorisation process was most intensive during the first and second phases of the research. Within grounded theory, the first coding procedure is

termed 'open-coding' which describes the process of identifying key concepts along with their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

During the interviews, the participants were asked to tell the story of how they started their company, this storyline was broken apart during the initial coding process to identify important events, behaviours and steps within their development. After data gathering, the semi-structured in-depth interviews were transcribed and imported into *Atlast.ti*. Within the qualitative analysis software, each transcript was reviewed and coded using micro-analysis, or line-by-line coding. The coding process involved pulling keywords and phrases, or in-vivo codes, that the participants used in describing their development. Each of these words and phrases were analysed by comparing the terms used to possible meanings according to the context of the research participant. Concepts that had multiple potential meanings were flagged for follow up with the research participants at future stages.

The primary goal of the initial coding and categorisation phase was to identify themes of what was going on in the data, and what issues, problems or perspectives were most important to the interview participants. All coded elements were considered to have equal influence and impact at this point in the research. Similar elements were grouped into categories (Urquhart 2012). These categories provided direction for further data gathering and analysis.

Throughout the open-coding process, in addition to the rest of the research process, memo writing and diagramming was used as part of the analysis. The application of these techniques is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.6.3 Memo Writing & Diagrams**

Memos were written throughout the research project and can be defined by occurring at key points: during the interview as comments and conversation; during transcription of the interviews; during analysis of key codes, categories and concepts; during constant comparative analysis of interviews, (groups of) participants and across categories; and after analysis during the write-up process. Memos were central to generalising the emerging theory and writing up the final thesis because they were able to be expanded on during write-up, incorporated directly into the thesis (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Urquhart 2012), and critically evaluated to determine potential gaps in analysis



and the final development of the grounded theory. Rather than having a formalised process for when, where and how to write memos, the activity was incorporated as needed to maintain a record of emerging ideas, spur the research process along, and explore concepts in depth to discover any hidden gaps or future directions for continuing research.

During the early stages of the research, memos were often short phrases of ideas and concepts ‘written in the margins’ of notes and in-line during the transcription process. Memos were also written after interviews, as a means of facilitating analysis within each phase of the research where multiple interviews were conducted on the same day in selected weeks of the year. Additionally, memos were ‘written’ vocally during data gathering as commentary during interviews. In keeping with the grounded theory perspective that ‘all is data’, these snippets of ideas were incorporated into the coding and categorisation process. They were also expanded upon and used to direct future data gathering. The commentary during interviews mirrored and re-articulated reactive analytical thinking to the participants’ responses. That is, during both the interviews and in retrospect during analysis, the questions and commentary (unconsciously) mirrored and articulated similar thoughts during the transcription process. As the interviews were audibly reviewed, it was often surprising that the ‘new’ questions or comments were actually articulated during the interview. Indeed, as concepts were identified during transcription, it was almost anticipated that related questions or comments were not asked at the time of the interview, and thus there would be a missed opportunity for following immediate leads, spurring notes for future follow up. However, it was a pleasant surprise that the question or comment was, more often than not, made within the interview, thus allowing for immediate follow up with the interview participant. This is also descriptive of the semi-structured interview process in which leads were followed based on defined parameters. This provided the interviewees the opportunity to define, explore and describe their journey through the brand development and internationalisation process.

As the research process progressed, memos provided greater depth to understanding of concepts. These were often written during the analysis process of reviewing codes, when ‘flashes of insight’ sparked ideas about relationships between

various categories (Glaser & Strauss 1967). At this stage of the research, memos were also used to explore ideas surrounding potential core categories, in order to begin generating and generalising 'the big idea'. Additionally, the opportunity to participate in conference presentations facilitated a venue in which to articulate and voice thinking around a category, organisation of categories or specific issues within the research project. In this way, preparation for explaining the research findings in progress at conferences helped to clarify thinking around specific categories. This often kick-started writing of memos that was expanded upon, and ultimately refined as the thoughts and ideas were integrated into the thesis.

Finally, diagramming was also integral to the memo writing process by helping to explain relationships that defined categories, sub-categories and dimensions. This technique was especially helpful during the intermediate coding process to help delineate and prioritise the data into a hierarchy working towards theoretical integration. Diagrams varied in complexity from quick journalled sketches to more complex pictures. The mapping application, *MindNode Pro* helped to diagram concepts as they emerged throughout the research process (see A.22 on page 412).

All of the memo writing techniques worked together as part of an iterative process with the rest of the grounded theory methods to progress the research. Memo writing also helped to provide a direction for future data gathering to incorporate diversity and variation into the research project. The application of theoretical sampling is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.6.4 Theoretical Sampling**

Theoretical sampling involves the selection and incorporation of research data along the dimensions of the properties and categories as they emerge through the research process (Strauss & Corbin 1998). It is the process of theoretical sampling that helps guide the research to a point of reaching theoretical saturation. The process of theoretical sampling directs the research toward people, places and events that create maximum opportunities to add depth to categories and uncover variations within dimensions of properties (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Urquhart 2012).

Within this research project, scheduling of data collection balanced the need to meet various research deadlines, and the calendars of potential participants who operate

within the timetable dictated by collection development and presentation at fashion week, followed by sales, production and distribution. Therefore, it was necessary to divide data collection into four distinct phases where interviews were conducted as much as possible in the months immediately following fashion week. Theoretical sampling was incorporated within this formula by purposively seeking out and including a diversity of participants for each phase of research.

Within Phase I, research participants were included through introductions by networked relationships into the fashion industry. Prior to the second phase, a database of potential interview participants was created and this was used to direct data gathering. At each of the second and third phases of the research, an effort was made to incorporate different types of womenswear design firms who varied in terms of the aesthetics of their collections, size of the firm, age of the firm and type of employee interviewed. This created a diverse pool of participants that ranged in age of company development along a ten-year scale, aesthetic approach of the designer, and location by incorporating designers from both London and New York. Additionally, employees other than the creative directors or head designers participated in the research, including chief executive officers, sales directors and marketing directors. Theoretical sampling also influenced the direction of the research by expanding the participant pool to include external PR agents, sales agents and business consultants that worked with DFEs.

In addition to these influences with the interview portions of the research, sampling of research data also incorporated using diverse types of data. Attendance at five total fashion weeks (September 2014, February 2015 and September 2015 at London Fashion Week; February 2015 at New York Fashion Week; and March 2015 at Paris Fashion Week) helped provide context for the research and understanding of the process of presentation of collections at catwalk shows, presentations and within the showrooms. Fashion week also provided a collection of documents, called 'run-of-shows', from a variety of designer enterprises that discussed the collections presented during the current season. Each of these documents provided a window into the collection development and sales process for design firms outside of the interview participant pool.

Finally, after the completion of analysis of the interview portions of the research (Phase I, II and III), theoretical sampling helped direct the design and direction of data

gathering for Phase IV. The final phase of data gathering collected information relating to the number of stockists, number of collections produced per year and price-points of collections, among other data from websites, social media and press of a larger database of DFEs. Direction for the number of participants to include in this database and the type of data to collect about the participants would not have been possible without the use of theoretical sampling.

Theoretical sampling is an iterative process connected to constant comparative analysis. As research data is analysed and compared to each other, gaps in the research are identified and sampling occurs in an effort to fill those gaps (Birks & Mills 2011). The application of constant comparative analysis is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.6.5 Constant Comparative Analysis**

Used in combination with the three types of coding procedures, constant comparative analysis is the process by which codes become categories, properties and dimensions. The process of constant comparative analysis occurs throughout the entire research project to analyse raw data, verify emerging concepts and assemble categories into a theory that explains the research phenomena (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Boeije 2002). It is within the process of constant comparative analysis that abductive reasoning takes hold so that previously unassociated concepts are brought together through a cognitive leap and cerebral process of discovery (Birks & Mills 2011; Reichertz 2004).

Constant comparative analysis is used throughout the entire research process because it is the connecting mechanism that joins the raw data to its theoretical abstraction. It occurs at every stage of research so that incidents are compared to incidents within the open coding procedure; incidents are then compared to codes as the initial categorisation process continues and progresses through each of the units of data. Constant comparative analysis is the activity of determining what concepts can be grouped into a single category, what concepts are variations of others, and how events are similar for some participants but different for others (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

As the research progresses, codes are compared to other codes to determine mutual exclusivity, and as codes are grouped into categories, codes are compared to the categories to determine fit and cohesion. Finally, at the uppermost and abstract level of data analysis the categories are compared to each other to explore, develop and explain

the relationships that connect them together and ultimately create the theory. By working through the process of constant comparative analysis, the research results were able to form around a structure that was intimately connected to the experience of the research participants, as opposed to developing an explanation removed from them.

In short, constant comparison occurs at and across three levels of analysis: incident to incident, incident to codes, codes to codes, codes to categories, and categories to categories (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998; Birks & Mills 2011). It progressively moves the research analysis up along levels of abstraction. But the process of constant comparative analysis would not be accomplished without theoretical sensitivity to the research.

#### 4.6.6 Theoretical Sensitivity

Grounded theory's 'openness of inquiry' is derived from the researcher's ability to be sensitive to the emergence of concepts, ideas, themes and relationships within the data (Glaser & Strauss 1967). It is the 'ability to recognise and extract from the data elements that have relevance for [the] emerging theory' (Birks & Mills 2011: 59). While the literature is often considered an element that hinders the theoretical development within a grounded theory study by limiting the direction of data gathering and analysis (Glaser & Strauss 1967), it can also enhance theoretical sensitivity by providing new perspectives throughout the research process (Birks & Mills 2011). Incorporation of the literature is a process of finding a balance between using existing literature to *enhance* awareness to concepts existing in the data, and not allowing the literature to *direct* the data using a preconceived theory.

Theoretical sensitivity is one of the criteria for reaching theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss 1967). From a practical perspective, theoretical sensitivity is the act of asking: 'What is happening in the data?' (Birks & Mills 2011). Theoretical sensitivity is something that is developed and enhanced throughout the research process. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue for a balance between objectivity and sensitivity on the part of the researcher so that the findings are impartially and reasonably representative of participants' problems and there is room for interpretation and creativity so that a new theory emerges from the data.

Therefore, theoretical sensitivity is something that is both brought into the research process by the previous unique experiences of the researcher, and something that is cultivated throughout the research process, continually adding to and questioning that experience and its influence on the interpretation of the data. Theoretical sensitivity, in combination with constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling and memo writing are all utilised throughout the entire research data gathering and analysis process. Once the research has progressed to the point of developing connections among categories, it has reached a level of intermediate coding, which is explored in the following section.

#### **4.6.7 Intermediate Coding**

Strauss & Corbin (1998) define the intermediate coding process as ‘axial coding’, which is the process of relating categories and sub-categories. It is called ‘axial coding’ because it takes place at the centre, or axis, of a category (Strauss & Corbin 1994). Whereas open coding breaks incidents apart, axial coding begins to put them back together raising the level of abstraction, moving towards a more generalisable understanding of the data (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Walker & Myrick 2006).

The sub-categories, through their properties, explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a category (Strauss & Corbin 1998). When putting categories back together in relational terms, each category represents an element of those questions. Strauss and Corbin (1994, 1998) outline several techniques to help assist with the intermediate coding process including developing a conditional matrix and paradigm that represents each of the collections.

This research incorporated and customised these techniques to suit the research process and analysis tools. Scott (2004) and Scott & Howell (2008) outline an approach to the coding matrix that uses the ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘with what consequences’ questions to assist in the relationship development among categories. This technique was used in the early stages of intermediate coding, during analysis of Phase II, to help provide orientation towards selecting a core category (see A.25 on page 416). Additionally, in preparation for Phase III, a network of relationships extending between the micro of the firm (the creative director) out towards macro influences (economic, political and social trends) on the development of the DFE was diagrammed to understand their interaction within the entire fashion network. This diagram was then used for

verification and to encourage further discussion within the third phase of interviews. After completing the coding of data, a code book was created that grouped codes into categories and began making connections between categories to explore possible relationships. The coding paradigm was used again at this stage to examine conditions, context, actions and interactions, and consequences of categories (see A.26 on page 417) (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin 1994; Urquhart 2012). This task was assisted by the network elements of the *Atlas.ti* data analysis software, and *MindNode Pro* which was continuously used to diagram relationships between categories. Finally, utilising methods outlined by Altinay et al. (2014) and Corley and Gioia (2004), categories were refined into second-order themes and connected to aggregate dimensions identified in existing literature related to dynamic capabilities and Urde's (2013) elements of brand identity (see A.30 on page 446).

Intermediate coding was a process of induction so that the relationships among categories emerged from the data. But it also included the process of deduction to verify that relationships actually do exist in the data (Strauss & Corbin 1998). It is through these activities that a core category was selected, which is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.6.8 Core Category Identification**

The core category is a central component of grounded theory methodology. It is defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a basic social process, which not only explains the principal problem of the research participants, but also can be expanded through additional research beyond the substantive area to other areas, working towards a grand theory.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) outline several criteria for the selection of a core category beginning with its analytic power to be relatable to other categories identified in the research in order to create an explanatory whole. The centrality of the core category means that all other major categories fit cohesively around it and are related to it. Most cases within the data should also indicate, point to or otherwise refer to the concept that is selected as the core category. In addition, the core category must have the ability to flexibly adapt to variations found within the data. This ensures that evolution of relating sub-categories to the core category is consistently logical so that there is no forcing of data. Additionally, as new data is gathered and analysed, the core category must be able

to grow in depth and explanatory power. This is related to the last criteria which requires the core category to be abstract enough to be applicable to other substantive areas.

As will be explained in Chapter 5: Research Findings, the core category emerged naturally from the data. It is through the repetitive process of coding, categorisation and intermediate coding that concepts were related and ultimately formed a core category that shaped the theoretical framework derived from the research results. This leads to the process of advanced coding and theoretical integration, which is discussed in the following section.

#### 4.6.9 Advanced Coding & Theoretical Integration

Advanced coding raises the concepts to the highest level of abstraction and combines the categories into an explanatory theory (Birks & Mills 2011). Strauss and Corbin (1998) define this process as selective coding, where the categories are abstract enough to explain a process, without the need to explicitly describe the experiences of individual participants (Urquhart 2012). In the first edition of *Basics of Qualitative Research*, Strauss & Corbin (1990) recommend the use of the 'storyline technique' which works as an assistive narrative of the theory and ensures the conceptualisation of the core category (Birks & Mills 2011). Selective coding is the process of relating codes to each other (Urquhart 2012), unifying the categories around the core category and filling in descriptive detail, linking conditions through action and interaction with consequences (Corbin & Strauss 1990).

Within this research project, the core category follows the product developmental path of the research participants in creating their collections. The selective coding process compared this theoretical 'storyline' to actual incidents in the data as a metaphor and form of verification. This process also assisted with identifying potential inconsistencies, outlying cases and gaps in the theoretical model that were filled through further analysis of the data. While there are quantitative elements used in the measurement of sub-categories, at this point in the research the important element was not determining how often specific events occurred, but the variations in how the events were represented (Strauss & Corbin 1998). This process of verification helped to add and refine the dimensions that form the tentacles surrounding the core category. In addition, this process helped to contextualise the research in relation to existing literature.



The generalisation process involved organising the multiplicity of features found in the data (Reichertz 2004). Once this process was complete, the research results reach a point of theoretical saturation, which is reviewed in the following section.

#### **4.6.10 Theoretical Saturation**

Theoretical saturation is the point at which no new ideas emerge (Glaser & Strauss 1967). It is through theoretical saturation that the validity of the theory is established (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Jones & Alony 2011). In addition to the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher, theoretical saturation is achieved through understanding the empirical limits of the data and the theoretical integration of a dense and flexible theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). As flexibility is built into the theory, the categories become fully developed through their properties and dimensions, providing a measurement for reaching saturation (Birks & Mills 2011; Urquhart 2012). Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that saturation is also measured by the point where gathering new data is counterproductive in that additional information doesn't add to the explanatory power of the theory.

Theoretical sampling assisted with the process of reaching theoretical saturation because it provided direction for where to look for new information. Constant comparative analysis was used to determine what areas of the research required additional data. Some concepts became saturated early in the research, while others took additional time to explore in depth.

By the beginning of Phase III, many of the categories could be defined as saturated, though the organisation of them in relation to others still required working out by re-exploring the existing data. The process of determining saturation required both a bottom-up approach, working from the raw data, and a top-down approach, working with the overarching themes and ultimately the core category to connect the mid-range concepts in relation to each other. During Phase III new information was gathered as a method of verifying the relationships among categories. Phase IV extended the understanding of the parts of the theory where data was publicly available to a larger dataset as a way of examining the theory from a different perspective.

Theoretical saturation is the practical outcome of the evaluation of the theoretical model's quality and rigour (Suddaby 2006). Reaching theoretical saturation is an

important and required element in developing the theory. The process of theory development is discussed in the following section.

#### 4.6.11 Theory Development

Overall, the data gathering and analysis process was not by any means a linear process, nor one in which the grounded theory methods were applied mechanistically. In practice, the data gathering and analysis was conducted pragmatically. In many instances the application of grounded theory methods was not a conscious effort, but a natural circumstance that occurred in a complementary manner with the analysis of the data. The successful application of the criteria for grounded theory was verified alongside the data throughout the research process. All of these elements worked cohesively together to develop a theory emergent from the perspective of the research participants.

The development of the theory, as it emerges from the data, is an ongoing process over time that involves recognising the relationships of how concepts are linked together (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Urquhart 2012). The process of developing a theory from the data is something that must be created (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The overall process of theory development involves taking the voices of single cases, abstracting them to the point of generalisability, and using relational statements to represent the perspectives of a defined population within a substantive area (Strauss & Corbin 1994, 1998).

The theory presented from the research findings in this thesis represents a 'basic social process' of the DFEs operating in London and New York. The basic social process of the research participants looks for action and interaction within the data. This process is defined as 'a series of evolving sequences of action/interaction that occur over time and space, changing or sometimes remaining the same in response to the situation or context' (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 165). The validation of this theory is derived from the highest level of comparative analysis and feedback from the participants (*ibid.*), in addition to examining the theory in relation to additional data gathering in Phase IV.

In the following chapter, the research findings are presented according to the path by which they emerged from the data through coding, sorting and memo writing during constant comparative analysis (see Chapter 5 on page 107). This chapter also provides an exploration of the day-to-day activities surrounding the core category. The analysis of the research findings dives into the elements of brand identity (Urde 2013),

relating emerged categories to the resources and capabilities by which brand identity is created (see Chapter 6 on page 151). The following section provides an overview of the interview research participants and the development of the database of DFEs used for recruitment.

#### **4.7 Sample Selection & Research Participants**

This section provides a review of the criteria used for selecting potential participants in the three interview portions of the research, as well as the DFE brands included in the database that was created for the fourth and final phase of data gathering utilising websites, social media and press. The purpose of this section is to present the composition of the research participant group. This section explains the process of sample selection and the rationale behind the decision to anonymise the research participants.

##### **4.7.1 Sample Selection Process**

A report commissioned for the Centre for Fashion Enterprise (CFE) (Karra 2008) was used to define parameters for the potential participant group. The initial interviews in Phase I were accessed via a network of industry contacts. After Phase I, a database of designers presenting at London or New York fashion week was created.

To source potential participants, London proved to be easier because such a large portion of the designers operating in the market show on-schedule and are profiled on the BFC's London Fashion Week website (BFC 2014a; London Fashion Week 2014). However, New York is more decentralised and multiple websites were utilised to source potential participating brands (CFDA 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Mercedes Benz Fashion Week 2014; New York Magazine 2015; New York Fashion Week 2016). The potential participant database for London included 78 DFEs. The sources for New York's database included 32 DFEs as potential participants. These identified DFEs were used as the primary participant pool for the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Each of the 110 potential participants was contacted via email prior to the interview portions of Phases II and III and asked to participate in the study. Overall, London DFEs were much less likely to participate and respond to requests for participation given the larger sample size. This required greater persistence in comparison to their New York counterparts. In

Phase IV, the database was expanded to 149 brands from designer profiles featured on international fashion media webpages (New York Magazine 2015), which matched the same parameters used for the interviews.

The CFE (Karra 2008) report notes that age is not a relevant factor in determining size of a fashion label, but annual turnover, number of stockists and number of full-time employees are more illustrative of the business category for this industry (see A.4 on page 366). However, these definitions are not readily available for privately held companies. In order to quickly estimate whether or not the label would fit the research study, age was determined to be a dependable factor. Additionally, because this project examines entrepreneurial fashion labels, age of the company was determined to be a reliable variable in determining the ‘newness’ of company development. In relation to this, the CFE report does mention that: ‘designers require an average of eight years to develop into mature businesses’ (Karra 2008: 35-36). During the interviews, information about the other variables was obtained to place the participants into the various categories for comparison.

The parameters outlined in the CFE report provided context for the DFEs operating within the New York and London fashion industries. But publicly available information was used to define the requirement criteria for the study’s participants (Table 4.4). Purposive sampling was the impetus for choosing London and New York, which offered the ability to compare data across countries and within major fashion centres — illustrating the cultural diversity of the fashion industry — but without the complications of comparing across multiple languages. Because of the internationality of the fashion industry, designers from various countries often show at one or more of the main fashion weeks (New York, London, Milan and Paris) in September or February/March. This

**Table 4.4 Summary of Database and Participant Criteria**

<b>Location</b>	Studio based in London or New York
<b>Year Founded</b>	2005 – 2014
<b>Product Category</b>	Must have womenswear, but can include others: accessories, shoes, handbags, menswear, evening, outerwear, fashion tech, etc.
<b>Price-point</b>	Contemporary Advanced Contemporary Entry Designer Designer Luxury

observation created a problem which produced the definition of what it means to be a London or New York based design firm: requiring that any new interview participants operate their design studios within either of the major fashion capitals in order to take part in the study.

Additionally, designers from all over the world show in New York during its biannual fashion weeks making it impractical to interview designers based in additional countries throughout the globe. In comparison, on-schedule London designers are required to demonstrate a basis in London by confirming that they have at least one stockist in the UK (LFW 2015). For practical reasons and in the effort of balancing these differences, the study was limited to designers whose *studios* are based in either London or New York, not necessarily where they show at fashion week. Therefore, the studio parameter defined the participant pool so that only those designers who actively developed their collections within either London or New York were included within the study. This ensured that access to the potential participant pool would not be a hinderance to the data gathering process.

Regardless, the diversity of the designers showing throughout the world at the various fashion weeks, and selling in predominately either New York or Paris markets, illustrates the internationality of the industry and the opportunities entrepreneurial firms have for entering the market. Where designers are located also significantly affects their identity as being described in the market as either an 'American' or 'British' designer and the meaning those labels place on the brands. For example, New York designers are often expected to conform to the 'American sportswear' stereotype and position their companies to be more 'commercially' focused. London designers, on the other hand, are expected to be conceptually and aesthetically innovative.

The participant group was further focused to include only womenswear design firms who presented their first collections between 2005 and 2014. The limitation to womenswear proved to be helpful because the companies operate on similar production and delivery schedules based on product category. The 10-year range of firm age was used to induce diversity into the participant pool by incorporating designers who were at various points in the development of their firm, from those that were just beginning to present and sell, to those that were more established within the industry.

Theoretical sampling influenced the participant pool again after the initial pilot phase, expanding it to include designers' support network to account for the development and management services provided by either employees within the company, such as heads of marketing and sales, but also external support services such as sales agents, business consultants, showroom managers and PR agents. The support network participants were sourced from recommendations by other research participants and industry contacts. Additionally, for comparison purposes, it is important to balance the number of interviews from both London and New York, which was a practice incorporated throughout the entire research project. However, it is also understood that more or fewer participants would be included in the study based on theoretical saturation and accessibility of potential participants. The balance of participants from London and New York fluctuated throughout the research process in working toward theoretical saturation, which was the ultimate criteria for stopping data gathering.

To account for the diversity of the fashion market, various types of womenswear designers were included in the study, from those positioned to a contemporary-priced market to those creating products in the high-end luxury price-point segment. Due to the nature of this entrepreneurial group, these firms produce product within various market segments including contemporary, advanced contemporary or entry-designer, designer-luxury, bespoke and atelier couture or semi-couture market segments, often redefining these segments through their product innovations within the industry. The parameters dictated that they create some type of womenswear line, not solely handbags, accessories or shoes, and therefore included designers who created products from conceptual lingerie, swimwear, ready-to-wear, evening-wear and bespoke luxury garments. The collections often included elements throughout this entire spectrum of garment creation.

In summary, the participant pool was defined by the studio location in London or New York, founding year range of 2005 to 2014, the requirement of a womenswear collection, and a price-point within the contemporary through luxury segments. The publicly identifiable parameters defined the database used in all four phases of the research. These parameters framed the research in context according to common characteristics of the research participants.

#### 4.7.2 Anonymity of the Research Participants

This section provides background and context of the group of DFEs who participated in the interview portions of the study (Phases I, II & III). The benefits and limitations of anonymising the research participants in the presentation of the findings was considered prior to data gathering.

The subject of 'branding' is a primary subject of the research and is associated with the concept of 'identity'. However, the purpose of this study is not to simply *describe* the participants and their current situation, but to lift the data to a generalisable theory. This is consistent with grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Given the nature of discussing (intimate) details about the privately held companies, it was considered beneficial to anonymise the participants and brands to increase the potential for access. Therefore, to ensure confidence and encourage openness, the participating brands and their representatives are anonymous within the discussion of research results (Creswell 2013). Acknowledgement of those brands wishing to be recognised for participation is indicated at the beginning of the thesis. However, all data provided by the interview participants is separated from identifying information during the transcription process. Several participants chose to remain completely anonymous with no mention of their identity within the thesis. Maintaining anonymity and not identifying the participating brands in the discussion of research results did not provide for unnecessary limitations that would jeopardise the research outcome. It is not the individual situation and specific brand identity of each of the participating brands under study, but the *process* by which they develop their brand identity in the course of internationalisation. Analysis of the participant group, using constant comparative analysis, worked to code individual transcriptions of interviews and then step away from the raw data to the comparison of codes and categories. In this way, anonymising the participants focused analysis on examining the process rather than describing specific incidents or identities.

This approach allowed for in-depth and contextually rich data to be gathered that would produce the desired results of generating a theory from data while also providing the participants with a safe context in which to explore and discuss their challenges, opportunities, experiences, personal backgrounds and stories of company development and interaction within the global fashion industry. Indeed, several participants

acknowledged that some of the details they were contributing would not otherwise be shared if they didn't have the protection of anonymity within the study. In short, the decision to anonymise the participant group provided greater access and assisted in the abstraction of the data.

#### 4.8 Conclusion

The purpose of a grounded theory study is not to assemble valid and descriptive statements about reality, but to obtain a new understanding about the relationships within a social situation and how they construct reality (Strauss & Corbin 1998). It is through the theoretical generation and the consistent nature of relevant concepts in which a grounded theory study can be judged on its validity (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin 1994; Douglas 2003). Because grounded theory does not include set rigid rules, it requires interpretive efforts throughout the research process as the researcher makes decisions about which categories to focus on, where next to collect data, and the meanings attributed to individual components of data (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Charmaz 2006; Suddaby 2006).

This research project is born from and situated within a contemporary context of business development trends occurring within the fashion industry, while its perspective is positioned within current approaches to qualitative research and grounded theory. Grounded theory is the appropriate methodology for this research project because no theory exists regarding the development of DFEs within a business management context, specifically focusing on brand development and internationalisation. Using the combination of grounded theory components, this research generates a theory of DFEs' development in the context of branding and internationalisation. The aim of this approach is to be pragmatic in addressing the research problem of understanding how womenswear DFEs deal with the activity of branding from the perspective of the firm and its employees. Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach to grounded theory provides the overall guidance for incorporating a variety of methods, perspectives and analytical tools to develop a theory that accurately reflects the actions and interactions of fashion entrepreneurs within the contemporary context of the fashion industry. Their pragmatic 'middle of the road' approach to grounded theory provides a framework for incorporating its essential components in a flexible manner consistent with the unique



requirements of the research problem (Suddaby 2006). The successful application of grounded theory methodology produces a new theoretical framework born from the data gathering and analysis.

The implementation of grounded theory's components was discussed to provide a detailed explanation of how grounded theory was utilised in practice throughout the course of the project. The research process iteratively incorporated the concurrent data collection and analysis, initial coding and categorisation of data, memo writing and diagramming, along with theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis and practices of theoretical sensitivity. It was through intermediate coding in which a core category was identified, leading to the advanced coding and theoretical integration of the data, working towards theoretical saturation that ultimately facilitated the theory development process. These methods, incorporated in a fluid approach to the research, provided a foundation of the creative sparks of insight which allowed for the discovery of new emergent themes and the creation of a theoretical framework to explain the action and interaction of entrepreneurial DFEs (Strauss & Corbin 1994; Reichertz 2004).



## Chapter 5: Research Findings

### 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the research findings as they emerged throughout data gathering and analysis. All of the data was coded and categorised according to grounded theory methodology's constant comparative analysis to develop a core category and theoretical framework supported within the data and the contemporary context of designer fashion enterprises (DFEs) operating within the global fashion industry.

As data was accumulated, it was added to previously collected data and analysed as part of a larger whole. In this way, the phases of the research served as distinguishable steps in data gathering, but comparative analysis of the data was conducted constantly and iteratively across phases. Because of this, analysis of the codes and categories is presented as a cohesive unit in the next chapter (see Chapter 6 on page 151). This chapter defines the accumulation of data through grounded theory, illustrating the steps of the analysis connecting the methodology to the research concepts.

This chapter provides an introduction to the participating brands and individuals, gives an overview of the designer database, and explains what and how categories emerged. This chapter acts as a transition from the previous chapter, discussing the methodology, in preparation for the next chapter, which provides a systematic analysis of the data. The purpose of this chapter is to connect the research process to the primary findings, illustrating the progression of categories throughout each phase.

To begin, the research process is discussed, followed by an overview of the participating brands and the individuals participating in the interview phases (I, II and III) of the research. The interview phases of the research were the primary source of data gathering and analysis, determining the core category and key concepts. The first three phases of the research provided the foundation for the development of the database used in Phase IV to gather data about DFEs' websites, press and social media. The development of this database is discussed followed by the data analysis of the fourth and final phase in which the concepts, codes and categories were verified and extended to a larger dataset of entrepreneurial DFEs. Phase IV used publicly available information to explore various concepts emerged from previous analysis. Finally, this chapter unveils the concepts collectively generated throughout the research process to outline the development of categories derived from the data. In doing so, it provides an analysis of the routines — design, presentation, sales, production and distribution — DFEs undergo in the course of the product development, relating these activities to the core category of the 'collection lifecycle'. The discussion of these activities is in preparation for the analysis of the operational resources and capabilities related to the elements of brand identity, which is presented in the next chapter. The following section begins the discussion of the research process in practice.

## **5.2 The Research Process**

This section explains the research process focusing on the steps of data gathering and analysis throughout each phase of the research. Emphasis is given to the first three phases, as these were the primary source of data gathering for the study. The fourth phase, which was complementary, is discussed in detail in the following two sections. The purpose of this section is to explain the procedure of the research over time (Table 5.1).

At the start of data gathering in the spring of 2014, two interviews were conducted: one in New York and one in London. Brief memos were written after each interview. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and open-coded using line-by-line analysis and highlighting key words. In-vivo codes were used frequently to maintain the context of the participants.

Following this, two more interviews were conducted, both in London. One of the interviews was a follow-up with the first designer from London, who was available

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**Table 5.1 Research Timeline**

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**Phase I: April - May 2014**

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- Pilot phase
  - 4 semi-structured in-depth interviews
  - 3 fashion brands: 1 New York, 2 London
  - Explored the experience and activities of launching a DFE
  - Demographic data survey: number of years in business, annual turnover, number of employees, in-house/out-sourced resources, funding sources, percentage of international sales.
- 

**Phase II: October - December 2014**

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- 17 semi-structured in-depth interviews with new and repeat participants
  - 15 fashion brands: 8 New York, 7 London
  - 1 New York based PR/Sales Agent/Showroom
  - Questions added and refined based on coding analysis from Phase I
  - Demographic data survey for new participants
  - Observation at London Fashion Week in September 2014
- 

**Phase III: March - May 2015**

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- 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews with new and repeat participants
  - 13 fashion brands: 7 New York, 6 London
  - 3 PR/Sales Agent/Showrooms: 1 New York, 2 London
  - Questions added and refined based on coding analysis from Phases I & II
  - Demographic data survey for new participants
  - Extended survey: consumer/muse description; wholesale distribution strategy; international sales: regions, countries, cities, stockists; sales strategy; product categories; price-point and market positioning; stage of growth; collection description; promotional tools: press, buyers, brand awareness, encourage sell-throughs; brand identity definition; social media usage and engagement; funding and investment sources; in-house/out-sourced resources; designer, brand and employee attributes; designer's fashion and education background; personal, objective and ultimate goals
  - Interview activities: timeline, network and collection lifecycle for verification of properties and dimensions
  - Observation at New York, London and Paris fashion weeks in February & March 2014
- 

**Phase IV: November - December 2015**

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- Analysis of DFE websites, social media and press
  - 149 DFE brands: 71 New York, 78 London
  - Data gathered: internationalisation rate based on stockists; PR and sales agents based on contact information; product categories; social media platform usage; price-points; number of collections produced per year; usage of own e-commerce; press categories: brand profile, designer profile, designer mention.
  - Observation at London Fashion Week in September 2015
- 

to participate at both the beginning and end of the data gathering period. Again, brief memos were written and line-by-line coding was conducted on the transcripts. Further memos were written during transcription as thoughts, impressions, and explanations of what was occurring, or what was remembered during the interview. A list of broad concepts was created based on this initial analysis (Table 5.2).

The software program *nVivo* was initially used for the coding of the first two interviews. But the consolidation of codes in this program proved to be difficult, and the second two interviews, and all those thereafter, were coded using *Atlas.ti*. The

**Table 5.2 Phase I - Emerging Concepts**

<b>Photography</b>	<b>Internationalisation</b>	<b>Branding</b>
How they tell their story	Survival	Diverse definitions
Brand is the collection	Instantaneous	Own brand
Create & define their message		A 'Brand'
	<b>Network</b>	Evolves organically
<b>Social Media</b>	Personal relationships	Instinctive
Crucial communication	Professional relationships	Created in the marketplace
Connection with consumers	Integration into FASHION SYSTEM	Related to personal identity
Editorial & product consumers		
Consumers defined aesthetically		

first two interviews were transferred over to *Atlas.ti*. During this process, the initial consolidation of codes was conducted manually using index cards, which were grouped into preliminary categories (Table 5.3).

At this point, the primary goal was to determine the broad themes and concepts most important to the participants and relevant to the research question, rather than saturating all the categories for properties and dimensions. The groups of concepts were used to determine which themes were significant, and where information was still missing. Questions that arose during the transcription, coding and sorting process were used to generate questions for Phase II.

The second phase of interviews was conducted in two big batches. This was to accommodate the short research trip to New York, which was during two separate weeks in October 2014. In an effort to balance the data gathering process, this was matched as much as possible with the London participants, and data gathering in London was conducted over a few weeks at the end of November and early December in 2014. In some cases, in both London and New York, two or three interviews were conducted on the same day. Brief memos were written between interviews to gather initial impressions. Overall, interviews from Phase II were transcribed and open-coded using line-by-line coding, in one large cluster. This helped to provide immersion within the data, facilitating constant comparative analysis across incidents, interviews and locations. All of the interviews were compared to each other in a back-and-forth fashion to determine what incidents were repeated throughout and which were not, along with possible explanations for variation.

**Table 5.3 Phase I - Categories & Sub Categories**

The Collection	Company Structure	Core of Brand
Collection Lifecycle	Business Side	Core Idea (Inspirations)
Collection Development	Finance Strategy	Designer Personality
Designing	Ownership	Brand Name
Collection Evolution	Supplies & Resources	Starting Out
Putting the Collection Together	Growth	Communicating Core Idea
Making Collections (Work Process)	Controlled vs. Uncontrolled Growth	Brand & Designer Connections
Orders (Factory Delivery   Factory Ship)	Describing Words for Growth	The Brand Starting Point
Production Cycle	Expanding: Two Types	Building the Brand
Buying Schedule (Fashion System)	Growth Talking	Brand Identity
Sales & Distribution	Growth Goals	Sustainability
Starting the new collection	Future Growth Opportunities	Consumer Introduction (Consistency)
Distribution	Ability to Grow	Communication
Online & Retail	Positioning	Network Partnership
Locations	Market Positioning	Outreach Program
Wholesale Accounts	Marketability Evolution	Website
Geographic Market Targeting	Sides of Fashion	Fashion Schedule
Network	Next Step	Social Media
Personal Network	Two Types of 'Editorial'	Promotional Tools
Professional Network	Broad Market	Media
Fashion City: New York & London	Commercial Market = Product Segmentation	Communication Activities
Fashion Network	Higher Volume	Describing Things
Reliance on Network	Differentiation	Designer Background
Network Support	Key Pieces / Garments	Non-Fashion
Network Learning	Co-Creation	Personal Background
Consumer Demands	Network Demands	Brand Ideas from Market
Trade Conventions & Fashion Weeks	Positive & Negative Influence	Switching Careers
Consumer / Customer	Own Opportunities	Network Contribution
Consumer Learning	Personality Type	Other Brands Mentioned
Consumer Identification	Success: Vision & Goal	Fashion Background
Gather Consumer Data	Personal Success	Education Background
Description & Demographic	Lifestyle	Market Demands
Commitment	Marketing & Fashion	Turning Point Decisions
Experimenting	The Brand Experience	Push Forward
Orbiting: Community vs. Following	Brand Success: Commercial & Fashion Industry Acceptance	Designer Representation (Image)
Job Decision		

For all of the interviews with DFEs, the design process was used as a point of departure: all of the participants were asked to explain what they do and how they produce a collection. During analysis, all of these elements were pulled out and used to create a 'collection lifecycle activity' sheet used in Phase III. Also, the participants were asked to explain the overall evolution of their company: how they got to where they were from the launch point of the company. Pragmatically, the participants were asked to tell the story of how the company was started. Elements from the responses to this question were used to explore concepts related to the development of the company: unique and similar things about courting the press, getting support, attracting buyers, dealing with logistics, customer service, quality control, finding resources and factories, and engaging with the end consumer. All of these things were deeply rooted in their own personal stories, but provided ideas about the decisions made in order to grow.

Axial coding was used throughout the entire process in Phases I, II and III, after open coding, to tease out the context in which concepts occurred. The initial sorting of concepts into categories after the first phase is an example of axial coding. After Phase II, several other techniques were also used, including the coding matrix (see A.25 on page 416) (Strauss & Corbin 1994, 1998; Scott 2004; Scott & Howell 2008). This was a period of experimentation to figure out how to examine all of the data. Diagramming using mind maps with the *MindNode Pro* application and the *Atlas.ti* networking function were each used for specific concepts (see A.22 on page 412 and A.23 on page 414). Additionally, memos were written about specific interviews and concepts. Ultimately, to begin narrowing down the data, the codes were moved away from the transcripts into a spreadsheet that formed a code book. This code book was used to group codes into categories, consolidating repetitive concepts (Table 5.4). The transcripts were explored continually to check codes in relation to meaning to ensure accurate grouping, but the objective was to move away from the individual incidents to focus on the concepts. By the end of Phase II, several of the concepts' properties and dimensions were relationally organised.

Analysis of the transcripts in Phase II also generated the questions that formed the qualitative survey used in Phase III as a method of verification and saturation of categories (see A.7 on page 373). Concepts were grouped as questions, and then the



Aesthetic Principles	Distribution City	Management
Behaviour	Distribution Activities	Market Positioning
Brand Awareness	Experimentation	Network
Brand Development	Fashion System	Improvisation
Co-Creation: Interactions & Reactions	Fashion Week	Press & Editorial
Collection Development	Growth	Product Category
Communication	Imagery & Visuals	Sales Strategy
Consumer	Influence of Place	Showroom
Decision Making	Investment & Finance	Social Media
Design	Launch Point	Reflection & Planning
Designer Background	Learning & Experience	Knowledge Integration
Designer Brands	Approach to Plans & Opportunities	Support Program

related dimensions and properties were used to form potential answers on the survey. The act of preparing the survey helped to organise and make sense of the immense amount of information gathered in Phase II. Within Phase III data gathering, a selection of DFEs were asked to complete the survey exploring several central areas of development bookended by the launching point and the ultimate goals of the firm. This survey allowed for the organisation and refinement of crucial emerging themes. Responses to the survey were analysed and compared to the depth of qualitative data from the transcripts through memo-writing. The key advantage in organising information as it was done in conducting the qualitative survey is that it mirrors the way in which designers and their representatives describe and think about the organisation of their firms. The survey questions synthesise data about the first two phases of research in determining the core category. Although there was a limited sample for the qualitative survey questions (just 12 of the 21 brands were asked to participate, due to time constraints during the interviews and participant availability during Phase III), the answers to the survey questions, in addition to the interviews conducted during Phase III helped to verify and extend the theoretical leads and framework development during the previous research phases. The data gathered from this survey is used to illustrate the multiplicity of dimensions, properties and sub-categories that form the foundation for the theoretical framework. The qualitative survey in Phase III explored: the consumer/muse; wholesale distribution; regions, countries, cities and key stockists for sales; sales strategy; product categories;

collection positioning; price-point; stages of growth; communication tools; how the brand identity is defined; social media usage and engagement; seeking investment; in-house/out-sourced resources; the launch point of the company; attributes that describe the designer, brand and employees; the designer's background; personal, objective and ultimate goals for the company; and other aspirational brands that influenced the business model, aesthetic or vision for the brand. The analysis of these concepts is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

In addition to the qualitative survey and the 'collection lifecycle' activity previously mentioned, the interview participants at this stage of data gathering were also asked to complete an activity relating to the development timeline of the company to verify key points of growth for the firm (see A.10 on page 385), including awards or competitions participated in or won; first-time events; major business decisions or strategy changes; tasks that were brought in-house or outsourced; acquisition of distinguished stockists and/or distribution to new regions; product category additions; reaching break-even, profitability or gaining investment; and adding new collections, such as pre-collections. This activity showed how participants prioritised different incidents of their development, marking notable events by the seasons in which they occur, which were just as varied as the unique stories and backgrounds of the individuals. However, this activity did illustrate and verify the general concepts for how DFEs measure success over time.

Participants were also asked to highlight and identify their network of relationships (see A.9 on page 384) originating from the individual's (designer) personal and professional network, the firm (full-time and part-time employees), agencies (out-sourced resources and processes), the industry (press, buyers, sourcing and manufacturing), and the consumer network (product, editorial and aspirational consumers). This activity quickly identified the saturation of the 'network' category.

Similarly, the 'collection lifecycle' activity highlighted variation in the order of activities in creating a single collection, such as when specific tasks were accomplished in relation to one another (see A.8 on page 383). But it also verified the process as a whole and the fact that activities do take place within either a conscious or unconscious order, regardless of certain resources and timing of events. Importantly, the 'collection lifecycle'

activity provided a common basis for what the participating DFEs did on a day-to-day basis.

The combination of the collection lifecycle, timeline and network activities, the qualitative survey and the in-depth interviews in Phase III provided support for the saturation of categories from previous research phases. The organisation of the survey and activities helped to solidify categories so that they were clearly defined. The use of the survey and activities during interviews helped to quickly show how categories were saturated. Data gathering for Phase III occurred between March and May 2015. This phase included a research trip to New York. London interviews were booked within the weeks on either side of this research trip. Multiple interviews were conducted on the same day in both London and New York.

It is at this point, that the data gathering and analysis of Phase III blends with the data analysis of Phase II. Within Phase III, theoretical sampling emphasised data gathering from more experienced companies, rather than those in the first one or two years of development. Therefore, those participants in Phase II that would be able to provide more depth of experience were asked for additional interviews in Phase III, and additional companies were targeted for interviews. All initial interviews with companies started with discussing the story of starting the firm and its development. However, the purpose of Phase III was to explore specific concepts that still had surrounding questions, working towards theoretical saturation, and the in-depth interview questions reflected this approach. The categories requiring further development included the concept of commerciality versus conceptuality, the connection of brand identity and decision-making, the impact of the fashion industry (and stakeholders) on defining the brand identity, the purpose of a muse/girl/woman in relation to defining the consumer or as a design tool, and the influence of being based in London or New York.

After data gathering in Phase III, but prior to in-depth analysis, the categories defined in the codebook from Phase II were moved to a mind map (*MindNode Pro*) to draw connections and define a core category among several concepts that were considered including, 'growth', 'collection lifecycle', 'network', and 'designer background'. Emphasis was initially given to the concept of 'growth', but this was still unclear until after data gathering in Phase III. It was during this iterative and in-between process that the

‘collection lifecycle’ emerged clearly and significantly as the core category. The ‘collection lifecycle’ was chosen because it best explained the focus of the company, the interaction of the designer and network, and the (ideal) outcome of that interaction: growth. In short, all of the other categories could fit in and around the ‘collection lifecycle’, whereas the other contenders for the core category left concepts out with no apparent connection as to where they belonged, despite their importance to the development of the company. This is consistent with the criteria outlined within grounded methodology that requires that the core category explain the theory as a whole, occur frequently within the data, connect easily with other categories so that they integrate around it, assist with further analysis of the data, have explanatory power, and incorporate variation (Glaser 1978; Strauss & Corbin 1998; Birks & Mills 2011). It was around the core category that selective coding began throughout the continual analysis of data from Phases I and II, and further data gathering and analysis in Phases III and IV.

The process of selective coding and axial coding are iterative. There was a lot of back-and-forth between examining relationships between categories (axial coding) — using the mind-mapping software, *MindNode Pro* and the coding paradigm described by Strauss and Corbin (1994, 1998) — and the abstraction of the categories to a process using the selective coding procedure (see A.26 on page 417). For selective coding, the ‘collection lifecycle’ was used as a metaphor to match the development of the collection to the development of the brand and internationalisation of the enterprise. This approach to analysis connected the everyday process of the research participants — developing a collection — to the ‘big picture’ process of developing a company, and the resulting resources and capabilities utilised in defining the brand identity and internationalising.

After data was gathered in Phase III, it was transcribed and coded. The coding at this phase used a paragraph-by-paragraph approach to mark key concepts. These paragraphs were data-mined for additional properties and dimensions (Table 5.5). This process, coupled with the axial coding, memo-writing, and write-up of the results from the qualitative survey, developed connections between categories, properties and dimensions. Diagramming was also used to understand the relationships between the activity process of developing a collection and the process of developing a brand. This provided the foundation for the resulting theoretical framework.

Collection Lifecycle	Design Activities	Presentation Activities
Business Model	Collection Development	Network
Management	Experimentation	Co-creation: Interaction & Reaction
Approach to Plans & Opportunities	Brand Definition	Network Integration
Sales Activities	Aesthetic Principles	Distribution Activities
Sales Strategy	Production Activities	Internationalisation
Market Positioning	Control	Communication
Identification	Brand Development	Growth
Brand Adjacencies	Adaptation	Establishment

The literature was incorporated throughout data gathering and analysis. At the beginning of the study, the literature was used to define the broad area of inquiry. In the middle, the literature was used to explore the emerging concepts, following paths to brand identity creation (Urde 1994, 1999; de Chernatony 1999, 2001; Ind & Watt 2005; Atwal & Williams 2009) and co-creation (Pralhad & Ramaswamy 2004; Vargo & Lusch 2004; Lusch & Vargo 2006; Payne et al. 2008; Payne et al. 2009; Frow et al. 2011, Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). For internationalisation, literature related to born globals (Bell et al. 2003; Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Cavusgil & Knight 2015) and resources (Barney 1991; Johanson & Vahlne 2009) was incorporated. Finally, at the end of data gathering and analysis, the literature was explored again to compare the data to in-and-out perspectives on brand identity development (Hatch & Schultz 1997, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2010; Urde 2003; 2013) and dynamic capabilities (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Zollo & Winter 2002; Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Teece 2007, 2012; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Ambrosini et al. 2009; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009; Newey & Zahra 2009). The understandings developed from the data and the resulting theoretical framework were then compared to the literature, to situate the findings of the study in context to existing research.

Thus, after completion of Phases I through IV, the concepts and categories were compared to the research literature, and where necessary, re-conceptualised and organised to clarify interpretation and ensure category exclusivity. During this process, the codebook was continually refined to establish accurate definitions of concepts that were mutually exclusive. The concepts and initial categories in the codebook were analysed and revised using the method recommended in Corley and Gioia (2004) and

Altinay et al. (2014). In this manner, the entire codebook was condensed and refined to generate ‘first-order concepts’ (see A.30 on page 446). These concepts were then grouped into broader ‘second-order themes’. This process was similar to the initial grouping of categories, though continually clarified in order to match the refined themes to ‘aggregate dimensions’ identified in the research literature (Table 5.6). For this research, the themes were organised within a hierarchy of capabilities (Ambrosini et al. 2009), fitting with the theory of dynamic capabilities, and within that ranking, matched according to the elements of Urde’s (2013) *Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM)*. Both the elements of brand identity and the hierarchical concepts of dynamic capabilities (operational capabilities, dynamic capabilities and organisational learning) fit most closely with the data to explain the process of brand development and internationalisation in connection with the practices, processes and routines of the DFE. The goal of this process was to conceptualise and relate the categories derived from the data with identified themes from the literature review. In this regard, the internal and external elements of brand identity (Urde 2013) and the concept of dynamic capabilities were useful in conceptualising the process of brand development (brand identity creation) and internationalisation as connected to and embedded in the operational capabilities of the DFE. Furthermore, the development of operational and dynamic capabilities — as well as brand identity — stem from the organisational learning of the enterprise that occurs during routine activities such as product development and internationalisation. This process helped to further

**Table 5.6 Final Categories & Themes**

Collection Lifecycle	Market Positioning	Investment & Finance
Design	Internationalisation	Control
Presentation	Establishment	Experimentation
Sales	Designer Background	Interaction
Production	Influence of Place	Identification
Distribution	Aesthetic Principles	Adaptation
Collection Development	Goals	Organic Growth
Network Integration	Communication	Improvisation
Fashion System	Social Media	Learning & Experience
Support Programs	Media & Editorial	Reflection & Planning
Consumers	Behaviour & Attributes	Decision-making
Brand Adjacencies	Management	Knowledge Integration

integrate the understandings derived from the literature review and refine the theoretical framework.

Phase IV was conducted in the autumn of 2015. It was designed after data analysis of the first three phases and used to complement the theoretical findings with the application of specific concepts to a broader dataset of New York and London DFEs. Phase IV incorporated publicly available information from websites, press and social media. Data gathering and analysis of this phase of the research is discussed in the following section.

### **5.3 Website, Press & Social Media Analysis**

Phase IV was designed and conducted after completing the analysis of the interview portions of the research. This phase of data gathering and analysis aimed to extend the research beyond the interview participant group to verify, test and broaden the findings using a larger dataset. Designing the final phase of research after the completion of the in-depth interview analysis provided an opportunity to theoretically sample a larger dataset of DFEs in an effort to achieve saturation of specific categories. This phase of the research included data gathered from publicly available websites, press and social media sources.

Two options were considered in the design of this phase of research. Originally, it was estimated that a dataset of approximately 60 DFEs (30 from London and 30 from New York) would be examined to explore elements of their brand identity. However, after the completion of Phase III, these categories — the elements designers use to create brand identity — were well saturated. Other than providing case-by-case examples of how DFEs describe their brand identity consistently across websites and social media, conducting Phase IV in this manner would not add significantly to the research results. While case-by-case examples would be interesting, this approach was determined to constrict the research to a descriptive level, limiting the generalisability of the research findings. In addition, the time requirements for this approach conflicted with research deadlines. Given these factors, this option was rejected in favour of a design that gathered data across a greater range of DFEs to explore internationalisation rates, distribution points-of-sale, usage of social media and categories of press. Rather than examining a selected dataset in qualitative depth, the second option would categorise a larger group

of DFEs across a breadth of categories derived from the previous research phases. Additionally, this phase experimentally categorised the dataset of DFEs based on their estimated annual turnover using parameters defined by the interview portions of the research and the Centre for Fashion Enterprise’s (CFE) report (Karra 2008).

The Phase IV dataset is composed of 149 brands (Table 5.7). The database was examined using location and age as primary parameters. Analysis based on location helped identify significant comparisons between London and New York based enterprises. For the age parameter, the entries in the dataset were grouped into five categories of two-year increments. The dataset is divided relatively evenly between brands based in London and New York, and across the firm age range. However, there are significant variations accounting for both firm age and location. Although this dataset is not designed to be an exhaustive survey of all entrepreneurial DFEs operating in either London or New York, the variation in age does highlight potential patterns. In comparison to each other, London DFEs represented in this dataset are weighted towards the younger end of the spectrum. New York DFEs are weighted towards the centre of the age range. This imitates the group of interview participants based in London, which also tended to be younger firms in relation to their New York peers. This may be due to the fact that new labels are featured on the BFC’s London Fashion Week website, which curates a collection of new enterprises each season to be featured in the LFW showroom, in comparison to the CFDA, which operates using a democratic and decentralised approach to its fashion week and did not host a website for the brands showcasing at the various official fashion week events.

The database of designers was compiled using a series of sources. As in the interview portions of the research, to be included in the database fashion labels were required to have launched a womenswear collection between 2005 and 2014. In addition

**Table 5.7 Phase IV Dataset Summary**

	<b>Years</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Year Category 5</b>	2005-2006	9	4	13
<b>Year Category 4</b>	2007-2008	4	18	22
<b>Year Category 3</b>	2009-2010	20	20	40
<b>Year Category 2</b>	2011-2012	23	18	41
<b>Year Category 1</b>	2013-2014	22	11	33
<b>Total</b>		78	71	149



to the designer labels already compiled for the interview portions of the research, other designer labels were added using a database of designers hosted on New York Magazine's fashion and style website *The Cut* which compiles a list of designers showing at various international fashion weeks. This list was sorted to exclude designer enterprises not based in London or New York, those that did not produce a women's ready-to-wear collection, and those not between the founding year range of the study. After refining the list, 78 London designers and 71 New York designers were included in the dataset. Rather than reducing the dataset to a predetermined figure of 60 total designer brands, data was gathered using the entire eligibility list.

Including all of the labels that were identified to be eligible helped to create additional points for comparison. Arbitrarily reducing the list to a pre-determined figure was considered to be unnecessarily limiting. For these reasons, the design of the final phase of research was as inclusive of as many brands identified as eligible. The data gathered from this phase included information that could be quickly collected, categorised and analysed to explore potential overarching patterns of development.

A customised Google survey was used to collect data primarily from the designer labels' websites (see A.12 on page 388). As a data gathering device, the survey easily facilitated the input of data directly into a spreadsheet format. Once gathered, the spreadsheet was prepared and imported into *Atlas.ti* software, which classified each of the brands into groups. Additionally, the spreadsheet was analysed using Apple's *Mac Numbers* application for data that required calculations.

Data gathered included the founding year of the firm, a survey of the website's pages, the text from the 'About' or 'Bio' page, the number of stockists sorted by geographic regions, the social media platforms promoted on the website, a survey of the points-of-sale to determine distribution outlets, a survey of garments to determine the approximate price-range of the collections, the product categories produced, the number of collections produced per year and three examples of press using a *Google News* search of the brand and/or designer name. Information was not always available for all of the categories for each of the labels in the dataset. For example, not all of the brands hosted an e-commerce site that listed their garments and prices, therefore online searches for the label's products were conducted to determine a particular brand's approximate price-

point; sites like *Net-a-porter*, *Gilt Group* and *Matches.com* were used when possible. However, even with additional searches, information for the enterprise was not always available. In these instances they were categorised as 'unknown'. Having 'unknown' factors did not exclude the label from the final dataset, as doing so would diminish the number of labels in the dataset significantly and unnecessarily, especially when brands may not list the number of stockists but have a robust e-commerce website from which to collect data, as an example. A lack of information within one category did not exclude the brand from analysis in categories where information was available. Therefore, brands were analysed and categorised based on the data that was available, with 'unknown' being the default category when a determination could not be made.

A majority of the information gathered was a tally of occurrences of various elements including types of website pages, number of stockists, and the platforms of social media used. Initially, the Google survey was designed to gather more detailed information relating to the garment price-ranges, social media and press of the designers in the dataset. After testing the data gathering on the first 20 designer labels, which served as a pilot, the survey was altered to exclude some information from data gathering and/or analysis as it was onerous and sporadic across the diversity of the dataset.

For example, the price-range of garments originally included the highest and lowest priced garments, the number of garments featured, and the average, median and mode prices. However, this was edited to include only a general average to place the DFE into one of four categories: contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry designer and designer luxury. As a second example, the usage rate of top social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) was to be gathered and analysed according to the frequency of posting and descriptor words used to describe the brand. However, this type of detailed analysis of the social media was determined to broaden the scope of the research, and the data related to this property was reduced to a tally of the types of platforms featured on the brands' websites as either a direct feed, text link or icon link. Finally, a considered approach to the analysis of the press articles included a categorisation of the 'quality' of press outlets, the occurrence of descriptor words used to describe the brand in the press articles, and a survey of the amount of press generated by each brand. However, there was no systematic method for accurately gathering and

analysing the vast amount of press information available, nor a means for categorising data accurately. A *Google News* search is not a sufficiently accurate method for accounting for the amount of press generated in a given time frame, nor a clear accounting of the quality of press a brand generates. Additionally, there was no systematic method for pulling and analysing descriptor words for designer labels on a large scale.

While these types of data would be interesting to explore, creating the framework to explore them accurately within this project is beyond the scope of the research. Therefore, the survey was simplified to conduct a snapshot accounting of the make up of websites, press and social media, not an exhaustive in-depth analysis of each of these elements. The simplification of the survey is in keeping with the aims and objectives of the research project, which is to identify the resources and capabilities of DFEs in the process of brand development and internationalisation. Given that the first three phases of research provided an in-depth view of the DFE, and the elements that influence the creation of the brand identity, the final phase of the research was curated to explore and verify the occurrence of elements related to the distribution of the DFE, such as the types of distribution outlets (boutiques, departments stores, e-commerce, private clients) both domestically and internationally, the usage of social media as part of their communication strategy, and three examples of press. The simplified survey allowed data to be gathered and analysed quickly. The categorisation of brands according to the rate of internationalisation and the occurrence of price-points, product categories and number of collections produced, helped provide an overview of brands operating within London and New York.

However, in addition to the above mentioned issues, this phase of the research is limited by the accuracy of the information posted on the websites and social media platforms. In some circumstances, the websites were not completely up-to-date and lacked information about the current season's collections, perhaps due to a lack of time and resources, or the fact that the label was out of business. Regardless, the information that was available was used in the analysis. The results of this phase of the research can be considered a 'snapshot in time' of information that was publicly available relating to a dataset of London and New York based DFEs.

The database of designers is not designed to be exhaustive or statistically significant, but to qualitatively examine patterns of development in comparison to the interview participant group. Key findings of Phase IV include verification of the multitude of product categories produced, a survey of the number of collections produced by DFEs per year, price-point categorisation of DFEs, usage rates of sales and PR agents using contact details as reference points, a survey of the number of stockists promoted on DFE websites, a survey of the website pages used as part of a brand and communication strategy, a survey of the types of social media used, verification of wholesale and retail distribution options, a categorisation of the rates of internationalisation and the comparison of those between London and New York, a categorisation of the press generated by DFEs, and experimentally, categorisation of the rate of DFE growth as measured by an estimated annual turnover in correlation to other variables. The contribution of each of these findings in relation to the categories properties and dimensions is discussed in the following chapter. The next two sections provide an overview of the participating brands and individuals in the interview portions (Phases I, II and III) of the research.

#### **5.4 Overview of Participating Brands**

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4: Methodology, during the first interview with participants, the individuals were asked to complete a survey that gathered demographic and classifying information (see A.5 on page 368). This information was used to compare across brands to identify patterns and variations. By the conclusion of the study, Phases I, II and III produced 38 interviews with 20 DFEs and four support organisations.

The four support organisations did not participate in the survey portions of the research, which were directed at gathering information for the categorisation of DFEs. However, these support organisations provided much needed background and context for two crucial functions: sales and public relations. The information provided by these firms offered insight not only into the process of sales and PR, but also provided insight into the nature of the web of networked relationships vital to the survival and success of DFEs. Support organisations act as intermediaries between the interest of DFEs, buyers and editors. Within this study, these organisations served as a bridge of understanding

<b>Brand ID</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Support Services</b>
9	New York	Public Relations, Showroom, Sales, Business Consulting
20	London	Business Consulting, Public Relations, Social Media
24	New York	Public Relations, Showroom, Sales
25	London	Public Relations, Showroom, Sales

between the process of brand development, international sales and distribution of brands and products within the global fashion system.

Support organisations provide multiple services to DFEs; an agent may start their company by selling product and then quickly expand into public relations and even business management consulting services. The parallels between sales, PR and business management are illustrated by the fact that these organisations often offer at least two of these services. Indeed, each of the four participating support organisations are characterised by the fact that their firms started within one domain (sales, PR or business consulting) and quickly grew to encompass complementing services.

Of the four support organisations, two were based in London and two were based in New York (Table 5.8). All of these organisations were also founded within the previous ten years, indicating their own entrepreneurship similar to the designer fashion brands they represent. Interviews from the support organisations were transcribed and coded in the same manner as those from DFEs. These interviews were especially helpful in comparing the sales and public relations process to representatives of DFEs who fulfilled the sales and communications functions in-house. In this way, sales and PR agents can be considered external extensions of the DFE.

The oldest DFE participating in the research was founded in 2004 and presented their first collections for the spring 2005 season, while the youngest firms were founded in 2013 and launched their first collections at fashion week in February 2014. The classifying survey gathered information about the individuals participating in the interviews and the brands they represented. Key categorising information included the brand's location, age, number of full-time and part-time employees, estimated annual turnover, international sourcing and selling, percentage of international sales and profitability (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Overview of Participating Designer Fashion Enterprises

Brand ID	City	Year Established	Firm Age (Years)	Full-time Employees	Part-time Employees	Estimated Annual Turnover	% International Sales	Profitable
1	New York	2010	4	4	4	£151 - 250k	<25%	Yes
2	London	2013	1	3	4	< £50K	25% - 50%	Yes
3	London	2013	1	1	3	£51 - 150k	25% - 50%	Yes
4	New York	2008	6	12	8	£2M - 10M	25% - 50%	Undisclosed
5	New York	2008	6	12	5	£2M - 10M	25% - 50%	Undisclosed
6	New York	2010	4	7	4	< £50K	<25%	No
7	New York	2006	8	8	4	£1M - 2M	25% - 50%	Yes
8	New York	2007	7	5	4	£1M - 2M	25% - 50%	Yes
10	New York	2009	5	5	7	£1M - 2M	<25%	Yes
11	New York	2004	9	18	2	£2M - 10M	<25%	Yes
12	London	2006	8	6	5	£501 - 1M	50% - 75%	No
13	London	2011	3	4	4	£151 - 250k	75% - 100%	No
14	London	2011	3	2	3	< £50K	75% - 100%	No
15	London	2011	3	2	3	£51 - 150k	25% - 50%	No
16	London	2013	1	0	1	< £50K	25% - 50%	No
17	London	2013	2	3	2	£51 - 150k	50% - 75%	Yes
19	London	2011	4	3	3	£251 - 500k	50% - 75%	No
21	London	2009	6	10	4	£2M - 10M	50% - 75%	Undisclosed
22	London	2007	8	6	10	£151 - 250k	50% - 75%	Undisclosed
23	New York	2009	6	14	5	£2M - 10M	25% - 50%	Undisclosed

The CFE (Karra 2008) report on the designer fashion economy was also used to categorise the label according to the type of enterprise. The report outlines seven types of DFEs: artisan, creative partnership, solo, designer and business partner, designer and licensing partner, designer and manufacturer, and designer partnership with investor. Within the demographic data survey, interview participants were asked to categorise their firms according to these seven types of DFEs with the additional option of ‘other’ in the event that the respondents didn’t agree with any of the original seven categories (Table 5.10). Five of the twenty respondents indicated that their enterprise did not fit within any of the seven defined categories.

In comparing this response to the interview transcription and the details provided about the composition of the firm and other survey responses about funding sources, three of the five ‘other’ respondents could be classified within the ‘partnership with investor’ category. However, this category may not have been selected since the enterprise didn’t consider the firm to be in a partnership with a formal investor, in that the owner-partnership is with an informal, private investor (family and friends, etc.). Additionally, the seven categories all place emphasis on describing what are ultimately less established organisations, highlighting the placement of the designer within the company. At least two of the ‘other’ responses may have been due to the fact that the organisation is a more established brand within the industry, with the designer taking a less prominent role regarding the overall composition of the organisation in that the enterprise is itself a well known label within the industry. In alignment with this, one respondent explicitly

**Table 5.10 Categories of Designer Fashion Enterprises**

<b>Centre for Fashion Enterprise Category (Karra 2008: 4)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Artisan - Designer driven purely by aesthetic motivation	1
Creative Partnership - Two creative people	4
Solo - Individual designer focused on growth.	6
Designer and Business Partner - One Creative and one business partner	1
Designer and Licensing Partner - Designer under royalty contract	0
Designer and Manufacturer - Designer in contractual agreement with manufacturer	1
Partnership with Investor - Designer in partnership with a formal investor	2
Other	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

stated that the ownership of the company was made up of other individuals, and while the creative director was the 'face' for the label, they were also only employed by the owning individuals. Another respondent explained that they considered the brand to be well regarded within the industry and the owner/creative director was a recognised entrepreneur. Lastly, 'other' may have been a popular response because the categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, in that ownership, funding sources, and composition of the organisation may be made up of multiple variables. Indeed, several of the respondents could be classified under multiple categories depending on the variability, complexity and involvement of the relationships designer-founders develop in order to fund their companies and produce products. In the course of the interviews, several participants indicated that as they grew and needed to source funding to meet market demands, they sought or were seeking investment relationships and partnerships with companies and individuals throughout the industry including manufacturers, formal investment firms and private investors.

These insights highlight the complexity of DFEs operating in London and New York. The categorisation of DFEs participating in the study is in alignment with previously published research. The following section provides an overview of the individuals who participated in the interview portion of the research project.

### **5.5 Overview of Interview Participants**

The interview participants included individuals from diverse personal, educational and experiential backgrounds both within and external to the fashion industry prior to holding their current positions. Their personal stories of their own development and growth provided rich contextual background to the development and growth of the companies they represent.

Overall, 28 individuals were interviewed throughout the course of the project from the 20 DFEs and four support organisations (Table 5.11). The men and women participating in the study, ranging roughly in age between 20 and 50 years old, indicated diverse nationalities including American, British, South Korean, Australian, Canadian, Persian, Spanish and French. Their varied international backgrounds highlight the international nature of the global fashion industry.



**Table 5.11 Interview Participants**

Participant ID	City	Job Title	Brand ID	Number of Interviews
1	New York	Chief Executive Officer	1	3
2	London	Designer & Director	2	2
3	London	Designer & Director	3	3
4	New York	Communications Director	4	2
5	New York	Chief Executive Officer	5	2
6	New York	Creative Director	6	2
7	New York	Designer & Director	7	1
8	New York	Sales Director	4	1
9	New York	Chief Executive Officer	8	2
10	New York	Director	9	1
11	New York	Creative Director	10	2
12	New York	Creative Director	11	1
13	London	Creative Director	12	1
14	London	Creative Director	13	1
15	London	Designer & Director	14	1
16	London	Designer & Director	15	2
17	London	Designer & Director	15	2
18	London	Designer & Director	16	1
19	London	Creative Director	17	2
21	London	Creative Director	19	2
22	London	Creative Director	19	2
23	London	Director	20	1
24	London	Sales Director	21	1
25	London	Communications Director	22	1
26	New York	Communications Director	23	1
27	New York	Creative Director	24	1
28	London	Sales Director	25	1
29	New York	Chief Operating Officer	6	1

The individuals participating in the study all operated at upper levels of management and included the head designers, creative directors, DFE owners, communication directors, sales directors and chief executive officers (CEOs). Additionally the support organisations were represented by upper level managers and owner-directors of their organisations.

On the demographic data survey (see A.31 on page 456) each of the individuals were asked to indicate their professional title in an open-ended question. Many of the participants were creative directors and owners; however, this question produced

a broad array of titles that covered design and other management functions, from creative director to chief executive officer. For simplification and clarification, these titles were edited into broad categories which were not necessarily mutually exclusive, but remained true to the title provided by the individual while allowing for categorisation based on common understanding. The titles indicate a potential emphasis on the role the individual plays in the overall development of the company. The edited titles relating to the designer and/or owners of the enterprises include chief executive officer, designer/director and creative director. Employees of the firm included a creative director (employed head of design), communications directors and sales directors. Within the support organisations, participating individuals included director-owners and sales directors. Several of the participating DFEs included interviews with more than one person at the firm, especially in the case when the firm was headed by two creative directors and classified as a 'creative partnership', or in the case when greater understanding was necessary in comparing brand development to the international sales process.

The variation of the organisations and the individual representatives provided for a broad basis in which to theoretically sample throughout each of the three interview phases of the research. Two of the interview participants, one from London and one from New York, were followed for the full year of data gathering and were interviewed on three separate occasions. Following designers for this extended period of time provided a depth of understanding. In contrast, theoretical sampling was used to pull understanding from multiple types of organisations and the influential individuals within those organisations added breadth to the research. New individuals were introduced to the study at each phase of the research, which, as previously mentioned, was deliberately conducted at specific points within the fashion calendar to coincide with the greatest likelihood of availability of individuals for participation. Individuals introduced to the study at the final phase of interviews provided for an opportunity to verify perviously emerged concepts and themes from other participants. This acted as a starting point for the generalisation of the overall theory. In addition to this, several of the key participants from the second interview phase were invited to participate in an interview in the third phase to re-examine, verify and explore in greater detail the emergent themes they introduced in the

preceding data gathering phase. Following companies for an extended period of time, and also introducing new firms throughout the research process, allowed for an accurate and saturated development of categories, providing a diverse, varied and meaningful theoretical framework.

## 5.6 Category Development

The four interviews from Phase I produced codes that were grouped into preliminary categories. These categories directed data gathering in Phase II. Further data gathered from Phase II introduced questions and concepts explored through constant comparative analysis and intermediate coding to determine a core category. Incorporating the methodology with continual interrogation of the aims and objectives ensured that information gathered during the interviews was leading to theoretical saturation that would complete the objectives of the project, allowing for adjustments to be made as necessary. Each phase of the research provided direction for the subsequent phases, continually progressing toward saturation of the categories and theoretical generalisation. Analysis of the interviews conducted during Phase III, followed by analysis of DFE websites, press and social media platforms of a larger dataset in Phase IV, allowed for the verification and further saturation of relevant categories. This data gathering and analysis procedure was previously discussed in section 5.2 The Research Process. This section provides an overview of the categories as they emerged through the research phases.

The category development table (see A.28 on page 435) incorporates the categories defined throughout the research project across each phase. Phase I introduced broad ideas that were used to direct further questions and research in the second phase. By the conclusion of Phase I, these concepts were expanded into more detail. The initial ideas included the following concepts:

- Photography is a tool used to capture the brand via photographs of the collections;
- The brand is developed organically and instinctively from the background of the designer;
- Internationalisation is 'no different' than any other sales process and is often reactive, instantaneous and necessary for the survival of the firm;

- Networks are influential, but at the firm's outset do not need to be made up of people within the fashion industry because it is the designer's personal network of relationships that help launch the company through financial investment and sincere encouragement;
- Social media is an important communication tool which helps the designer connect not only with product consumers, but more likely with editorial consumers who are avid followers.

All of the DFEs who participated in the first phase of research were in development less than five years. Phase II provided a greater diversity of participants across the ten-year range, and essential detail, variation and depth to the codes during analysis. At one point there was more than 2000 codes between the first two phases of research which were consolidated and grouped into overarching themes without hierarchical importance. As previously mentioned, while ideas for the core category were starting to emerge, such as 'controlling growth', 'intuitive evolution and development' or 'designer background', these were not yet chosen as there were several concepts that didn't easily 'fit' within these themes that would explain as much of the developmental process as possible. For example, the concept of 'controlling growth' didn't explain those participants who were quite reactive to their growth (sales and press) process. Furthermore, relying solely on the designer's background didn't explain how other individuals informed the development of the company once decision-making was spread to other employees. Additionally, the concept of 'the designer' explored the development of the firm from that of the individual, not the enterprise, which is the focus of the study. Although many of the participants described their development as an intuitive process, using 'intuitive evolution' as a core category didn't illustrate *how* specific routines, decisions and reflections came to be considered intuitive.

In short, the original overarching contenders for the core category didn't adequately break down, explain and provide insight into the process of development. In many ways they stopped at a descriptive level of defining the participants' perspectives, without explaining the elements that helped to formulate that perspective. Notable categories from Phase II included: collection development, management resources, brand development, distribution, interaction and communication. The 36 categories in

total provided direction for further analysis of the existing transcripts and future data gathering in Phase III. These categories illustrate the initial structure and organisation of the emerging concepts. The continued analysis of existing data from Phases I and II in comparison to Phase III solidified this structure, leading to the selection of the core category and theoretical saturation. As a complement to the previous phases, Phase IV provided additional dimensions to existing categories. In this context, 'dimensions' refers to the variation in properties of categories. This is in contrast to 'aggregate dimensions' (see Corley & Gioia 2004; Altinay et al. 2014), which are concepts derived from the research literature and used in comparison to the broader themes in the conceptualisation of the research findings.

It was during the process of memo writing, and after the initial analysis of Phase III, that the core category emerged as an explanatory vehicle of the developmental process of the DFE brand in the course of internationalisation. As the core category, the 'collection lifecycle' fits in explaining not only the design, presentation and distribution of the collection for a particular season, but also the 'design', 'presentation', and 'distribution' of the brand on an international scale across seasons. In parallel with product development, brand identity is developed through the negotiation of the DFE within the fashion network. This realisation allowed for the configuration of categories that segmented data at different levels of abstraction, conceptualising the development and growth of the DFE over time.

The delineation of categories, sub-categories, properties and dimensions was configured using both top-down and bottom-up methods, so that unique codes were represented and connected to the basic social process. Once the core category was selected, the details of the mid-range categories and concepts were saturated, creating connections to individual codes that incorporated variation (see A.29 on page 441). Importantly, the 'dimensions' account for the options, activities or decisions DFEs make in the course of collection development and interaction with the global fashion industry.

The organisation of concepts from the interviews, activities and qualitative survey helped to examine the relationship of sub-categories around the core category. Specifically, the levels of categorisation helped explain how different elements interact during day-to-day activities and decision making, illustrating not only the process

of creating a collection but also the process of growth for the DFE. The levels of categorisation align with the hierarchy of capabilities related to the operational routines, dynamic capabilities and organisational learning practices, as well as key elements for DFE brand identity creation (see A.30 on page 446). The following section explains how, as the core category, the collection lifecycle provides a framework for the categories, properties and dimensions.

### 5.7 The Collection Lifecycle

The global fashion system dictates the collection lifecycle process of design, presentation, sales, production and distribution according to the fashion schedule. The enterprise launches with the development of the designer-founder's first capsule collection. Designers begin with what they know and understand: the design process. Their knowledge sometimes does not go beyond the presentation of the initial collection at fashion week, which can be considered the initial 'end goal' of the first collection. However, this is not always the case, as some designers have previous experience within the fashion industry, or initially seek to sell their garments prior to undertaking the expense of a fashion industry catwalk show or presentation.

Regardless, presentation of the collection to the fashion industry network occurs within the timetable stipulated by the fashion system. For example, sales must occur when buyers have access to their full seasonal budget and the portion that is designated as 'open to buy', which is the contingency budget for emerging designers. Additionally, while fashion week is an event increasingly produced to generate enthusiasm among press and the end consumer, the scheduling of sales, fashion week and distribution periods is a consistent system within the industry (CFDA 2016). The short product lifecycle is built around the fashion 'seasons' (Sproles 1981; Jang et al. 2005). The following participant explains:

With the fashion calendar it's all pretty set. It's varied by a couple weeks here and there. But the fashion calendar is what it is. You either have a collection or you don't exist. And you either deliver on time to the stores or you just spent a lot of money, and you're never going to see a return on it. ... Because with the main collections, spring/summer, fall/winter, you only have a five to six week selling period at full price with the department stores before it goes on sale. With the pre-collections you have five months. So in the six years we've

existed, pre-collections have become far more important, not just to the retailers, but also to the designers. So we now all have to do four collections a year (Participant 5).

At the point of ‘presentation,’ through initial interaction within the fashion industry, and the learning and experience it provides, the entrepreneurial DFE begins to develop their own resources and capabilities for the sales, production and distribution processes. Individual capabilities provide opportunities for enterprises to innovate within the industry’s schedule parameters. This is illustrated by the variation among properties and dimensions.

DFEs typically start with the production of two collections per year introduced at New York, London and/or Paris fashion weeks in February/March and September. Once the enterprise has completed the design and presentation portions of their first collection, they begin the design and presentation portions of the second collection during the sales and production periods of the first collection. By the design and presentation of the third collection, DFEs are managing the distribution and sell-throughs of the first collection, and the sales and production components of the second collection. This means that by the initial development of the third collection, DFEs are constantly managing three collections simultaneously, each of which are at various periods of the collection lifecycle (see A.24 on page 415). Therefore, DFEs cannot be considered to be in full operation until the development of their third collection, in which they are working through the entire sales and production periods of the previous two collections. This consideration explains the pattern of buyers and editors providing feedback and encouraging designers with a ‘wait and see’ approach, promising sales and editorial placement in later seasons, as evidenced by the following quote:

And they [buyers and editors] said: “We really can’t do that much for you right now. All we can do is cheer for you. You have something here. You have something great. Develop it, and we’ll be there” (Participant 6).

Within the collection lifecycle, during each of these intervals (design, presentation, sales, production and distribution) there are specific tasks that each DFE manages. These activities remain relatively the same for every DFE, with little variation between firms in terms of tasks necessary to produce product. In other words, DFEs produce collections using a routine of activities. While designers may exhibit slight variations in

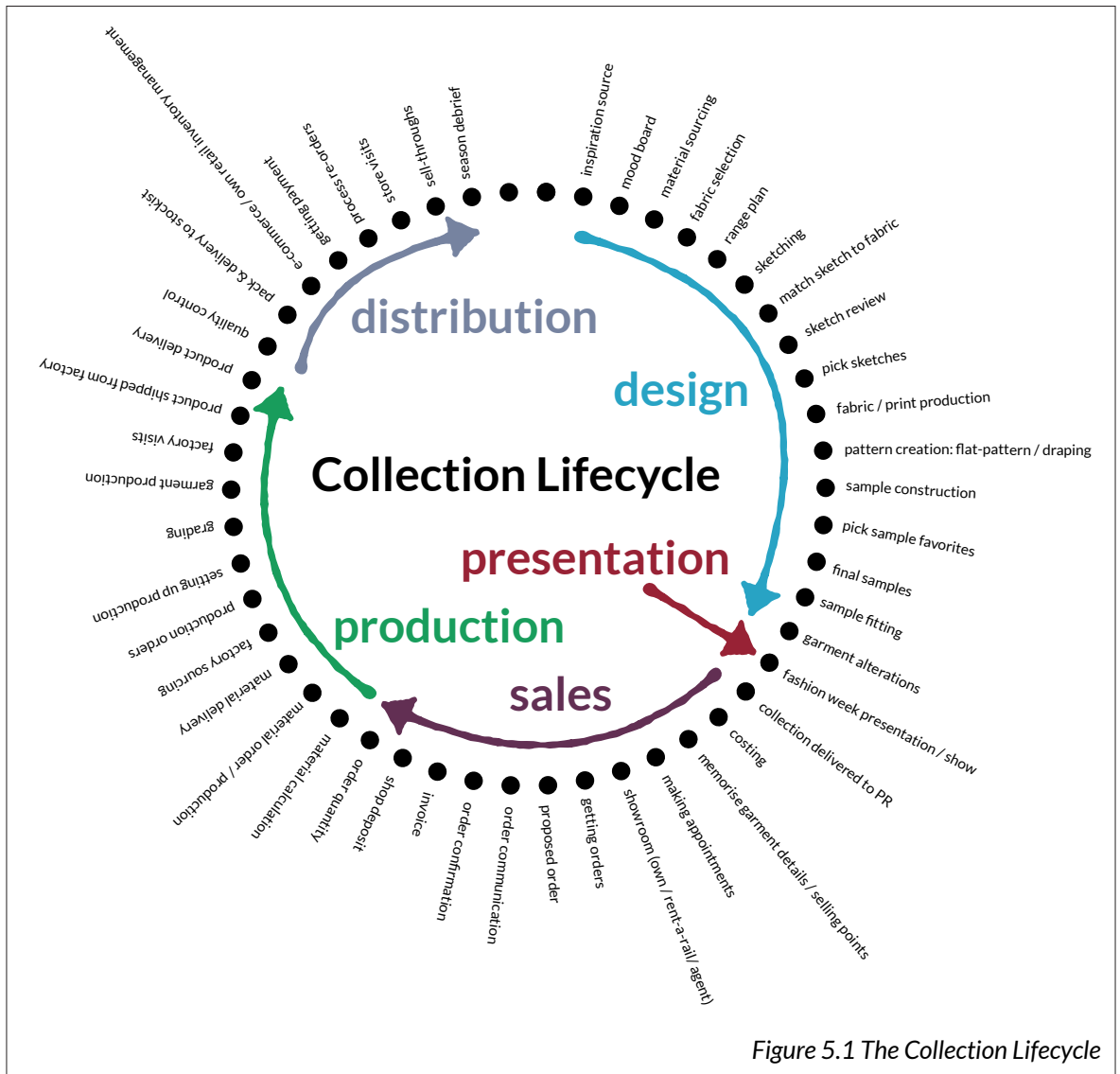
their approach to the process by placing emphasis on certain techniques (for example, preferring draping over sketching within the design process), developing womenswear collections is more or less identical from firm to firm by comparison.

Figure 5.1 shows the tasks of the collection lifecycle grouped according to their segment of the fashion industry schedule. However, due to necessary lead times for some of the tasks, they actually occur at earlier points within the collection lifecycle, so that the management of the design process also includes planning for future segments, including presentation, sales, production and distribution. As DFEs increase resources, their approach to this process becomes more strategic to accommodate and adapt to the additional lead time required to manage the logistics of extra collections per year, new product categories and range plan expansion (increased colour-ways and types of garments). This set of routine tasks — and the organisational learning accrued through repeated iterations of them — provides the foundation for the development and renewal of capabilities and resources integral to product innovation and brand development within the dynamic fashion industry environment. Thus, the collection lifecycle serves as the central connection point between the DFE, its consumers and other stakeholders for both the product and brand, as evidenced by the following quote:

First and foremost, *lets talk about the collection*, lets talk about the fashion. Because it's a visual product. We operate in a visual world. So instantly we can kind of [need to] really *be able to have resources* to kind of *punch home those messages*, to visually *connect with your customer* (Participant 21, emphasis added).

Furthermore, the collection lifecycle serves as a narrative metaphor for the creation of brand identity within the international fashion system. Utilising this metaphor, the categories derived from the data were organised in a matrix, with each category relating to a stage in the collection lifecycle as well as designating a step in the processes of organisational learning, operational and dynamic capabilities. The relationship of the final categories is organised in Table 5.12, which highlights the process of development that occurs at each of the various levels of abstraction and embedded capabilities within the organisation. The categories are laid out here to illustrate the connection between initial concepts and final categories, properties and dimensions.





**Table 5.12 Relationship of Concepts**

Routines / Activities	Operational Resources & Capabilities	Organisational Learning	Basic Social Process: Dynamic Capabilities	Brand Outcome
Design	Collection Development Personality & Culture	Improvisation	Experimentation	Aesthetic Principles
Presentation	Relationships	Learning & Experience	Interaction	Network Integration
Sales	Market Positioning	Reflection & Planning	Identification	Brand Adjacencies
Production	Management Competencies	Decision-making	Adaptation	Control
Distribution	Internationalisation Communication Mission & Vision: Goals	Knowledge Integration	Organic Growth	Establishment

Each of the subsequent sub-sections provides an examination of the day-to-day activities of the collection lifecycle, including design, presentation, sales, production and distribution. Following this analysis, the conclusion of this chapter provides a brief summary related to the research findings.

### 5.7.1 Design

The design process is the first step in product and brand development. Through the design of the collections, decisions are made that, carried over from season-to-season, influence the *design* of the brand.

The design of each collection circulates around a concept which operates as an inspiration source. From this, the designer and design team create a mood board, source materials, select fabrics or develop custom prints and textiles. A range plan is developed to balance the collection among several types of garments: trousers, tops, dresses, outerwear, etc. Following this, the design team enters the sketching process of developing initial garment designs by sketching and/or draping on a dress form, matching sketches to fabrics, reviewing sketches, and picking the final collection of sketches, which are developed into sample garments. During this process, any custom fabric or print productions are produced to be used in the final samples. From the sketched designs, patterns are created using flat-pattern or draping techniques. The samples are constructed often using muslin or toile materials. From these initial prototypes, adjustments are made and the sample favourites for the collection are chosen. The final samples, which will be presented for sales and to the press, are produced. The samples are fitted to models throughout the process. Prior to the initial presentation of the collection, final garment alterations are made, sometimes only moments before the models walk the catwalk.

The following section discusses the presentation of the collection to the fashion system.

### 5.7.2 Presentation

Presentation is the second stage of the collection lifecycle and involves the interaction of the DFE within the fashion industry and their network. Participation at fashion week remains important for the DFE in obtaining sales, developing relationships and generating brand awareness within the industry, in addition to the promotion of the

brand for consumers and media. This section discusses the activities involved for the DFE's participation in fashion week.

Many designers seek to host a catwalk show during fashion week. For these enterprises with limited resources available for promotion and awareness, a fashion show or presentation is their most extravagant and/or only marketing expense. Fashion week is important because it is a visible representation of their involvement within the local (London or New York) and global fashion community, as evidenced by the following quote:

It's crazy, models are like £400 per head. And catwalk you need like ten models at least maybe. And then you have the venue and everything. *I think it's just an expensive way of saying, "I'm still here"*. And I don't know how much affect it has because it's hard to measure (Participant 3, emphasis added).

With the added assistance of emerging designer support initiatives, fashion week incubators and sponsorships, such as NewGen, Fashion East and MADE Fashion Week, DFEs have increasing opportunities to exhibit their collections on a global stage. If the opportunity or resources to produce a catwalk show are unavailable, DFEs can produce smaller 'presentations' that vary in production quality from gallery-like installations to a series of mini-catwalk shows. The least expensive option for exhibiting at fashion week is to host a section of the showroom, or 'rent-a-rail'. Both the presentation exhibitions and showroom options offer designers the opportunity to network with buyers and editors within the industry, in addition to promoting the brand to the consumer market. The following quote discusses how the show provides a venue for expressing the DFE brand, both during the show and online:

I really felt like the casting was, even more this season, like the casting is always really good and diverse racially. But having different body sizes and having the gender spectrum be represented in all of its creations. We had androgynous girl models, transgender models, plus size models, all different races always, *so I felt like it really sent the right message*, and the message that we sort of feel is that [Brand 1] is for all different types of women. And that anyone can be the [Brand 1] girl and *I think that really resonated, especially online*. So that was cool (Participant 1, emphasis added).

Preparation for the fashion week presentation includes finding a venue, renting lights, seating and other equipment, hiring models, makeup artists and hair stylists, designing the 'run of show', music, set and other entertainment, catering, managing the guest list, and promotion of the event, among other tasks. The planning for a catwalk show or presentation occurs months in advance. DFEs may hire a show manager to facilitate the design and execution of the show. Fashion week is an opportunity for interaction and feedback on the collection within the fashion system. Participation at fashion week is an important symbol of involvement within the industry, whether it is conducted as a press and consumer communication tool as part of distribution, or an industry event prior to sales.

The presentation of the brand via fashion week, involvement within support programs, and relationship development as the DFE conducts its day-to-day activities provide an opportunity for interaction and feedback on the collections and brand. The sales process furthers the brand interaction and feedback as the DFE negotiates with buyers, targets specific stockists, determines the price-point segment of the products and identifies the target consumer.

### 5.7.3 Sales

At the third stage of the collection lifecycle, sales primarily relies on the wholesale process beginning immediately following fashion week. Roughly speaking, sales for the distribution of product for the autumn months occurs in March and April, and sales for the distribution of product in the spring months occurs in September and October, six months ahead of when products are designated to be distributed to retail, allowing adequate time for production. Pre-collection sales occurs proportionally in-between those periods. London DFEs may generate sales by exhibiting in a showroom space during Paris Fashion Week. New York market week happens immediately after the official New York Fashion Week, which also overlaps and conflicts with London Fashion Week. New York designers have the added advantage of being able to sell in both New York Fashion Week and Paris Fashion Week, which are the two largest market periods for ready-to-wear designers. For DFEs with developed industry relationships, sales also accrue via private buyer appointments and on-going communication throughout the fashion calendar. For a particular collection, the wholesale period will last about a month.

The sales activities begin with costing of the garments. In some cases, the samples presented during fashion week are used on the sales rack for buyers to examine. A majority of sales are made as a result of a closely networked group of buyers, sales agents and showroom managers, and previously arranged appointments. In addition to managing sales in-house, other options for the wholesale process include contracting with an agent that takes a percentage, or ‘renting-a-rail’ within a showroom.

If the enterprise is selling via an in-house sales director or via a contracted showroom or sales agent, the designer and/or design team may present the collection to the salesperson explaining the garment details such as fabric, stitching, haberdashery and/or fit details. The details are then ‘translated’ into selling points used to pitch the garments to potential buyers, as the following quote illustrates:

Before market, I have the collection manager — [the designer’s] righthand — I have her come and talk to us about the fit of the garments or the fabric. So what’s special about each piece. And then we take that information and we make it more into a sales way ... As a consumer, you’re like: “I don’t care that this has 20% wool, but you know what I do care about, is that it’s really shiny and I can wear it day-to-night”. So it’s those types of points that you’re going to care about as a consumer and a buyer, not the technical. So it’s changing that technical into a sales strategy (Participant 8).

After the sample garments are used for sales, they are delivered to the PR agent for in-season promotion of the collection to press to encourage end-consumer sell-throughs.

During sales appointments, the potential buyer views the collection and, if choosing to place an order, initiates a negotiation process. Buyers may ask for additional discounts and stipulate delivery requirements. All aspects of production and delivery can be negotiated at this point in the process, from requesting alterations, exclusivity of garments or new designs, to packaging, shipping and delivery of the collection. The more desirable the retailer, the more power the buyer has during the negotiation process. This negotiation process is also an opportunity for the DFE to seek beneficial terms, such as relaxation of the delivery schedule, assistance with packing or shipping expenses, a deposit on the order to cash flow the production costs, and/or a suspension of any additional expenses typically required of larger brands (especially distributed within department stores). The power of the DFE and/or its sales agent within this process

depends upon their reputation within the industry, the desirability of the brand and/or its demonstrable consistency with sell-throughs. Over time, as the brand grows, the DFE's power increases within sales negotiation.

The negotiation process is an opportunity for each party to achieve a mutually acceptable transaction. Once the buyer chooses to place an order they submit a proposed order which is then communicated to the DFE (if the order is being placed via an external agent). The order is then confirmed. Buyers may place orders for more product than they intend to follow through with, so orders must be confirmed prior to undergoing the expense of production. Once the order is confirmed an invoice is delivered to the buyers and a shop deposit is received. Order confirmation is an iterative process, in that orders must be approved by both the buyer and the DFE. If there are not enough orders placed for a particular garment and/or style to meet production minimums, then the item will fail to go into production.

Orders must also be calculated for the DFE's e-commerce or own retail shop, should they also sell directly to the consumer. Collectively, the decisions made to navigate the sales activities create the market positioning of the brand. In the words of one participant: 'Without sales you're not a full brand' (Participant 6). Once the quantity for each garment style is calculated and confirmed the collection can go into production.

#### **5.7.4 Production**

Production is the fourth stage of the collection lifecycle and is defined by the activities of manufacturing the products and the decisions related to where, who and how those products are manufactured. Through interaction, the presentation and sales processes provide feedback that can be incorporated into future decisions about the design of the collections, brand development and international distribution opportunities. The DFE's reaction to interactions with the industry and market generates adaptation and alignment of the brand in preparation for distribution and growth. This section presents the data related to the activities and routines of the production process. Throughout the production process, decisions are made in relation to the selection of factories, adaptation of garments based on buyer's requests, and quality control.

The choice of where to produce — locally, domestically, internationally in Europe or Asia — all carry various meanings that can influence brand image either within

the industry and/or consumer market. Europe is known for high quality, ‘luxury’ manufacturing, although high quality manufacturing can also be achieved elsewhere. Domestic manufacturing in either the US or UK patriotically supports the local economy, provides ease of access for production management, typically requires lower production minimums, and reduces shipping and travel expenses, but at the same time can require higher per-garment costs (and justify a higher price), as evidenced by the following quote:

Everything is made in the UK, yeah. And it’s quite challenging, because obviously there are people competing overseas where obviously it’s a lot cheaper to get things made, but we have avoided that. And that’s part of our sales pitch. “Everything is made in the UK” and what we’ve found is that, there are customers that are— like, the industry likes it. They love that story. So in the showroom when they buy it wholesale, they love that. Customers don’t seem so fussed. They just care about what it’s made of and if its well made... We’ve had this feedback from our clients as well... As long as it seems to be made of something beautiful and really, really well made, that seems to really be the focus. Because ultimately it can be made anywhere as long as it’s done really, really well (Participant 24).

The decision of where to produce also depends on the skills (language, cultural and sourcing capability) of the designer or production manager to find factories throughout the global supply chain that can produce products for the correct price, quality, deadline and minimums. Additionally, the ethics of where garments are produced is also a concern, ensuring fair wages and working conditions of the factory workers.

The production activities begin with sourcing of factories and manufacturers. This step is often done during the design process or carried over from previous seasons. It is beneficial that the manufacturer(s) of the collection be confirmed prior to costing in order to determine accurate wholesale and retail prices for the garments. Otherwise, a rough estimate of the garments will be used for costing and a factory will be sourced just prior to production. Some DFEs outsource sample-making to the manufacturer. This provides accurate product costing prior to sales and allows the manufacturer to test the production process for the garments, working out any logistical issues.

The materials required for production can be calculated immediately following the confirmation of order quantity for each garment of the sales process. The patterns are

also graded to account for each of the sizes of the garments ordered. Once the materials are calculated, a fabric order is placed and the materials are shipped either directly to the factory or to the DFE which then delivers them to the factory. The DFE places the final production order with the manufacturer(s).

Many of the research participants discussed how they worked with more than one manufacturer for several reasons, including the fact that many manufacturers concentrate within one particular garment type or product category, or in an effort to spread risk in the event that something in the production process goes wrong. More than one manufacturer may be used to assess different working relationships and production qualities with different factories, accommodate range plan diversity (ordering tops from one manufacturer, dresses from another, outerwear from a third, etc.), and/or as contingency in case one manufacturer fails to meet deadlines or quality standards. Providing a factory with a selection of the collection to produce is a way to 'test' the relationship in an effort to build trust, protecting against potential negative consequences (Gander & Rieple 2002; Gander et al. 2007). After several seasons, the DFE builds a portfolio of factories for the production of different products. Consistency within the manufacturer relationship provides the DFE greater leverage to produce products according to deadlines, specifications and pricing, with advantageous payment options.

Once the factory orders are confirmed and the materials delivered, the factory will begin setting up production, sometimes producing 'first-offs' to work out any last remaining alterations or quality control issues prior to the entire run of production being manufactured. During the production process, the designer, design team and/or production manager may visit the factory to supervise the production of the collection. Once the garments are produced they are either checked at the factory, or shipped to the DFE or a third party warehouse to be examined for quality control.

DFEs may conduct either spot checks of ten percent of final products through to 100 percent quality control at either the manufacturer, studio or a third-party pack-and-ship warehouse. Smaller DFEs often undertake 100 percent quality control, examining every garment to ensure zippers, buttonholes, embellishments, pockets, individual stitches and garment details are fabricated to the highest standards.



The production process also involves adaptation, in which products may be altered at the requests of buyers or to reduce production costs. Buyers may request minor adjustments during the sales process such as length, sleeve or colour adaptations for specific garments, as evidenced by the following quote:

With [mass retailer], they definitely had some thoughts on like adjusting our designs to fit their customers and stuff. I wouldn't necessarily call that a collaboration. It's more like we developed this diffusion line and they bought it for their store  
(Participant 1).

Additionally, stockists may negotiate for exclusive products to be sold in their store only, requiring the DFE to either limit production of an existing garment style, or design pieces specifically for a particular retailer. This may occur within the current season or in planning and negotiation for future seasons and long-term relationships. Related to this, adjustments may be made based on sales feedback from previous seasons' sell-through data, as the following participant explains:

So we kind of provide information everyday. And at the beginning, if you're a small designer you want to know how it's going. When you're built up structure, you need the orders because you need to start planning your production and get the feedback, and modifications, saying: "Okay, this we need to change". And plan your business going forward. So that's how we plan it (Participant 28, sales agent).

All of these are dimensions of how products are adapted to fit with market opportunity. Once the garments are shipped from the factory and checked for quality control the distribution process begins.

### **5.7.5 Distribution**

The final segment of the collection lifecycle is distribution, the point at which the DFE experiences growth through the retail sales of products and the symbolic consumption of the brand. The DFE has several options for distribution of products via private clients, wholesale and retail channels.

Private clients are consumers who place orders during the wholesale period. They offer the DFE an opportunity to garner a consumer following within the earliest stages of development, providing a sustainable avenue towards profitability and sales consistency,

especially during the first three to four seasons when stockists are more likely to take a ‘wait and see’ approach.

For most DFEs, a majority of sales are garnered via wholesale channels, including boutiques or speciality shops, department stores and online outlets such as *Net-a-Porter*. In preparation for wholesale distribution, the collection can be shipped directly from the factory to the stockists, delivered to the DFE, or dispatched to a third party packing and shipping facility. It is at this point that the e-commerce or own retail shop inventory is managed in the direct-to-consumer operations that the enterprise may oversee.

Some DFEs start with, introduce or seek to develop retail sales via their own e-commerce, a flagship (boutique) store, pop-up shops (Surchi 2011), and/or operating their own multi-brand retail store. Operating their own retail shop, whether online or through brick-and-mortar channels, provides direct consumer feedback which informs future design decisions, as evidenced by the following quote:

The store is a really important interface for the design aspect of the collection. Because a: you have things that sell well and don't sell well. We also have— people can identify the holes for you. Like: “God, I wish this coat came in a thick fabric”. Or: “I'd love this dress if it was a top”, and then all of a sudden you have your next piece. So, you know, so. I try — like I say — to edit more so than design. And the information that informs that process usually comes from the sales floor (Participant 7).

For wholesale distribution, once the collection is delivered to the stockists, the DFE invoices for payment for any remaining balance on the wholesale cost of the collection. Although rare, a stockist may request re-orders for best sellers or stock-swaps with other stockists for items that don't sell as anticipated within a given market.

Department stores and influential boutiques provide validation of the DFE's integration into the fashion industry, but a majority of sales and profit may be achieved through smaller boutiques, as explained by the following participant:

If you think about someone who has 70 stores, 30 of them you might know. But the rest might be some random little stores, but that's actually what makes the money. And you can refuse it. And it's all really nice and dreamy in the beginning to say: “Oh, I got this, I got this”. But you have two great stores and they add up to £3000. So you have to be a bit more realistic about it (Participant 19).

The distribution activities allow the DFE an opportunity to interact with the end consumer or at least the sales personnel selling the collections on the shop floor. It is during this time that the designer will visit key stockists in order to educate the shop assistants about the label and collection in order to generate excitement and encourage the promotion of the designer and garments to the end consumer. Larger brands offer remarkable incentives at the major department stores, whereas smaller entrepreneurial labels rely on the excitement of being a new, independent label. While incentives from larger labels may be vacation packages or financial bonuses, designer fashion SMEs offer sales associates newsletters detailing the brand and garments, small gifts (accessories, key chains or garments), and/or privately hosted dinners to encourage sell-throughs.

Regardless of distribution channel, *sell-throughs* to the end consumer are imperative as they establish a pattern of consistency and longevity (Jang et al. 2005). It typically takes at least three seasons for a stockist to get an accurate read on the saleability of a collection. For example, a stockist may purchase a spring-summer collection in September, which is delivered in February at the same time as the autumn-winter collections are presented, when they will purchase the second collection. It is not until the presentation of the third collection in which the complete sell-through data of the first collection is generated. By the third season, depending on the achievement of a favourable sell-through rate (generally, at least 60-70 percent at full retail price, greater than 75 percent for department stores or online), the buyer may choose to maintain a relationship with the DFE. The key to generating a high sell-through rate is to deliver product to the stockist by distribution deadlines in order to ensure the maximum amount of time on the shop floor prior to scheduled sales reductions for the season.

Sell-throughs provides consumer data, design feedback based on what sells and what does not, and validation for other stockists who may be interested in retailing the brand but hesitant to take a risk. The DFE's success is measured by their sell-through rate, as evidenced by the following quotes:

*The end goal is to push sales.* I mean, you can get all the press in the world that you want, but if it's not helping sales, then we're not doing our job effectively. *We want to push*— if we had a choice to send a dress [for editorials] that's made and hitting markets or sending a dress that is not being sold. You know, we only use those pieces that aren't being sold if we're completely out of everything else, and it's something to just help brand

awareness. But you know, if we had the choice, *we'd always be pushing what customers can buy* (Participant 4, emphasis added).

I always have this conversation with a friend of mine who's in press, and she ... always says to me: "How do you measure success in fashion?" And obviously, for my job, I would not be in the right job if I didn't say that *it boils down to the numbers* (Participant 24, emphasis added).

Even within wholesale channels the DFE is responsible for ensuring that a significant portion (at least 60 to 75 percent) of products sell-through at full retail price. Once the final sell-through report for the season is compiled, the designer reviews the process and/or success rate of the collection in a season debrief with the design team, PR and sales agent, and/or network of buyers to make adjustments, changes and improvements for future collections.

Navigation of the distribution process — meeting deadlines, encouraging and monitoring sell-throughs and incorporating sales data — generates capabilities that the DFE can execute and adapt to facilitate growth. The following section presents a conclusion of the initial research findings.

## 5.8 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the classifying information for the interview participants and the database of entrepreneurial DFEs used in Phase IV. Care was taken to ensure that participants for the interviews and dataset were chosen based on meeting standardised criteria to ensure accurate generalisation of data across the participant group. While the criteria was designed to clearly define the participant group, it did not overly simplify the sources of data gathering, ensuring that diversity was built into the participant pool across a range of firm age, location and aesthetic positioning. This helped to build in variation into the theoretical model derived from the data and generalise the theory to a broader group of entrepreneurial DFEs.

This chapter explained the process of data gathering and analysis throughout the research phases. It provided a summary of the dataset used for participant recruitment and data gathering in Phase IV. Following that, the participant brands and individuals were introduced in a general review of demographic characteristics. Finally, this

chapter introduced the organisation of categories as they emerged, connecting them to their arrangement around the core category, along with an analysis of the stages of the collection lifecycle of design, presentation, sales, production and distribution. Overall, this chapter provides a basis for the research analysis, theoretical development and integration of the results with the literature, which is presented in the following two chapters.



## Chapter 6: Research Analysis

### 6.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter provided an overview of the research participants, brands and database used for data gathering, and presented the category findings as they emerged through the research process. Continuing the discussion of the research findings and analysis, this chapter presents key insights connecting product development routines to elements of brand identity.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the data that serves as a foundation for the theoretical framework. It provides a detailed analysis of the sub-categories, properties and dimensions that explain the development of entrepreneurial designer fashion enterprises (DFEs). Each of the sections incorporate incident examples from the data sources (in-depth interviews, fashion week observations, activities, surveys and online) to provide a rich contextual background for theoretical development. The quotes provided from the in-depth interviews are not an exhaustive representation of all of the dimensions; they do not serve as a tally of every incident, but serve as insights into concepts and meanings related to the subject category. The data analysed in this chapter collectively provides evidence of concepts in relation to the core category, and brand development and internationalisation processes.

As the core category, the collection lifecycle can be descriptively defined as the process of creating collections from initial product design through distribution to the end consumer. The collection lifecycle follows the path each collection takes from conception

through final distribution. Utilising the collection lifecycle as a metaphor, theoretical insights were derived from a deeper analysis of the teleological process DFEs experience to create brand identity (Bacharach 1989; Forsgren 2002). Because the DFE builds the business through the continual development of the collection, the previous chapter provided an analysis of product development routines structured around each step of the collection lifecycle: design, presentation, sales, production and distribution. Immersed in these day-to-day activities are operational resources and capabilities related to the process of brand development. Embedded in these operational capabilities, dynamic capabilities and organisational learning processes influence the elements of brand identity (Luo 2000; Zahra & George 2002; Morgan et al. 2003; Reid et al. 2005; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Ambrosini et al. 2009; Pandza & Thorpe 2009; Urde 2013). As such, the elements of brand identity and related product development (operational) resources and capabilities are analysed in this chapter, while the next chapter integrates the processes of organisational learning and dynamic capabilities that emerge from and are embedded in the processes of the DFE to holistically develop brand identity. Therefore, this chapter examines the properties and dimensions that form the foundation for the theoretical framework, analysing the development of collections through the concepts, interactions and decisions that ultimately influences brand development. This provides a starting point for the conceptualisation of connections between branding and internationalisation capabilities. The analysis will show how, through the continual development of collections and interaction within the global fashion system, the DFE brand is created. The process of brand development can be explained as a complex interaction between the DFE, their stakeholder network and the fashion system to create an alignment of capabilities and resources.

This perspective is in keeping with Urde's (2013) *Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM)*, which delineates the internal and external elements of brand identity. In alignment with these elements, the sections of this chapter relate the resources and capabilities of the DFE to each brand identity element. These elements serve as aggregate dimensions in the analysis of the concepts and categories. As previously mentioned, 'aggregate dimensions' are concepts identified in the research literature that align with the categories and themes emerged from the data (Corley & Gioia 2004; Altinay et al.



2014). In contrast, 'dimensions' indicate variation within properties of categories (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Therefore, the properties and dimensions of each data category are discussed within each section identified by the aggregate dimension of Urde's (2013) CBIM.

In the analysis, each element of the CBIM is matched with corresponding themes from the data, beginning with the value proposition and properties that define the collection development category. Then, the relationships of the DFE are presented in the categories of network integration, consumers, the fashion system, support programs and brand adjacencies. The section examining the position of the DFE is broken down into categories of market positioning, internationalisation and establishment within the global fashion system. The 'value proposition', 'relationships' and 'position' aggregate dimensions are all external reaching elements of brand identity. Next, the personality of the DFE brand is examined, utilising the designer's background and influence of place. At the centre of the brand is its core values, defined within the DFE as 'aesthetic principles'. Following this, the expression of the brand is represented by internal and external communication and its subcategories: social media, website pages, media and editorial. The 'personality', 'core' and 'expression' aggregate dimensions are all internal and external elements of brand identity. Subsequent to this, the brand's mission and vision are analysed using a series of goals, while the concept of culture is examined through behaviours that provide the DFE brand with its authenticity. Finally, the competencies that facilitate the creation of the DFE's brand are illustrated within management practices, including in-house and out-sourced resources, investment and finance, and control in the production and distribution of both product and brand. In closing, this chapter highlights significant conclusions from the data analysis in preparation for construction of the theoretical framework.

The analysis will connect the elements of brand identity to the collection lifecycle, illustrating how it is the basis for the business model. Throughout the course of developing collections, specific decisions are made to identify signature facets of the brand, introduce it to the network, and nurture distribution to the end consumer. Therefore, each of the following sections discusses the variation of decisions executed during each interval of the fashion schedule and the related capabilities that develop the

brand and facilitate international growth. The next section discusses the relationship between the brand’s value proposition and the development of the collection.

### 6.2 Value Proposition: Collection Development

The value proposition is constructed from the collection development capabilities, specifically the definition of product categories, signature pieces, a range plan, product positioning, the use (or not) of a muse, and the number of collections produced per year. Designing a collection generates a series of decisions that collectively create definition for the brand. In the words of one participant: ‘That first collection set the DNA for the brand’ (Participant 5). These decisions formulate collection development capabilities, which begins to take shape from the design of the ‘capsule’ collection. The components of collection development are discussed in the following six sub-sections.

#### 6.2.1 Product Categories

A product category designates the type of merchandise produced by the DFE. Womenswear, menswear, shoes, handbags, cosmetics, accessories, lingerie and swimwear, evening-wear, outerwear and fashion tech were identified as product categories during the first two phases of interviews. Additionally, the DFE may expand outside of the fashion industry into ‘lifestyle’ categories, including objects, arts, home and interior design products. The DFE may produce within multiple product categories, or take a

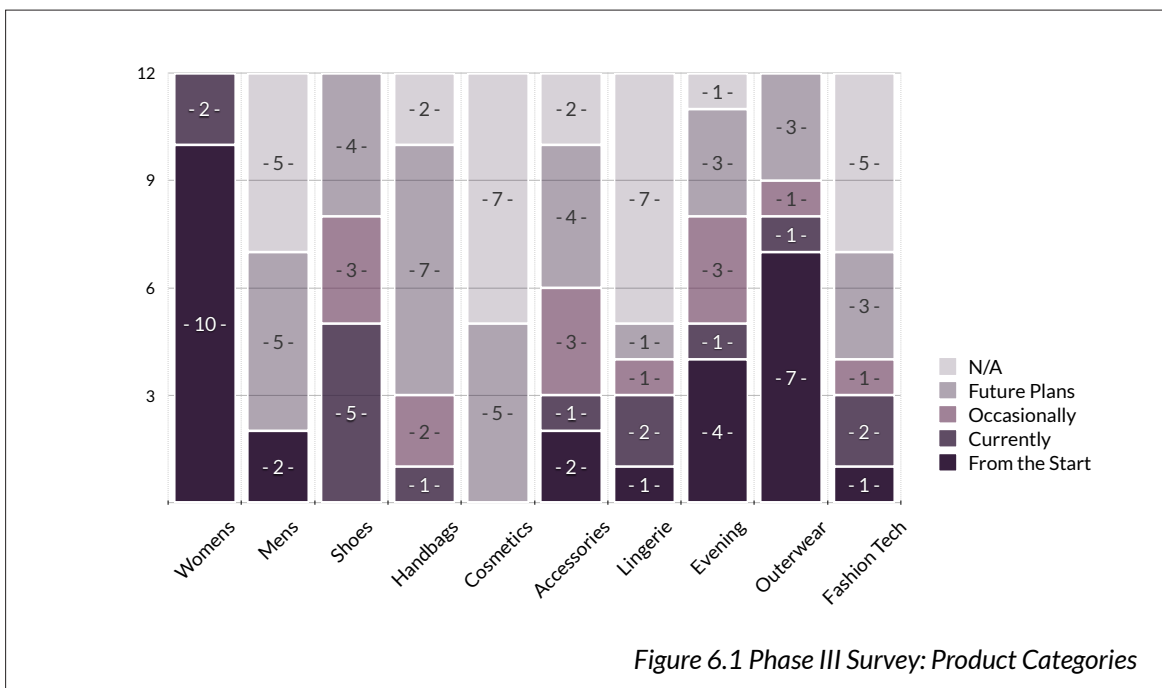


Figure 6.1 Phase III Survey: Product Categories

targeted approach. The type and number of products also changes over time, as DFEs may manufacture ‘from the start’, ‘currently’, ‘on occasion’, ‘in the future’, or have no future plans to produce within specific categories.

The qualitative survey participants in Phase III were asked to identify the fashion product categories in which they produced garments (Figure 6.1). While all of the participants within the study were required to currently produce a womenswear collection, many of the participants indicated that they produced product within additional product categories from the start. The two most notable product categories, in addition to womenswear, are evening-wear and outerwear, which are less resource-intensive extensions of a womenswear line. However, handbags and shoes require different design skills, expertise and resources in comparison to garment production. The ‘accessories’ product category includes belts, scarves, small leather goods and jewellery.

For comparison to interview participants, Phase IV included an examination of online collection photographs and/or e-commerce shops to gain understanding of how many product categories the larger population of DFEs within the dataset produced (Table 6.1).

Producing in more than one product category indicates how relatively easily DFEs are able to expand their product offering through external manufacturing via the fashion system’s network of factories that specialise in various product types and materials. Extending into multiple product categories illustrates the aesthetic of the label and the existence of a clear identity that is cohesively demonstrated throughout. Some DFEs may

Product Category	Dataset Percentage
Womenswear	100%
Outerwear	42%
Accessories	32%
Evening	18%
Shoes	13%
Handbags	12%
Menswear	10%
Objects	3%
Fashion Tech	2%

launch within a single product (t-shirts, for example) and then expand into a full range within a product category (a full womenswear line) and/or expand into other adjacent categories (accessories or shoes). Others may begin with a full range within a product category and expand from there. Outerwear, evening-wear and accessories are examples of adjacent categories to womenswear, allowing for an ease of product extension. Expanding from womenswear into handbags or shoes may require the sourcing of additional factories that are capable, whereas outerwear and accessories (such as scarves) may be able to be produced within the currently contracted manufacturers.

One approach for testing the introduction of a new product category is to introduce a limited run of the items 'on occasion'. This means that the enterprise may introduce a small shoe line, for example, that coincides with the collection of a particular season. The enterprise may produce items every other season, only when resources allow, or when it is necessary to illustrate a particular concept for a specific season's collection. Producing product 'on occasion' is a means of experimenting to identify a consumer market for product category expansion.

Additionally, DFEs may introduce new product categories via short-term creative collaborations or long-term (exclusive) diffusion lines with retail partners. A diffusion line is a range of products produced at a lower price-point (and production quality) in comparison to the primary collection. It is targeted at the mass consumer market and is often distributed through larger, 'fast-fashion' retailers. These lines provide a secondary source of revenue that may support the main product offering:

We're trying to develop ... our lower-priced diffusion line ... and it's still just sort of a baby project. [A major chain retailer] picked it up last season and that was cool. But yeah, I would love something that people could afford. But I would also love to work with really strange materials that are hard to find and do some really crazy shit that takes like 20 hours to build. I would love to do both. So we're trying to strive towards that. Bringing [Brand 1] up and bringing [the diffusion line] more out into the open (Participant 1).

A diffusion line is a long-term secondary collection to the main collection, targeted for distribution to a larger consumer group. Producing diffusion lines for distribution through major retailers increases brand awareness. Similar to this is a short-term,

temporary (limited number of seasons) collaboration that operates as a one-time project in partnership with a specific mass retailer.

Regardless of the product category, the DFE may introduce new product categories and then pull back on the production of those if there are not sufficient resources to allow for the continued support of those products. Part of the experimentation process of the firm is to identify the right fit of product category for the brand's stockists, the firm's resources and its future goals. Launching with too many product categories, or expanding too quickly, creates challenges, as evidenced by the following quote:

I started doing all of them ... I was insane. And I did that for quite a while. I did shoes. I did wearable shoes. I did two types of shoes. I did couture-y shoes then wearable shoes. Couture-y clothes and wearable clothes. Then I did like couture jewellery, like big like crazy pieces, and wearable jewellery (Participant 15).

While these enterprises see opportunity for growth into multiple product categories, the introduction of new product categories is entirely dependent on their capabilities and resources for management and production. The decision to extend into new categories depends on resources and the image created by the current products, as explained by the following quote:

There are so many more factors that go into designing, then just the handbag. And I think the handbag— that is always the piece of the puzzle that completes the look. And completes [the designer's] overall vision. It's sort of that focal piece. And also, when you create— when you do this branding and you do the clothes, a lot of people aren't going to invest in a top or dress or things like that, because you can only wear it X amount of times. But a handbag is something that you wear EVERY day. So the way you do your handbag sales, is not only just off of the luxury customers, but also you have an aspirational customer that is coming to you. So you have to create this image, this fantasy for that customer (Participant 8).

Within product categories, DFE brands become recognised by their signature pieces, which is the cornerstone of their value proposition.

### 6.2.2 Signature Pieces

Over time, DFEs become known for producing ‘signature pieces’. These are product types that help define the aesthetic of the brand through repeated silhouettes, materials and details. Silhouettes define the shape of the garment, materials refer to textiles, and details designate specific elements, such as embellishments or hardware. Any or all of these may define a ‘signature look’ for products. Table 6.2 provides evidence for the emergence of *signature pieces* within the data.

Signature pieces are not solely determined by the designer, but are selected based on experience and feedback from stakeholders, primarily: buyers, editors and consumers. The key products take time to discover through interaction within the industry over multiple seasons. As they are identified and repeatedly incorporated into the collections season after season, signature pieces assist in the formulation of the range plan.

**Table 6.2 Evidence of Signature Pieces**

<i>Repetition</i>	‘We’d like to become known for certain things. And we repeat those things over and over. Of course we tweak them. But if you look at Chanel for example, they became, they’ve got a number of icons, but just to use one, the tweed jacket is something that they’ve become known for since Coco Chanel started that. And you know, when things work, we repeat them over and over, we tweak them, and people become associated with— people associate those design details with your brand’ (Participant 12).
<i>Intentionality</i>	‘I intentionally include some pieces from previous seasons. For example, this top is in SS14 but I also included it in AW14. One of the reasons is that the first collection was barely seen and sold. So if you like something very much then it’s kind of a shame to throw it away. You know, and then I included it again and more people loved it’ (Participant 3).
<i>Formalisation</i>	‘Sitting down and kind of brainstorming, you never really formalise exactly what you are until you start being what you are. And I always used to smile when we would get into our first season, and we would have people come up to us and ask, “So what are your signatures?” And we’d go like, “That takes a while to develop”’ (Participant 21).
<i>Discovery</i>	‘We’re still in that process. 100 percent. Yeah, there’s nothing concrete about what we do or how we do it. It’s like the office is going to look totally different in six months by the way. It’s constantly evolving. And we find that until we find that signature piece that sells 3000 units every season. We’re going to constantly be evolving in that way’ (Participant 6).
<i>Focus</i>	‘Focused as in ... it’s more like when you start you have all these ideas. And you can do it this way or that way, you can do textile experiments, or colours or whatever. And then as you go, you realise that okay we’re not monochromatic brand. Things like that— you just become more focused. You know that this is what you’re going to do. The same with texture. Silhouettes. Things like that’ (Participant 19).

### 6.2.3 Range Plan

The range plan outlines the number and type of products produced within a collection. It is used to generate consistency of the collections throughout the seasons and achieve unity and balance among garment types, styles and options within the current season. It can be either implemented as a planning tool, accounting for various types of garments, colour options and fabrics that must be included, or it can be constructed during the design experimentation process as samples are approved or rejected.

As a strategic tool, the range plan can assist with achieving resource efficiency, such as ensuring that ordered fabric minimums will be used up by incorporating the fabric throughout several garment types (tops, jackets, skirts and trousers, for example). It may also be deliberately used to incorporate feedback from previous seasons' sales data within debriefing meetings between the design and sales team:

We have these really epic meetings. And sometimes it takes two to three meetings to really convince a designer. It's like sort of being a parent in a sense, where you don't want to, you don't want to interfere too much. You want to inform without scolding. But at some point you do have to put your foot down and be like: "This isn't working, you need more", or, "This is complicated", or, "You need to try something new", or, "We have to start over". Whatever the case may be. But we have these kind of epic meetings and wrap ups. And our criticisms are usually congruent with the sales numbers or growth of the brand and placement per season (Participant 27).

Sales data from previous seasons can provide guidance for which garments to repeat and which to eliminate, or which types of products or product categories may prove advantageous for extensions. Range planning may or may not formally take place. A formal range plan is a tool used to design around and may be introduced as the DFE takes a more deliberate approach to their design process and business model. The range plan balances the collection as a whole, ensuring that the season's 'concept' is reflected throughout each product. The range plan helps to illustrate the brand identity within the seasonal collections, as evidenced by the following quote:

If you're not crystal clear on and solid about and strong about [your identity], it will fragment and it will show. And it will show in the collection and it will show when you're presenting the collection, and when people are talking to you about it (Participant 21).

But not all DFEs utilise a range plan deliberately, and the collection achieves its cohesiveness through the design experimentation process. The iterative process of selecting products in comparison to each other may produce a range of garment types and styles, which are then cross checked to ensure sufficient saleability. For example, constructing light weight garments for warmer climates and coats and jackets for cooler climates.

The *range* describes the different types of garments within a season's collection, including new designs and repeated signature pieces. The range plan may also include variations in products based on target audiences, such as garments constructed for publicity during fashion week in comparison to garments designed for their commerciality to the end consumer, as evidenced by the following quote:

I think we do have to think with two minds. I think we do have to think differently when we're making things that people will want to buy, versus making things that will change the future of fashion. Because they're not the same. No one wants LED jackets yet. No one wants, all this real, crazy stuff. Because it's not comfortable. So it's two different minds for us  
(Participant 1).

The repetition of products and the consistency of the range plan throughout the seasons, including the commerciality and conceptuality of the collections assists in the definition of product positioning.

#### 6.2.4 Product Positioning

The aesthetic positioning of the products influences future opportunities for the DFE's interaction within the industry, particularly with press and buyers. As a cultural industry, the fashion industry is linked with stereotypical opposition between the conceptual and the commercial (Gander 2011; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014). Collections can be positioned across a spectrum of commerciality and conceptuality. DFEs consciously or unconsciously design products at either end of the spectrum, or somewhere in the middle. Commerciality defines brands that maintain saleability through their desirability and wearability, as evidenced by the following quotes:

Commercial is the lovely, happy outcome that comes from [the garment being] wearable or that comes from it being accessible; meaning it sells, which is great (Participant 21).



I actually used to be like that. Like, commercial was offensive. Like if you showed someone your sketches and they said: “Oh it’s very commercial”. Like that’s the worst thing that they could possibly say. But no, I don’t think it’s a dirty word... I actually want to define commercial as desirable and wearable, not high-street. Because to me, that’s what commercial means: desirable, wearable (Participant 24).

Across the spectrum of conceptuality, the more conceptual the brand, the more niche the market for distribution. The term *conceptual* is used rather than *creative* because *creativity* is a broader term that can refer to both conceptual and commercial product; just because a product is designed to be sold and worn — generating profit for the DFE — does not mean that it is not creative. The participants recognised that press and fashion week publicity was generated as a result of the ability of products to relay a ‘conceptual’ story. Conceptual pieces are targeted for publicity and editorial, as illustrated in the following quotes:

What they do on the runway is obviously more aspirational and editorial and fashion. But you need those commercial pieces to support it. And you don’t want to stray too far away from where you are on the runway. Because if one doesn’t have anything to do with the other, you aren’t telling a concise story. You want someone to be able to walk into a showroom and go, “Okay, I got it” (Participant 26).

I like to keep the conceptual side separate. So like, when I did the exhibition piece, I wanted it to be almost an art piece, rather than people wearing it. So, it’s like separate. And then, because I wouldn’t wear it normally in my day. But I want people to wear my clothes and live in them. They go to work and events. They make memories with the clothing (Participant 3).

We’ll always do crazy pieces that get a lot of editorial, but no one ever buys those. That’s fine, and it’s fun, and I love doing it, and that’s what gets the name out there. So I recognise that it is important to do really editorial pieces, but when it comes down to doing a show and next seasons sales, that’s the only way I’m going to continue. So I think sales are important, and we’ve worked hard to design pieces within the collection that are easy to wear and easy to sell (Participant 1).

Having both conceptual ‘runway’ pieces and ‘commercial’ products for sales requires a connection between the two for consistency, as explained by the following participant:

Fashion week is a different thing then selling it. So, fashion week is really a press opportunity. So sometimes you’ll create — and this show was no different — where you’re creating specific items or pieces or gowns or whatever that are simply just for the show. That are part of the theatre of it all, so that you can drive home the design direction that you’re going for in that particular season (Participant 12).

Conceptual pieces provide the advantage into easily relaying the season’s story, but it must be carried over and translated into pieces for sales, as evidenced by the following quote:

I see creating something desirable and commercial retains the message, it’s the ultimate challenge. I feel like there are a lot of people that would complain about that: “Oh I have to make something wearable”, and it would lose it’s creativity. But I actually think that it’s far more of an interesting challenge to really create something— I’ve seen it happen where someone really hits the nail on the head, and they’ll be selling like hot cakes. It really is that. Being able to do that (Participant 19).

Products can be both ‘conceptual’ and ‘commercial’, and there are multiple approaches to product positioning. Many brands can be considered ‘commercially conceptual’, designing products each season around a particular concept, often with an underlying story, message or inspiration, yet individual garments are also commercial in that they are ‘desirable’ and ‘wearable’.

The design concept, lead by the label’s creative director, is one of the defining elements of the designer fashion market (Au et al. 2003; Malm 2008; Rieple & Gander 2009). It is the exhibition and spectacle of each collection that illustrates the underlying concept for that season’s collection. This presents a challenging contradiction for the entrepreneurial DFE, which operates with limited resources, as evidenced by the following quote:

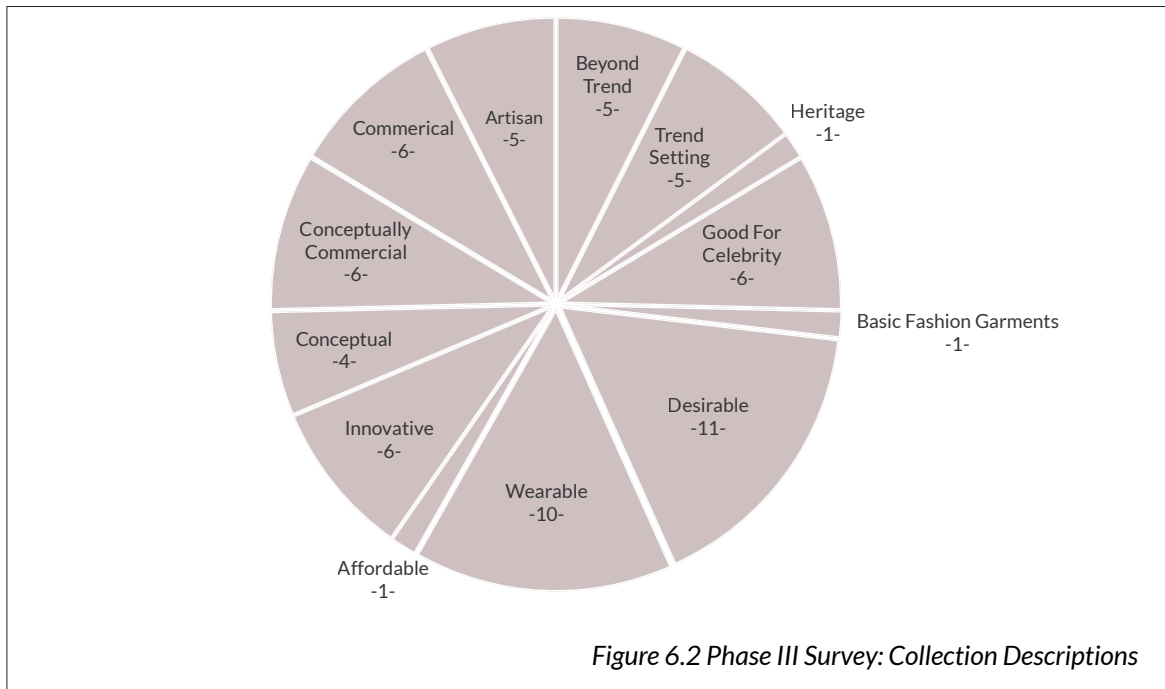
You need to be able to have unlimited budgets in a way, to create a show that you’re not going to sell, to have another collection in the back to do it ... So that’s why I think a lot of the so-called creativity is not really there in that sense. It’s really just spectacle. It’s just that I think the machine is so big

now that independent designers, if you're too creative in a way then you maybe make products that are not sellable in the end (Participant 9).

Brands can approach the commercial-conceptual spectrum in different ways. The first option for product positioning is to balance commerciality and conceptuality so that the underlying aesthetic is limited by the design restrictions of the body (wearability), and is directed at sales (desirability). Another option is to create garments solely for the conceptual inspiration of particular seasons. In this situation, designers are not motivated to create product for the purpose of sales, but to design purely for aesthetic purposes. A third option is to straddle the commercial-conceptual spectrum, creating some garments designed specifically for fashion week, and other products that are not necessarily shown on the catwalk but are primary sellers. The final approach is 'owning' the commerciality of the collection, recognising that the strength behind the collection is that each garment is designed to be desirable, wearable and sellable to the end consumer. In this case, products are designed based on their anticipated opportunity for sales and to be worn.

The commercial-conceptual spectrum is important because it partially highlights the stereotype of what it means to be a London or New York based designer enterprise. London is considered to be innovative (McRobbie 2003; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014), whereas New York is focused on commercial 'sportswear'. From an organisational level, the firm's approach to the conceptuality/commerciality spectrum is important because it helps define aesthetic consistency across seasons, market positioning and, ultimately, the brand identity.

In addition to the commerciality and conceptuality of the collections, several other common descriptions emerged. Figure 6.2 shows the breakdown of the collection descriptions; respondents were able to select more than one descriptor to characterise the collection. The term *artisan* invokes, and is related to, the quality and craftsmanship of the garments. 'Artisan' and 'conceptual' labels differ in that artisan collections often involve the intricate work of traditional methods of manufacturing, embellishment or traditional approaches to design. In contrast, conceptual collections are focused on illustrating abstractions of meaning within each garment. While it is possible that both 'artisan' and 'conceptual' collections can and do find viable markets for the sales and



distribution of the garments, it is nevertheless not surprising that these two ideas make up a smaller percentage of responses due to their niche positioning.

In opposition to presenting innovative and conceptual garments at market, ‘basic fashion’ collections find their strength in their simplicity and quality for garments designed to be worn everyday. The price-point of these garments may fall throughout the contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry designer and designer luxury price-points (see Price-Points on page 187). Within the higher price-point categories, the relatively little competition for these extremely luxurious garments means that these brands are capable of carving out a solid niche of stockists and consumers. The concepts of *basic fashion* and *commerciality* are related, although ‘basic fashion’ refers to the design aesthetic and ‘commerciality’ refers to products designed for sales.

Likewise a similar subset of enterprises define a clear foothold in the market as a ‘heritage’ brand, or seeking to build heritage based around the brand’s origins or story of the designer. The concept of *heritage* emerged as a goal among some of the participants, providing both direction for the developing the brand narrative and the positioning of the brand next to established heritage labels, such as Dior, Hermes, Chanel, etc. While it is extremely difficult for the entrepreneurial firm to lay claim to this idea of heritage, there are unique sets of circumstances in which a label can base their collections in the designer’s history and personal background.

Each of the collection attributes foreshadows the overall development of the firm, as a path dependent process, through the continually evolving approach to designing garments. Individually, the collection descriptions do not provide a unique identity, many DFEs may describe their collections using these terms. However the collection descriptions do position the products within the market, providing stakeholders with an orienting perspective for the garment usage. The garment usage is defined by the intention of the products and whether they are designed to be worn for everyday, day-to-night ('desk-to-date', Participant 13), nights out, special occasions, or a variety of those elements. It is the unique combination of elements used for discussing and describing the collections that provides a starting point for the definition of brand identity. Furthermore, the concept of the muse is useful in determining the aesthetic of the collections. This is discussed in the following section.

#### 6.2.5 Muse

The muse is a construct commonly used during the development of the collection. However, there is a great deal of a variation in how DFEs incorporate this concept. The muse can be either a tool used in designing the collections, serving as a source of inspiration for the designer, or a construct for articulating the brand identity during points of interaction. During the design process, the muse provides a conceptualisation of who the design team is designing for, providing them with consistency and progressive evolution, as the following participant explains:

It reflects the brand. And it's the muse, the woman, the ideal that [the designer] and the team design towards. From my perspective in having observed the process, I feel it should always be aspirational. It should stay pure to the vision of the brand and the vision of the woman. And the brand should always — across the different departments — know who that woman is. Even if it changes now and then, but the core everyone should be very well aware of. And should that overlap with the real customer — great, but it should always be an aspirational figure (Participant 4).

The creative director(s) and their team may design for the self (the designer creating garments they want to wear), friends and family, celebrities or the consumer. Any of these groups or individuals may assist in the construction of the muse. This provides motivation for the creation of garments, and helps identify a gap in the market.



Figure 6.3 Aspirational Individuals as Muse, Design Studio Poster (Participant 1)

The muse may be conceptualised as an ideal consumer, aspirational individuals, and/or as a girl/woman, as illustrated in the following quotes:

When they talk about muse, its always really attractive looking. Your real customers are not like that. But I think in a way they are the same. They lead the same kind of lifestyle. They like similar stuff. So, I don't think it should be different... I think it makes it easy to keep the identity. So, you don't want to design one season for who would wear Versace and then the next season Celine. So, it's kind of— yeah, I think it should be the same from the beginning and then you can kind of build onto it (Participant 3).

I think the muse shares a spirit with the end consumer but they're not necessary the physical representation of that person (Participant 21).

It always ends up being the same girl, but maybe different ages. But it becomes easier and easier for us to define ourselves as a company, I think, because now I immediately know what [Participant 17] is talking about and what I'm talking about because we know now what kind of girl we're talking about in a way (Participant 16).

Alternatively, the concept of a muse may be utilised during presentation of the brand (interaction) to facilitate a dialogue around the collection with buyers, editors, consumers and social media followers. In some cases, the muse is just 'an easy way for people to identify you in a world of mass information' (Participant 6). In utilising the muse during interaction, DFEs may choose to construct the muse after the design process, using celebrities and aspirational individuals to represent the ideals of the brand (Figure 6.3). In this way, the use (or not) of the muse concept provides direction for how the DFE interacts with stakeholders. Carried over from season-to-season, the muse provides a conceptualisation and a dialogue for who the brand is targeting and where it should be positioned within the market of press and stockists. As a metaphorical construct, the muse generates understanding among and by consumers and industry stakeholders (Bettiol et al. 2012).

Finally, the number of collections produced per year is a significant component of the product development concept that defines the brand's value proposition. This is discussed in the following section.

### 6.2.6 Collections Per Year

For an entrepreneurial DFE, collections are often produced only two to four times per year, with the main fashion week collections produced in accordance with the February/March and September shows. In between these periods, once the firm has developed enough resources they may produce pre-collections delivered to stockists at earlier intervals with longer sales periods.

Producing three collections per year is a transitory period to producing four collections. The progressive introduction is used to build resources to support the increased expenses associated with expansion. Pre-collections are designed primarily for sales, and are not presented at fashion week. DFEs may pursue producing more collections per year proactively to increase sales, or reactively at the request of stockists who require additional stock to fulfil turnover demands, as evidenced by the following quotes:

Pre-collections are done to put — are very much driven by the needs of key accounts. So if you have a strong American market in department stores and online, you need the pre-collections because you have more competition and you need to be on the shop floor earlier (Participant 28).

I think even if you plan, but maybe you're sales didn't work this time. Or maybe you're actually kind of going down then up. And then expanding collections is silly. So I think you need to play it by ear and know what is happening now, what is relevant. Okay maybe like five main buyers say: "Can we have pre-collections?" and maybe that's the time (Participant 3).

For the most part, London DFEs produce two collections per year, while New York designers spread production between two and as many as ten collections per year (see A.19 on page 403). This may be due to the larger department store domestic market of the US that provides New York based DFEs a greater frequency of distribution opportunities. In comparison, the UK market internationalises at a higher rate and relies on a larger scope of distribution outlets, particularly small, independent boutiques that may not be able to support the faster turnover rate required for the production of more than two collections per year. The number of collections per year is also correlated with two other factors: price-point and developmental stage.



The price-point category defines the retailer prices for which products are sold. DFEs who produce in the contemporary price-point category design more collections per year in comparison to those who produce in the designer-luxury category. The lower price-point categories require more collections per year to meet turnover demand and achieve higher annual turnover levels. However, the designer-luxury price-point category targets a niche market with smaller distribution by volume, but nevertheless can generate high turnover due to the higher price. To achieve the same turnover level, a contemporary priced brand will need a higher volume turnover and more collections compared to brands in the designer-luxury category. As a result, contemporary positioned brands produce more collections than designer luxury brands. Also, the more developed the company, the more resources they have to develop additional collections. The contemporary brands may produce more than two collections as early as their first or second year, but it typically takes designer luxury brands longer to introduce multiple collections.

Collectively, the decisions that define the collection development process — product categories, signature pieces, range plan, product positioning, muse and number of collections produced per year — assist in the definition of the brand identity over time. The decisions and capabilities provide a basis for the brand's value proposition and the generation of a dialogue in the pursuit of relationship development. The relationships important to the DFE brand are discussed in the following section.

### **6.3 Relationships**

To facilitate interaction and network integration, the DFE utilises the relationships of the designer and employees. The relationships developed by the individuals within the DFE are made up of both personal and professional relationships (Morris et al. 2002; Tyler et al. 2006). The personal network of friends and family can encourage the designer to launch the firm, either through helping them identify a gap within the market ('designing for friends') or through a connection into the industry. Even 'weak ties' to the periphery of the industry, such as other start-up DFEs or sales agencies, can help create a cluster of support (Gulati et al. 2000; Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014; Perry-Smith & Mannucci 2015; Langseth et al. 2016).

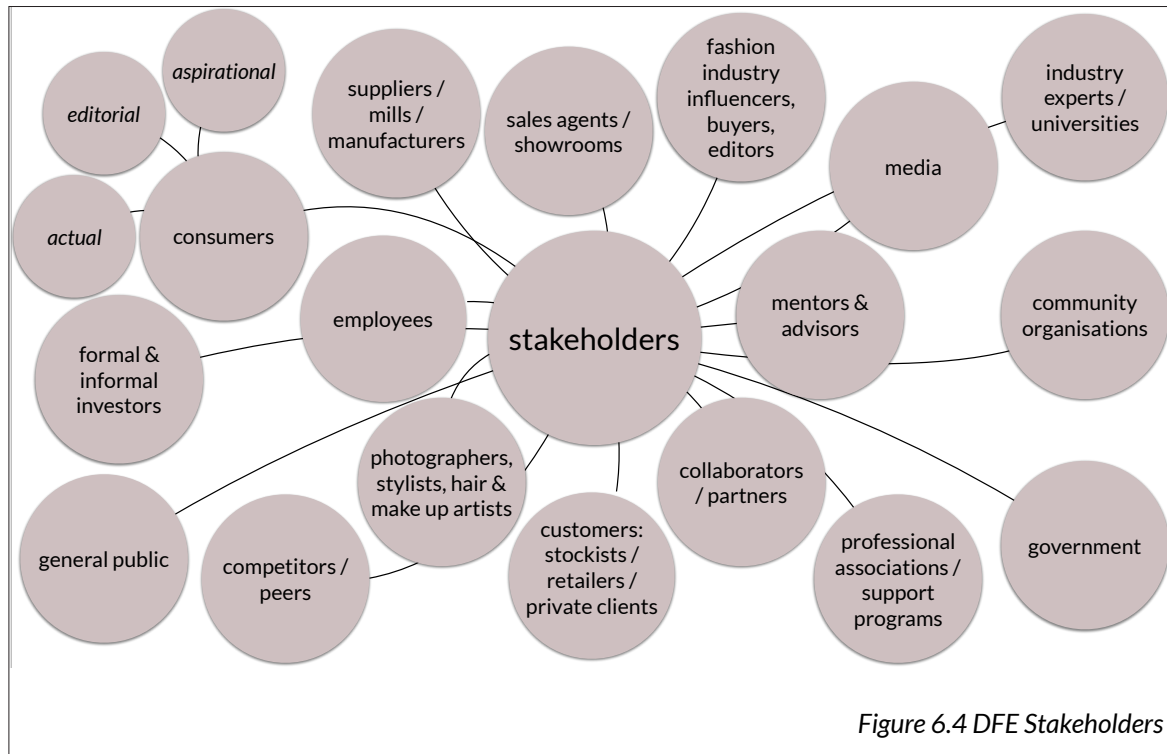


Figure 6.4 DFE Stakeholders

The DFE network includes the individual networks of the designer(s) and employees, the internal network of the firm, the agency network of out-sourced services and resources, the fashion industry network of buyers, editors and sourcing resources, and the community of consumers. The network of relationships are the stakeholders of the enterprise (Figure 6.4).

This section discusses the DFE’s network integration, fashion system, support programs, consumers, and the significance of brand adjacencies in the development of relationships that contribute to brand identity creation. The relationship the designer(s) and employees develop over the course of their individual careers provides access to potential sales, press, suppliers, cash flow and know-how, facilitating network integration into the global fashion system.

**6.3.1 Network Integration**

Network integration involves the utilisation of an existing network, development of further relationships and the integration of the brand through those relationships into the fashion system. As the DFE grows, newly hired employees provide further access to the industry via their individual networks. Table 6.3 provides evidence of the influence of the personal and professional relationships of designers and their employees. Importantly,

**Table 6.3 Evidence of Network Relationship Influence**

<i>Public Relations</i>	'We asked a friend who was retiring from PR – who had been director of communications for [a major US retailer] – and he was getting ready to retire. We asked if he would help us out. We literally met with him the day before we flew out to ... go make the collection. We had lunch, he said: "God, you know, these are pretty pictures, pretty clothes, but I don't know if anyone is going to find this relevant. I'll send it out to a few friends." ... Three days later he calls me and says to me: "I don't know how to tell you this, but I've got a fight between Vogue and ELLE and each wants the exclusive on the story. And the New York Times also wants it"' (Participant 5).
<i>Sourcing</i>	'Because you have to have somewhere to start. Because you go into Premier Vision or a fabric show, or an agent comes, and if you haven't got some idea of where you're going. It's so bamboozling, it's so overwhelming. And I think it's about trying to work with mills that work with the kind of thing that we like and at the prices that we can do. You know things that will work with our lead times and that sort of thing' (Participant 13).
<i>Fashion Week</i>	'On the show day, I'm always struck by how many people there are. There's always this moment. Particularly the last kind of three seasons, well when we started doing catwalk. I'll always stop in the middle of the day. It will be, whatever time the show is, it will be a couple of hours before the show, everyone's there and you have about 50-60 people. And I always go [whispers]: "God, they're all here for us". That! I feel very, very humbled by that. It does not come together with just the two of us. You may have – we do – we have the ideas and the direction. But you need a strong team around you. A cohesive' (Participant 21).
<i>Manufacturing</i>	'When we say to them: "I promise you, I will pay you. But I'm going to let you know now, if we do this, if you work with us to do this, it won't be in 30 days. But it will be in 90. But I can assure you that you will be paid by 90." Having worked with them for at least two years before, getting those sorts of orders and knowing us as people and having those relationships, they trusted us. And we kind of– we honoured that. I think that's really important, is to build – I think that's got to be one of the most important things in starting your brand. Do not underestimate the value of those relationships, because those are the people that CAN make it or break it' (Participant 21).

influential relationships include those within and outside the fashion industry. The dimensions of the networks DFEs develop was verified in Phase III.

The unique combination of relationships the DFE develops is a source of differentiation, contributing to the brand narrative as the relationships become part of the evolution of the enterprise. This includes, for example, the relationships used to launch the enterprise or grow into new geographic locations or acquire new stockists. The networking capability of the firm can be a marketing tool and assist with internationalisation (Gulati et al. 2000; Weerawardena et al. 2007; Dyer & Ha-Brookshire 2008; O'Dwyer et al. 2009). These relationships don't necessarily need to exist prior to the execution of specific activities, but can be cultivated as the DFE reaches out for promotion and support, as evidenced by the following quote:

When you're asking people the worst that can happen is that they'll say: "No". That's it. So just ask people (Participant 3).

Network integration is a means of solidifying the brand's presence within the fashion system, with the objective of identifying and cultivating a consumer group. The significance of the fashion system is discussed in the next section.

### 6.3.2 Fashion System

As discussed previously (see 2.2 on page 14) the fashion system is a complex set of individuals, organisations and locations that exert influence on the DFE (Hirsch 2000; Power & Hauge 2008). The fashion system provides structure for how products are produced through the interconnections of relationships horizontally and vertically within the supply chain (Gulati et al. 2000). As an activity, exhibiting at fashion week is a part of this system that helps to solidify the brand's presence within the fashion industry, as the following participant explains:

We do our fashion shows, which are an investment but something that *helps institutionalise the brand and advertise especially within the industry* that we're doing it. We're *participating within the economy of the fashion market*, beyond just trying to get people to buy our shit. [laughs] Which is everyone's goal (Participant 7, emphasis added).

At the top of the system is the 'fashion machine'. Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of American *Vogue*, is often cited as an example of the powerful and influential individuals who may help or hinder a DFE's progress in developing relationships, gaining access to resources and opportunities, and generating press. The fashion machine is a set of key influencers who potentially offer support through encouragement, networking and promotion, as evidenced by the following quote:

The machine is really small. It's either you're within the group, or within the one or two people that they're allowing in. Otherwise you're not in the machine. [laughs] It's like politics or anything else. But you know, you still get support, and you're still there, but you're not the movers and the makers of the industry, because it's a billion dollar industry (Participant 9).

Within this system comes fashion week, the formalised support programs, and the schedule of sales and distribution of product. Editors, stylists, buyers, manufacturers, suppliers, photographers and peers/competitors each have influence over the DFE's

creation and navigation of their business model as relationships are developed to facilitate the creation, production and distribution of product. There are two broad directions DFEs can take with their business model: global growth and scale oriented towards a major heritage or lifestyle label requiring formal investment and partnerships within the system, or remain a niche independent label. Either business model can be profitable, and new technology presents opportunities for DFEs to create business model innovations, such as new price-point segments or direct-to-consumer models. Nevertheless, the fashion system remains important because it provides structure to the retail process, as illustrated in the subsequent quote:

We've seen a lot of brands come and go, and the telltale signs are there. *The industry doesn't change so much. There are certain conventions built around the basic retail experience.* You know, social media changes that a bit with people selling off of Instagram and 'likes' and all these different sort of new media outlets. But the basic foundations of retail are still the same. And it has to be supply and demand (Participant 27, PR & sales agent, emphasis added).

Table 6.4 provides evidence of the properties and dimensions of the fashion system, including the influence of buyers and editors and variations of business models as the system changes over time. How the DFE navigates or is constricted by influencers within the fashion system affects the development of the business model and brand as the DFE reacts to their acceptance or rejection by the fashion machine. To some extent, the DFE must interact with the fashion system in order to produce product, and generate either wholesale or retail sales. As the fashion system continues to saturate with 'emerging' designers, formal support programs provide assistance with promotion, business training and resources.

### 6.3.3 Support Programs

There are several different types of support programs that perform various functions within the industry. The specific nature, scope and variety of individual support programs available is not the focus of this study. However, for the DFE, support programs offer opportunities to develop network relationships, business skills and brand awareness. Broadly speaking, support programs offer collaborations between established brands and emerging designers, short or long-term diffusion lines with mass retailers,

**Table 6.4 Evidence of Properties & Dimensions of the Fashion System**

<p><i>Influence of editors &amp; stylists.</i></p>	<p>'I suppose there are more opportunities for designers to kind of reach their consumers directly, with Instagram and such. But I still think that the voice of these editors and stylists are what really compose this kind of traditional kind of communication that still everyone looks to. And still they're growing their foundation with blogs and online content. So I think there's still – I mean you always need some kind of champion, I suppose in a way to give stamps to validate, because there are just so many of us out there' (Participant 19).</p>
<p><i>The power of buyers.</i></p>	<p>'I think the power is really with them [the buyers]. I don't think it's with the editors, I don't think it's with the designers. I think it's with – totally with the buyers – like the buyer is like the rockstar of the fashion world right now. You can really see it with the big stores. You can see it just from the dynamics of the placing of shows. Like where they're seated and the attention that they obviously get. Because obviously some of them are spending vast amounts of money, for the big, big stores, that they are the people you really need to impress. And I think that because of that, it can be quite frustrating sometimes, because stores want to steer things their own way for their own benefit. What – so for example, what Saks wants can be completely different to what Harrod's wants. And you can get quite confused sometimes. Because they almost try to re-develop your collection into being commercially suitable for them. And if you start doing that, then you're steering away from what your identity is and actually the vision of what you wanted to create. And you're ultimately moving away from another retailer as well' (Participant 24).</p>
<p><i>Buyers' and editors' request and feedback to designers.</i></p>	<p>'The ones sort of dictating fashion- and I hate to be like a fashion, you know, snob, education snob– but they don't know what everything means and where it stands and what it represents, how it's developed to represent cultures and societies and things like that. All they know about is what sells and what goes off a hanger. And they're telling designers what to do, which I think is really dangerous' (Participant 15).</p>
<p><i>Business model limitations: global vs. niche</i></p>	<p>'Those types of success that happen in the 80s and maybe 90s. I don't think that the new generation of designers that are out there will get to that point. Maybe if Louis Vuitton buys you and then they pump you out. Even you look at Stella McCartney, and from the most famous family in the world. And they had the budget. And they pumped money in there for 5 years or 8 years before they actually saw a profit. Who can do that anymore? I think brands are fabricated now. There's no natural growth in that sense. Unless you're a brand like us and you have natural growth. But it's not like tomorrow morning you're going to sell in all the Neiman Marcus' or something like that. ... I think there is a limit [to how big you can grow] ... I've just realised the limitations of fashion – of the fashion machine' (Participant 9).</p>
<p><i>Fashion machine: network relationships</i></p>	<p>'I think they're 100%. Completely and utterly essential. If you look at every designer, if you look at every single designer, and you think how did they make it...There will always be, if you go about 10 layers or 5 or maybe even 3 layers sometimes, there will always be like: "Okay, she knew him, and she knew him and they knew him", dah-dah-dah. There's always a connection. There's always– it is a little Mafia' (Participant 17).</p>

artistic exhibitions, competitions with peers for resources, design awards, sponsorships for fashion week and resources, and incubator or accelerator programs. DFEs may apply for such programs by their own motivation or be invited to apply via their network of relationships, as indicated by the following participant:

It's a pretty intimate process. It's usually a call from our PR office that says, you know: "Someone just talked to Anna [Wintour], and she says you have to do this" (Participant 5.)

Both New York and London offer an advantage as they provide a variety of support programs via the CFDA and BFC, in addition to the network of universities and clusters of support businesses such as PR and sales agents, as illustrated by the following quote:

Out of ten, maybe two or three are going to make it. But if we manage to get two or three out of ten, then that's really good results. And when you see the proportion of designers that are still on the map after three seasons. So I feel like the US has been good. You know, the CFDA program and the incubators and everything. They've been very, very good at nurturing young people. But they still take them at this stage where they are already kind of existing. So there's really nothing before that. That's what we're trying to fill (Participant 10, PR & sales agent).

Reliance on formal support initiatives also comes with potential negative consequences as DFEs don't develop the skills necessary to succeed on their own, especially in the earliest stages of development. For example, support programs may propel the DFE into the fashion market while providing a safety net for making mistakes through the subsidisation of financial resources or business skills. But there exists a risk that the DFE will not formulate the skills and resources necessary to sustain the firm beyond their sponsorship by the support program. Additionally, support programs select DFEs for support based on predefined parameters, rejecting or ignoring those that don't fit the business model, or align with the image promoted by the program. In short, support programs should be incorporated (or not) as they fit with the goals of the organisation. Participant 19 described it as part of the 'team'. Support programs are simply one component of the network DFEs develop that provides access to resources, and ultimately consumers. How DFEs identify, describe and target their consumer segments is analysed in the following section.

### 6.3.4 Consumers

As the DFE gains learning and experience through their interactions within the industry, they may also make adjustments to how the target consumers are described. The identification of a target consumer group is important because it is one mechanism that determines brand adjacencies with stockists and peers/competitors. The description of the target consumer group creates a dialogue for positioning the brand within the market, and is often used as a tool to describe the collection during the sales process.

In Phase III of data gathering, the qualitative survey participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with emerged descriptions of the end-consumers (Figure 6.5). Several of the attributes were overwhelmingly popular including describing consumers as ‘modern’, ‘worldly’, ‘strong’, and ‘independent’. Regardless of the individual design aesthetic, describing the consumer around general attributes does not distinctively differentiate the enterprises from one another. Therefore, a brand cannot be defined based on its target consumer. Several of the participants acknowledge that they were actually targeting the same demographic of consumer defined most notably by their disposable income. In reality, the DFE has little control over who the consumer actually is, as evidenced by the following quote:

Obviously you can't dictate exactly who the consumer is going to be — you can do a little bit of that and have a vision of who you think will be wearing the clothes, walking down the street

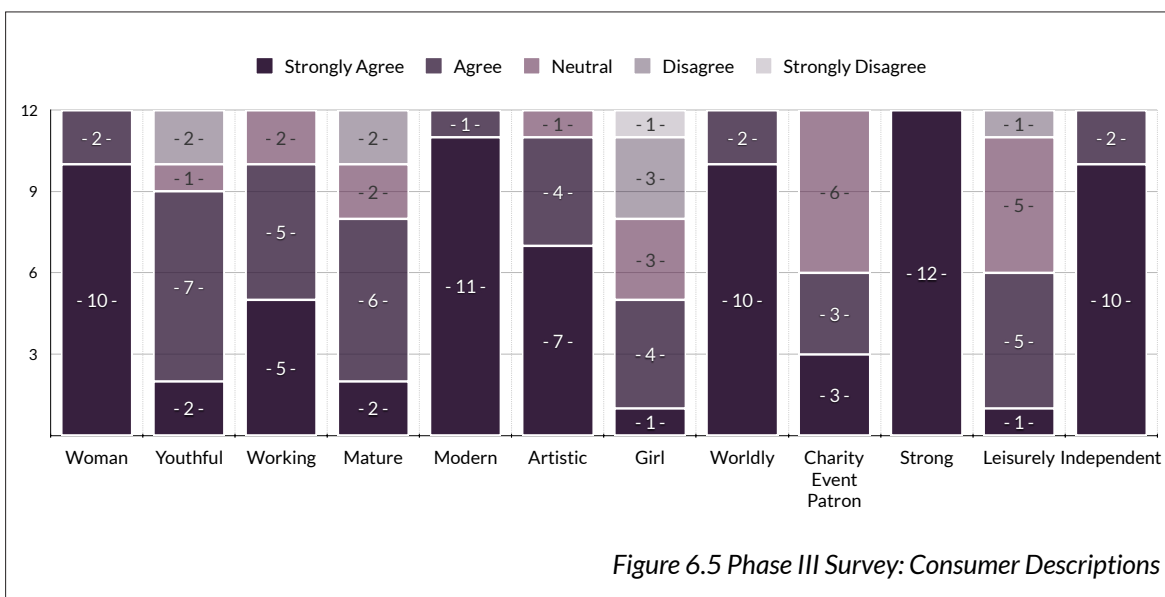


Figure 6.5 Phase III Survey: Consumer Descriptions



— but then sometimes you're shocked when you see some of the real consumers out there and who they end up being. I think for the most part we have a pretty good handle on who she is... Granted there were some age [adjustments]. I think the demographic of who we were hitting at an age perspective has potentially evolved slightly. But we don't really want to even put an age on it (Participant 26).

DFEs refrained from defining their consumer according to marketing standards of concise age demographics. According to many of the participants, demographic segmentation is too limiting, narrow and excluding of other parts of the market in which there are opportunities to capture value for the brand, as explained by the following quote:

It's probably more accurate to ask: "What aesthetic does your woman align to?" ... I would say to buyers don't ask designers that question [i.e. "Who is your customer?"] Ask "what is your brand alignment?" [Asking about the consumer] doesn't feel authentic. And it doesn't feel like it's actually something that has a useful, valuable learning tool for the designer or the buyer. I feel like we're all having this conversation, she [the buyer] doesn't really believe it, we don't really believe it either, but we're all going through this exercise of going: "So who's our woman?" and giving this demographic description (Participant 21).

The terms used by the participants describe personality and psychographic criteria, such as social class, lifestyle and culture, rather than demographic segmentations (Dubois & Duquesne 1993; Danneels 1996). For example, the term *woman* was used to describe the consumer as an individual with a state of power, individuality, sophistication and assured identity. This is in opposition to the term *girl*, which might be used to describe a consumer who is an individual more likely to experiment, be a 'free spirit', and malleable in their self-identity. Respondents either chose terms in opposition to the other, or encompassed them both in a way that reflected the unique aesthetic of the collection. For example, describing the consumer as both 'youthful' and 'mature'. The terms, *youthful* and *mature* each describe general broad segments of age demographics and/or personality and disposition of the target consumer. The common descriptors verified the ways in which designers and their representatives discussed the target consumer group during the sales process.

Given a lack of data about the end-consumer, DFEs construct the consumer description and adjust the dialogue based on learning and experience as a result of both direct (social media, direct-to-consumer sales) and indirect (buyer feedback, sell-through data) relationship development practices. All of the attributes for describing the consumer hint at the individuality of each designer brand, but do not directly define it. While there is no 'right' or 'wrong' description, each brand identifies and adopts attributes that operate as the link between the collection's aesthetic and characteristics of the end consumers. These attributes can take time to discover, or can change over time as the enterprise gains experience through interaction.

With increased experience and consumer data, DFEs are able to more accurately identify who ultimately purchases their products, which can influence other aspects of market positioning (targeting stockists and identifying ideal price-points), future decisions related to product development (collection design) and avenues for expression (communication, social media, fashion week participation and PR efforts). The alignment between the media, stockists, peers or competitors, consumers and geographic market locations in terms of aesthetics, price-points, distribution opportunity, culture and personality illustrate the brand adjacencies of the DFE in pursuit of long-term relationship development with the brand's stakeholders. This is presented in the next section.

### **6.3.5 Brand Adjacencies**

As the DFE develops network relationships, they are able to draw adjacencies to other stakeholders operating within the fashion industry, including media, stockists, peer/competitors, target consumer groups and geographic market locations. In this way, DFEs align their products and brands based on overlapping characteristics between aesthetics, price-points, distribution opportunities, reputation, culture and personality. Common variables between stakeholders and the entrepreneurial DFE provide a starting point for the development of long term relationships based on a dialogue of shared meaning.

As the DFE gains organisational learning, they are able to transition from a reactive approach in the development of relationships to the proactive targeting of potential

stakeholders and opportunities for growth based on brand adjacencies, as the following quote illustrates:

I would say the company started with creating really editorial collections. *Really trying to garner those clients who were known to have fashion forward customers. And that's how the company really started;* going after a very distinct group of clients [stockists]. And then, *after that they've been very specific about distribution, and distributing to the clients who have similar brand adjacencies to us. So it's been a very tight distribution strategy.* When I came on board it was sort of, before that, it was grab whatever you can in a sense that fits into the box of what we're looking for and what adjacencies we're looking for. And when I came on board I really looked at it from a global perspective, where do I see the most opportunity and going after those markets (Participant 8, emphasis added).

Consequently, brand adjacencies provide information about market opportunities in real time, and for future growth and planning. Brand adjacencies are important to the development of brand identity because they operate as a source of understanding about the market environment. The ability of the DFE to identify, evaluate and align with a potential stakeholder, whether they are a prospective customer (stockist), consumer, collaborator, supporter or peer/competitor, is an important capability in the development of a network. For example, brand adjacencies are components that define where DFEs sit on the shop floor in relation to peers/competitors, which target consumers are likely to buy, which media outlets would be appropriate avenues for communication, which celebrities may provide promotional support, and which stockists and geographic locations would be suitable for distribution. In short, brand adjacencies provide positioning for the entrepreneurial DFE within the fashion industry. Brand positioning is discussed in the following section.

#### **6.4 Position**

Considering the resources and capabilities of the enterprise, the concept of position refers to both the internal assets as well as the external position in relation to the firm's environment (Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). Positioning includes the quality of the product in relation to price, personality (reflected in the aesthetic, designer and muse), and communication activities (internal and external; media, tone of voice, etc.) (Urde 1999). The categories used to define the position of the entrepreneurial DFE include

market positioning, internationalisation, and establishment and growth capabilities. The market positioning of the DFE is defined utilising a sales strategy to target customers (stockists) and identify the appropriate price-point for the products. The sales function facilitates the distribution of the brand throughout the global fashion industry. This determines the international positioning of the DFE, which may include the use of exporting based on e-commerce sales through their own website. International sales then leads to the growth of the DFE through various financial stages, which assists in the establishment of a recognisable and unique position in the global fashion system. Each of the components of positioning is analysed in the proceeding sub-sections.

#### 6.4.1 Market Positioning

DFEs approach the sales process from different perspectives depending on their resources and capabilities. As DFEs navigate the sales process, they make decisions that affect their market positioning, which includes the sales strategy, targeting potential stockists, determining product price-points and describing the target consumers. The ability to position the brand within niche markets signifies the marketing capability of the DFE (Weerawardena et al. 2007).

The sales strategy involves the plan, practices and the reactive or proactive decisions made to acquire sales. The use of a showroom (own, rent-a-rail, agent) determines *when* and *where* sales are made, whereas the sales strategy defines *who* is responsible for generating sales. In the earliest stages of development, the designer may conduct the sales process and rely heavily on private clients. For some DFEs, the designer may be uncomfortable with the 'business side' of the sales process, and receiving feedback (and rejection) from buyers may prove awkward, as explained by the following quote:

I feel like everyone [i.e. every designer] should try to go at it themselves first. Everyone should get that, at least that initial reaction from buyers and from the general public on the reactions to their collections. So that they can see if they are going to hire you to do the sales for them, that their expectations are managed. I think a lot of people are like: "Go sell this for me". And they don't realise how difficult and how competitive and how many other people trying to do the exact same thing as them are out there (Participant 27, sales agent).

As resources allow, the sales process can be out-sourced to an external sales agent or the DFE may hire an in-house sales director. A combination of these options may be utilised, depending on resources and geographic locations. For international growth, DFEs may contract with an agent overseas, but use an in-house sales director for the primary markets. These are all options for achieving wholesale stockists. The use of these various options may change over time, depending on the needs of the DFE who may require new, larger or different networks of sales opportunities beyond the capacity of their current sales manager or external showroom/agent, as the following quotes illustrate:

We bounced around with sales. And now we have a really competent sales team (Participant 11).

At a certain point we felt like they had hit a ceiling as far as [the showroom's] reach. They had gone to every store they had a relationship with around the world and that was it. Because after three seasons of being at a certain level, it just wasn't growing, but the press was growing. We know we can get, we can reach more people and more stores if we're not in a showroom with 38 other designers. So we brought [our sales manager] in-house (Participant 5).

The option also exists to develop a direct-to-consumer model, which bypasses the wholesale process entirely, but requires the forecasting and management of a retail (online or brick-and-mortar) business model in addition to the DFE. A hybrid of both retail and wholesale puts the DFE in competition with its stockists.

Maintaining wholesales in-house provides a connection between the sales process and design, as the designer or sales director receives direct feedback from buyers. This can create a targeted sales strategy that maximises opportunity and removes the 'filter' of information that may otherwise negatively impact the DFE, as evidenced by the following participant:

We kept sales in-house, and *kept it very private feeling* for the first couple of years, intentionally. And let people come to us so that what we had a faithful, *very desirable group of retailers*, as opposed to trying to get out to everyone at once ... But any designer-showroom relationship is really touchy. Because a designer ... *the closer that design and sales can be to each other in a company, the more money you'll make*. Lost information

between design and sales is expensive. And a showroom is exactly that; *they wedge themselves right in between* (Participant 7, emphasis added).

Regardless of an in-housed or out-sourced sales team, the designer's involvement, through a collaborative relationship with the sales team, provides a source for learning about stockists and consumers that is paramount to generating feedback that will influence next season's collection. For example:

With the sales agent, *the relationship is very collaborative*. Because I started later in the season, like we didn't work from the beginning. But this season for example, we talked about *the feedback from last season*: "So that worked", "*This people didn't like it much*", and then, "They expect ... more outerwear or separates from you". And then that's what you're going to design. And then stores, *they have all the information, which will feed into the next collection* (Participant 3, emphasis added).

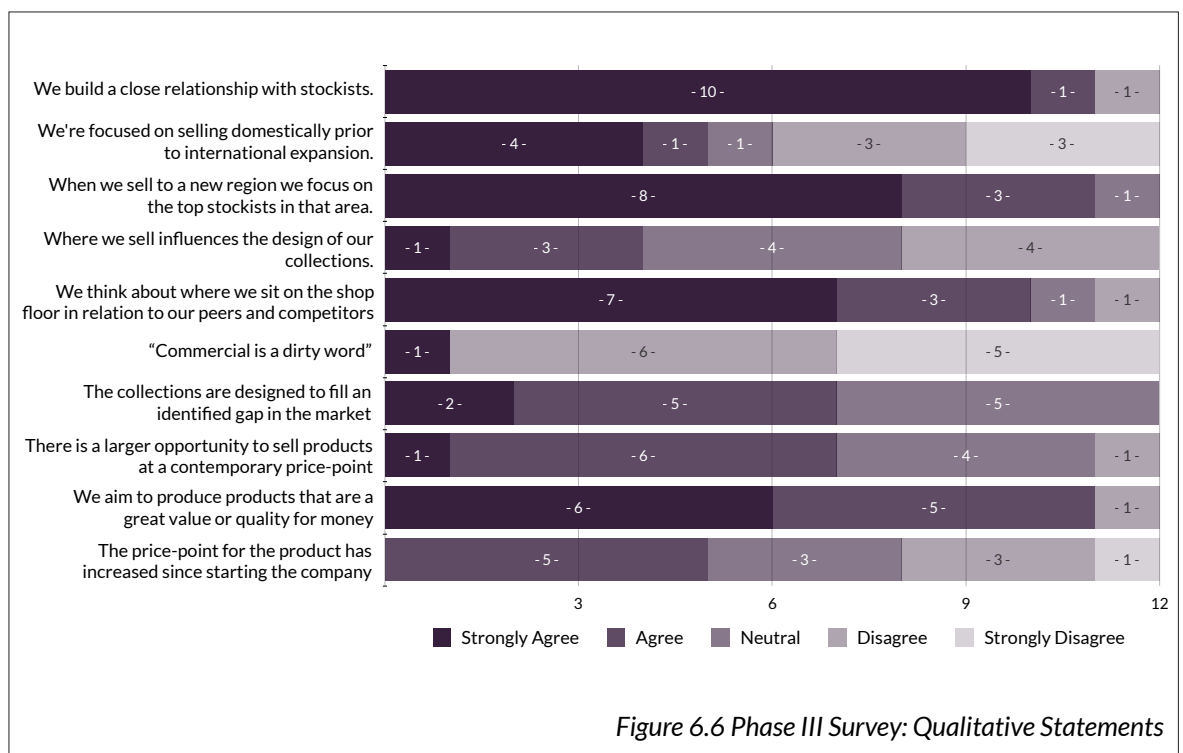
Because of their capacity to support multiple brands, an out-sourced sales agent may provide access to a wide distribution network. A sales agent provides the DFE with instant access to a pre-existing network of relationships and an objective perspective on feedback, as the following quote illustrates:

*Working with different brands that have different entities of business gives you the opportunity of understanding the different markets out there, and what are the needs and what are the trends, so you can see the potential in a brand and drive them. It is good to have someone from the outside. It is normal. That gives you a different view of what you see when you are in the market ... Because we know. And the buyers talk to us about what they need. And sometimes it's easier for a buyer to communicate to an agent that they have a relationship with, then directly with the designer because you feel there is always that, um, that fear of hurting the designer; saying the wrong things* (Participant 28, sales agent, emphasis added).

The use of an in-house or out-sourced sales team depends upon the DFE's resources and capabilities. The choice of one or the other depends on the strength of the relationship, as explained by the following participant:

Ultimately you want to have someone in-house that works exclusively for you. But *it all comes down to the relationship. If you feel that relationship is strong* and they're doing a good job and they're an outsourced showroom, you keep going with that (Participant 21, emphasis added).

Based on the transcript analysis, the participants were introduced to several statements about the sales strategy and market positioning of the brand within the qualitative survey (Figure 6.6). The respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. The statements in which there was a majority consensus among the respondents relate to the successful sales and distribution of product via wholesale channels. Building a close relationship with stockists is considered important. However, the outlier within the statement is a brand whose sales are completely managed by an external sales agent. Additionally, the outlier within the statements about commerciality and shop floor placement is a DFE previously focused on building image via social media, celebrity endorsement and media appearances, not actively seeking sales. Statements where the answers are in the majority at either end of the spectrum indicate a consensus among the participants regarding a specific strategy or industry perspective. In contrast, statements where the answers are

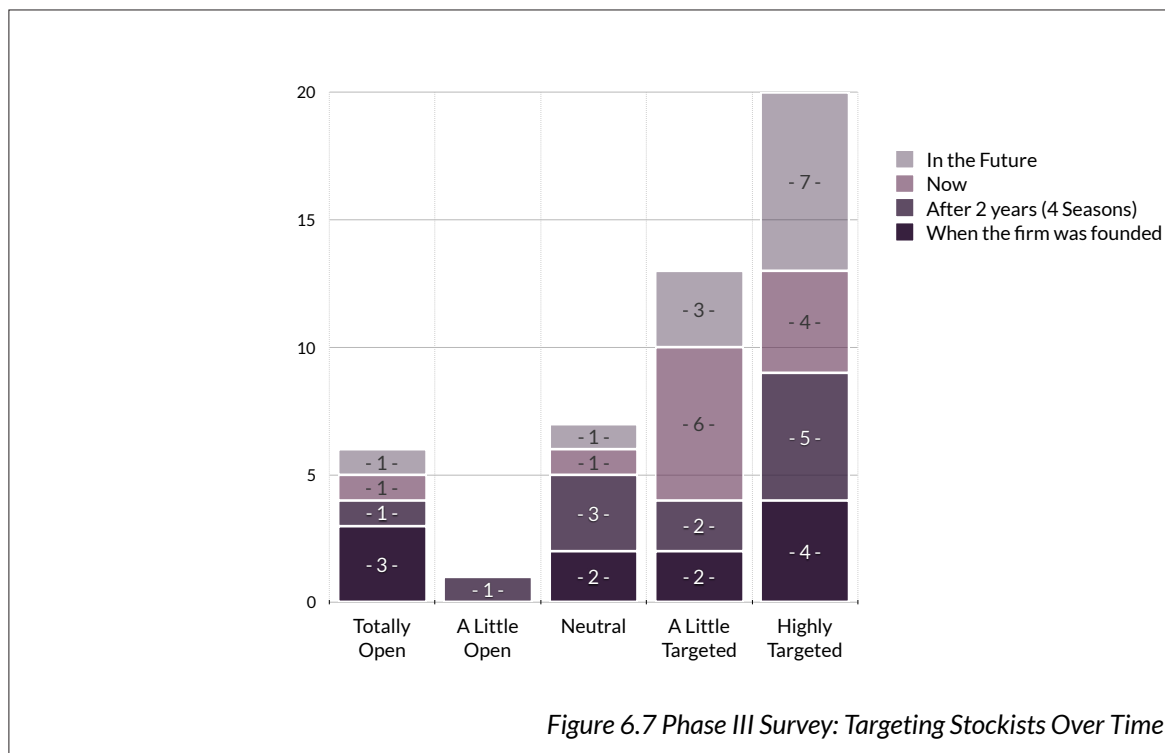


spread across the continuum show opportunity for variation of strategy. How the DFEs target stockists, determine the price-point of the collection, identifying alignment with consumer segmentations based on their sales strategy, all work to position the company within the fashion industry.

**Targeting Stockists**

If the DFE seeks wholesale distribution, it must decide the approach to obtaining accounts via either an ‘open to sell’ or ‘highly targeted’ practice. An ‘open to sell’ approach characterises firms that sell to any stockist who seeks to buy. The ‘highly targeted’ approach distinguishes DFEs that sell product to predetermined stockists according to specific parameters, such as the retailer’s fit, reputation and represented peer brands (brand adjacencies). Figure 6.7 illustrates how DFEs shift their approach for targeting stockists over time. The idea of being ‘open’ means that the enterprise was impartial to the stockists in which they would sell. This progressed along a continuum to being ‘highly targeted’, meaning that the enterprise strategically sought out specific stockists.

The enterprises generally move from a ‘totally open’ approach to potential stockists, either domestically or abroad, during the first three selling seasons, to a slightly or highly ‘targeted’ approach as the label continues to develop and gain experience within





the industry. However, there is variation to this approach such as: (1) targeting specific stockists from the initial launch of the company, which can be attributed to having prior experience within the fashion industry; (2) launching the enterprise using a planned approach; or (3) catching the interest upon start-up of several high profile buyers from influential stockists who requested exclusivity, forcing the DFE to prioritise and 'pick-and-choose' stockists.

Depending on the enterprise's resources, launching with a 'highly targeted' approach may transition to being 'open' to exploring opportunities as the retail sector evolves. For example, Brand 15 transitioned from a targeted wholesale strategy to that of being open to new opportunities (ultimately shifting to a direct-to-consumer model) based on previous negative experiences with mainstream retail stockists, despite having garnered enthusiasm upon launching the company, as explained in the following quote:

And third season it kind of starting going a bit downhill because we actually started loosing a store because we weren't selling anything. We ourselves cut out three stores because they were just too much hassle. They were selling in the end. But it was too much happening for that little bit amount of money. And we are still waiting for the big guys, obviously USA, waiting for them to come in. Big promise every season. Everyone is there ... everyone is just waiting (Participant 16).

For this DFE, the new sales strategy transitioned to operating in partnership with an investor to sell product via their own retail and e-commerce outlets. According to the designers, cutting out the wholesale process altogether allows the enterprise to create a fashion 'uniform' outside of the fashion schedule, which induces planned obsolescence for products that would otherwise have a longer period of relevance (and thus sales) within the market. This plan was born from direct contact with consumers who frequented the label.

The other 'opening' perspective loosens the parameters as the label gains brand awareness and new retailers approach the enterprise with previously unforeseen growth opportunities.

The dimension of time was an element that was introduced into understanding this idea of how stockists were targeted because it became clear based on the interviews from the first half of the research project that the DFEs did often change their approach to sales over time. Therefore, this question explored the sales approach at four distinct

periods of the firm. The first is when the enterprise was initially founded. This is followed by a marked period of after two years (four collections). This marked period in time was highlighted because it was a point which emerged repeatedly in the interviews. Once DFEs produce three full collections, from design through distribution and sell-throughs, which occurs within the fourth season, they have reached a period that can be described as full-production, whereby the first season's collection has completed its entire lifecycle (see A.24 on page 415). At this point, the enterprise is able to take learning and experience and fully circulate it back into the development of future collections. During this process, adjustments are made which alter the approach of the firm, including how the enterprise targets stockists based on their own segmentation parameters (Danneels 1996). The upward movement towards increasingly targeting specific stockists begins to occur at the fourth season and then continues to become 'highly targeted' at the present state of the company. Within Figure 6.7, for those companies that continued with the same targeting approach at the present in comparison to the fourth season and their estimation for the future, they were typically currently at the fourth season mark, meaning that their enterprise was only two years old at the time of the research study, and that their response for the second and third time dimensions ('2 years' and 'now') marked the same interval.

In this instance, the qualitative survey confirms understanding based on the in-depth interviews: the enterprise adjusts its approach, based on reflection and planning, of where, who and how they sell as a result of learning and experience generated from industry and market interaction. As they interpret their experience, they are able to shift their sales strategy to align with their goals. Their growth provides leverage in the negotiation for future sales. This is explained in the following quote:

Each sales person and sales team will have a *different strategy and a different set of relationships*. One of the things that [our sales person] brought to us was a different strategy. She said: "Look, you know, Barney's is great, they've got you in two doors, they've had you in two doors for two years now, they're not going to grow you. They've said so. They've said we're just going to keep you in New York and LA. And Saks wants you. But your [previous showroom] said no to them because if you go to Saks, Barneys will drop you. But Saks was coming to us with eight doors. *So you could be making four times as much money and have a long term strategy if you go there*, at the risk

of losing Barneys”. We lost Barneys. But it was a smart decision. We lost Barneys but we opened Saks and we opened Neiman’s. It was a big change. Yeah. *With that strategy shift*. You know, all the majors, whether it’s Saks, Neiman’s, Barneys or the important kind of specialty boutiques, tastemakers, they’ll—they want to keep you as like a bonsai. Really special and small and their own. They don’t want to see you grow, because you have leverage over them, you have a bigger reach and you can compare your numbers between stores (Participant 5, emphasis added).

The previous quote is an example of how existing relationships may also restrict or negatively impact opportunities for DFEs, requiring the enterprise to make a shift in their practices (Gulati et al. 2000; Gander & Rieple 2002; Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Tyler et al. 2006; Gander et al. 2007). Additionally, stockists are targeted based on various factors: the number of ‘doors’ or sales volume opportunity, the aesthetic of the stockists and existing vendors (brand adjacencies), the reputation of the stockist within the fashion industry, and the ability to sustain the DFE over the long-term as a result of developed relationships (Table 6.5). This shifts as DFEs continue to pursue sales volume growth over time. Finally, the price-point of the products influences the market positioning of the DFE. This is discussed in the following section.

### *Price-Points*

All of the participating brands in the study operate at the upper levels of the market (Leslie 2014). The price-point categories for womenswear are not clearly defined, and entrepreneurial DFEs produce collections across and between price-point ranges of contemporary through designer luxury. For example, 3.1 Phillip Lim, an entrepreneurial DFE that celebrated its ten-year anniversary in 2015, is regarded for introducing the contemporary segment, in which the collections feature a ‘designer aesthetic’ at a lower price-point (Business of Fashion 2015; Vogue 2015), as discussed by the following participant:

[Phillip Lim] at the time, wasn’t advanced contemporary, it was just this designer brand that was actually undercutting everyone else’s. And lots of things happening in the industry where it was good. We researched a lot. You know, like different brands, but what are they doing, their price-points, where were

**Table 6.5 Dimensions of Targeting Stockists**

<p><i>Categories of stockists: reputation</i></p>	<p>'We do like the good, good ones. We don't open it to the more to the— like you have the levels: you have Barney's and Bergdorf, and then you have the Saks. So we're not opening it to the Saks yet. For now we're just keeping it to the [higher]. You know, it's very political selling to department stores. If you sell to one the other is not going to buy. So we'd rather aim at the good ones to start' (Participant 10, PR &amp; sales agent).</p>
<p><i>Department stores vs. independent boutiques</i></p>	<p>'You try and start at the top. And then trickle down if the top store allows us to open the market. It's a — "allows us" — we have to make a decision that that's what we're going to do and we're going to piss off that other store, but they'll accept it, because ultimately all their successful brands exist in multiple stores... The top, top stores know their clients really well and buy specifically for individuals. So it's just getting it to them. And having them have the imagination to figure out who it can go to. That's the great thing about the best stores in the world: is that they really know their customers, which is why they're so good, because they're taking big risks with expensive clothing. Whereas with department stores it's more of a gamble which is why they have so many ... punitive things built in. [laughs] So that if their gamble doesn't pay off for them, it doesn't pay off for you either' (Participant 5).</p>
<p><i>Independent boutiques; politics of sales</i></p>	<p>'The big groups control maybe 95% of the market, and the rest of it is for everybody else that's independent. So the stores already have their main merchandise that they have to buy because they have to from lets say LVMH. They have to buy those five brands and certain number, and then they add on the emerging designers. But a lot of it is kind of a facade. It's not huge orders or something. So those stores alternate between what's the next one, so that the store as well stays current. But it's— like us, we've built relationships with more independent stores that have found the customer for us' (Participant 9).</p>
<p><i>Targeting based on aesthetics</i></p>	<p>'And you look at the nature of the designer and the nature of the design and what are the stores that ideally can work. And you talk with the brand as well. You could have a brand that says: "You know, I don't want any online or department stores. I want to be in 10 top retailers in the world. I want one in Paris, one in Italy", and you just go: "Okay fine". And you reach out to people and say: "I have something very new, it's a very selective distribution and they want to work with you. You're my partner of choice. Do you want it, do you not want it?" You know that they have to tell you "yes" or "no". And if not then you go to someone else' (Participant 28, sales agent).</p>
<p><i>Stockists &amp; peer brand adjacencies</i></p>	<p>'You have to respect and maintain the distribution and your previous stockists as well. That's a concern. And yeah, you need to maintain your relationship to other brands. To make sure that you're next to other price-points and aesthetics that complement what you're doing. Public awareness is so quick on things, because of the internet and social media and things like that now. So, you know, if something looks ugly somewhere it can be told just as quickly as it looking good. So you want to stay looking good in places that know how to keep you looking that way. This season, I think we had three accounts that we had to say, "Maybe next time" to' (Participant 7).</p>

they sitting. And also what did we want it to be. What was our unique signature? What interested us and what did we want to say (Participant 22).

Since this innovation, other designers have filled in between the segments of the market, introducing collections as ‘advanced contemporary’ or ‘entry designer’. These segments are often used as synonyms, with blurred lines in-between the four segments of contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry designer and designer luxury.

During the qualitative survey of Phase III, interview participants were asked to define the price-points of the collections using only the names *contemporary*, *advanced contemporary*, *entry designer* and *designer luxury*. This was compared to data gathered via press, interviews and a survey of prices to define a sliding scale of product price-point categories for the purpose of the research (Table 6.6). Rather than use ‘entry designer’ and ‘advanced contemporary’ as synonyms, they were used to describe variations in price between the ‘contemporary’ and ‘designer luxury’ segments. The contemporary price point marks the threshold between ‘better’ and ‘mass produced’ garments to ‘personality brands’: collections produced by named designers. DFEs may also produce collaborative diffusion lines at mass-produced price-points in partnership with, for example, Target or Topshop. Even the lowest priced contemporary garment is priced significantly above mass produced products.

The survey of the Phase IV dataset involved examining the collections on the DFEs e-commerce to determine a range of prices. Daywear dresses were used as the benchmark. Dresses that fell between £300 and £650 were considered contemporary. Blouses, accessories and other small goods were priced below this mark at about £100. Evening-wear and outerwear may range above the £650 mark. The same pattern followed for each of the other price-point categories. The price-point category is important

**Table 6.6 Product Price-Point Categories**

	New York	London
<b>Contemporary</b>	\$500 - \$1000	£300 - £650
<b>Advance Contemporary</b>	\$750 - \$1250	£500 - £850
<b>Entry Designer</b>	\$1000 - \$1500	£650 - £1000
<b>Designer Luxury</b>	\$1250 - \$1750+	£850 - £1200+

because it defines where the DFE sits on the shop floor in relation to peer companies (brand adjacencies). However, there is no official designation of price-points based on specific price ranges because categories are fluid and reactive to other economic factors, such as inflation.

The survey of designer enterprises in Phase IV produced different results for London and New York based designers. London designers play within and between product categories defining the advanced contemporary and entry designer segments. In comparison, New York DFEs price garments at either end of the spectrum within contemporary or designer-luxury (see A.19 on page 403). This may be a reactive approach due to the vast domestic network of department stores in the United States that have clearly defined floor space based on price-point, as explained by the following participant:

So in London, there are a lot of designers like that, it's kind of called "affordable luxury" or "advanced contemporary". For a small shop it's not a problem and Harvey Nickels have a lot of upper designer labels on the contemporary floor in this small section and that's where you are. But the American stores, they ... have really obvious divisions like ... luxury is really very more expensive. And the contemporary floor is like jeans and sweatshirts (Participant 3).

Pricing garments is based on costing, but also the DFE's estimation of what a product will sell-through for at retail price. For some products, the margin may be reduced to encourage a larger sell-through rate at full price, while for others, the margin may be increased if, by estimation, consumers will be willing to spend more. This practice is an effort to maximise sales and profitability of the collection as a whole.

Operating at the upper levels of the market allows the DFE to price products in niche markets that offer lower sales volumes in exchange for higher quality, allowing the enterprise to match price with smaller production capacities. In addition to this, the image of the designer adds an increased symbolic significance to the brand, thus denoting an elevated level of quality.

However, the in-depth interviews indicated in several cases that DFEs may transition through a period in which they make adjustments to the price-point of the collection in order to 'find' their market. While some of the participating brands have increased the price-point of the product to align their products with the existing levels of

the market, others have found opportunity by decreasing the price-point, often making design adjustments to reduce production costs. For example:

When we first started we were doing something that was very designer price-point. Even though I saw this opportunity in what I call the “contemporary world”, I really— I priced myself out of the market when I started, and that was something that I didn’t even notice until much, much later ... after showing it to a bunch of retailers. I realised that the gap wasn’t there but that it wasn’t a look or an aesthetics problem, it was a price-point problem. So my cost structure was all screwed up (Participant 12).

It is the alignment of stockist, price-point and design aesthetic that helps to determine the distribution of the DFE internationally. Proactively or reactively creating a sales strategy through the DFE’s and the industry’s network by targeting stockists and identifying the optimum price-point for the products are examples of marketing elements and capabilities that assist in the positioning of the DFE (Danneels 1996; Gilmore et al. 2001; Moore & Fairhurst 2003; Morgan et al. 2003; Vorhies & Morgan 2005; Skálén & Hackley 2011). These capabilities are enacted internationally as the DFE seeks to establish its place within the global fashion system. The internationalisation of the DFE is discussed next.

#### **6.4.2 Internationalisation**

For entrepreneurial womenswear DFEs, internationalisation takes place at the outset. On the surface these companies appear to be born global, which can be illustrated by the accelerated internationalisation rate (Weerawardena et al. 2007), indiscriminate distribution process, and the networks exhibited during fashion week. Internationalisation opportunities originate from the network of relationships (Altinay 2001) created through interaction with the fashion industry.

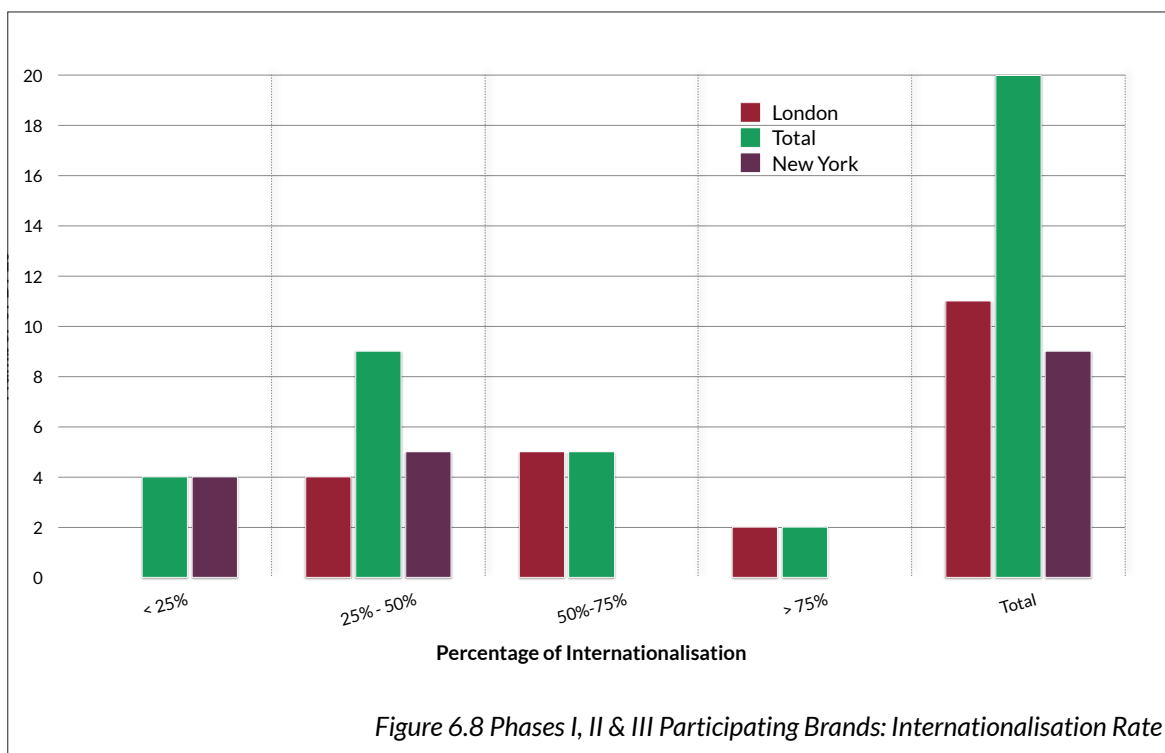
For DFEs, internationalisation can be exhibited within sourcing, manufacturing and sales/distribution behaviour (Swoboda et al. 2009). All of the DFEs participating in the interviews both sourced materials and sold product internationally from the time that the firm was founded. For many DFEs, sales to an international stockist is the same as domestically generated sales, as indicated by the following participant:

[Internationalisation is] oddly no different than shipping to LA. It’s just a different address (Participant 1).

However, the degree to which sales volume originate from international stockists — measured as the percentage of internationalisation — varies between firms based on their individual strategies for sales and brand management (Figure 6.8).

Complementary to the findings from the interview portions of the research, Phase IV included a survey of the number of stockists listed on the enterprise’s website, organised by region (US, UK, North America, South America, Africa, Australia, Asia and Russia, Middle East and Europe). The percentage of internationalisation was then calculated for both London and New York based brands. These figures were compared between London and New York to examine differences in internationalisation patterns (Figure 6.9).

London and New York DFEs have significantly different approaches to internationalisation. While a number of enterprises internationalise from the outset, New York DFEs rely on international sales much less in comparison to their London counterparts. New York brands hold relatively steady, despite their age of development, at about 40 percent of sales as international. In comparison, London DFEs operate with more than 80 percent of sales as international. This verifies previous findings in which interview participants from New York indicated that they focus on domestic distribution prior to international expansion, as evidenced by the following quotes:

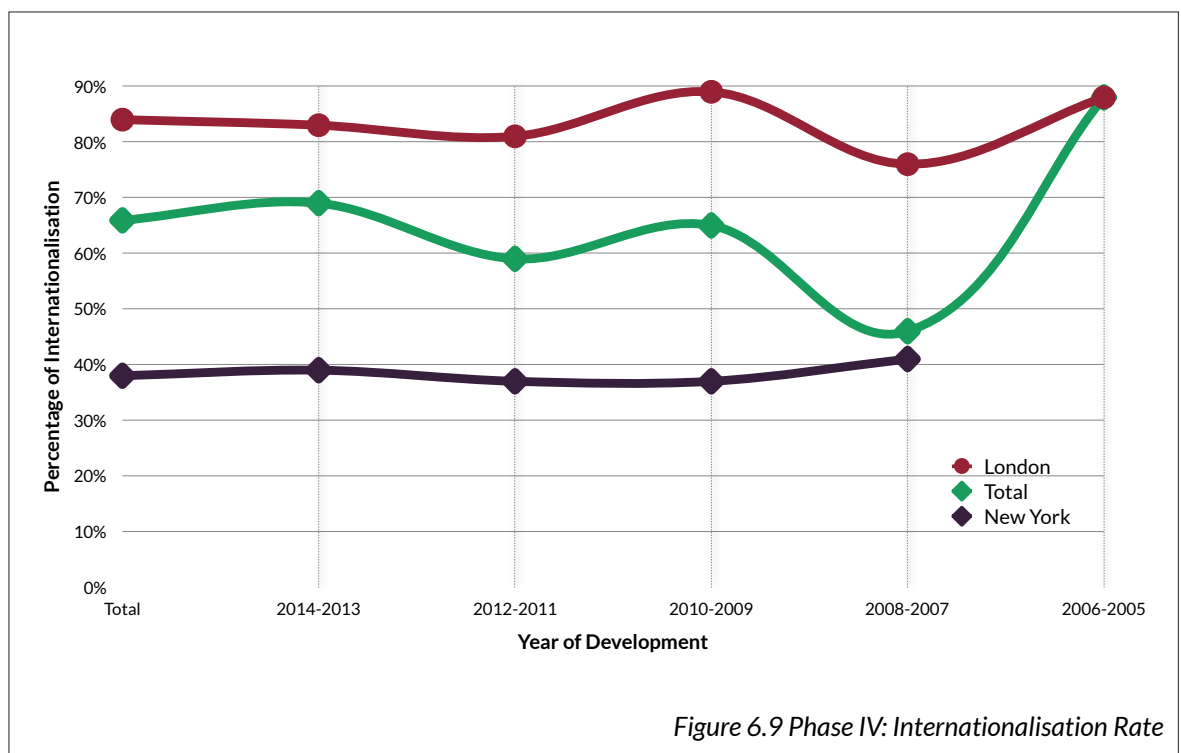




Mostly domestic [US]. A vast majority of our business is domestic. And that's something that we think is really important for us because we are "Made in America". We are based in America. We're able to really keep a tight control over it. We're able to visit a lot of the stores, and really connect with the store owners and the people that shop there. That's exciting for us. Whereas it would be much less-so the case abroad — just due to budget (Participant 11).

Most of our distribution is US based because we don't have the means to have a second [sample] collection for press that would be in Europe. We go to Europe for sales, but not every season because it has to be financially worth it for us. If you're going to spend \$50,000 to go there, you need to know that you're going to have at least a \$100,000 in orders to make it worth your trip. Basically for us, I think it comes to a point that your growth gets limited by how much you can invest in your growth as well (Participant 9).

London DFEs were far more reactive to sales from international regions. This may be due to the consumption power of consumers that is concentrated in specific geographic areas that have the demand to purchase product, such as Asia, the Middle East and the USA. Indeed, New York designers cited the expansive domestic market and the ease of distribution via the network of American department stores as a reason



for a reduced internationalisation rate in comparison to their London-based peers. Additionally, US based firms are limited in internationalisation opportunities by exchange rates and tariffs, as explained by the following participants:

It could be that we need a designer that is from Europe because that is where a US designer is just way too expensive when you land it in Europe, so that is a financial way of seeing it (Participant 28, sales agent).

The pricing [in Europe] doesn't work. So then we lose that store and then we get another great store. Because there is kind of, the girls in fashion know who we are in the UK and in France. But the girls in fashion also know how much things should cost. So they want it, but they don't want to pay full price for it. So we sell well on sale there, which isn't great for stores. So I think we just have to — I think with outside investment we'll actually just make a push. Do some stuff on consignment at a lower price just to try and grow it. But at this point we can't afford to produce all that excess inventory (Participant 5).

Beyond this broad generalisable difference between New York and London brands, internationalisation for DFEs is dependent upon and influenced by the ultimate goals for the organisation in line with its resources, capabilities and brand. Growth of the DFE is realised as a result of the distribution activities. Success for the DFE is measured by the organic and controlled growth of the enterprise aligned with its goals, financial and investment capacity, and in-house and out-sourced resources. As the DFE grows through financial stages, the resource and capabilities change, refining the brand identity. Regardless of their size, online e-commerce offers DFEs instant internationalisation capabilities. The use of their own website as an internationalisation platform is discussed in the following section.

### *Website E-commerce*

The DFEs own website e-commerce in particular provides an avenue to accumulate (international) retail sales without the exorbitant costs associated with a brick-and-mortar shop. Technological advances, such as ready-made website plugins and applications, enable DFEs to introduce online stores with fewer resources. An accessible avenue to retail sales provides the DFE with the supplementary profit of the full retail

price in addition to instant access to an international consumer market. This distribution channel also provides access to consumer data, as explained by the following participant:

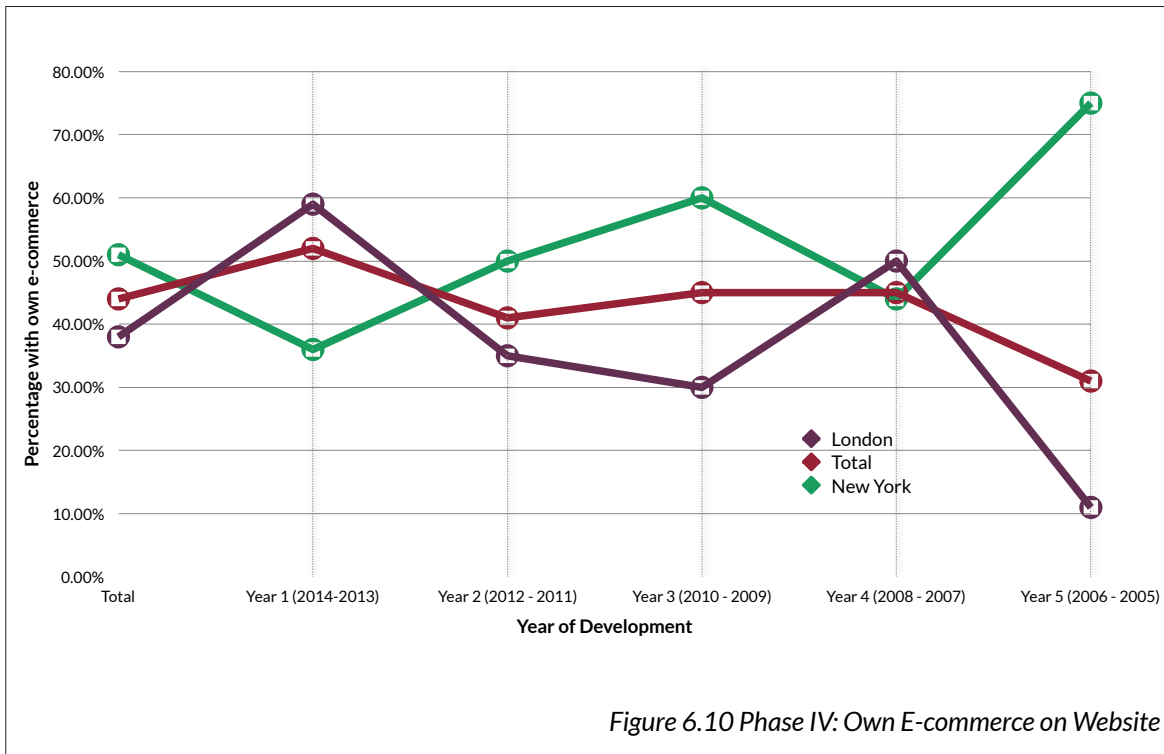
Online sales is great for us, because not only do we have a direct link to the customer, so we know actually what people are buying, and what people like, and how it fits ... It's great for us to know our customer. And we also have data on who these people are that buy our product — and that's great. And I want to continue to expand that, but right now it's very wholesale based. Like, different boutiques all over the world buy our stuff (Participant 1).

As an extension to the business model, own-website e-commerce also comes with increased need to handle the customer service aspect: order processing, packaging, shipping and returns. While technology enables the introduction of e-commerce, the lack of human resources limits the firm's ability to support this part of the business, especially in relation to the quality expected of higher price-points. Furthermore, hosting an online shop puts the DFE in direct competition with wholesale stockists, potentially inhibiting future wholesale growth. The DFE may avoid this by using the e-commerce shop to sell exclusive product and promote the brand through its editorial content, as evidenced by the following quote:

I would say [online sales are ] like 5-10%, but it's growing. We anticipate it being, like next year, being 20% and then hopefully from there going to 30 or 40. We don't really want it to grow more than 40 or 50% because our wholesale accounts are extremely important to us. And we'll be offering mostly exclusive product on our website. Not really competing directly with our wholesale accounts. Which is great, you really— you go onto our site and there's something you can't get somewhere else, which is great and it's always evolving, updated and refreshing. It's definitely about the content along with the product (Participant 11).

Despite the potential negative consequences and risks, nearly half of the DFEs in the dataset compiled during Phase IV hosted an online shop on their website, but these numbers are quite different for London and New York designer enterprises compared to the year categories of growth (Figure 6.10).

Overall, the use of an online store for London and New York designers follows two different paths. New York designers grow from 36 percent in Year Category 1 to a height of 75 percent in Year Category 5. In contrast, 59 percent of London designers in Year



Category 1 host an online shop, and this figure drops to a low of only 11 percent in Year Category 5.

The difference in these figures may be due to a variety of factors including the price-points of the collections, the variation in international distribution between London and New York, or the availability of resources based on when the firms were founded. For example, enterprises founded nearly ten years ago started with vastly different technological resources available for launching e-commerce shops. Additionally, as previously discussed, London designers internationalise at higher rates compared to their New York counterparts. Hosting an online shop earlier in their development may be the only means by which they are able to sell their products to the UK market, whereas, New York labels rely on an extensive domestic network of speciality shops in addition to department stores who may require distribution exclusivity. Finally, while marginally different, New York designers also produce at either-end of the price-point spectrum creating contemporary or designer-luxury collections, whereas London designers are spread slightly more between each of the product categories. A lower price-point may enable a DFE to host an e-commerce shop faster due to the higher minimums required for production and the increased number of collections produced, whereas, designer-

luxury brands may introduce online shops after several more years of development as they grow and increase their available resources.

The online e-commerce shop is one potential use for the DFEs website, which is a significant component of communication designed to create an online 'world' for the brand in the pursuit of growth and establishment within the global fashion system. How the establishment of the entrepreneurial DFE brand defines its positioning is analysed in the proceeding section.

#### 6.4.3 Establishment & Growth

Each of the elements of brand identity assists in the establishment of the brand within the global fashion industry. The development of the DFE brand was described by the participants as a 'growing up' process, where the collections become 'polished' and 'mature' in their aesthetic. It is the alignment between the aesthetic, product quality, pricing and distribution that establishes a clear position for the brand. Awareness of the DFE's status and positioning within the market is necessary to facilitate growth. The established position of the brand is exhibited when the DFE is 'on trend' with garments and materials in the market, generating demand, and receives validation based on store and media placements.

Within the fashion industry, the success — or establishment — of brands is measured by sales, longevity, growth, product extensions and brand awareness (Jang et al. 2005). The DFE experiences growth as a result of the effective implementation of distribution capabilities. The long-term measure of success for the DFE is *organic growth*, specifically in terms of increased sales, product categories, range plan, number of stockists and brand awareness. This requires a *controlled* approach to gaining a balance between press and sales exposure, matched with the resources required to sustain and support over the long term, as evidenced by Table 6.7. In addition to the economic measures of organic growth, holistically, growth can be measured based on brand goals, stages of growth, investment and finance, in-house and out-sourced resources, and rate of internationalisation.

Each individual DFE grows in relation to their own personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals. Increases in sales (annual turnover) provides a measure for how the DFE transitions through stages of development. Organic growth is the actual growth of

**Table 6.7 Organic & Controlled Growth**

<i>Brand Awareness</i>	'I mean we could just throw our product out there and I'm sure we'd get – like – a million more followers. We haven't done that thus far. It's been kind of a calculated, measured, organic growth. Because are still small' (Participant 1).
<i>Product Category Expansion</i>	'At the right time, either we find a partner or we do a lot of collaborations with brands or whatever that financially help' ( Participant 9).
<i>Product Category Expansion</i>	'So [the womenswear line] technically is two seasons old now. And that started really organically. We are a menswear business obviously, and that's true to what we're trying to drive. But it's almost as if the women's kind of grew really naturally out of it without any strategic planning, or any real— no one in the business expected that to really happen... It's quite organic— our buyers started saying that women were buying the men's pieces. Could we produce them smaller. And that was it really. And we started doing that for some of our stockists' (Participant 24).
<i>Controlled Growth</i>	'When we first started we had a very little amount of sales. And then by the second or third year, we had seven times, year over year, we grew seven times versus the prior year. And that was kind of scary. Because we had customers, big customers who were reordering tops and dresses of ours before they even paid for the first ones. And so there were significant financial risk at the time and I think I thought to myself, "smart growth", as opposed to just all out, petal to the metal type of thing' (Participant 12).
<i>Sustainable Business</i>	'It [the economic recession] was a point where we were forced to re-examine what we were doing. And I think the momentum generated by being new and interesting and exciting had switched to someone else. And it was like, we need to be sustainable. It wasn't that we— it was important to us, not to change, right, but to refine I think' (Participant 25).
<i>Balanced Press &amp; Sales</i>	'I just feel like I've gotten a lot of press exposure, but the sales doesn't match it at all' (Participant 1).
<i>Controlled Organic Growth</i>	'It's like this steady growth that we have, this more organic growth that we have. We didn't arrive on the scene through a competition... There was a period I think, probably at the stage when we were really planning what we wanted to do and what we wanted to be. [Versus] where I think there were these competitions that literally just threw designers in the air' (Participant 21).

the enterprise and excludes growth measured as resources acquired through investment or financing. But the ability to gain investment and financing are competencies used to propel the brand into new product categories, annual turnover stages and market opportunities. They may be used in the short-term to finance a season's collection and/or over the long-term to support larger objectives. The investment and finance of the enterprise is one resource utilised to support the acquisition and movement of other in-house and out-sourced resources required to produce a collection and promote the brand. Thus, utilising both in-house and out-sourced resources, along with investment and finance competencies in alignment with the brand goals, the DFE is able to internationalise and establish a global brand. The financial growth of the DFE is measured in stages that coordinate with resource availability. The stages of growth of the DFE is discussed in the following section.

### *Stages of Growth*

Growth of the DFE occurs in stages, which are defined by segments of financial success. This research identified and defined five categories of development: *capsule*, *start-up*, *early*, *emerging* and *expansion*. These segments are defined most notably by financial milestones; however, passage through these stages is a process along a continuum (Table 6.8).

Interview participants were asked to categorise the enterprise's annual turnover (sales). These figures were based loosely on the CFE's report (Karra 2008) on the UK's designer fashion economy (see A.4 on page 366). However, the figures were broken down into smaller categories to obtain more detail. The CFE outlines parameters defining segments of micro, small and medium DFEs who operate with an annual turnover of less than £8 million (\$13.4 million). Two of those parameters included 'number of employees' and 'number of stockists'. Additionally, the US dollar equivalent at the time of creating the survey on 31 March 2014 (£1 = \$1.67) was used so that both London and New York participants could make accurate estimations in their response.

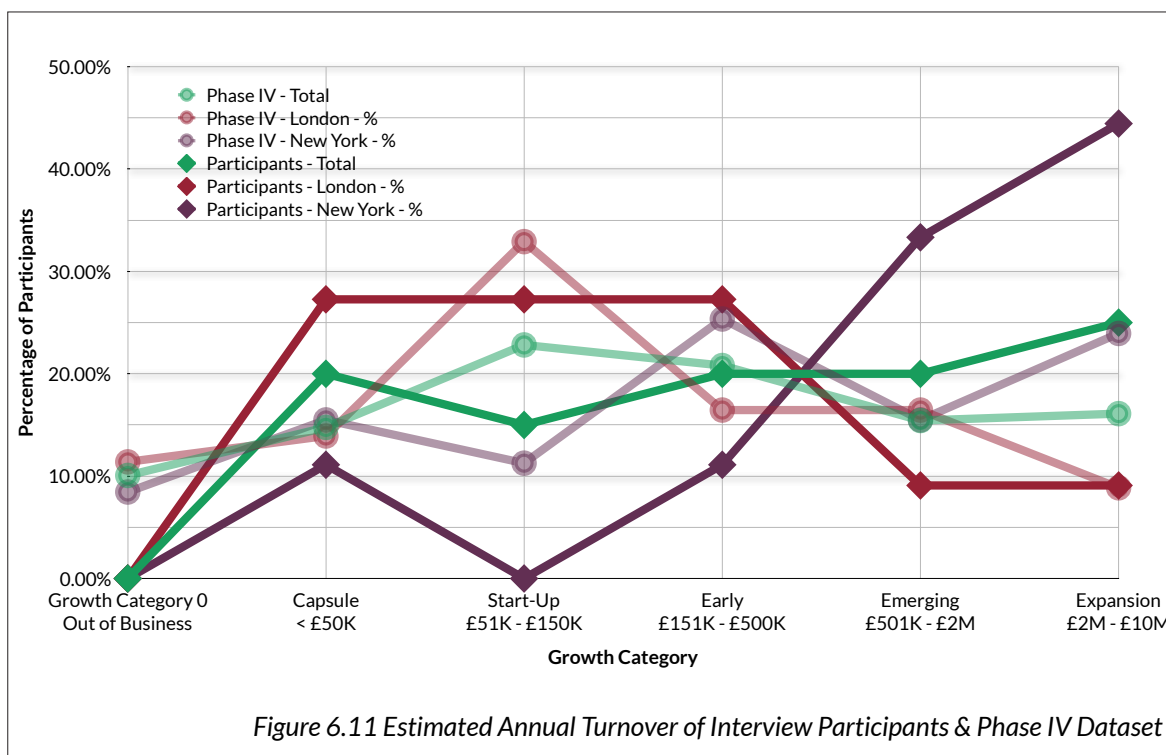
Participants were also given the option to not disclose annual turnover information. Out of a total of 21 responses, nine participants chose not to explicitly disclose the firm's annual turnover. Despite this limitation, the annual turnover segmentation for each of the participating brands was estimated using categories defined in the CFE's report (ibid.) in comparison to the anonymous responses from the other participants and qualitative information about the organisation shared in the interviews. In comparison to the CFE's report (ibid.), annual turnover, number of stockists and number of full-time employees are defining characteristics of firm size within the global designer fashion economy. Therefore, the number of full-time employees was an element which helped to estimate the annual turnover for all of the participating brands. During the analysis of Phase III, it

<b>Category</b>	<b>Brand IDs</b>	<b>Full-Time Employees</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Turnover</b>	<b>Founding Dates</b>
<b>Capsule</b>	16, 14, 6, 2	0-3	< £50K	2010 - 2013
<b>Start-Up</b>	15, 3, 17	2-3	£51K - £150K	2011 - 2013
<b>Early</b>	22, 13, 19, 1	3-6	£151K - £500K	2007 - 2011
<b>Emerging</b>	8, 12, 10, 7	5-8	£501K - £2M	2006 - 2012
<b>Expansion</b>	21, 5, 4, 23, 11	10-18	£2M - £10M	2004 - 2009

was apparent that the estimated annual turnover provided an approximation of the size of the firm and its stage of growth due to its correlation with firm resources. The correlation between employees, turnover and stockists was useful to estimate the stage of growth for firms in Phase IV. The segmentation of stockists per growth category was achieved using the calculation based on the interview participant group, the CFE report (ibid.) and the interviews with showrooms that delineated the growth stages of DFEs.

The analysis of all the data allowed for the estimation of the range for each anonymised brand. Overall the study included DFEs throughout the spectrum of micro, small and medium sized operations as defined by the CFE (ibid.). London DFEs participating in the interview portions of the study skewed slightly to the lower ends of the turnover spectrum, while New York designers skewed slightly toward the higher turnover segmentations (Figure 6.11).

In comparative analysis, there was not a significant difference between the operational activities of either London or New York designers which would limit the theoretical results of the study within the financial segments. While not an absolute requirement, because of limited resources, *start-up* and *early-stage* designers tend to out-source the sales process to external showrooms and sales agents, while *emerging* and *expansion* DFEs maintain sales in-house and close to the collection development.





Most firms keep, or seek to obtain, an external PR agent under contract, possibly due to the importance of editorial contacts within the fashion network that experienced agents have. Profitability can be achieved at any stage, and DFEs may move in and out of profitability as they pursue growth in line with their goals and financial resources (investment). However, it is not a requirement that DFEs continue to progress to the next stage in order to create a successful business. In other words, growth and survival are two mutually exclusive concepts (Sapienza et al. 2006; Prange & Verdier 2011). Several of the interview participants within the fourth growth category, *emerging*, maintain a profitable independent label as an established brand in the industry. However, this category is defined as *emerging* because of the niche distribution and arising brand awareness. The *expansion* category defines brands looking to grow beyond the £10 million annual turnover range. These are enterprises geared for investment and increasing growth as a result of specific objectives and vision. For example, the following participant explains:

I feel like we're at this stage where like— I feel like we're at that weird teenager stage. Where we know exactly what we're going to be. But we're not there yet. That's what it feels like now (Participant 5).

Phase IV included a survey of the total number of stockists for each member of the dataset. This figure was the primary factor used in estimating the growth category, but was supported by other factors including the company's age, press searches, and other details available on the website. Where data was lacking for a particular brand, data that was available relating to that brand was compared to others within the dataset where significant data was available. When information was clearly significantly out of date by more than one year, the label was considered to be out of business and segmented into 'growth category 0'.

Generally, the spread between London and New York was relatively even throughout the five growth categories. London's most prominent categories were the *start-up* and *early* categories at 26 percent and 29 percent respectively. Comparatively, New York's most prominent categories were *early* and *emerging* at 25 percent and 23 percent, respectively. The highest growth category, *expansion*, for New York (15 percent) is more than twice that of London (6 percent).

Variations in the development across enterprises between ages and locations can possibly be explained by a number of factors including differing economic conditions, trends, availability of resources within the industry (support programs and awards), the firm's age and other individual resources in relation to external conditions. For example, the lower price-point and higher production rates of New York DFEs may lead to sales volume/annual turnover growth to the highest financial categories at a faster rate. In comparison, the London-based designers, who are in the highest estimated financial categories (£1-2 million and £2-10 million), maintain strong distribution in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and North American markets (as indicated by the stockist page on the websites). Brands in the highest growth category may have achieved or are seeking investment in preparation for global expansion, although investment can be obtained at any stage of growth.

The stage of growth demonstrates the DFE's financial positioning within the fashion industry. Collectively, the market positioning, internationalisation and establishment of the DFE provide a comprehensive representation of the brand's position within the global fashion system. The value proposition, relationships and position of the brand are all external constructs (Urde 2013). Moving on to the brand identity elements that are both internal and external, the personality of the brand is discussed in the following section.

## **6.5 Personality**

The creative director of the entrepreneurial DFE is a central figure in the creation of brand personality. It is the designer's background that provides a starting point for the personality traits embodied by the brand. Related to this, the brand also inherits characteristics that serve as the 'influence of place' across various dimensions. The designer's background and influence of place are discussed in the following two sections.

### **6.5.1 Designer Background**

As the creative director for the organisation and its collections, the designer operates as a figurehead, developing design priorities and spotlighting the brand's unique contribution to the market via the collections. There are several dimensions related to the designer's background that influence the development of brand personality and identity.

**Table 6.9 Evidence of Dimensions Related to the Designer's Background**

<i>Aesthetic is extension of the designer.</i>	'It's become more clear how our personality translates into a brand. We did a lot of really experimental, almost like non-wear, like unwearable things in the beginning. And it's just, our point of view is relatable, and it's very much an extension of who we are as people and very much inspired by each other. Like us as a team and our friends. There's a lot more. It's still aspirational. We're passionate and inspired. But there's a refined ease to it' (Participant 11).
<i>Designer is the 'face of the brand'.</i>	'Personality brands as well. You know. Have you heard that. I can't remember where I've read it. I read somewhere, about places like Lulu Guinness or Paul Smith are personality brands as opposed to Mulberry. So they have a face to wear. And the face of the brand has as much to do with the brand identity as anything else. Whereas Mulberry, different creative directors but it has that aesthetic and you know what the brand is. So I think everyone I work with is more like a Paul Smith' (Participant 23).
<i>Company &amp; collections are evolution of the designer.</i>	'Well, my brand for me is, it's a business, but it's more than that. It's a very personal thing. And it's um, it's very for me like— the easiest way to explain it is that it's a way for me to express, to leave my legacy, to explore. I guess I knew I want to be very happy and I knew that if I did this then I would be happy. I mean, I love life, I love to be alive. I want to live forever. But maybe since I won't be able to, I can sell my dresses and they would be there forever. And one day they will be in a museum and people will see them and be inspired ... I think I have a way of working, a way of designing as a designer. It's always going to be kind of the same. But my collections are an evolution of myself, my experience. I see this company as similar' (Participant 18).
<i>Brand name is designer name because of designer-brand connection.</i>	'It's funny, because I want to see new things every time and I change my mind quite often. But if I say something that I come up with randomly. I might want to change it two years later... It just makes sense. It's your name and it's you. And it's your thing and it's what you like. It has a very deep connection. I'm designing what I like and what I would wear. If I was doing some extreme other brand then I wouldn't use my name. So, it was kind of a good decision' (Participant 3.)

The designer's background is an example of the socio-cultural characteristics that influence the entrepreneurial behaviour of the enterprise in the course of designing and developing collections (Au et al. 2003; Altinay & Wang 2011). The activities, behaviours and experience (heuristics) of the designer-founder as an entrepreneur provides resources for the DFE (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Weerawardena et al. 2007).

The personal identity of the designer, stemming from personality, behaviour, previous experience, and education (either within the fashion or other industries) profoundly influences the culture of the organisation, the design of the collections and the development of routines. Table 6.9 provides examples of the connection of the designer's background to the design of the collections and definition of the brand. The designer, as the 'face of the label', provides the collections with the founding aesthetic, and the collections and brand reflect the evolution of the designer's experience.

For these reasons, the brand and designer are intimately connected, as represented by the common use of the designer’s name for the label. The designer’s background — and the brand — are also impacted by various dimensions categorised as the ‘influence of place’. This is discussed in the following section.

### 6.5.2 Influence of Place

The influence of place encompasses several intertwined dimensions. The designer’s background, collection inspiration, location climate, associations with production, manufacturing and distribution locations, and the rate of internationalisation all provide a ‘place’ based context for brand identity.

The personal background of the designer — where the designer is from — may influence how the DFE is perceived in relation to the circumstances of where the studio is based and where products are manufactured. The elements assist in the definition of the brand as either a British, American or international label (Table 6.10). Each location

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**Table 6.10 Examples of Influence of Place**

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‘We’re actually an international brand. But who produces the clothes and which conditions, and which fabric we buy, everything along the chain to make sure that we have an ethical company ... I don’t think [the creative director] considers herself an American designer, depending on how we define America. In a way she is an international designer and New York is a good place to be an international designer because technically it should not be defined by geography because it’s an immigrant nation, but there is a stigma on American fashion as well that is not always great ... The tradition of real couture comes from France. And England has it to a certain extent, and the Italian for production, for the know-how, as well. And here a lot of it is seen as mass market and watered-down fashion. And not a lot of creativity because it has to be a business before creation and all of those things. That’s why I don’t define our brand as an American brand in that sense. And as for quality too, a lot of people don’t understand that there is actually high-end quality in America. But if you’re in Europe and it says made in USA. I don’t know that it sounds as good as ‘Made in France’ or ‘Made in Italy’ ... [But] dressing Michelle Obama helped establish us as being an American based brand’ (Participant 9).

‘I think that there’s a trickle down effect coming from where our roots are, being in New York, being here, and just seeping into every market that we ever want to be a part of. ... I think in a way we are patriotic like that. It’s something we celebrate. We celebrate to the point of being made in New York is of huge importance. And we decided to put in on our clothes. It’s “[Brand 23] Made in New York”. Because I think that, aside from giving back to this economy, and the economy and everyone around us who has supported us, to give back to that is incredible. It’s kind of like that pay it forward process. And we have you know, not even 5% made overseas’ (Participant 26).

‘I think heritage-wise it’s quite a personal thing. Given the fact that I don’t fit. I’m not part of anywhere in particular and based in all the other places at the same time. I think that for me that has never been a significant part. Because I see myself more as an international kind of person. And I think it’s a lot. I think a lot more people are starting to relate to that. Just the way that everyone is starting to work and travel. And I think, therefore, I think where you’re based is important because it’s where you are most of the time that sets where your inspiration, energy and the city that it represents. But at the same time, I think where you’re manufactured, there’s obviously a certain amount of cache with you know British made items’ (Participant 19).

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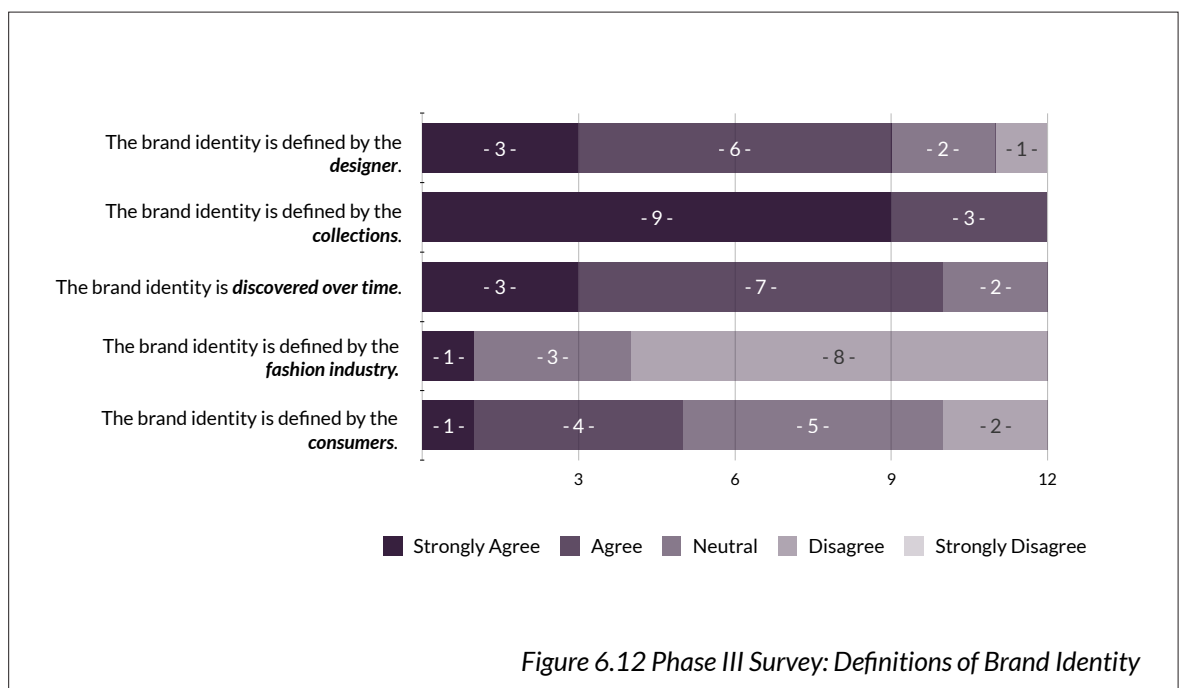
associated with the DFE places the enterprise within a context of meaning. It is up to the DFE to decide how to incorporate that meaning into the brand narrative and messaging. Both the influence of place and the designer's background build on each other, contributing to the development of the brand's personality.

At the centre of the brand resides its core values. These operate as rules that permeate through all internal and external elements of brand identity. For the entrepreneurial DFE, the core values are defined by 'aesthetic principles', which are discussed in the following section.

### 6.6 Core: Aesthetic Principles

The core values of the brand originate from the designer's background, influence of place, organisational culture and development of collections, while at the same time provide the definition for the limitations and boundaries of the brand. In this way, brand development is a path dependent process (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Ind & Watt 2005).

Within the interviews, the designer, the collections, the fashion industry and the consumers were identified as sources of brand identity (Table 6.11). However, the participants predominantly recognised that the source of brand identity stems primarily from the collections, not the industry, consumer or designer (Figure 6.12), highlighting the complexity of brand development for an entrepreneurial fashion business. This is



**Table 6.11 Evidence of Brand Identity Influences**

<i>Consumers</i>	'In the end, you kind of feel out what people are willing to accept from you, and what innovation they'll take... You have to listen to it because your numbers show, but at the same time you cannot have your brand defined by how people see it on the outside' (Participant 9).
<i>Fashion Industry</i>	'In terms of defining what the brand is, you know, I mean [buyers and editors are] hugely [important]. That's— they, to some extent they provide— Well, they don't provide the platform, but you know they kind of amplify your voice. And so, in getting us out there, getting our story out there, they're critical. And in terms of controlling the story that we put out there, you know, we try to control it as much as we can' (Participant 25).
<i>The Designer</i>	'They [the fashion industry] don't define what we do. If they did, then we wouldn't be that interesting' (Participant 5).
<i>The Designer</i>	'It's like he is the identity and the package rolled into one. And everything comes from him. So if ever we're unclear about something [the creative director] is very definitive on it. So you know you can always get the "yes" or "no" on the identity from him. And everything else seems to come out of that really. And I think it's very important. We have a very clear idea of like who our [consumer] is and how we cater to that. Um, I mean, we're seeing it more and more. The store really helps. Massively. Like what we've learned in the last six months from seeing directly who our customer is— not just hearing it second-hand through the retailer has been enormous, so that's massively helped. But we never steer away from what we think— from what [the creative director] thinks is the nuts and bolts of what [Brand 21] is' (Participant 24).
<i>The Collections</i>	'[The brand is] something we define based on what we put on the runway. But we've had reviews where we're like, "What the —!" Pissed at how people have interpreted it' (Participant 1).
<i>The Designer &amp; Collections</i>	'And we've kind of come to a place where we're like: "We don't have to explain it to you. It just happens. It happens in our head". It is something that is that small magical tangible thing — intangible thing, rather — that you don't necessarily, that you can't explain. It doesn't matter. The explanation is the deliverance of a collection. And that's what people can judge you on, but again it's purely someone's opinion. They can't, which is why I say they don't define what our brand is or what we can do, because they cannot be in that head space. They cannot be in that kind of — which is actually within THIS moment — that magical potent moment where you are, it's simply discussions. It's discussions about the themes, talking about the political side of it, how does that influence the fabrics, it's just something that happens, you can't necessarily explain, but we've really come to a place where we're like: "We don't have to"' (Participant 21).

consistent with the properties that emerged as part of the collection development, which was previously discussed (see 6.2 on page 154). The process of developing collections emerges a set of properties — aesthetic principles — that defines the brand’s core, as evidenced by the following quote:

I think it comes down to signatures things. Only when you’ve got the history, and a catalogue. And you start to look back, and you start to have your favourite pieces and your favourite imagery. I think we were saying something else, one of the words was that the woman that we like — that we were attracted to — is actually, she’s confident, but she might be a bit relaxed, so “effortless”. But actually, when we really stopped and looked, it’s not effortless it’s actually bold. These pieces are bold. The woman might be effortless, wearing them, but actually the actual fabric that we design, and the prints that we design, they are not effortless. They are bold. They are saying something, (Participant 21).

The brand identity is primarily created through the development of products and the interaction of experiences that the DFE has with the fashion industry and consumers. Brand identity is discovered via the repetitive patterns of this interaction through the development of collections over time. At the centre of the DFE’s brand identity is the core values. Within the DFE, core values radiate from the aesthetic principles derived from the collections.

The *brand core* is also described as the DNA, essence, concept; it is the consistent values of ‘what the brand stands for’. This creates the *consistency* of the brand, which is expressed through signature pieces, maintained relationships with buyers, editors, suppliers and manufacturers, and the development of a consumer base (sell-throughs). Consistency is balanced with *newness*: infused inspiration and evolution as the DFE incorporates learning and experience into decision-making for future collections and growth. Overall, the brand identity is expressed through the artefacts (signature pieces, logo, graphics, images, muse) and elements (aesthetic principles: ‘pillars’, personality traits and keywords) that describe the brand. The artefacts are used internally and externally to cultivate a consistent image and reputation with stakeholders.

One example of an artefact is the ‘brand book’, a small strategic internal publication that is always evolving and improved upon but used to introduce employees and other relevant stakeholders to the brand, as explained by the following participant:

Every time we show somebody who's not part of our company — this [brand book] is usually an internal document — it's not necessarily something that helps in a sense in understanding aesthetically what [Brand 4] is, but it really, vividly gets them to understand who the woman is, which has been great (Participant 4).

It is a snapshot in time, capturing the brand identity (and desired brand image). It describes the 'pillars' the brand stands on that makes it unique, as well as the girl/woman; muses; defining textures, colours and silhouettes; layout and font guidelines for logos, graphics and images; and other elements collected over time that provide direction for decision-making. Not all DFEs codify their brand in such a manner, but they do generate a catalogue of artefacts, elements and guidelines defining how the brand should be presented. For example, Brand 19 developed a tag attached to products to relay key brand messages:

So we then started doing swing tags explaining, having an extra one explaining, it was a story explaining why the scarf was like that. And then they kind of go with the collection and moving it further and having each one an element of it being handwritten. That this piece was inspired by this... It's like that authenticity straight through to the garment (Participant 21).

This is an example of how the core of the brand's values — the aesthetic principles — are used throughout all of the other elements of brand identity, in this case the expression of the brand. Developing and defining artefacts, elements and guidelines provides a component of control, defining a 'box' of what the brand will and will not do. This assists in setting limitations and directing decision-making relating to editorial placement, wholesale sales and product adaptation. Thus, the codification of the brand identity provides the basis for the brand strategy, which can be enacted and refined through future activities, routines and capabilities.

The brand strategy is the culmination of the efforts, planning and activities to establish the brand in the market (Doyle 1989; Keller 2001; Hedning et al. 2009). The brand strategy provides boundaries for the enterprise, based on the platform of brand identity elements, creating clarity and focus for decision-making within the day-to-day activities (Ind & Watt 2005; Gromark & Melin 2011). The development of a brand strategy illustrates and supports a stable brand identity, which is necessary for a



consistent brand image within the market (Hatch & Schultz 2003; Nandan 2005; Ind & Watt 2005). Brand strategy is the alignment of products (aesthetic of collection), product category, market positioning, core values, brand name and artefacts that expresses the vision and uniqueness of the brand consistently over time (Urde 1999; Heding et al. 2009).

Thus, the brand strategy is the plan and practices executed throughout the course of the collection lifecycle in support of brand identity (Järventie-Thesleff et al. 2011; Skålén & Hackley 2011; Vásquez et al. 2013). Its guidelines and limitations provide direction for the distribution of the products and brand, including through communication activities. The expression of the brand via internal and external communication is discussed in the following section.

### 6.7 Expression: Internal & External Communication

Communication provides an avenue for the distribution of the brand beyond and complementary to the distribution of product. Generally, external communication activities include advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations, direct marketing, interactive marketing (online), word-of-mouth, and personal selling (face-to-face interaction) (Keller 2009). But the DFE utilises a broad menu of communication media throughout the day-to-day activities, including a logo; website; blog; social media; fashion films; lookbooks; photography, graphics, imagery and visuals; posters, postcards and newsletters; collection press releases; fashion week presentations or catwalk shows; public relations; stylists; celebrity placement; word-of-mouth; showrooms; and store visits or trunk shows. Fashion week is their primary 'advertising' expense. Imagery and visuals provide a powerful means of making a visual connection with the consumer, customer or intended audience through the use of photography, videography and art-direction.

Both internally and externally, communication activities express what is unique about the brand, including the aesthetics, design, graphics and visual style, logo and flagship products (signature pieces) (Urde 1999). Collectively these elements define *what* the DFE says (messaging), *where* they say it (media), and *how* they say it (language). The DFE brand story, or *narrative*, is the curated and authentic history of how the brand came to be; it begins with the designer-founder's background and is threaded through every

**Table 6.12 Example Dimensions of Communication**

<p><i>Store Visits</i></p>	<p>'The person that sells it, doesn't have a connection with the designer. They don't even know the designer. Maybe they're a fashion victim and knows everything about the designer and hates the designer, because they don't understand it. Or loves the designer and is going to be the best person to sell it. But on the shop floor – and on the shop floor of the department store – there's a lot of product, and there's a lot of competition. And I [the shop assistant] have maybe a commission on what I sell. So I try to push product that sells itself because it is well known, rather than selling a designer that no one knows because maybe the price is high. Because of course there's a small production so they can't afford to produce at a lower price-point. Why do I have to waste my time selling that, when I can tell this woman: "You should try these because it works". So you go to the store, you meet these people, you tell them about the designer and you make sure they have a connection with the world of the designer. And they get excited' (Participant 28, sales agent).</p>
<p><i>Self-Created Editorial: Posters, Postcards, Newsletters, etc.</i></p>	<p>'We do a newsletter... which I actually got from [another brand]; [the designer] gave me one that she started sending out to her stores. And it totally changed sales. So she does it every month. And we just started doing it actually a couple of months ago ... The buyers love it. The buyers love it and the sales people love it because it is like in one page or two pages, it shows the inspiration of the collection. Some key pieces that they have and where the collection has been in the press recently. We do one for Saks and one for Neiman's. And then we do one general one. It is super helpful' (Participant 5).</p>
<p><i>Fashion Week Catwalk Show/ Presentation</i>  <i>Public Relations</i></p>	<p>'We have our show, which is kind of the biggest marketing tool we have. And then we do interviews at the shows and for the weeks following the shows. And a week or two beforehand. And then between the magazines and the blogs, there's a need for content, so they just come to us now. It's a pretty— I show up to a movie premiere and I get asked about something. It's now— Once you are kind of in the pool, the stories just come. The press just happens. And we don't actively dress celebrities the way a lot of brands do— We have some good relationships with creative people that we've known for a long time and that we reach out to. But we don't do. We don't hire celebrity dressers, we don't cultivate relationships with the stylists the way a lot of brands do' (Participant 5).</p>
<p><i>Fashion Week Presentation</i></p>	<p>'We do runway shows. Mostly presentation. We did one runway show. We've gone back to presentation. We don't even know if we're going to do a presentation going forward. Because it's so expensive. It's really not worth it for us at this point. It's a lot of money that we could put into traveling for sales. More that we could put into development and getting it even more perfect then we can already get it' (Participant 6).</p>
<p><i>Lookbook</i>  <i>Visuals &amp; Imagery</i></p>	<p>'I think that in how you put your brand messages across. When we first started and the key promotion tool that we would use to get out there was a lookbook. So we would create beautiful imagery. But an image, that imagery would be to promote the whole brand message, but also for selling. So it had to be clear. It wasn't like a magazine shoot. It had to still show the product. But it also had to sell the dream as well' (Participant 22).</p>

collection, experience and decision as the DFE evolves over time. Thus, the message of the brand defines the story the brand has to tell. It is uniform, clear, easy-to-digest, cultivated and refined over time, sharable and consistent. The language is the brand's tone-of-voice and the set of words repeatedly used to describe the brand and collections throughout the seasons. The use of promotional tools illustrates common practices used throughout the industry, but also provides an avenue for individual innovations beyond the design of the collection.

Table 6.12 provides evidence detailing the various dimensions related to communication. For entrepreneurs, word-of-mouth and personal networking are key (Morris et al. 2002; Bettiol et al. 2012) as the DFE seeks to integrate into the fashion industry and build a network. These activities are expressed by the DFE through the use of store visits, trunk shows and postcards, posters and other self-created printed materials to encourage sell-throughs, especially within larger department stores. Self-created editorial content provides information about the current season's collection and provides sales assistants with brand messaging to relay to end-consumers. While the enterprises recognised they didn't have the resources to compete with the larger designer brands who provided sales incentives (commissions and rewards to sales assistants who hit performance targets), they are able to successfully encourage sell-throughs by visiting the store, meeting shop assistants, sharing the brand story by providing small gifts.

For promotion, DFEs pursue four primary objectives: obtaining press, targeting buyers, increasing brand awareness and encouraging sell-throughs to the end consumer. There was minimal distinction among the participants as to which promotional tools were targeted at and most helpful with each of the four identified objectives. Several of the participants pointed out that they considered all promotional tools useful in all four cases (seeking press, targeting buyers, increasing brand awareness and encouraging sell-throughs). This indicates that communication activities fulfil a variety of uses throughout the collection lifecycle, and that DFEs incorporate them holistically.

The variety of website pages, use of social media and distribution of the brand via press/media and editorial are detailed sub-categories derived from the data, and are discussed in the following sub-sections.

### 6.7.1 Website Pages

The pages featured on DFE websites evidence the product and communication distribution practices (Table 6.13). Within Phase IV, the dataset of DFE's websites were surveyed to create a tally of website pages, providing an indication of the resources, capabilities and objectives of the enterprises under study.

Out of the group of DFEs without a website (13), some of the web addresses directed to a holding page, social media page, or 'under construction' page, others led to domain name websites indicating that the domain name was available and that the label

	<b>London</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Total</b>
About / Bio	57	53	110
Bespoke	3	2	5
Blog	18	19	37
Campaign	1	2	3
Celebrity	2	3	5
Charity	0	2	2
Collaborations	5	7	12
Collections	62	61	123
Contact Details	58	60	118
Contact Form	17	8	25
e-store	30	36	66
Flagship	2	2	4
Image Gallery	16	13	29
Multi Brand Retail	0	2	2
Newsletter Signup	27	31	58
Partners	2	0	2
Press	28	32	60
Projects	3	1	4
Search	0	6	6
Single Image	1	1	2
Social Media Feed	7	2	9
Social Media Links	44	52	96
Stockists	38	39	77
Legal	17	15	32
Videos	24	18	42
Other	7	3	10
Website Down	8	5	13

was probably out of business. An additional two brands only featured a static image as a website without links to additional pages.

The pages categorised as related to the distribution of product include those featuring an e-commerce shop (66), flagship retail location (4), or multi-brand store (2) in which they featured other brands in addition to their own ready-to-wear collections. Additional pages related to distribution occur only once each in the dataset and are categorised as 'other', including a page related to the brand's diffusion line and one page featuring the showrooms that the brand distributes from during London and Paris fashion weeks.

A majority of the website pages relate to the communication practices of the enterprise. The 'about' page (110) often featured a detail biography about the designer and/or a description of the brand. A blog (37) served as a newsfeed for the brand and designer. The 'campaign' page (3) featured the promotional materials for the current season such as a 'postcard' image. The 'celebrity' page (5) included a feed of celebrities featured in the label's garments. The 'charity' page (2) featured a detailed description about charitable contributions the designer supported through garment sales and other donations. The 'collaboration' page (12) featured the designer's projects in partnership with other brands, such as shoe or eyewear labels. This is similar to the 'partner' page (2), which featured various relationships with industry partners such as other labels, awards programs and support programs. The 'press' page (60) featured a newsfeed of recent and notable editorial features. The 'projects' page (4) featured special projects by the designer. The websites also included social media links (96), a feed of social media postings (9), an image gallery (29) and videos (42). Additional pages related to communication, occurring only once in the dataset and categorised as 'other', include a page on the ten-year anniversary of a brand, 'awards', 'exhibition', 'fine art', 'mood board', 'trends' and 'music'.

The use of social media is discussed in the following section.

### **6.7.2 Social Media**

The concept of social media arose early in the interview portion of the research as a means of promoting the brand and communicating directly with both aspirational and actual consumers. However, not all DFEs approach social media the same way, as there

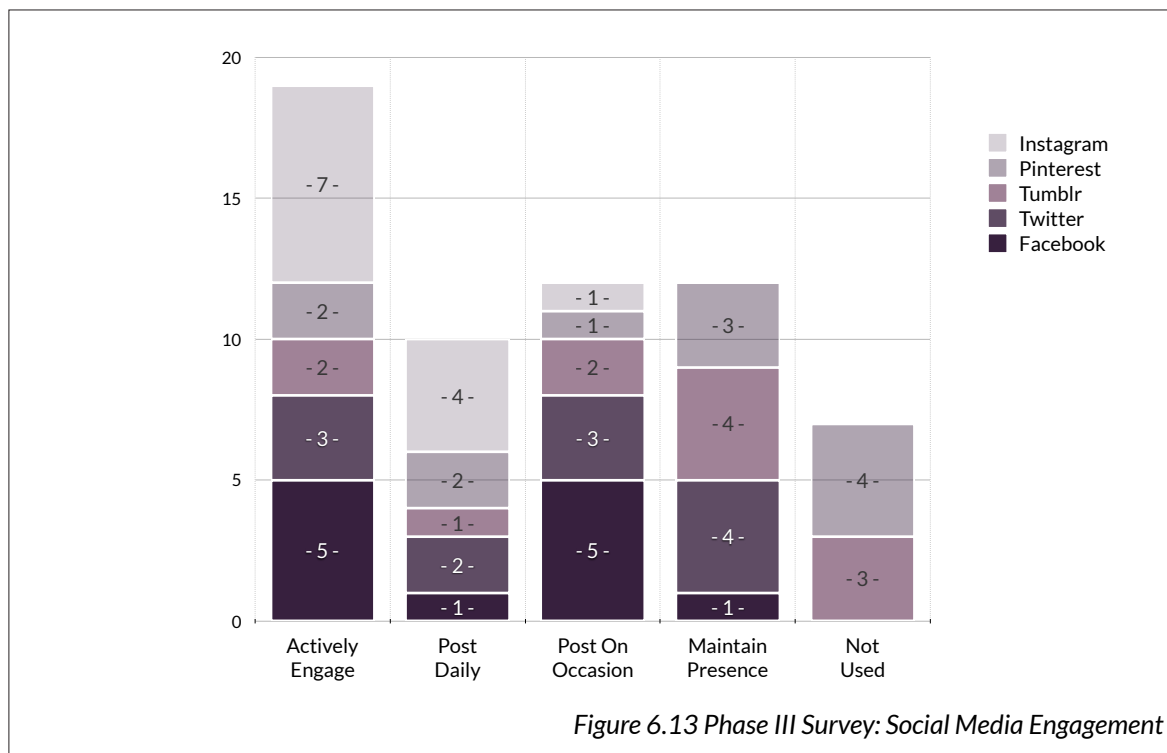
is variation along two dimensions: platform usage and level of engagement. Figure 6.13 illustrates the use of social media by the primary platforms managed by DFEs compared with the level of engagement.

There are two identified approaches to social media. The first involves incorporating the use of social media deeply into the brand identity of the firm using various media platforms to drive a continual conversation about the brand online, as evidenced by the following quotes:

We do think that social is important. It's a really quick, cheap way to communicate with our customer. And also because we don't have our own stores yet. Creating a digital world that makes a lot of sense for the brand is important (Participant 5).

I can reach seven or eight thousand Instagram followers who are maybe die-hard fans or even not die-hard fans, and show them something new that just hit Revolve.com that maybe a celebrity wore. That is all great. But many other brands are doing the same thing. In certain cases you do see a big tick in sales when something gets posted in a viral manner. But it's not a sure fire win (Participant 12).

The second approach recognises the use of social media for specific purposes, but balances this with the personality and culture of the brand, in which a high level of active



engagement does not fit with the brand identity of the firm, but maintaining a presence on social media is important for long-term brand awareness. For example:

That strategy slowly evolved for us to being something that is very curated. And we'll only say something if there is something interesting to say. As opposed to posting for the sake of posting. Um, I think we also took a step back and acknowledged that there are certain things that in order for us to build a formidable brand that we just have to have. But we wanted to do it wisely in the sense that we have limited resources. We want to control, you know, the messaging of our brand very tightly and in a consistent way (Participant 4).

The two approaches are simply two sides of the same coin, in that in order to be effective, the use of social media must authentically fit with the organisational culture and goals.

The platforms emerged from the interview portion of the research include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr. Phase IV of the research explored those platforms that DFEs promoted on their websites through feeds or links in the forms of icons or text. Significantly, DFEs in the dataset utilised a broader set of social media platforms. Additional platforms emerged from this portion of the research include Blogspot (1%), Google+ (3%), LinkedIn (1%), Vimeo (1%), Weibo (3%) and YouTube (6%). While not used in large numbers, these platforms highlight niches of consumer groups. For example, YouTube and Vimeo serve as a function for distributing fashion films, while LinkedIn serves as a platform for promoting the designer for collaborations and additional freelance projects. Weibo — utilised by three enterprises in the dataset — is a popular social media platform in Asia.

The social media platforms promoted on the websites serve as both a means of promotion of the brand and as an opportunity for engagement with consumers. Determining the appropriate level and approach to engagement with the platforms depends on the personality of the designer, organisational culture and available resources, as evidenced by the following quote:

And we're not by any means innovative there, we're just doing a fair contribution. We always have an aesthetic that we maintain with anything that we put on... You want to connect the dots... Anything that we post, with— well sorry, 70% of everything we post is product driven. And then I maintain an art contribution on all of those platforms as well that isn't about "buy the shoes,

buy the watch, buy the pair of pants”. So I guess we do have — I didn’t really identify that until I just said that — but we do have a mix that we’re trying to maintain (Participant 7).

The findings from Phase IV in relation to social media point to how enterprises make their social media ‘menu’ their own, using video sites, mainstream platforms, and targeting international consumers. In general, younger brands use social media more than their older counterparts (see A.18 on page 402). The current generation of entrepreneurial DFEs is notably the first generation of new brands who have had the opportunity to experiment with the use of social media in the development of their firm. This illustrates a transition for the more established entrepreneurial brands who did not previously use social media during the initial development of their firm compared to those enterprises who rely on social media in the promotion of their brand to the end consumer and industry, as evidenced by the following quote:

I had the e-brake on until about two years ago with a lot of social media. I was a huge proponent of it because it’s democratic and free. So as you’re saying younger designers digging in, they should. Because before there was not an international media platform where they could share their ideas with. So, now that that is available, ironically someone can start a little line tomorrow from their basement and it’s right online next to me who’s been trying for eight years (Participant 7).

The insight garnered from this stems from the importance of considering the aesthetic and culture of the enterprise in relation to positioning, placement and goals within the broader industry and market. The use of social media is one example of the dynamic ways in which communication tools are customised to express the brand’s aesthetic in the pursuit of growth.

Finally, media and editorial features provide an important opportunity for the expression of the brand. This is discussed in the following section.

### **6.7.3 Media & Editorial**

The press a DFE generates can be categorised into tiers of influence and positioning within the industry based on readership and editorial content. Not every DFE is an appropriate fit for all media outlets and care must be taken to target individual outlets that provide an opportunity to generate appropriate brand awareness to the end



consumer. This includes both traditional media, such as magazines, and new media, such as blogs, which can be categorised based on content, influence and publication type, as illustrated by the following quotes:

I think it's just very easy, and with experience I can just see a brand and know what magazine I'm going to put it in. Some brands are more— so I divide it up into four categories, so category one you have Vogue, Vanity Fair, Harpers Bazaar. And then category two you have Cosmo, Marie Claire, Elle. And three you have like the paper magazine, like Interview, the more street, city, art. And then you have the newspaper, New York Times, Wall Street Journal. ... Magazines are, they have a lot of pressure from advertisers. So when they place young designers, it's you know, it's the fact that— you know, they have a crush on the piece or they do it to support you as well. So there's a support system in the industry (Participant 10, PR Agent).

People tend to look a lot to blogs rather than the magazines. But the magazines are also an important element as well. And it's definitely, they play a large part... They provide feedback and we definitely consider it, but at the end of the day, we're definitely staying true to ourselves, because that is the most important thing (Participant 11).

Within Phase IV, press data was gathered systematically by searching for the brand name and/or the designer's name in a Google News search. From the first page of results a limit of three news articles was selected. In cases where more than three articles relevant to the DFE populated the first page of search results, selection favoured the most recent and in-depth articles. In some cases, press data could not be found for some of the brands or designers in the dataset using Google searches.

After the press data was identified, the articles were saved as a PDF file and imported into *Atlas.ti* software. At this point the articles were reviewed and categorised based on identified themes. Table 6.14 illustrates the tally of articles for the categories of editorial identified. Editorial that DFEs receive can be categorised across two dimensions: the depth of coverage and the type of article. The most in-depth coverage can be considered the 'company profile', followed by a profile of the creative director ('designer profile'), and 'designer mention' where the creative director is mentioned in a story about a separate subject.

**Table 6.14 Phase IV: Editorial Categories**

	<b>Company Profile</b>	<b>Designer Profile</b>	<b>Designer Mention</b>	<b>Total</b>
Support Program	8	2	13	23
DFE Growth	29	16	3	48
Celebrity	1	3	26	30
Fashion Week	11	9	11	31
Collection Review	36	14	18	68
Emerging Designer	2	6	15	23
Collaborations	18	2	10	30
Behind the Scenes	16	25	4	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>298</b>

The types of stories include those about support programs or industry awards, celebrity gossip or profiles, fashion week news, seasonal collection reviews, collaboration announcements, ‘behind the scenes’ (in-depth profile features about the company or designer), articles operating as emerging designers in the industry, and articles on the growth of the enterprise. The ‘DFE growth’ category includes news features about enterprises, as well as new brand launch announcements. The ‘emerging designer’ category explored a variety of issues about being an ‘emerging’ designer in the fashion industry, including the designer’s experience in overcoming industry-wide challenges or ‘global forces’ such as: the economic recession of 2008, business model innovations such as crowd funding, industry trends related to brand names, defining ‘codes of the house’, sustainability, employment and intern issues, race and diversity, entrepreneurship and freelance in the industry, cultural trends, emerging markets, and trade shows.

Categorising DFE editorial provides an indication of how these labels are ‘covered’ in the media. The implications for this categorisation creates a potential framework, or deliberate segmentation and targeting (Danneels 1996), for how enterprises pitch articles to press outlets as part of external communication initiatives, which works in tandem with the sales strategy. For example, the following participant explains:

I wait until after press days, and after two weeks in, I see what the response is ... from editors. And then we sit down [with the designer], and usually we will sit down together and I give them feedback ... and based on that we set our strategy for the season: so what I think we should push and in what order, and what are the goals for the season (Participant 10, PR agent).

Editorial features within particular media outlets and article depth provides an indication of the DFE's integration into the fashion system, and is the primary means of expression in the absence of an advertising budget. It is through the communication activities and resources — the website, social media and public relations efforts — that the DFE is partially able to express its brand in pursuit of its goals. The hierarchy of goals that make up the brand's mission and vision is discussed in the following section.

### 6.8 Mission & Vision: Goals

For DFEs, the brand's mission and vision are reflected in a hierarchy of goals: personal, objective, operational and ultimate (Table 6.15). The interlaced nature of personal goals illustrates how closely the development of the firm is tied to its designer-founder, defining the motivations and aspirations of the designer (Mills 2012). Objective goals define actionable and measurable targets for the enterprise, while operational goals indicate desired improvements or alterations to how the DFE functions within the fashion system. Finally, ultimate goals provide long-term direction and vision.

While Mills (2012) categorises fashion enterprises based on their motivations, aspiration and self-identity (see Table 2.1 on page 15) as having either a creative enterprise, creative business or fashion industry orientation, this research did not identify a significant difference between these three categories. Rather, DFEs within this research all seek to participate and be successful within the fashion industry. However, how they

**Table 6.15 Personal, Objective, Operational & Ultimate Goals**

<b>Personal Goals</b>	Continue to design, life enjoyment/be happy, work-life balance, earn a living, achieve aesthetic vision, achieve respect or renown
<b>Objective Goals</b>	Increase brand awareness, distribute to specific regions or stockists, increase sales by a forecasted amount, open or maintain a flagship retail store, hire additional employees, gain formal investment, shift manufacturing and production, shift product positioning, shift design aesthetic, shift price point, shift target consumer
<b>Operational Goals</b>	Gain traction, create an impact on industry/network, generate following to make it easy for stockist/consumer to 'buy in', operate 'outside' fashion system/distribution, institutionalise brand within fashion system
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Financially successful/profitable, business survivability & longevity, global lifestyle brand, create a legacy or heritage, multidisciplinary design firm, scalable, maintain independence/family run, remain small firm

define success depends on their particular emphasis and alignment between various dimensions of personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals.

Personal goals are connected to the experience of designing, owning and/or managing a fashion label, emphasising the designer's need to create. Personal goals include the desire to continue to design, pursuit of happiness and life enjoyment, achievement of a work-life balance, ability to earn a living from fashion design, the achievement of the designer's aesthetic vision, and the attainment of respect or renown.

It is within the day-to-day management of the enterprise that objective goals begin to form. The most immediate objective goal for the firm is to increase brand awareness, which is an on-going measure of success. Other objective goals speak to the individual situations of the DFE and include the desire to distribute to specific regions or stockists, increase sales by a forecasted amount, or gain formal investment. Seeking formal investment is related to the desire to ultimately scale the firm; while some brands find advantages remaining an independent label, others seek to obtain rapid global growth. The objective to open a flagship shop reflects the DFEs desire to control the 'brand world' and distribution process, further legitimising their place within the fashion industry. These objective goals all represent forward progression, but others were also identified which 'shift' the organisation laterally to achieve an alignment of resources and opportunities.

During the course of development it may be necessary to make deliberate shifts or adjustments, often quite profound, to align various aspects of management practices with capabilities and the market environment. These are examples of the reconfiguration of resources (Ellonen et al. 2011). This entails possibly making a shift in the manufacturing and production of garments, such as contracting with new or additional factories, and/or shifting the product positioning to create a better fit with the demanded price-point of the product, as evidenced by the following quote:

It was the financial crisis really, which was also a point of crisis for us. And [the designer] had been producing dresses at about the £1000 mark. That was really the average for a dress of us. And they were typically short and sexy dresses at a £1000. And he suddenly found that people didn't— that was one thing that people crossed off their list. When money became tighter, out went the £1000 short and sexy dress. And that was a point when we really had to take a step back and think about what

we do and how we could adjust to fit within a changing market. And that was a point in which a lot of stockists— we lost a lot of stockists (Participant 25).

In addition to these, the enterprise may be required to shift its design aesthetic, price-point of the product and/or target consumer to create better alignment of the collection and products with the designer's personal goals and/or market demand. For example, the following participant explains:

Here are two ways of doing it: You could double the prices and completely re-brand, which is quite terrifying and risky, and without an actual marketing budget it's quite difficult to rebrand because we haven't got any body doing it. Or we can do a little bit of: "If we build it they will come" kind of approach. So what we're doing is putting really nice product in front of people, perhaps at a slightly higher price than in was last year. But if you put the two items side by side you would hopefully see a massive improvement so that that slightly more expensive garment will still represent good value for money (Participant 13).

Operational goals link objective and ultimate goals. The achievement of operational goals is determined through the DFE's reflection on their position within the fashion system. Because of the 'softer' metric based on reflection, they are distinct from objective goals. Operational goals include: gaining traction or momentum; creating a positive impact on, or contribution to, the network or industry; generating a following within the industry that makes it easy for the stockists or consumers to 'buy into' the brand; institutionalising the brand within the fashion system; or operating outside the fashion system through non-traditional presentation, sales, production or distribution methods. DFEs may also seek to create a club, community or lifestyle, infusing the brand with hidden details or secrets that the consumer or other stakeholders can access through the consumption of the brand, as evidenced by the following quote:

I want it to have the full experience. And I really do want it to be a lifestyle (Participant 2).

Objective and operational goals provide direction for the achievement of the DFE's ultimate goals, or vision for the brand. The ultimate goals provide an insight into the impetus of practices enacted throughout development. While some of the goals are not revelational (seeking financial success and profitability, for example), others provide

insight into the rate and scale of growth. Ultimate goals provide an orienting target that affect day-to-day decision-making. They help define the long-term vision for the brand identity delineating where the DFE is heading (Urde 2013). Given that DFEs align their positioning within the fashion industry around the design aesthetic, ultimate goals for the firm diverge based on the background of the designer-founder. For example, some DFEs seek to achieve survivability and longevity beyond the designer-founder, as evidenced by the following quote:

The success will be that the brand is still there even when I am gone. I want it to be a long lasting thing that can live with other people's lives, not just a flash of a hot designer and then like gone. I think the biggest success that I could wish for is having this life, this long life. I don't want the brand to be just you know achieving the commercial success, I also want it to be like— I also want it to leave a footstep in fashion history (Participant 3).

However, others are content to use the business as a form of profitable creative expression within their lifetime and the parameters they place on their growth. For example:

For me this idea of growth, it's you grow to the level where you feel comfortable with growth. You don't. Not everybody needs to be this big powerhouse brand that is everywhere. Because I feel when it gets everywhere, it's not luxurious anymore. It's not appealing (Participant 9).

Success may be defined by the constant progression towards a moving target and continual growth, and/or the stability and establishment of the brand within the industry. There are multiple opportunities for innovation and growth between the two non-linear dimensions of achieving the status of a global 'lifestyle' brand and remaining an independent label.

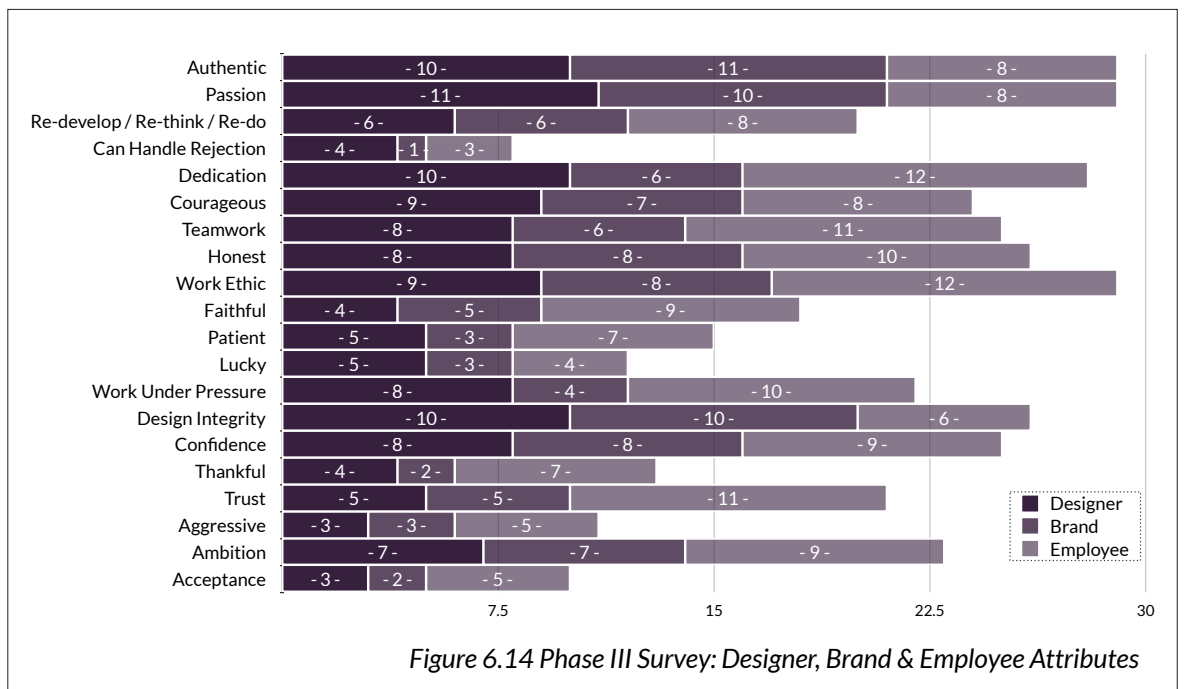
Global lifestyle brands produce products in a diverse array of categories in addition to fashion, which they are able to do through the achievement of tremendous scale. Within this same framework includes the development of the company into a multi-disciplinary design firm, whereby the enterprise offers design services for a variety of uses, products and experiences. Achieving these goals would require substantial financial investment to accommodate the ever necessary scalability of the company. In opposition, there is the desire to maintain the firm's independent ownership and/or remain a small

enterprise. Within both of these goals, the DFE may seek to maintain control and the intrinsic connection of the brand to the designer-founder. Either option is related to the creation of the brand's legacy or heritage through the construction of the brand narrative.

Identifying and understanding the ultimate goals of the firm are important because they serve as a guide in the development of mid-range objective and operational goals, and day-to-day management decisions (Reid et al. 2005; Gromark & Melin 2011). If opportunities don't align with the ultimate goals, they should be rejected for appropriate alternatives to appropriately express the brand's values in the pursuit of the DFE's distinct mission and vision. For the DFE, the organisational culture is a construct that is created, and permeates throughout the decisions, routines and behaviours of the enterprise during the course of product development. This is analysed in the following section.

### 6.9 Culture: Behaviours & Attributes

The interview participants identified several attributes used in discussing qualities about the designer, brand and employees. The overlap of these attributes illustrate the close connection between the designer-founder (creative director) and the management of the organisation (Figure 6.14). The attributes describe the organisational culture and guide product development. For example:



I think the words “honest” and “authentic” crops up quite a lot with us. Because we do have that. We have had that organic growth. But to kind of begin with the crux of it, we love human stories. We love storytelling. So the whole idea of narrative being involved and laced through the collections was going to be very important to us. Aesthetically, I would say, the words ... are words that kind of came together. Those really summarise the aesthetic of what we do. So we have— we had quite clear brand messages, but it took a while to hone those down (Participant 21).

As the participating brands were all quite entrepreneurial and in operation less than ten years, the influence of the designer-founder(s) significantly impacts the culture of the organisation and the decision-making of the employees, who turn to the creative director for guidance (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001). The organisational culture defines the way the DFE conducts business and influences the relationships that the firm develops with employees, consumers, suppliers and other stakeholders (Barney 1986b; Hatch 1993; Hatch & Schultz 2003).

The organisational culture is made up of the attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours of the individuals that influence and is influenced by the brand's heritage, track record, place of origin and the designer-founder (Weerawardena et al. 2007; Urde 2013). Hatch & Schultz (2002, 2003, 2010) argue that culture is a major component of brand identity because it creates the environment for the expression of the brand. Thus, the culture of the brand is dependent upon the personalities and behaviours of the designer-founder(s) and employees in the development of routines and the day-to-day operations of the enterprise (Urde 2013). The internal competencies of the DFE are the final element of brand identity, and are discussed in the next section.

### **6.10 Competencies: Management**

In general, the management competencies of the DFE involve its capacity, resources and capabilities such as time, individual skills, finances, knowledge and experience that assist in the development of the collections. The management function encompasses the company's structure (including investment and finance), launch point, in-house and out-sourced resources, and the DFE's ability to control various aspects of its production, growth and brand. The company structure refers to the overall design of the enterprise, relating to its financial and market position, relationships and competencies, as well as the



role of the designer(s), employees and partners within the DFE. In this way, the concept of management is a self-referential 'meta' concept that both exists within the elements that create the brand identity and refer to the process as a whole by encompassing the general operational resources and capabilities of the enterprise. This section analyses the competencies of the DFE by examining the variation in the launch points of the company, investment and financial assets, in-house and out-sourced resources, and the control of the brand.

The management of the DFE begins with its launch point. The designer's personality, education and previous experience impact the opportunities for launching the brand (Altinay & Wang 2011). The launch point is the impetus or event that launches the company into the development of the initial collection. Six launch points were identified which are not mutually exclusive.

The first launch point is planned entry, in which the DFE identifies a gap in the market, conducts market research and strategically plans for market introduction. In this case, market research includes formal or informal surveying of potential stockists for wholesales, or other aspects of business planning prior to launch. For example:

I remember us going: "Okay, what labels have they just taken on? Where do we sit within that mix?" We wrote [to potential stockists]: "I feel like we would sit really well on the third floor next to so-and-so that you recently just brought in". So we did our research. We really kind of thought about how we would present ourselves to them. And I guess for the people that had time to read it, it had that effect. And then we were able to speak to them. It was a quite an honest approach, and then it just built from there (Participant 21).

A few designers described 'identifying a gap in the market', although this gap can be considered to be in relation to their personal network of relationships in addition to, or leading to, further research such as potential consumer or competitor analysis. Another option for entry is product experimentation, which entails developing an initial product or capsule collection, presenting and attempting to sell it without prior planning and development of the company. In this situation, the designer 'figures it out' as they progress through the collection lifecycle process.

The third option is developing a company immediately out of university, either instead of completing a degree or upon graduation. This was initially not an option

for selection within the extended survey; however, upon an additional review of the transcripts two of the participating brands would fall into this category. These three options: strategic entry, product experimentation, and post graduation can be considered direct entries into the market.

The final three options for market entry include participation in a fashion competition, participation in an artistic exhibition, and winning an award. Four participating brands fall within the winning award and fashion competition participation category, as they all participated in a particular design or fashion related competition for new design talent and subsequently won top placements within those competitions, as illustrated by the following quotes:

I won [an] award and because I won, I was invited to do a showroom in Berlin, and I was invited to do a show in Milan. It just seemed like there was an interest. And I thought that it was quite an opportunity that many people dream of. So that's kind of why I launched it (Participant 19).

I feel very lucky to have— I mean I don't think that I would be able to do it if I didn't win the award and that also made me think of how joyful it was to work alone and independently, and also financially, and things like that (Participant 3).

These routes of entry can be considered indirect launching points, as the initial impetus for creating a collection and the development of product is not necessarily to pursue sales. However, participation within these activities highlights a potential opportunity for the designer within the fashion industry through the generation of interest (publicity) and resources (network relationships and/or funding).

Similar to the direct entry option of consciously beginning a company post graduation, often designers who enter the market via indirect means launch their enterprises shortly after graduating from university or at a younger age (early to mid 20s). Launch points are the initial catalyst for propelling the DFE into the industry. As the DFE begins operations, it structures the company around various combinations of in-house and out-sourced resources.

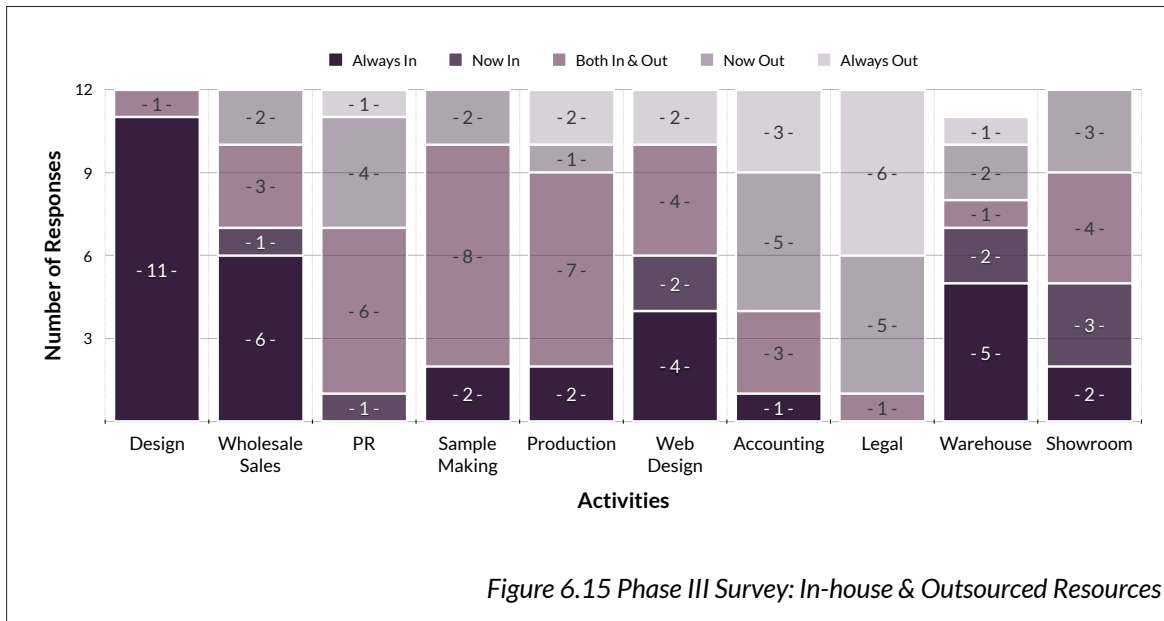
### 6.10.1 In-house & Out-sourced Resources

DFEs out-source activities as necessary, often bringing them in-house once they have the additional financial capacity to support the salary of the employee that would hold the position. Employees, including their knowledge and experience, are often the most valued and needed resource for entrepreneurial firms (Barney 1991). Employees often help to propel the enterprise into the next stage of development based on the newly hired individual's industry contacts and experience. Having activities in-house provides the benefit of greater control over those tasks, but requires significant financial resources. To justify the expense, the DFE needs to increase earning by up to three times the salary of the new employee. In some cases, this creates a mutually conflicting situation in which the enterprise requires additional employees in order to grow, but needs to grow in order to be able to hire additional employees. The following quotes provide evidence for this phenomenon:

I have three full time staff and six interns. But it's just like [if] I get whatever million dollar deal that happens to fall into my lap, that will help me get more space and get more staff. And I think that changes everything. Once you have more people and you can figure out what everyone is going to be doing. And you can do more stuff because you have more resources (Participant 1).

And even with a million dollars, you can't do anything with a million dollars. Because you hire two people at \$200,000. And you're already there. And you make a show, you make a collection and that's it. You can never really generate a million dollars in sales with a million dollars. Because you need to make at least 2-3 to cover just that million (Participant 9).

For the most part, the only task that is maintained within the DFE is the design process (Rantisi 2002). But even one qualitative survey participant shares this task with contractors outside of the firm, such as pattern-makers for example. In the earliest stages of the development the designer may be the only personnel available and responsible for handling the day-to-day activities. Figure 6.15 shows the evolution of resources in-house to out-sourced over time. The identified categories of functions are: design, wholesales sales, public relations, sample-making, production, web design, accounting, legal, warehouse and showroom.



Out-sourcing provides access to resources without up-front investment. But as a trade-off, payment terms for the contracted, out-sourced activities require larger percentages of service fees in the short-term. Outsourcing the wholesale sales, showroom and public relations functions — primary tasks of the DFE — provides the enterprise with entry to the fashion industry network, as illustrated by the following quote:

I met two [sales] agencies, but at this time I got an offer from three or four major agencies. But I didn't know what to do. So, I asked buyers and designers what they think about them. I think buyers are quite good advisors because they're the ones going to that place to make their orders. They've been dealing with the agency. And they have the feeling [that]: are they just out for the money or do they care about their designers, and things like that (Participant 3).

The formal network of showrooms, sales agents and PR firms provide the enterprise with access to a wide and targeted assortment of editorial press and key stockists.

For Phase IV, the contact details page of websites was used as an indication of in-house and out-sourced resources related to public relations and sales (see A.16 on page 400). Out of the 149 DFEs in the dataset, 128 included contact details. These findings are limited by the information provided on the website, where the following potential conditions were identified. In some cases, contact information provided on the website may refer to the DFE who then forwards sales and public relations inquiries to their agent. Additionally, information may be out of date, or the use of sales and PR agents is not

listed on the website and is unknown. Finally, PR may be identified as shared in-house and out-sourced, and referred to two contacts.

Based on this survey of the 128 enterprises in the dataset for which there is contact information provided on websites, London DFEs are slightly more likely to refer to a PR agent (59%) or sales agent (22%) in comparison to New York DFEs who refer to in-house contacts for sales, PR and general inquires. Significantly, only 3 percent of New York DFEs referred to a sales agent, while 87 percent referred to an in-house contact.

As previously discussed (see 6.4.1 on page 180), the sales function can move in and out as resources allow. This perspective of the sales process is quite different from the approach to public relations. For the DFE, public relations is an essential activity which is predominantly outsourced completely or shared with an in-house communications director. Rarely is it solely an in-house task.

The activities of sample-making and production follow a similar pattern. Indeed, often enterprises will out-source the sample-making process to the production factory in order to obtain an accurate estimate of each garment's production cost, which factors into the development of the wholesale price. A majority of the respondents share both the sample-making and production process with external hired manufacturers. These activities are often considered to be shared because in order to ensure quality control, the designer(s) and/or their hired production manager will oversee the sample-making and production process on a day-to-day basis with the factory. This often entails the designer and/or in-house production manager traveling to the (potentially overseas) factory during production periods to supervise the process and address any challenges that may arise.

Once the garments are ready for distribution they go through a final quality control check either at the factory, at a contracted warehouse facility or at the designer's studio. The warehouse activity is the holding period between the completion of the products from each of the different factories and the sorting, packing and distribution to the stockists. This activity is highly dependent upon the resources available to the DFE and the amount of sales. If the enterprise operates in a studio with space to accommodate the sales stock prior to distribution, the enterprise will manage the warehouse process in-house. Or they may ship the stock to the enterprise's retail space should they operate

their own retail store. Enterprises at both ends of the development spectrum, those just starting their firm and those that are more established, may operate by means of their own warehouse environment. It is the enterprises that are operating within the middle segments of development — where they are less likely to have the studio capacity or the retail environment to manage the amount of stock that comes in prior to distribution — that are more likely to outsource the warehouse function to external pack-and-ship distributors. Also, enterprises that produce garments at a contemporary price-point are more likely to use warehouse facilities due to the fact that contemporary price-points sell in higher volumes because of a larger end-consumer target market, which requires more space for pack-and-ship processes.

The showroom function is closely related to the wholesale process but takes on a slightly different pattern. Like the warehouse, maintaining an in-house based showroom requires the investment in commercial property, but can take final form along three dimensions. The first includes the in-housed based showroom created within the studio. These spaces are often set up as conference rooms surrounded by clothing rails displaying the merchandise of the forthcoming season. Great care is taken in all aspects of this space to illustrate the brand aesthetic. One participant even described how the brand maintained strict standards as to the type of beverages served to guests of the showroom, in addition to the consideration given to the paint colour of the walls, carpeting and furnishings. All of these elements help to create a 'brand experience' and express the aesthetic principles. Outside of the selling period, these spaces act as meeting rooms for the enterprise's employees and visitors.

Additionally, if the enterprise operates its own retail shop, that space may also serve as the wholesale showroom. The third dimension for operating an in-house based showroom is to rent temporary retail or private showroom space during the selling periods at New York, London or Paris fashion weeks. If the resources are not available to operate this space, but the enterprise operates sales in-house by way of the designer or hired sales director, the enterprise may out-source the showroom function by renting-a-rail at various showrooms during the selling periods. Within this type of showroom arrangement the enterprise is sharing space with other DFEs.

The design and development of the firm's website depends on the operation of e-commerce, which requires daily processing of online orders, merchandise and site management, and is more likely to be managed in-house. A website used primarily as a promotional tool can be an out-sourced function. Likewise, newly launched enterprises may not have the resources to continually consult with accountants and lawyers and these functions may be ignored during this period. As the business gains momentum these services are often required for key tasks such as protecting intellectual property, formally filing and setting up the business, and tax accounting. Like public relations, these are activities that are very quickly out-sourced, and then as resources allow, they may hire an employee to manage these administrative tasks in conjunction with an externally contracted professional.

Like many of the decisions within the firm, choosing to keep a function in-house or to out-source it is a dynamic process. It may be more advantageous to keep an activity in-house, then out-source it as resources change, only to bring it in-house at a later date when capabilities allow. The management and structure of resources contribute to the DFE's ability to control the development of the collections, company and brand. Furthermore, the DFE's ability to appropriately finance its business operations, possibly through formal and informal investments, is an important competency. The following section discusses the variations of investment and finance options, and their relation to brand identity.

### **6.10.2 Investment & Finance**

When and how a DFE seeks investment is often a very personal decision for the designer-founder, and is dependent upon individual financial circumstances and the goals of the enterprise. It may be assumed that the only resource entrepreneurial designers need when starting their firm is substantial financial resources; however, this research identified many different approaches to the investment and financial management of the firm, depending on the culture of the enterprise.

There were several cases of entrepreneurs who were able to 'bootstrap' the launch of the firm, in some cases starting with as little as \$5,000 in savings, maintaining a profitable selling position from the earliest stages of development and floating cash flow with short-term loans or flexible payment terms with manufacturers and suppliers. On the

opposite end, there were several cases in which there were ample financial resources used to start the firm, supplied either from personal financial circumstances and/or private investors. On both ends of the financial spectrum — minimal resources to high levels of financial investment — there exists cases of both struggling and successful enterprises. This demonstrates that financial resources alone are not what sets a DFE on the path to economic sustainability.

As a competency, seeking investment provides opportunities for growth. This is especially true for design firms transitioning from the mid to upper levels of annual turnover. The distinction between the first stages of development to the established entrepreneurial firm are segmented by specific brackets of annual turnover (see Stages of Growth on page 199). Transitioning through the middle levels of these brackets is the most difficult, as the enterprise is neither the new entrant nor firmly established within the global fashion market. It is at this point where additional financial resources are needed to grow, as evidenced by the following quotes:

I mean *your spending is getting bigger every season*, if you are doing a show especially. *But the sales are not guaranteed to get bigger*. And at some point you get like more debt than you're earning (Participant 3, emphasis added).

*We've been profitable for two years*. It's incredible to say, to be able to say that. So we're *self financed*. Really just you know money comes in and money goes out, money comes in, money goes out. So it would be really great to not be so— I mean we are so efficient. And *it would be great to just have more resources*. I mean we obviously are growing our capital base, but to also — when the time is right, and we're not in any hurry and we don't necessarily need it right now — But we are interested in *taking it VERY much to the next level and in a huge way*. And to do that, and build out our e-commerce in a robust degree, *that takes capital* (Participant 11, emphasis added).

As Figure 6.16 shows, the respondents to the qualitative survey were asked to indicate when it was most appropriate for a DFE to seek investment. They were given a qualitative scale in which to answer. Their responses were then compared to the stage of development of the firm based on their estimated annual turnover and whether or not the firm was profitable (although several participants chose not to disclose their profitability and this was offered as a third option). Overall, there is a distinction that DFEs based in



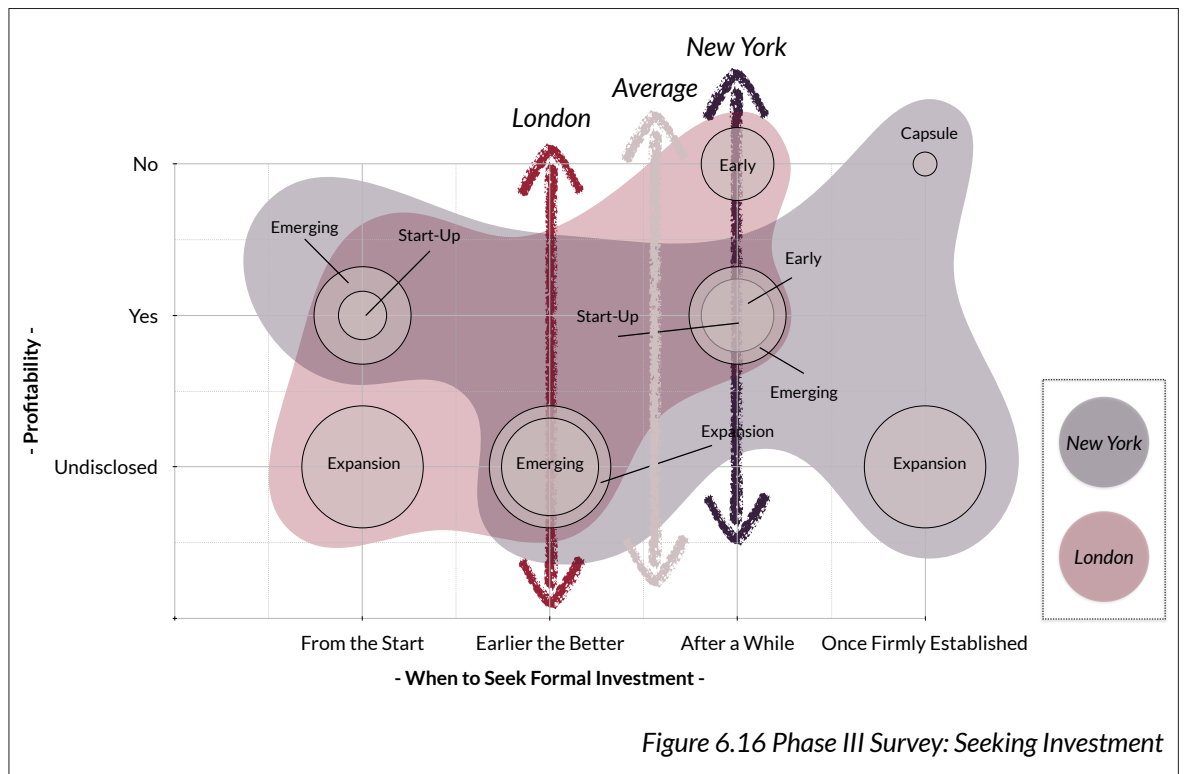


Figure 6.16 Phase III Survey: Seeking Investment

New York tend to prefer to wait to seek investment, while London-based labels prefer to seek investment within the earlier stages of the company. It is a minor distinction, as both of the periods correlate to middle levels of development. The difference may be due to several factors including availability of resources, when investment is actually needed, cultural differences, and/or the use of private investors versus formal investors associated with the fashion industry. There were more support resources for London-based firms identified in comparison to those available in New York, indicating why they might seek investment options earlier. Additionally, London based designers internationalise at higher rates indicating that they may need additional financial resources based on the impact geographic differences have on the economic development of the firm.

Interview participants also mentioned their patient approach to seeking investment, in that they were either approached by investors or were looking for investment, but that they were willing to wait for the 'right' kind of investment, as explained by the following participant:

Nothing that's been right. We're actually looking right now [for investors]. It's ... we're at this stage where it *needs to be the right partner*. Otherwise it's not going to— it'll go to shit. ... [We need] *smart, patient money, or experienced money*. Or a *strategic partnership* like a shoe manufacturer that wants to get

a piece of the business and will develop a shoe collection for us at no cost to us, but will help get it out there. So there are all kinds of general ways to go about it (Participant 5, emphasis added).

This perspective of finding the ‘right’ investor that fits with the company’s vision, goals and brand is in opposition to finding an informal private investor or patron, who may not have knowledge, experience, connections or additional resources beyond their financial contribution. Indeed, the lack of these additional resources in combination with a financial contribution may actually be detrimental to the DFE. Regardless, when seeking investment, expectations regarding return on investment is a process of negotiation between the enterprise and their potential partner.

The third dimension of investment seeking involves the firm that launches with abundant financial resources from family and friends. But this can also present challenges, shifting the focus of the firm from obtaining press in support of sales to obtaining press for the sake of obtaining press. This can result in a struggling firm who surpasses the advantage of being a new label, without actually establishing a financial position within the market. Additionally, it can provide a lack of focus in the design process, as all options for collection development (and brand definition) are available for exploration, as explained by the following participant:

For us it’s different because when you have everything at your fingertips, that makes it harder. It makes it so that you can let all of this stuff in that isn’t supposed to be there. When you only have a certain amount of money, you know what you have to do. You know you can only do this amount of stuff and you will only do the most important amount of things. And those are the things that count. That’s where we’re back to now (Participant 6).

The disconnection between financial resources and growth indicates that it is not only the financial investment in the firm that allows the enterprise to successfully function but other factors as well. The decision to seek investment, and from which available and securable source, is one connected to the current capabilities, resources and perspective of the designer-founder. There were multiple sources of financial contributions identified during the course of the in-depth interviews, including family and friends, private investor or patron, angel investor, formal investment via a luxury

group or private equity firm, partnership with manufacturer, partnership with a retailer, or short-term ('bridge') loans to float production of the collections. DFEs within the study use a variety of these sources, in addition to their own savings. Regardless of stage of growth, investment and finance provide access to resources assisting with the management of the DFE. Collectively, the resources and competencies of the DFE relate to its ability to control the production and distribution of the products and brand. The concept of control is discussed in the following section.

### 6.10.3 Control

The concept of control is an important competency throughout the various operations of the DFE, including in the development of brand identity. Controlling the deployment and use of resources, including how the brand is positioned and expressed throughout the day-to-day operations, balances opportunity with risks (Luo 2000). The concept of control emerged from the interviews during discussions about the DFE's production process (quality control), growth (controlling growth) and distribution of both the products and brand (through sales and communication activities).

As discussed previously (see 5.7.4 on page 142), DFEs conduct quality control activities to ensure that the manufacture of products meets the required standards. Furthermore, DFEs require a balanced and controlled approach to growth (see 6.4.3 on page 197) in order to achieve sustainability of the business in line with resources. Finally, the control of distribution is exhibited in the limitations the DFE sets on decision-making based on the alignment of opportunities with the brand strategy. The aesthetic principles, brand adjacencies, and collectively, all of the elements of brand identity serve as a frame for decision-making.

The concept of where, how and in what ways the entrepreneurial DFE is able to enact control capabilities during the operations of the collection lifecycle, and its impact on dynamic brand development capabilities, is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter (see 7.6 on page 264 and 7.9 on page 287). Control, along with investment and finance capabilities, in-house and out-sourced resources, and other management competencies construct the final internal brand identity element for entrepreneurial DFEs. The next section discusses initial conclusions drawn from the research analysis

derived from the examination of the internal and external elements of brand identity in relation to emerged concepts and categories.

### 6.11 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the results of the in-depth interviews, surveys, activities and online data sources, incorporating diverse evidence from each of the four phases of research to identify and explain relevant concepts to the development of DFEs. This chapter serves as a means of verification of the connections between the collection lifecycle as the core category and primary data, organised according to the aggregate dimensions of elements of brand identity (Urde 2013). The sections of this chapter highlight variation in the properties and dimensions that ultimately provide the foundation for the theoretical framework. During analysis, categories and concepts were cross checked between different types of data and phases of the research. These concepts were discussed in comparison to the rich detail derived from each phase of the research. The insights about the individual categories, properties and dimensions identified in the data collectively illustrate the intersection between the resources and capabilities that facilitate brand development and internationalisation, establishing entrepreneurial DFEs within the fashion system. Each established DFE holds a unique position within the market, created by heritage, capabilities, positioning and goals, which assist in the creation of brand identity.

The unique positioning of the enterprise, defined holistically as the brand, begins with the collection design and development. Presentation of the brand involves the interaction of the DFE with stakeholders throughout the fashion system, including support programs, fashion week, and press and editorial, furthering the development of personal and professional relationships that provide feedback and generate momentum for sales and brand awareness. The sales process involves the negotiation and market positioning of the brand as it identifies and defines its target stockists, consumers and price-point. As a result of, and reaction to, interaction within the fashion system, the production process is defined by the physical production of products and the codification of the brand that prepares the DFE for distribution and growth. The distribution process is the point at which organic growth is realised through the acquisition of sell-throughs, maintenance and increase in wholesales stockists, addition of product categories or styles

within the range plan, and brand awareness through communication activities. As the DFE conducts its day-to-day activities, decisions are made that provide learning and experience resulting in the development of capabilities. Over time, these capabilities are refined and shifted to create increasingly precise alignment with the brand, goals and market opportunity. The refinement and brand alignment depend on the DFE's resources, routines, and operational and dynamic capabilities.

In connecting this process of the collection lifecycle to the codification of brand identity elements, this chapter began with an analysis of the value proposition that is related to collection development capabilities, including definition of product categories, signature pieces, a range plan, product positioning, the use of a muse, and the number of collections produced per year. Following this, the importance of the relationships a DFE develops was illustrated utilising the categories of network integration, the fashion system, support programs, consumers and brand adjacencies. In concluding the external elements of brand identity, the position of the DFE was defined, beginning with its market positioning (sales strategy, targeting stockists and price-points) that influences internationalisation (and the use of website e-commerce) prior to establishing and transitioning the brand through stages of growth within the fashion industry. Following this, the impact of the designer's background and influence of place on the brand's personality was discussed. At the heart of the brand resides the core values, which for DFEs are established through the definition of aesthetic principles carried over from season-to-season. Succeeding this, the expression of the brand was analysed through the DFEs internal and external communication activities, including its website, social media and public relations efforts. Then, the hierarchy of goals which delineate the brand's mission and vision was analysed to illustrate the variety of motivations DFEs maintain in the operations of their companies. The goals of the enterprise emerge from the culture, derived from the behaviours and attributes of the designer(s) and employees. Finally, this chapter analysed the competencies of the DFE through the management practices, in-house and out-sourced resources, investment and finance capabilities, and control capacities that formulate the business structure.

The activities and resources discussed within this chapter do not describe a 'magic bullet' of success. As the dimensions illustrate, there exists significant variability

and flexibility in how the DFE develops its business. This flexibility leaves room for innovation, which may stem from the designer-founder's background, the influence of place or the structure of the business model. These elements form the foundation of the theoretical framework, which can be used as a tool to explain and measure the development of the entrepreneurial DFE. The following chapter presents the holistic examination of the data as it fits into the theoretical model in comparison with existing literature.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

### 7.1 Chapter Overview

There's an analogy with writing. I don't remember verbatim, but its something along the lines of: "I don't know what I think until I write it". And I think even with the brand, it's like *the thinking is part of the doing. Or the defining ourselves, it happens in the doing of things* (Participant 25, emphasis added).

As the core category, the collection lifecycle serves as a framework for understanding the theoretical process of brand development for designer fashion enterprises (DFEs). Superficially, the collection lifecycle is a descriptive framework that outlines the day-to-day activities used in the development of a single collection at the micro level. The activities and resources were presented in the previous two chapters in the analysis of the research findings, relating categories, properties and dimensions to the core category and elements of brand identity. This chapter discusses the generalised brand development process embedded in the capabilities of the DFE. It discusses the dynamic capabilities that develop the brand, and alter the operational capabilities and resources most closely related to each stage of the collection lifecycle. This discussion will show how decisions made throughout the day-to-day activities of the DFE codify and define a set of rules that create routines for brand development. Furthermore, this discussion will illustrate how brand development is a dynamic capability because it is a path dependent process embedded in the routines of the enterprise, is future oriented, and is repeated over time as the DFE generates and integrates organisational learning to

adapt the brand (as a resource) to the external environment (Zahra et al. 2006; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). Brand development is a dynamic capability because it explains the entrepreneurial DFE's capacity — through the repetitive routines of the collection lifecycle — to create, leverage, extend, modify or otherwise alter its resource base, and specifically the brand identity (Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Ambrosini et al. 2009; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009).

The purpose of this chapter is to present a theoretical framework developed from the emergent basic social process of the participant population, and to discuss the research implications in comparison to the literature. The research presented in this thesis seeks to expand understanding of the brand development and internationalisation processes of entrepreneurial DFEs. Constant comparative analysis and theoretical integration assisted in the emergence of eight propositions that support the development of the theoretical framework. Derived from the data analysis, the propositions are presented in comparison to the literature, specifically using the concept of dynamic capabilities as a lens to illustrate the connections between internationalisation, brand development and the fashion industry. The theoretical propositions provide a basis for the generation of a theoretical framework.

This chapter is broken into ten additional sections beginning with the comparative analysis of London and New York, illustrating the similarities and differences of DFEs operating within each of the cities included in this study. Then, the next five sections each explain the contribution of an aspect of the theoretical framework in relation to the corresponding stage of the collection lifecycle. The first of the five sections discusses how the *design* of the DFE brand is accomplished through the process of *experimentation* to discover *aesthetic principles*. This explains the beginning of brand identity development within the entrepreneurial DFE. The second discusses the *presentation* of the brand, which involves *interaction* to achieve *network integration*. This section discusses how the DFE develops a network of stakeholders, integrates into the fashion system and how interactions influence brand identity development. After this, the third section discusses how the *sales* process represents the *identification* of *brand adjacencies*. As creative entrepreneurial companies within a highly networked industry, DFEs develop their market positioning in relation to stockists, press, geographic locations and peer



companies. Next, it is through the *production* process that the brand experiences *adaptation* to market opportunities balanced with measured *control*. It is at this point that the brand is 'produced', providing necessary limitations in preparation for growth. Then, through *distribution*, the final of the five sections, the DFE brand experiences and seeks out *organic growth* in order to *establish* (a unique position) within the global fashion industry. This section discusses the DFE's pattern of internationalisation and how, as a resource, the brand serves as a guide for that process.

As a new routine, the collection lifecycle is the foundation of the DFE's knowledge base, from which dynamic capabilities are developed (Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Zahra et al. 2006; Ambrosini et al. 2009). Organisational learning enriches the firm's knowledge base and leads to the revision, enhancement or adaptation of future collections (Newey & Zahra 2009). Therefore, the section following the discussion of distribution presents the overall process of organisational learning within the DFE. Within the entrepreneurial DFE, learning occurs throughout the product development process of the collection lifecycle. As a result of this process, organisational learning facilitates the development of dynamic capabilities for both improvements to operational routines and brand creation. This is connected to the process of co-creation, which is discussed in the section after organisational learning. Through interaction, co-creation provides the DFE with experiences for organisational learning that strengthens brand identity (Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). Therefore, the discussion on co-creation examines how the DFE engages with and manages the process of organisational learning through co-creation experiences.

This chapter establishes the relationship between the collection lifecycle, as the core category, to the development of brand identity, matching operational practices to the creation of dynamic capabilities. This chapter highlights the use of dynamic capabilities in the discovery and codification of brand identity and internationalisation. Finally, this chapter presents a theoretical framework that uses the concept of dynamic capabilities as a 'lens' to understand the development of brand identity within the DFE, and its impact on internationalisation. As a metaphorical construct and the core category, the collection lifecycle represents the broader process of creating and developing a company. This process correlates with the organisational learning that influences brand development.

As a procedural model connecting the operational practices to the elements of brand identity, the collection lifecycle provides theoretical understanding for the growth of DFEs in the global fashion system. The framework presented in this thesis draws theoretical connections to the routinisation of operational capabilities, development of dynamic capabilities, integration of organisational learning, and impact of co-creation on brand identity and internationalisation (Ambrosini et al. 2009; Teece 2012; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016).

Collectively, these sections provide support for the collection lifecycle as the core category and define the basic social process of DFE brand development in the course of internationalisation. This chapter concludes with a discussion and evaluation of the theoretical verification and integration of the core category, providing an overview of the key insights and implications derived from the research findings and analysis.

## **7.2 Comparative Analysis of London & New York**

Generally, the brand development and internationalisation process of both London and New York based DFEs is relatively consistent. The fact that enterprises operate in much the same manner despite their base location in either of the two fashion capitals, and in correlation to other firms of comparable size, provides a foundation for a generalisable process of DFE brand development and internationalisation. Generalisability across all the participants is a requirement for the core-category and theoretical framework (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin 1998; Douglas 2003; Birks & Mills 2011; Miles et al. 2014). However, there were notable differences in the dimensional choices between London and New York based design labels. These dimensions are highlighted and compared in Table 7.1.

The first dimension is in relation to the DFE's approach to internationalisation, highlighting the influence of 'place' (a component of personality that infuses the brand with path dependent characteristics) on distribution opportunities. DFEs are not consistently, in the same manner, born global, partly because they do not distribute consistently regardless of their base location (Madsen & Servais 1997; Knight et al. 2004; Trudgen & Freeman 2014; Cavusgil & Knight 2015; Knight & Liesch 2016). However, where, how, and how much a firm distributes around the globe is very much dependent on who they are, where they are and what they want to achieve. London and New York

	<b>New York</b>	<b>London</b>
<b>Internationalisation</b>	International + strategic domestic focus	Reactive global internationalisation; aesthetic & market fit
<b>Commerciality</b>	Design for sales & show; range plan; sales feedback	Innovation concept design
<b>Sales Opportunity</b>	NY & Paris markets	Paris market
<b>Fashion System</b>	Democratically open FW; world-wide competition	Curated by BFC; 'British Fashion'
<b>Early Years Support</b>	Peer-to-peer informal mentorship	Formalised (financial) support
<b>Expectations</b>	Profitability	Industry support
<b>Brand Development</b>	Behind-the-scenes experimentation	Highly visible evolution
<b>Stereotypes</b>	Sportswear, commercial, contemporary	Innovation, luxury, European manufacturing

have a different approach to internationalisation (and growth) because of who they are, where they are, and their individual resources and capabilities (Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Trudgen & Freeman 2014; Cavusgil & Knight 2015; Langseth et al. 2016).

The findings regarding internationalisation supports the work of Wigley et al. (2005) that found differences between British and American retailers, where the British firms appeared to be more proactive in their internationalisation activities as opposed to their American counterparts who appeared reactive. However, the findings within this research are more nuanced and dependent on more than just strategic intention or activity. This research shows that for DFEs in the earliest years of development, the approach to internationalisation can be characterised as reactive, internationalising at the outset through wholesale channels in foreign markets, developing relationships with buyers that shop at either New York, London or Paris fashion weeks. But once the DFEs move through several stages of growth, their approach to international wholesales diverge. The more established New York based DFEs focus sales growth on the domestic market, while also maintaining a quasi-reactive approach to international sales by targeting stockists in specific markets and reactively selling to others. In contrast, London based DFEs focus on sales in specific international markets with high growth opportunities including Asia, the Middle East and the US. The difference can be explained by the size of each country's respective domestic market. The US maintains a vast domestic market strongly supported by a network of high-end department stores,

whereas the British market is understandably and significantly smaller by comparison. In short, the New York based enterprises can be characterised as having an international distribution with a strategic domestic focus, whereas London based brands maintain broader international distribution, targeting stockists based on aesthetic fit and market opportunities. As a result, London based DFEs may have an opportunity to build a global brand sooner because of their higher rates of internationalisation.

The concept of commerciality of the labels emerged early in the research as assumptions about labels based in either London or New York spurred discussion of their commercial or conceptual approach in relation to their location. Due to the nature of London Fashion Week, British designers are often stereotypically expected to showcase innovation-based ‘conceptual’ designs. Whereas New York brands are assumed to represent ‘American sportswear’. For better or worse, these are examples of the place-based personality traits that brands in either location are, in some ways, assumed to possess. In actuality, there are both ‘commercial’ and ‘conceptual’ brands on both sides of the Atlantic. But the concepts of designing separately for sales and the fashion show — presenting conceptual pieces at fashion week, and commercial pieces for sale — the use of a range plan, and the proactive incorporation of sales feedback were more predominate in the New York based participant interviews.

A notable difference in the fashion schedule is the sales opportunities for London and New York based labels. For each year’s two major collections — Spring/Summer (in September) and Autumn/Winter (in February/March) — the schedule of fashion week presentations and market weeks follows a set schedule starting with New York, London, Milan and ending in Paris. While London Fashion Week is a simultaneous presentation and sales week, New York Fashion Week is divided into separate weeks. The market week falls during the London presentations. Given this schedule, New York brands are able to present at New York Fashion Week, selling collections at market week the following week, which competes with London Fashion Week. New York brands also have the opportunity to sell at the Paris markets. These two sales periods are in addition to private sales appointments. For London DFEs, they are able to show, and (to a lesser extent) sell at London Fashion Week; the majority of sales for London brands occurs at the Paris market and/or private sales appointments.

This also highlights differences in the fashion systems between London and New York. London Fashion Week is considered to be ‘curated’ by the BFC, who actively determine which brands are representative of ‘British Fashion’, according to the interview participants. London is known for featuring new design talent at its biannual fashion weeks (Amed 2009; BFC 2012, 2014b; Hoang 2014). In contrast, the CFDA maintains a vocal sense of openness to the fashion week presentations, whereby any label is allowed and encouraged to show (Amed 2011; CFDA 2012). This has several implications for the presentation of DFEs. To some extent, a London brand must ‘make the cut’ and be accepted as part of the system. This initial hurdle provides a platform for viewership by editors and buyers. London DFEs compete with fewer shows during the fashion week period. In comparison, because the New York fashion system is ‘democratically open’, any label is able to show, providing an ease of entry at the expense of increased competition from a worldwide population of labels.

The individualised fashion systems also offer different approaches to support, with New York participants citing the existence of informal peer-to-peer mentorship. London based participants made no mention of informal peer support, and those that utilised support initiatives took advantage of formalised (financial and skill development) support sponsored through fashion industry initiatives such as the Centre for Fashion Enterprise, NewGen, FashionEast sponsorships and others sponsored by the BFC.

This correlates with the validation of the company, measured slightly different for each of the New York and London based brands. New York DFEs were motivated and validated by their own profitability and growth. London brands, in contrast, more prominently valued acceptance into the fashion system as indicators of their success in addition to consistent sales.

The development of the brand is also slightly skewed for each of the London and New York labels. The development of the New York brands was often considered ‘behind-the-scenes’. It is not until they have a distinctive identity that they become more visible in the industry. London labels, in contrast — especially those presenting immediately upon graduation from a fashion university — showcase a highly visible brand evolution as their aesthetic transforms each season in the domain of fashion week.

Finally, the stereotypes facing each of the firms were different and dependent on the place in which they based their company, regardless of the designer's background and heritage, in some circumstances. American brands are assumed to be showcasing sportswear ready-to-wear garments in the highly commercial, contemporary price-point category. The British labels by comparison were assumed to create highly innovative, designer-luxury price-point positions, benefiting from European manufacturing. For DFEs in both locations, these stereotypes only presented a challenge when they fell out of alignment with a particular enterprise in a specific location. London brands creating highly commercial 'basics' products faced challenges being accepted as part of 'British Fashion' despite their valuable and sustainable sales volume. Similarly, American labels experienced challenges when they priced garments manufactured in Europe and/or in the high-end luxury categories, battling the assumption of 'American sportswear'.

Despite these differences, neither approach to distribution is more or less beneficial. Overall, London and New York each offer its own benefits and challenges to launching a DFE corresponding with the unique characteristics of the location. The differences discussed here highlight the variability of the theoretical framework rooted in the research findings.

The following section begins the discussion of the generalised understanding for both London and New York based brands derived from the research findings, formulating the relationships between concepts that contribute to the creation of the theoretical framework. Related to the design stage of the collection lifecycle, the process of experimentation facilitates the discovery of aesthetic principles that define the DFE brand, which is essential for the development of a consistent brand identity in international markets. This is discussed in the next section.

### **7.3 Experimentation to Discover Aesthetic Principles**

Experimentation is the first step of the basic social process that is most closely represented by the design stage of the collection lifecycle. Within the DFE, experimentation influences the development of the collection and brand. Experimentation is the process of 'trial and error'. It is a process that defines the practice of design and, through the development of the collection, defines the aesthetic of the brand.

Within the design process, experimentation provides the momentum to try new things and develop product innovations. Design is a process of problem-solving (Au et al. 2003). The process of experimentation occurs throughout the design activities to create the collection. This process can also serve as a market entry method. As a potential launch point, experimentation helps the DFE to determine its viability in the market from the initial introduction of product, as evidenced by the following quote:

I dabbled a bit first with doing some denim. Even when I was back in LA. And like a men's button up shirt. *Really simple, quiet, kind of putting-the-toe-in-the-water experiments.* And then when I moved here, I started doing men's suits. Because [Brand 7] originally was just a men's concept. The men's suits fit really small. I'm small. And so they were great for Japanese and they were great for women and that's who they attracted the attention of (Participant 7, emphasis added).

The DFE experimentation process parallels their approach to design; it is a continual process of re-developing, re-thinking, re-doing, and refining their approach to the task at hand. Experimentation allows for innovations to be created and initial ideas to be presented to the fashion industry to gain support and feedback, as explained by the following participant:

They [DFEs] know who they are, but they need time to experiment to find out who they are. But I think what I mean is that there is the vague sense of what they want to do. But actually, what appears on the catwalk or on the rail, that takes time. So I think it does take a while for them to work out "What shapes work for me and my customer", and you know, what price works (Participant 23, agent).

DFEs rely on experiential learning when undergoing new experiences and interactions (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000). Trial and error and reflection on their experiences within the industry is an integral part of the enterprise discovering its brand identity, as evidenced by the following quote:

Sometimes I would see like a vision of what it might be, and I'm like: "Right, this is what we're going for". Not even in terms of collection, in terms of the brand. Where it's going to need to be. And I think that's more what drives it. It sounds terribly unplanned. It has this unplanned— there is a business plan — but at the same time I think it has a lot to do with reading it and reflecting it and seeing how you do (Participant 19).

Thus, the brand identity is defined through internal reflection to define an authentic ideology (Collins & Porras 1996). The development of brand identity emerges from specific practices and concepts related to the business model in the context of the fashion industry. As a result of experimentation, initially reactive decision-making produces organisational learning that creates and integrates new knowledge into the DFE's routines. However, the DFE's knowledge creation is a path dependent process based on the designer's background and personality, the influence of place, and the collection development practices.

As personality brands, the development of DFEs is heavily influenced by the designer's background, based on their personal identity, education, previous experience and behaviour (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; O'Dwyer et al. 2009; Mills 2011). The heritage of the brand begins with the creative director as the 'iconic leader' for the label, but is amplified by the brand's track record, industry reputation and country of origin (Urde 2013). The influence of place plays an important part, impacting the design of the collection and ultimately the brand along three dimensions: (1) the designer is inspired by the location where they base their firm, (2) designing garments for specific regions or climates, and (3) whether the designer and/or brand self-identifies as an American, British or international designer/brand.

The development and repetition of the design process throughout the seasons creates the consistency that is defined during collection development with the codification of product categories, signature pieces, product positioning (commercial-conceptual continuum), range plan, muse and the number of collections produced per year. The collection development process assists in providing a dialogue about the brand discussed at points of interaction, and provides the value proposition. The DFE's individual approach to developing the collections constitutes a knowledge-based 'product technology' (Vargo & Lusch 2004) that creates a consistent aesthetic, which defines the brand and is embedded in each product and experience, carried over from season to season.

As the DFE interacts within the fashion industry, both the product and the dialogue surrounding the label contribute to the development of a distinctive image (Rantisi 2002). The brand innovation is derived from intangible factors, such as



aesthetics, closely related to the artistic creativity of the designer (Bianchi & Bortolotti 1996). Thus, the brand identity of a DFE partially results from the embedded meaning in the design of the collection.

Therefore, the brand identity of entrepreneurial DFEs is *designed* out of the collections, which collectively define *aesthetic principles*. For brand development, experimentation is the process by which the DFE discovers its aesthetic principles:

Proposition 1: The internal development of brand identity is designed through an experimentation process to discover aesthetic principles.

Correlated with collection development, aesthetic principles are a core element of the brand. Aesthetic principles define ‘what the brand stands for’. They become key to the consistency of brand messaging and are visible within the collections. They are always present — emerged from the designer’s background — but are discovered within the collections over time. Participants defined aesthetic principles as ‘codes of the house’, ‘DNA’, ‘signature’, ‘unique point-of-view’, ‘pillars’ and ‘attributes’:

[The designer] looked back and said: “You know, looking through the lens of these four pillars, the collections that didn’t necessarily tick all of those four pillars were the ones that felt the least [Brand 4]”. But now looking back, the ones that do ... it feels more and more sort of true to his vision of the brand. So that’s sort of how we’ve been [evolving] (Participant 4).

Aesthetic principles are how the brand becomes defined through a dialogue during interaction within the fashion system. They are the words, elements, imagery, visuals, textures and consumer descriptors used to discuss the brand. They may emphasise the developing heritage of the brand, a geographic location, personality traits, textures, or other adjectives that provide a framework for collection design and decision-making in alignment with the brand. Aesthetic principles define the brand’s core (Urde 2013), and are often presented as three to five illustrative words or phrases that describe the overall aesthetic of every collection, as explained by the following participants:

The identity, because I came from art, your vocabulary and your making sense of the esoteric is you know, kind of comes with the job. So I was curating a lot there. And when I started [Brand 7] it was really intentional that it have kind of a

language. So there are still terms that we use now ... [which are] super important as opposed to “design, design, design” (Participant 7).

It's ... I should have those words in the top of my head. Because everyone asks. The three words that describe your brand, but I always feel like I still get caught off guard (Participant 19).

The illustratable attributes of the garments and collections accumulate to be exhibitors of the brand identity. As the building blocks of brand identity, aesthetic principles create boundaries: the lines that the enterprise will not cross (Ind & Watt 2005; Vásquez et al. 2013). While interaction within the fashion system facilitates the discovery of aesthetic principles, they are emergent from the creative directors, as evidenced by the following quote:

They [buyers, editors, influencers] can only go: “I think you should go this way or that way”. I was thinking of that first collection, “What’s your signature?” When we first started, and we were like: “We’ve only started we don’t have a signature yet”. But that was a question that at the time a lot of people were asking... But they don’t create it. So, we can create it and they can go, have an opinion, but they don’t direct it. And we were just saying yesterday, the only thing that can direct it is what is in our heads (Participant 22).

The first ten years are crucial to the development of aesthetic principles, whereby the brand creates its heritage based on the founding designer’s unique point-of-view. The unique point-of-view is path dependent on the background and personality of the designer-founder/entrepreneur, providing the foundation for the point of differentiation (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Altinay & Wang 2001; Prange & Verdier 2011). The creative director is the key storyteller for the brand. The alignment between an enterprise’s culture and vision — thus the alignment between the designer-founder and the ultimate goals of the firm — stimulates the development of the brand (Hatch & Schultz 1997; de Chernatony 1999). Aesthetic principles help to facilitate the independent identity of the DFE brand. The DFE brand is expressed as a narrative about the enterprise’s identity, carrying the message of the aesthetic principles as the unique and defining elements of the organisation and its products (Salzer-Mörlling & Strannegård 2004).

The signature attributes of the collection become aesthetic principles when they are not only reactively identifiable in the collections, but also pro-actively guiding range-planning and future product development. The aesthetic principles guide decision-making to create a consistent and authentic brand narrative, defining the consistency exhibited within each collection and across seasons, as illustrated by the following quotes:

And I think for a brand, or even as a human being, you want to be consistent in your aesthetic. You want to refine it. You don't want to just make clothes to impress people that are sitting in the front row. You know. Because if she [the designer] wanted, she could do a completely "out-there" collection. It's not that difficult. What is difficult is to do something with simplicity in a way that is very refined, and that you're not hiding behind thrills or tricks. And that's the catch of it (Participant 9).

I think it has to be consistent. And I think it's really like the lead for everything. So I think depending on the identity, it sets the tone for everything. It sets the activities, the mood, the activities or strategies that we would do. I think that's quite important. And it helps everything that I think you do. Externally, or can be seen. It all goes back to reinforcing this identity (Participant 19).

For the DFE, the entrepreneurial development of the enterprise is about creating the unique 'point-of-view' that will provide an established position in the global fashion industry. Aesthetic principles are a scarce and unique resource that ultimately define the core of the brand identity, providing direction for other brand elements, resources and capabilities. For example, the following participant explains:

I think identity affects the, or equals with, the aesthetics. And that defines the consumers. So whether I'm designing for a 40 year old woman who has a secure job and money and can afford more luxury goods, then that will be followed by the fabric choice and the designs. Maybe because they're 40s they don't want to show their arms, you know, things like that. Or if you are designing for teenagers it's very trend driven. And you have to change quickly, and maybe they don't necessarily care about how it's made inside. They're more sensitive for the prices and things like that. So I think that will affect everything (Participant 3).

The corporate brand identity matrix (Urde 2013) highlights the interaction between internal and external elements that radiate from the brand core to create brand identity

(Table 7.2). DFEs are brand-oriented firms, generating value and meaning via the brand (Urde 1994, 1999, 2013). The brand orientation is manifested as:

Being impassioned, seeing the brand as a mission and vision, being able to integrate and combine the brand with the company's other resources and competencies, seeing the brand as continual learning, seeing the brand as an expression of one's own identity, and being able to see the brand's symbolic value in a large social context (Urde 1999: 124).

For the DFE, these elements emerge from concepts related to the design, presentation, sales, production and distribution capabilities for each collection, as presented in Chapter 6: Research Analysis. Product development occurs in connection with the environment (Rieple & Gander 2009). The brand is a reference point that allows for intuitive decision-making (Ind & Watt 2005), permeating every aspect of the enterprise, so that the development of the business and brand are linked (Heding et al. 2009; Urde 2013). The brand identity provides boundaries and limitations, which are essential for continual and successful innovation, providing focus for creativity (Ind & Watt 2005; Vásquez et al. 2013; Perry-Smith & Mannucci 2015). Innovation is essential for the development of dynamic capabilities (McKelvie & Davidsson 2009). Within DFE, experimentation is an intentional practice to innovate within the collection, brand and the development of new capabilities through organisational learning (Luo 2000; Zahra et al. 2006).

Due to their consistency, aesthetic principles operate as the brand core to provide guidance, focus and coordination (Urde 2013). Brand identity is the ideal set of associations sought or maintained through a brand strategy (Heding et al. 2009). Aesthetic principles are important to the development of brand strategy because they provide a basis for comparison against market opportunities such as press, wholesale stockists, geographic distribution, celebrities and stylists. Market opportunities are measured against the aesthetic principles to determine if various choices throughout all levels of collection development are 'on brand', as the following quote illustrates:

We came up with some codes. And you know some of them were really simple, and I think also the process is kind of—it's a, it's an ongoing process. It doesn't stop because your identity doesn't— you know some part of it is static but some part of it is evolving. So, and the way that it really informs our decision-making is that, in terms of how [the creative

**Table 7.2 Corporate Brand Identity Matrix applied to Designer Fashion Enterprises**

Urde (2013)		Generalisations based on research findings	
Element	Indicative Questions	Findings	Related Concepts
<b>Value Proposition</b>	Key offerings and appeal to customers and non-customer stakeholders	Design innovations in alignment with the brand's aesthetic principles for the collections	Collection Development
<b>Relationships</b>	Connections made with and by the brand reflect and define brand identity	The relationships that DFEs form through their personal and professional network, consumers, buyers, editors and all other stakeholders. Interactions for co-creation.	Network Integration Fashion System Support Programs Consumers / Stakeholders Brand Adjacencies
<b>Position</b>	Intended position in the market, and in the hearts and minds of key customers and non-customer stakeholders	Positioning defined by the product category, signature pieces, garment positioning, price-point, consumer description and brand adjacencies	Market Positioning Internationalisation Establishment
<b>Personality</b>	Combination of human characteristics or qualities forming corporate character	Connected to consistent collection designs, muse and designer background that inform the aesthetic principles	Designer Background Influence of Place
<b>Core</b>	Promise and core values that sum up what the brand stands for	Codes of the house, brand DNA; core values are always present but identified over time; visible in artefacts	Aesthetic principles
<b>Expression</b>	Unique or special way of communicating and expression that makes it possible to recognise the brand at a distance	Consistency across purpose, message/narrative, media, language, imagery & visuals; influences relationship development and communication activities	Communication Social Media Media & Editorial
<b>Mission &amp; Vision</b>	Purpose, beyond the simple aim of making money (mission); direction and inspiration (vision)	Related to the designer's impetus for launching and managing the company (unique point-of-view); the ultimate goal and vision for the company and their place within the fashion industry	Personal, Objective, Operational & Ultimate Goals
<b>Culture</b>	Attitudes, work process and behaviour	Led by the designer/founder, supported by employees and the relationships the DFE forms with external stakeholders (buyers, editors, suppliers, etc.)	Behaviour & Attributes
<b>Competences</b>	What the company is particularly good at, and what makes it better than the competition	Capacities, company structure, in-house & out-sourced resources, launch point; each DFE has a unique point-of-view (heritage) but also validates their positioning in relation to the competition	Management Investment & Finance Control

director] designs, so much more, so in the design process we think: “Is this on brand, does this fit within the codes that we established for ourselves? What about the show that we’re planning? What about our social media? Where did we go off? And how do we get back on? Who do we want to work with? What relationships do we want to have? And how do those relationships reinforce who we are?” (Participant 25).

As the brand is created, it becomes a knowledge-based resource embedded in and emergent from the DFE’s capabilities, and as a result, guides the internationalisation process (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Teece 2007, 2012; Brun & Castelli 2008; Ghodeswar 2008; Spence & Essoussi 2010; Tynan et al. 2010; Caniato et al. 2013). While some argue that branding is not a priority for small firms (Spence & Essoussi 2010), in reality, brand development is a natural and fundamental process associated with day-to-day activities of the firm, and the learning and experience those activities create, as it integrates into the social system in which it is embedded.

Through organisational learning, the enterprise shifts from a reliance on improvisation to the integration of new knowledge. During this process, the brand identity is refined and articulated through the continual presentation of ideas and innovations from the designer at points of interaction with stakeholders (Easterby-Smith et al. 2009). The points of interaction facilitate the brand’s creation of a network of support, as well as integration into the fashion system. This is discussed in the next section.

#### **7.4 Interaction to Achieve Network Integration**

The second stage of the basic social process is the presentation of the collection to the DFE’s network of personal and professional relationships, and the fashion industry. The act of presentation can be as simple as mentioning the collection to a personal friend, who then introduces the designer to someone within the fashion industry, or it can be more involved and formal where the DFE presents the collection at fashion week and receives feedback in the form of requests, recommendations, support and/or sales.

Presenting the collection creates points of interaction, whereby the DFE can facilitate the brand’s integration into the fashion system as evidenced by fashion week participation, sales negotiations and editorial placement. Interaction is the mutual and reciprocal interplay between internal and external stakeholders (Gromark & Melin 2011;

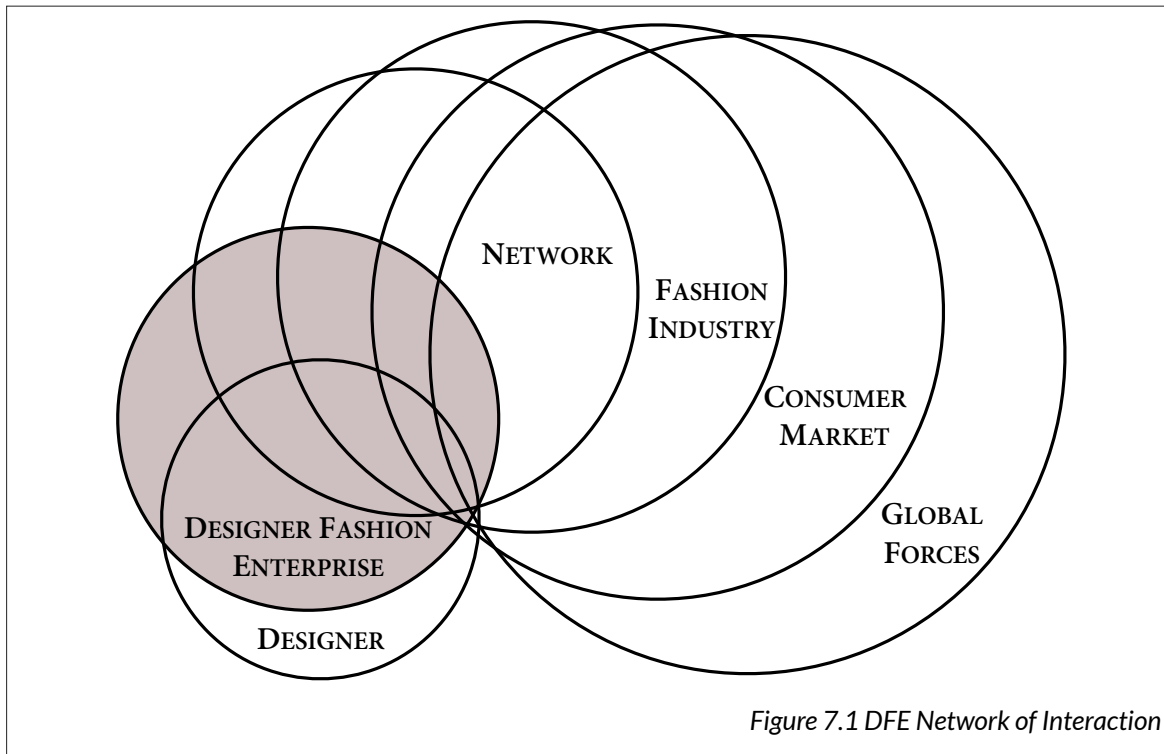
Grönroos 2011). Within fashion week showrooms and presentations, buyers, editors and other industry influencers provide feedback on designers' collections. By leveraging both their personal and professional network, the DFE is able to gain additional resources, feedback, suggestions or connections for integration into the fashion industry. As previously discussed (see 6.3.1 on page 170), network integration is defined as the utilisation of an existing network, development of relationships and the integration of the brand into the fashion system.

This integration into the fashion industry network is important for the firm in order to gain access to valuable opportunities for future brand awareness and sales on a global scale (Petkova et al. 2008). The ability of the DFE to integrate and create a network provides an environment for the development and use of dynamic capabilities, through the exploration and exploitation of external market opportunities (Zollo & Winter 2002; Zahra et al. 2006; Prange & Verdier 2011). The DFE's approach to presentation and their reaction to interaction experiences, ultimately affect the overall integration of the brand into the fashion industry network:

Proposition 2: Presentation of the collection generates interactions with the brand to facilitate network integration.

Thus, the presentation of the collection creates interaction surrounding the brand, as the DFE generates interest from press, buyers and other influential members of the industry. The DFE interacts with their personal and professional network, the industry, consumer market and global forces (social, political and economic trends) (Figure 7.1). Networking capability is an important marketing tool for SMEs, which begins with a reactive approach to industry norms and is based in the personality of the founder and existing social and business relationships (Gilmore et al. 2001; Zontanos & Anderson 2004). The foundation for the DFE begins with the fashion designer who bases the company on characteristics closely related to his or her personal identity and background. Upon the initial collection's development, the designer presents the collection, and as is often the case:

When organisations communicate to the marketplace they first of all talk to themselves, sometimes confirming a self-image based on future aspirations rather than self-insight into the organisational culture (Hatch & Schultz 2003: 1050).



The outcomes of interactions between the DFE and various stakeholders illustrates the power of strong and weak relationship ties to influence the utilisation of resources to grow the brand internationally (Gulati et al. 2000; Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014; Perry-Smith & Mannucci 2015; Langseth et al. 2016). As previously discussed, the fashion industry revolves around a regimented schedule of product design, production and distribution scheduled by the presentation of the collection to press, buyers and (increasingly) consumers at fashion weeks in February and September. The formalised structure of presenting to the fashion industry — namely buyers and editors — at fashion and market weeks provides the enterprise with a clear path and access for integration. The practice of operating the business in line with the fashion calendar is a means of demonstrating to the fashion industry that the firm belongs or deserves to operate within the network. In doing so, the enterprise must contribute something new (a unique ‘point-of-view’) and also demonstrate their ability to ‘fit in’ via consistently producing product and generating a dialogue according to the quality standards, or rules, of the industry (Solomon 1983).



Working toward the outer spheres of network interaction, technological advances provide the DFE direct access to the consumer market via social media, company websites (including their own e-commerce) and/or (rarely) their own retail outlet. Beyond the consumer market, the firm is impacted directly and indirectly by global forces, such as economic, political, cultural and social issues (sustainability, economic opportunities/challenges, consumer trends, etc.). Each interaction provides learning and experience that contributes to brand development, but the influence of buyers and editors is extremely visible. During points of interaction the DFE potentially cultivates relationships with key stockists and editors that shape opportunities for growth. For example, the following participant explains:

So the collection started as a capsule of shirts and shirt dresses. And then the buyer at Liberty saw it and championed it and bought it, and encouraged them [the owners] to build it up and make it a bit more of a collection. And at the same time, an editor from Vogue also came on the scene and said: “Oh this is interesting and this is really fresh” ... So that’s kind of where the brand came from (Participant 13).

It is through the practice of continually producing collections and presenting them to the fashion system — seeking sales, press and consumers — that assists in the cultivation of brand identity. Collections are created in the context of the fashion system and the environment in which DFEs operate. The interaction of the DFE with buyers, editors and other stakeholders generates feedback. This feedback is interpreted by the DFE in the process of sales negotiations, sell-through analysis, product adaptations and future product development.

Each interaction with stakeholders is a source of feedback, requests, demands, opinions, and impressions about the designer, garments, collections and brand. This is a key source of learning and experience for the DFE as the firm negotiates its position and opportunities. Interactions generate a dialogue (Hatch & Schultz 2010; Frow & Payne 2011; Grönroos 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2011) as the firm and stakeholder interpret and analyse brand meaning in relation to their own experience, desires and goals. This is illustrated by buyers making specific requests for alterations in the length, colour or fabric of garments, or entirely new designs.

Buyers may request alterations for current season garments — such as the addition of sleeves — or additional garments to the collections for future seasons based on sell-through rates (the percentage of garments that sell through to the end consumer at full-price). At the end of distribution for each season's collections this data is communicated back to the DFE to be used as a source of learning about the end consumer and what garments they are purchasing. The following participant describes this process:

We [the sales team] sit down and we talk with [the designer]. You know: “This is what the North American market is asking for, this is what the UK is asking for, this is what the Chinese are asking for. How do we find something in the middle? How do we satisfy this? Where do we want to go? Can you do more tops? Can you do less tops? Can you—” So those are REALLY big influences and you can see those coming through in the collection (Participant 8).

However, feedback derived from the multiple sources and interactions DFEs experience can be conflicting, as when buyers within the same geographic market request different design directions, or when various regions expect different things from the brand. For brands in the earliest stages, data can be limited and contradictory, as evidenced by the following quote:

It's tough to do when, again, the sales is so spread between these stores. It's so tough. Because again, one person could love something and one person could feel differently about it. This, I would say, is the toughest part of my job. And I have to come in and make the decision about what to chop and what to keep, even though I'm using five different people's words that are completely the opposite of each other. This is what I struggle with, and the fact that I've had to drop some of the basic pieces that I loved (Participant 14).

The interpretations of the DFE brand (brand image) held by stakeholders present opportunities when they are in alignment with the brand's goals, and challenges when they are conflicting. Even associations that are considered 'positive', such as being an 'emerging designer' which garners significant press, can constrain the brand in its growth efforts as it seeks to establish a sustainable position within the industry.

The nature of these interpretations demonstrate how interactions jumpstart a process of negotiation in which the DFE interprets experiences based on their own goals. The power of the brand in navigating interaction experiences grows over time as

aesthetic definitions collectively and consistently emerge in the dialogue surrounding the brand, providing direction for management decision-making. How the DFE navigates the process of integrating into the fashion system by developing relationships within the networked supply chain of suppliers, manufacturers, buyers and editors; positions the products according to aesthetics, quality and price-points; and embodies the meanings associated with being a British, American or international designer each work to influence brand identity development. For example:

With the right relationships you can kind of feed them those messages that you want relayed. And it's a matter of how they put them out there. So I think that we are very particular about the outlets that we work with, the celebrities that we dress, I mean, a lot of times it's saying no more than yes  
(Participant 26).

The relationships that the firm develops within the fashion industry influence its market positioning and brand identity. The DFE's interaction leads to network integration: the development of relationships within the fashion industry that assist in the identification of opportunities, information exchange, product innovations and resource acquisition (Ashton 2006; d'Ovidio 2015). How the DFE identifies opportunities is discussed in the following section.

### **7.5 Identification of Brand Adjacencies**

The third stage of the collection lifecycle is a tipping point for the DFE. This is the point at which the brand development process requires the successful negotiation of the DFE's positioning within the industry. Differentiation requires positioning of the entire organisation (Hatch & Schultz 2003), further illustrating the connection of brand development to every aspect of decision-making, including internationalisation. Determining the positioning of the DFE in relation to their environment results from the process of identification. In this process, the enterprise is identifying market opportunities for international and domestic sales and distribution of the brand based on the positioning of the DFE in comparison to the aesthetic fit of geographic locations, stockists, peers/competitors, media and consumers (Ellonen et al. 2011).

To successfully sell, the DFE needs to be able to recognise and communicate attributes derived from the aesthetic principles to buyers, showrooms and sales agents

throughout the global fashion system. Equipped with understanding of the brand's aesthetic principles and an expanding network of relationships provides the DFE with increasing power during the sales negotiation process. While the creation of the collection is a starting point for the dialogue within the fashion industry, being able to identify key brand attributes, market positioning and current opportunities for sales and press are imperative to the successful and continual growth of the enterprise:

Proposition 3: Sales and growth opportunities are created through the identification of brand adjacencies, positioning the DFE within the international fashion market.

The process of identification occurs through reflection based on the learning and experience obtained from operating in the industry. Presentation of the collection, and network, industry and market interactions forces the DFE to define the brand in relation to its environment. The process of identification requires reflection and planning, whereby the DFE draws connections between its aesthetic principles and market opportunities, furthering the organisational learning of the firm. This process allows decision-making of the enterprise to be dispersed among employees, as the following quote illustrates:

I work in the press team and part of the job is responsive and also passive, and part of it is active. But in both elements, *whether we're reaching out to stylists or titles [media], or whether we're responding to requests from stylists— Like an exercise I have to do is: "Okay, does this fit within— Is this on brand?"* And you know, when I started it was very much a case of asking [the designer]: "Oh what did [the designer] say it is, that's what we'll do". *But once we established those codes it became a lot easier. "Oh well, this person and this aesthetic that they're going for in this magazine, this is us and we know it's us because we've discussed the codes and we know who we are. And this fits within that."* "Okay, well what about this?" "No, this is super sporty or super casual, that's not us." So you know, *it made it possible for, you know, the decision-making, we could disperse it a little.* It didn't have to be one person who made the decisions. We could make them collectively (Participant 25, emphasis added).

It is through this process that the DFE positions itself and substantiates its network integration through brand adjacencies. As previously discussed (see 6.3.5 on page 178), brand adjacencies are media, stockists, consumers, peer/competitor companies

and geographic locations that align with and validate the DFE's positioning. Brand adjacencies orient the brand in relation to the market (Malem 2008; Rieple et al. 2015). DFEs may align their brands with stockists and peer/competitor enterprises based on price-point category (contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry designer or designer-luxury), aesthetics and/or reputation within the fashion industry. For example, the following participant explains:

*Adjacencies are really important for us because obviously we don't have a marketing campaign, we don't have those dollars to do those things. And to really allow the consumer to see who we are. So the way we can market ourselves, in my opinion, is really through our stores. And we have to pick stores that have the right adjacencies, and the adjacencies that we want are the heritage brands: so the Celine's, the Givenchy's, the St. Laurent's. Because while we might be grouped as an emerging designer because of the year of growth of our business, we also have the craftsmanship, the aesthetic, and the price-point that is more leaning towards heritage brands. And that's what— we see where we want to be next to for the next 10, 15, 20, 30, 50 years (Participant 8, emphasis added).*

For DFEs with limited resources to define their target consumer, the brand's adjacencies identify where the label would 'sit on the shop floor' in relation to its peers, providing an orienting context and a dialogue for market positioning. With regard to peer companies, the direct observation of DFE's products throughout collection development by competitors is necessary for the interaction of the brand within the industry (Rieple & Gander 2009). This was observed as participants discussed informal mentorships and the positioning of their enterprise in relation to other emerging designers and established brands. Peers/competitors are a source of learning and potential collaboration (Hamel et al. 1989). Brand adjacencies provide a dialogue to situate the brand in the marketplace.

Related to this, aspirational brands are a sub-property of brand adjacencies and operate as a unique mechanism in the development of an entrepreneurial fashion label. In all of the interviews, the participants explained their ambition, aesthetic or desired business model (vision) in comparison to other established brands within the fashion industry. Aspirational brands offer the entrepreneurial label a model to aim towards. In this instance, the objective isn't to copy or completely replicate another design aesthetic

or business model, but to provide inspiration and more importantly a dialogue and language for positioning their own brand within the industry. It provides validation for market positioning. The size, practices and aesthetic of the aspirational brands create brand adjacencies, which help to position the entrepreneurial DFE within the market in relation to those that are more established. Network relationships and aspirational brands provide imitative learning that is an alternative route to knowledge acquisition for the DFE, assisting in the process of internationalisation (Forsgren 2002; d'Ovidio 2015).

Internationalisation, as a result of selling behaviour (as opposed to sourcing or manufacturing), begins with the sales process as the enterprise begins identifying retailers in diverse regions throughout the globe. During the sales process, the global fashion system breaks down barriers to internationalisation such as foreignness and newness (Knight & Cavusgil 2004). In the earliest stages of development, DFEs are not necessarily proactively identifying opportunities globally, but are nevertheless able to internationalise through the network of the fashion system. DFEs identify potential areas of fit within the system, dependent on their network relationships and brand adjacencies. In some cases, international markets are used as a platform to gain traction to increase brand awareness in key fashion and domestic cities. Illustrating consistency and longevity within specific markets and stockists internationally is a sign of potential success domestically within the fashion capitals of London and New York, validating and enhancing the DFE's position within the fashion industry.

DFEs in both London and New York approached the internationalisation process similarly at the earliest stages of development — reactively selling and distributing based on opportunities that arise from network integration. But as DFEs in London and New York grow, their approach and priorities shift. Thus, the identification of international sales opportunities is dependent on the location in which a DFE is based, as well as their individual capabilities (McDougall et al. 1994). As previously discussed, British labels relied more heavily on international sales in comparison to their American counterparts. Regardless, both New York and London based DFEs operate as globally consistent brands and international new ventures in an worldwide marketplace.

Generally, DFEs are able to approach sales deliberately, targeting stockists domestically or abroad, if they have the objective or experiential knowledge of the

potential clients (Grant 1996; Hadley & Wilson 2003; Johanson & Vahlne 2009). For other stockists, the DFE is reactive, responding to opportunities that may arise through participation in fashion week, particularly regarding Asia and the Middle East. As they gain resources, they are able to approach the internationalisation process strategically on a global scale (Andersen & Kheam 1998; Coviello & McAuley 1999; Bell et al. 2003; Bell et al. 2004; Weerawardena et al. 2007; Schweizer et al. 2010). At this point, stockists, cities and regions are targeted based on where the greatest brand adjacencies and growth opportunities exist.

As international entrepreneurs, DFEs contribute further evidence connecting the born global internationalisation model to dynamic capabilities (Madsen & Servais 1997; Knight et al. 2004; Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Cavusgil & Knight 2015). DFEs are early adopters of internationalisation via exporting, who consider the aesthetic fit of their products within markets globally, and through experience, develop capabilities necessary to achieve international distribution in alignment with their goals (Knight & Cavusgil 2004). The iteration of the collection lifecycle develops sensing routines (dynamic capabilities), assisting the DFE in environmental scanning and identification of consumer/customer needs to recognise opportunities for market positioning (Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Ellonen et al. 2011; Aramand & Valliere 2012). Thus, the process of identification can be considered as the operation of 'creative search' and 'strategic sense-making' capabilities in which the DFE imaginatively and intuitively seeks out and recognises opportunities, and also scans the environment, interprets events and reacts based on desired firm performance (Pandza & Thorpe 2009). The ability of the DFE to search, explore and learn about the broader market environment is exhibited through the maintenance of relationships, participation in trade fairs and utilisation of best practices to identify and exploit opportunities for growth (Wilden & Gudergan 2014). Furthermore, the brand serves as a frame used to make sense of events, experiences and situations, guiding decision-making (Vásquez et al. 2013).

From a wholesale perspective, DFEs increase their sales in line with industry-based brand awareness by developing close-knit relationships with influential stakeholders who operate in both the editorial and sales sectors of the fashion industry. The enterprise's networking capability (network integration) enables the exploitation of international

opportunities and growth (Zollo & Winter 2002; Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Chen et al. 2009). Decisions made in conjunction with this point in the collection lifecycle include the DFE's sales strategy (the use of a showroom, sales agent or in-house sales director), target consumer description (the brand's girl/woman), price-point definition, and the parameters for targeting stockists. Thus, as a result of the identification process, decisions are made for the market positioning and adaptation of the enterprise in relation to international opportunities. The process of adaptation, following the DFE's interaction and identification of opportunities, is discussed in the following section.

## 7.6 Adaptation and Control

After identification, the process of adaptation requires the DFE to make adjustments to its brand and internationalisation routines. This entire process of interaction, identification and adaptation is one of an iterative negotiation, whereby the enterprise is adjusting its product, messaging and approach to solidify its place within the fashion industry. Adaptation is possible because of the learning and experience, resulting in reflection and planning, as the enterprise transitions through continual rotations of the collection lifecycle.

DFEs make adjustments to their products and/or brand messages in response (positive or negative) to the (mis)representations of those products and/or brand messages by individuals within the industry. The process of adaptation is the ability to make measured adjustments in response to the environment (Kasim & Altinay 2016). Adaptation represents the point of decision-making based on the reflection and planning required in the identification stage. As a process, adaptation combines the internal understanding of the enterprise with the interpretations of external experiences to produce actionable decision-making in an effort to control the reception of product and brand:

Proposition 4: The brand is produced through the adaptation of the DFE in an effort to control how it is received by the network, industry and market.

From an operational perspective, adaptation is related to production because it is during the actual production process in which adjustments to specific garment designs are made in order to satisfy the requests of buyers. For example, DFEs may provide



exclusive garments to individual stockists, make adjustments to garments within the collection based on regional and cultural requirements, or fulfil a buyer's perceived need. However, this presents a potential risk for the DFE, as making adaptations that fall outside of the aesthetic principles (whether discovered and defined, or not) can be detrimental. To correct the imbalance, the DFE must readjust the collection according to the personality and vision of the creative director, as the following quotes illustrate:

*We're about to make a deal with Bergdorf's in the next couple of seasons which is great... Here's what they want: They want us to trend towards printed gowns because that's a niche that they are not covered in. So this is what a buyer does as well. A buyer comes in and says: "You know what, we don't have this. Can you please fill that gap?" When you say: "But wait, this is me". You know what I mean? You have to really pick and choose* (Participant 6, interview 1, emphasis added).

*What happened was, in the course of one season it went from being an amazing thing, to having no personality. And as a young person, I got sucked into that, of people saying: "This is what you should be doing". Bergdorf's is telling me I should be doing printed gowns, but it wasn't me. So there's no value in it. So now we're doing things that I want to do and it's going to be true to the heart, and people are going to see that. It was a hard time. This was a hard time for us. Thank goodness we have the backing to be able to come through it* (Participant 6, interview 2, emphasis added).

While adaptation may be made in response to various market demands, trends and influences, there is a limit to how far the DFE is able to push the boundaries of the collection's aesthetic (Ind & Watt 2005). Therefore, it is important to 'remain true' to the aesthetic principles, balanced with the desire to generate sales from stockists, as evidenced by the following quote:

*Of course you want to get that order from Liberty's, of course you want to get that order from Selfridge's. That signifies growth. That signifies achievement. Um, and it signifies a recognition of what you're doing. But if you constantly allow that to engage with your development process, engage with the creative, engage with your strategy, be it your price strategy or your sales strategy, you will fragment. You really will. And I've seen it happen to other people and they look a bit like a rabbit in headlights: "Shit, someone is saying that to me, someone is saying this to me. Right, I'd better do this. Right, sexy and*

fitted. Let's do this". *And then you spin and you don't know where your identity is and your true direction lies.* And it's really important to *stay strong* (Participant 21, emphasis added).

A balance between adaptation and control must be maintained, requiring the DFE to continually evaluate their positioning within the fashion industry in relation to their network, the industry, the consumer market and global forces (social, political and economic trends) (Aramand & Valliere 2012), adapting decision-making without losing the structure established via the core of the brand: the aesthetic principles.

Within the supply chain, internationalisation impacts the production process as the DFE sources materials, suppliers and manufacturers on an international level through their network of connections within the fashion system. Relationships affect DFEs differently for distribution and production. Production is heavily associated with psychic distance and previous network relationships (Johanson & Vahlne 1977, 2009; Brennan & Garvey 2008). For example, a London based designer of Korean heritage immediately started manufacturing in South Korea, in comparison to an American designer who maintains manufacturing in the US since the launch of the company. This may be due to the greater and/or direct oversight required during production, and the resources available to the firm.

Furthermore, there is pressure to get production 'right' as DFEs only have 'one chance' in the development of their relationships with stockists. If the production quality of garments is of lesser quality than expected, the garments won't sell-through, thus reducing the chance of future orders, in turn reducing the DFE's consistency and longevity with their network relationships. Additionally, if the DFE's production suppliers, factories, and/or partners fail to complete manufacturing by retail distribution deadlines, the products will have less time on the shop floor at full price, also reducing the sell-through rate and credibility of the DFE with stockists.

Outsourced activities, like production, sales and public relations, requires, to some extent, the relinquishment of control. To build and ensure trust with manufacturers, DFEs utilise existing network relationships, 'test' or trial new factories with small production batches, and/or develop a portfolio of factories for specific product categories or garment types. These tactics provide the DFE leverage and control over the production process.

Within the agency relationship, control can be considered a continuum, negotiated during the initial contracting period between the DFE and sales or PR agent, and re-negotiated as the DFE increases their capabilities and internal resources. The continuum allows firms with fewer resources to outsource more activities and to a greater involvement, so that the agent has greater decision-making power and responsibility for the DFE. At the other end, the DFE may still outsource some activities to a certain extent, but exert more control over the decision-making processes and relationship development with the connections made by the agent on the DFE's behalf.

The ability to control is related to power within network relationships (Dahl 1957; Cox 1999; Hines & McGowan 2005). For the DFE, increased growth and traction within the fashion industry allows them to have greater power in the negotiation of contracts for sourcing, sales, manufacturing and/or promotion, and thus greater control over the development and distribution of their products (and brand). While they may not start from a position of power, they are given the opportunity to generate it through their participation within the fashion system.

The combination of negotiated brand meaning during interaction and the identification of opportunities, requires the adaptation of brand messaging for control. As an activity, this occurs during the production process through interaction with the media, while the fashion press is creating editorial content prior to the garments being available for in-store sales. The concept of control is exhibited by the limitations set by the DFE to the production capacity, stockists and/or media outlets in an effort to oversee the production of the brand within the market through distribution and communication activities. If the label is growing too fast, this may be a point of contraction where the enterprise rejects opportunities that do not fit with the long-term goals. The task of brand management is the act of refining the brand narrative — creating its authenticity — in order to clearly communicate the desired identity (Collins & Porras 1996; Hatch & Schultz 2003, 2010; Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Ind & Watt 2005; Boyle 2007; Heding et al. 2009; Gander 2011). This is the production of the brand, developed through the brand strategy that aligns the aesthetic principles, brand narrative, artefacts and market positioning. Thus, all of the codified internal and external elements of brand identity (Urde 2013) are, within this research, integrated with the product development

process: the collection lifecycle. For the DFE, the brand strategy is the definition and implementation of the brand identity into the everyday practices of the enterprise.

The balance between adaptation and control provides the DFE with a foundation for decision-making built on existing resources and specific attributes of authenticity, as evidenced by the following quote:

*So this is our niche. This is where we appeal to our consumers. This is where we are. So we don't have the money. We don't have the youth. We don't have the social aspect. But you have all of these other aspects. Experience. Actually knowing fashion, and being in fashion when fashion was less about image, it was about clothes or people going out. But it was a different way to go out. And celebrities was a different level of celebrity... It's just different. You adapt to what it is. But I think that when there is too much of everything, then it comes back full circle. And it comes back to a certain authenticity* (Participant 9, emphasis added).

The process of adaptation encompasses the production of products and the alignment of decision-making between brand and market opportunities (Urde 2013). These elements all work together, intertwined to facilitate the distribution of product and brand, achieving an established position within the fashion industry. After adaptation, the enterprise moves into the organic growth process, represented by distribution, which is the avenue for expansion of the brand, both domestically and internationally. This is discussed in the following section.

### 7.7 Organic Growth to Establish

The final step within the collection lifecycle is the distribution process, where the DFE focuses on organic growth to encourage sell-throughs via private clients, retail e-commerce or wholesale channels; generating brand awareness via communication activities; identifying markets or stockists for domestic or international expansion; and develops the resources and capabilities for new product development and the introduction of new product categories. DFEs operate with a global vision in which there exists no boundary between domestic and international markets regarding the service of customers, including stockists and private clients (Karra & Phillips 2004).

Important for the distribution of the brand, communication activities are targeted at editors, buyers, aspirational and product consumers, and include the creation and

distribution of press releases; fashion films, lookbooks, posters, postcards and other assets; the development and maintenance of public relations outreach initiatives and relationships; the creation and maintenance of a website, blog and/or social media presence on various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and Pinterest; the use of photography; the brand's logo; celebrity placement (via stylists); the encouragement of word-of-mouth; and the showroom presence, presentation or catwalk show during fashion week. The connection between communication and distribution is apparent for DFEs given the intertwined nature of brand identity, the collections and product development processes. Market opportunity is based on brand awareness and network relationships within the industry.

In the course of introducing collections, DFEs may 'chase image', focusing on generating editorial placement and brand awareness. In these circumstances, product sales are not the initial goal. While 'chasing image' may generate the appearance of success publicly, it is not a sustainable strategy. Conversely they may 'focus on product', prioritising sales. However, solely focusing on sales limits future opportunities as editors and buyers look to each other for cues. This is what separates the struggling from the successful DFEs: an imbalance between image and sales orientation. A balanced approach needs to be pursued in order to facilitate growth. The growth of the brand, through new opportunities, is often described as being 'organic' and a 'natural evolution', as evidenced by the following quote:

It's just grown organically out of the mens. There hasn't been a strategy to become a unisex brand. Or even how the women's started. It just happened naturally out of the pattern that we've seen emerging with the customer (Participant 24).

Organic growth is related to the distribution process because it signifies distribution of product to the stockists and end consumers, the distribution of brand messaging via communication activities, and the increased distribution of the brand due to continual expansion.

In their efforts to grow, many DFEs seek to develop their own retail stores to gain direct interaction with customers, reduce their dependency on the wholesale market, and maintain integrity of the collection presentation (Saviolo 2002). Collectively, these advantages allow the firm to present their products according to their vision and within

their own brand ‘world’. This construct not only provides the brand with control over how its identity is presented to the market (Hutchinson et al. 2006), but also validates and establishes their positioning:

There’s just different conversations and things that wouldn’t have taken place before but are taking place now for us... The profile that the [own retail] store is giving us as well is almost even bigger than that. It’s a game changer for us (Participant 24).

Organic growth is an economic term used to define the growth of a company utilising the acquisition of resources from the market, evaluated by increased brand awareness, annual turnover, stockists and product categories. But organic growth also defines the process of the evolution of the brand in a controlled, measured way. The organisation must put ‘practices in place to manage the tensions of growth and innovation versus control’, so that growth is controlled by their capabilities (Lawson & Samson 2001: 384). It involves seeking opportunities that align with the aesthetic principles, brand adjacencies and goals, while rejecting those that do not. The purpose of organic growth — through either brand awareness or sales — helps to establish the DFE within the fashion industry through the development of a clear, distinguished and unique brand identity. The alignment of operational activities with brand identity encourages the movement of the firm through each stage of growth, facilitating increased brand awareness, resources and annual turnover through the organic growth of sales, product categories and distribution outlets. The focus of the firm is on producing product in the pursuit of organic growth and establishment within the market.

The establishment of the brand results from the DFE’s ability to exhibit both *consistency* and *newness*. Consistency is exhibited by the DFE’s capability throughout the seasons to articulate a unique point-of-view — stemming from the aesthetic principles — that ties each of the collections together. Additionally, consistency is illustrated in the enterprise’s ability to maintain relationships within the industry with manufacturers, sales and PR agents, showrooms, editors and stockists. Participants cite how, within the industry, buyers from various markets ‘watched’ the firm for several seasons to reduce purchase uncertainty, because as the DFE gains acceptance in major fashion markets, they are validated, accepted and thus sellable. The relationships a DFE develops within

the industry becomes part of their sales story. The maintenance of relationships illustrates that the DFE can sustain its position within the marketplace and follow through on its obligations to other members of the fashion industry network. The time period for creating consistency within the industry is cited as being at least three seasons by the research participants. This illustrated consistency gives a cautious buyer the ability to gauge a brand's stability, staying power and sell-throughs with other reputable, brand adjacent retailers.

The concept of newness requires the DFE to continually present new and innovative ideas to market in order to be continually relevant. This is facilitated around the continual introduction of new collections. In the earliest stages of development, newness is an especially important component for the entrepreneurial DFE because it is the element by which they illustrate the 'gap' they fill within in the industry, and it provides a beneficial yet fleeting advantage as an emerging designer (that lasts only until there is yet another new designer on scene).

Being 'the next big thing' is something that expires within the industry, requiring the DFE to establish a stable position and identifiable brand as soon as possible, as explained by the following participant:

Because at some point, you're an emerging designer and you hit a peak. You know, every emerging designer hits a peak. You're the it boy, you're the it this, you're the it that. And you don't want to be known for that. You want to be known, from, you know, from a retail perspective you want to be known for the longevity. Your longevity. And "emerging" doesn't always apply that. So, our goal has been to really sort of break away. And to make sure that the clients understand that as well (Participant 8).

Both consistency and newness stem from the designer-founder who initiates innovation and capability development through the continual iterations of the collection lifecycle (Bettioli et al. 2012). The enterprise receives validation from the successful implementation and completion of all aspects of the collection lifecycle, which assists in the establishment of a unique brand identity.

Brand identity is often cited as a source of competitive advantage, which recognises a contribution to the market *over and/or in comparison to* competitors (McDougall & Oviatt 2000; de Chernatony 2001; Urde 2003; Knight & Cavusgil 2004; Teece 2007,

2012). However, as a resource, simply possessing a brand is not a source of competitive advantage, rather it is how that brand is utilised, internally and externally, by the enterprise and its stakeholders that creates value (Cepeda & Vera 2007; Grönroos & Voima 2011, 2013). In addition, designer-founders often do not start their firms from a position of explicit comparison and understanding of competitors, nor do they approach the creation of their products and growth of their companies in *competition* with other market actors.

DFEs are, in fact, more likely to view other brands in terms of market ‘peers’, often highlighting the ‘brand adjacencies’ and commonalities with other brands. As previously discussed, the concept of *brand adjacency* is defined as the complementary or ‘fit’ of the brand in relation to peers/competitors, stockists, geographic market locations and press outlets. For DFEs, drawing these comparisons with peer brands — who are, in fact, competitors — creates a dialogue and selling-point for the focal enterprise in conversation with current and potential stockists. The DFE’s competitors are potential partners, mentors and collaborators. For these reasons, the concept of creating a competitive advantage was not a directly emergent concept within the data.

In contrast to competitive advantage as a militaristic approach to the firm’s orientation, there is more to be gained and greater leaps of innovation to be made by focusing on creating an offering grounded in the resources and capabilities of the firm (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Balmer & Gray 2003; Knight et al. 2004; Borch & Madsen 2007; Weerawardena et al. 2007; Chen et al. 2009; Ellonen et al. 2011; Ind & Coates 2013; Krzakiewicz 2013). As the DFE proceeds through its development, it deepens its opportunities, aligning routines to fit with the brand identity and vision. For DFEs, the brand is founded from an underlying aesthetic that is illustrated in every garment, collection and season. The unique identity is created within and from the products themselves, developed within the context of the fashion system. It is not a manufactured point of differentiation, but the underlying aesthetic, born from designer personality, design practice and experimentation, that provides the basis for defining the brand.

Therefore, for DFEs, the creation of product (the collection) is not executed to achieve competitive advantage explicitly. Collections reflect the designer’s personality, background and unique ‘point-of-view’. The designers must have something to say that



is unique within the marketplace. This unique message is not necessarily an outcome of ‘identifying a gap’, but the establishment of a brand identity in relation to the brand’s individual goals, as evidenced by the following quote:

We’re established. ... [It depends on] how much you want to grow as well. Because, I feel there is always this frantic thing for people to grow enough. New categories. But if you have a strong established business, why would you want to extend yourself over, you know? ... It keeps the charm of the brand and it keeps it at a human level. Instead of just numbers and people at the end of the day when people go see what’s in red... It’s better to keep it at a format or at a scale that you can actually operate in (Participant 9).

Because competition is not stable or predictable, it is less important than the innovations that can displace existing companies (Schumpeter 1934/2008; Barney 1986c). DFEs are both a source of innovation for the fashion industry and are able to adapt to changes within the international market (Barney 1986c; Knight et al. 2004; Croitoru 2012). Therefore, the concept of competitive advantage is the outcome of the product development process — the collection lifecycle — not the starting point. Within the fashion industry, DFE brand and product development is not and should not be based in differentiation from industry incumbents, which creates a defensive and reactive approach to innovation. Rather, differentiation and competitive advantage is born out of an openness to innovation: competitive advantage is the consequence of innovative product and firm development; it is not the impetus for it. Thus, emphasising product and firm development by identifying a potential competitive advantage within the market takes the focus off of the firm’s potential for innovative capabilities and places it on an artificial ‘snapshot in time’ of the industry.

Resource-based view introduces an alternative perspective, outlining that the path to competitive advantage lies in the firm’s resources and competencies, instead of defeat or avoidance of competition (Barney 1991; Urde 1999). It is the capabilities of the enterprise as opposed to its market position at a singular point in time that is a true driver of sustainable differentiation (Collis 1994; Tallman & Fladmoe-Lindquist 2002). Rather than describe the purpose and path of the firm as the pursuit of a competitive advantage, for entrepreneurial DFEs, motivation lies in generating organic growth through product category expansion, increased sales and increased brand awareness. The

measurement of success is in relation to their own positioning within the market over time, as evidenced by the following participant:

I do think that I consider it to be successful. Even at just the most basic level. Like we're not going into debt. You know, we're not losing money by existing. And I think that is successful (Participant 1).

Therefore, the term *creative ascendancy* is more appropriate and explains the development of the firm as it grows, relative to its own locality over time. In an entrepreneurial environment within the creative industries, the enterprise ascends based on its continual development. Economically, the concept of creative ascendancy provides an accurate unit of measurement by exploring the growth of the firm in real terms through its financial success of annual turnover, profit and return-on-investment as opposed to market share:

Proposition 5: The establishment of the brand is achieved via the organic growth of the DFE. Success is measured by the creative ascendancy of the brand.

The concept of creative ascendancy more precisely reflects the behaviour and motivations of the entrepreneurial DFE operating in the fashion capitals of London and New York. While DFEs can be considered to be in competition with their peers, firm success is measured by their own organic growth.

There is a considerable amount of literature on the importance and role of knowledge related to both brand development (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Ghodeswar 2008; Payne et al. 2008; Payne et al. 2009; Jansson & Power 2010; Tynan et al. 2010) and internationalisation (Beijerse 2000; Bell et al. 2003; Galbreath 2005; Johanson & Vahlne 2009; Trudgen & Freeman 2014; Langseth et al. 2016), yet no direct link between branding and internationalisation. The brand is a knowledge-based resource, guiding decision-making for the development of collection and industry interaction (Hall 1992; Saviolo 2002; Ind & Watt 2005; Helm & Jones 2010). Because of this, the brand becomes a guide for internationalisation, and brand development is a dynamic capability that extends 'the firm's performance into new markets, new product categories, and new ways of doing business' (Knight & Cavusgil 2004: 127). The concept of a capability being dynamic refers to its capacity to change the operating capabilities and resource base (Zollo & Winter 2002; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009).

As an innovating firm, the development of products is dynamic and fluid as the DFE interacts with the fashion system throughout the collection lifecycle (Chetty 1997; Coviello & McAuley 1999; Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Knight & Cavusgil 2010). The routines of the collection lifecycle — design, presentation, sales, production and distribution activities — shape and constrain the way the DFE grows and adapts to its environment through the creation of brand identity (Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). The product development process of the collection lifecycle is an operational capability, whereas the capacity to change that process is a dynamic capability (Zahra et al. 2006).

Because the DFE begins its business through the creation of operational capabilities by launching into the collection lifecycle, these capabilities precede the development of dynamic capabilities in these entrepreneurial enterprises, but over time the two levels of capabilities become interwoven (Zahra et al. 2006). The evolution of the DFE is reinforced by interactions between dynamic and operating capabilities (Newey & Zahra 2009).

Given the interconnection between defining the construct of the brand as a knowledge-based resource, and knowledge-based resources as integral to the dynamic capabilities of the enterprise, the concept of brand development can therefore be considered a dynamic capability of the firm that assists in the internationalisation process based on the firm's resources:

Proposition 6: Brand development is a dynamic capability that impacts the operational capabilities and resources. Internationalisation capabilities are enhanced when there is alignment of brand identity elements.

Brand development fits the criteria for conceptualisation as a dynamic capability because it is a continual, path dependent, future-oriented and embedded organisational process that serves to consistently, repeatedly and intentionally change the resource base of the DFE (Zollo & Winter 2002; Ambrosini et al. 2009; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009). Brand development is a dynamic capability because it is about creating and altering the desired identity of the DFE in future environmental interactions in alignment with the organisation's goals. Furthermore, brand development is a repeated process that evolves over time as the DFE integrates new knowledge through organisational learning. As a dynamic capability, brand development encourages and facilitates learning as a result of

internationalisation to ensure the firm's adaptation in preparation for growth (Zahra et al. 2006).

As the DFE develops, brand identity acts as a guide for further learning and experience, reflection and planning, and decision-making. As brand awareness and reputation increase within the industry, internationalisation shifts to focus on opportunities. Internationalisation opportunity is influenced by the brand adjacencies and aesthetic principles defining the brand identity, providing a foundation for capability enhancement as the enterprise develops relationships in foreign markets. The connection and importance of the brand to the internationalisation process is illustrated by the entrepreneurial product development process of the DFE (Knight et al. 2004; Weerawardena et al. 2007; Johanson & Vahlne 2009).

Internationalisation is also correlated to brand identity in the context of location (influence of place), both economically and aesthetically along several dimensions, including being described as a British, American or international label; the DFE's support within domestic markets in comparison to international markets; international price-points and tariffs; and the degree of commerciality and conceptuality in relation to a foreign market's opportunity. It is the individual situation of the firm in terms of resources and positioning that affect internationalisation (Swoboda et al. 2009). For DFEs, the brand's aesthetic principles guides decision-making in response to, and alignment with, international market opportunities, 'enhancing, combining, protecting, and, when necessary, reconfiguring the business enterprise's intangible and tangible assets' (Teece 2007: 1319). The brand evolves through and emerges from the organisational capabilities of the collection lifecycle to create new configurations of resources that in turn develop and grow the brand internationally (Teece et al. 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Weerawardena et al. 2007).

For internationalisation, DFEs align closely with the born global model (Cavusgil & Knight 2015), but focus on specific geographic areas based on brand awareness, market opportunities and distribution strategy, concentrating limited resources to facilitate growth (Table 7.3). In comparison to the born global model described by Bell et al. (2003), the motivations, objectives, expansion patterns, pace, distribution methods, internationalisation strategies and financing options vary across proactive and

**Table 7.3 Born Global Firms: Capabilities & Internationalisation**

Adapted from Cavusgil & Knight (2015)

General Characteristics	Characteristics of Designer Fashion Enterprises
Value-added offerings: innovative, cutting edge, differentiated and unique	Design innovation; main component of differentiation is the brand born from the designer. The development of the collection is the source of the innovation based value proposition.
Leadership driven by change agents: founders & employees that drive export initiatives	Internationalisation driven by the designer-founder via interaction within the fashion system; may be reactive or proactive to international opportunities based on existing resources and goals.
Change agents possess entrepreneurial orientation	Entrepreneurial orientation built from the designer-founder's personality, background and goals.
Leadership motivated by worldwide clientele for their offerings	The DFE may target key wholesale stockists, regional markets and consumers globally as they develop a deliberate approach to sales and distribution.
Born globals are effective in building global networks of collaborators: distributors, agents, representatives and suppliers	The DFE is a highly networked organisation within the fashion system, which provides feedback on products, opportunities and the brand. The DFE's reaction to interactions (co-creation experiences) impacts brand identity.
Nations with small domestic markets exhibit higher proportions of born globals	London designers relied more heavily on international stockists focusing on key global markets (Asia, United States, Middle East). New York based DFEs emphasised domestic expansion, but remained international from inception.

reactive approaches, incorporating characteristics of the stage model of development in addition to born global elements (Table 7.4). DFEs take advantage of opportunities that are available and presented to them via the global fashion network. DFEs utilise their network of relationships to internationalise, shifting their internationalisation behaviour from an indiscriminate global practice to a targeted sales approach. As the resources and capabilities of the DFE are altered, specific regions, countries, cities and/or stockists are targeted for future sales opportunities that align via brand adjacencies with their brand strategy (i.e. the codification and implementation of brand identity elements).

As exporting is their mode of internationalisation for sales, contextual situations are most important, including the individual circumstances of each market in relation to the resources and capabilities of the DFE (Swoboda et al. 2009). This explains the dimensional variation in the distribution practices of London and New York DFEs. The fashion industry, social trends, and economic and political policies create a context of opportunities and limitations where the DFE is 'embedded in an enabling, and at the same time constraining, business network that includes actors engaged in a wide variety of interdependent relationships' (Johanson & Vahlne 2009: 1423). The DFE's

Table 7.4 Elements of DFE Internationalisation

		Adapted from Bell et al. (2003)		
		'Traditional'	'Born Global'	'Born-again' Global
<b>Motivation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reactive</li> <li>• Adverse home market</li> <li>• Unsolicited/enquiries orders</li> <li>• 'Reluctant' management</li> <li>• Cost of new production</li> <li>• Processes force export initiation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive</li> <li>• Global 'niche' markets</li> <li>• 'Committed' management</li> <li>• International from inception</li> <li>• Active search</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reactive</li> <li>• Response to a 'critical' incident (MBO, take-over, acquisition, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firm survival / growth</li> <li>• Increasing sales volume</li> <li>• Gain market share</li> <li>• Extend product life-cycle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive advantage</li> <li>• 'First-mover' advantage</li> <li>• 'Locking-in' customers</li> <li>• Rapid penetration of global 'niches' or segments</li> <li>• Protecting and exploiting proprietary knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploit new networks and resources gained from critical incident</li> </ul>
<b>Expansion Patterns</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incremental</li> <li>• Domestic expansion first</li> <li>• Focus on 'psychic' markets</li> <li>• 'Low-tech': less sophisticated markets targeted</li> <li>• Limited evidence of networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrent</li> <li>• Near-simultaneous domestic and export expansion (exploring may precede domestic market activity)</li> <li>• Focus on 'lead' markets</li> <li>• Client 'followership' Networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Epoch' of domestic market orientation, followed by rapid internationalisation</li> <li>• Focus on 'parent' company's networks and overseas markets</li> <li>• Client 'followership'</li> </ul>
				<b>Designer Fashion Enterprises</b>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reactive: Unsolicited/enquiries orders, limited domestic market, response to critical incident (demand from Fashion Week international PR)</li> <li>• Proactive: International from inception, active search, global 'niche' markets, 'committed' management, targeting key international stockists/markets</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firm survival / growth</li> <li>• Organic growth: increasing sales volume and distribution outlets</li> <li>• Protecting and exploiting proprietary knowledge (brand)</li> <li>• Exploit networks and resources</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrent</li> <li>• Simultaneous domestic &amp; export expansion</li> <li>• May prioritise on domestic expansion but continue with international orders</li> <li>• May prioritise 'lead' international markets</li> <li>• Networks</li> </ul>

Table 7.4 Elements of DFE Internationalisation				
Adapted from Bell et al. (2003)				
	'Traditional'	'Born Global'	'Born-again' Global	Designer Fashion Enterprises
<b>Pace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradual</li> <li>• Slow internationalisation (small number of markets)</li> <li>• Single market at a time</li> <li>• Adaptation of existing offerings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid</li> <li>• Speedy internationalisation (large number of markets)</li> <li>• Many markets at once</li> <li>• Global product development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late/rapid</li> <li>• No international focus then rapid internationalisation</li> <li>• Several markets at once</li> <li>• Adaptation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid</li> <li>• Reactive (open) or deliberate (targeted)</li> <li>• Speedy internationalisation</li> <li>• Several markets at once</li> <li>• Adaptation of products for markets</li> </ul>
<b>Method of distribution / entry modes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventional</li> <li>• Use of agents/distributors or wholesalers</li> <li>• Direct to customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible and networks</li> <li>• Use of agents or distributors</li> <li>• Integration with client's channels, use of licensing, joint ventures, overseas production, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks</li> <li>• Existing channel(s) of new 'parent', partner(s) or client(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks</li> <li>• Fashion industry system</li> <li>• Sales agents / showrooms</li> <li>• Direct to consumers (e-commerce)</li> <li>• Wholesale exports</li> </ul>
<b>International strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad-hoc and opportunistic</li> <li>• Continued reactive behaviour to new opportunities</li> <li>• Atomistic expansion, unrelated new customers/markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured</li> <li>• Planned approach to international expansion</li> <li>• Expansion of global networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reactive in response to 'critical' incident but more structured thereafter</li> <li>• Expansion of newly acquired networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad-hoc and opportunistic</li> <li>• Continued reactive behaviour to new opportunities -- <i>or/then</i> --</li> <li>• Planned approach to international expansion</li> <li>• Expansion of global networks</li> </ul>
<b>Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Boot-strap' into new markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-financed via rapid growth</li> <li>• Venture capital, Initial public offerings (IPO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital injection by 'parent' refinancing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Boot strap'</li> <li>• Self-financed via rapid growth</li> <li>• Support programs</li> <li>• Formal &amp; informal investment</li> </ul>

internationalisation activity is embedded in and legitimised by understanding of the larger, more complex social process of product and brand development in relation to the fashion industry (Dacin et al. 1999).

Even if overall sales volumes are low, DFEs internationalise often within the first season of acquiring wholesale sales, distributing in disparate regions throughout the globe. These regions are not considered to be close in psychic distance (Johanson & Vahlne 1977), as the most prominent markets for emerging designers are the US, Asia and Middle East. In general, European based stockists are considered 'slow to react' by both London and New York designers, though for different reasons. Participants from London DFEs quoted a need of European stockists to 'wait and see', ensuring that the 'emerging brand' would maintain a consistent presence in the fashion industry. New York firms cited the high exchange rates and export tariffs into Europe as being barriers to entry, indicating that the brand sells well in Europe on sale due to the fact that the 'fashion educated consumer' knows that American brands can be purchased cheaper in the United States. However, both London and New York DFEs refer to Asian and Middle Eastern stockists as major channels of distribution, especially once the DFE is stocked in notable and prominent Western retailers such as Selfridges, Harvey Nichols, Barneys New York or Bergdorf Goodman. Buyers and/or owners for speciality boutique retailers often refer to these reputable stockists as validation of the emerging designer, as well as selling points for their own customers. This indicates two points of validation. One is given to the DFE by major stockists. The other point of validation is exhibited by the retention of stockists across seasons.

The internationalisation pattern of DFEs provides further evidence of the overlap between the Uppsala and born global models, and that internationalisation originates from the behaviour and path dependent background of the entrepreneurial designer-founder (Madsen & Servais 1997; Lloyd-Reason & Mughan 2002; Bell et al. 2003; Knight et al. 2004; Johanson & Vahlne 2009; McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Prange & Verdier 2011; Cavusgil & Knight 2015; Knight & Liesch 2016). DFEs both exploit existing market conditions, as well as explore opportunities through network integration and identification capabilities (March 1991; Prange & Verdier 2011). The concept of dynamic capabilities (Teece et al. 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Winter 2003; Teece 2007, 2012;



Barreto 2010) provides insight into the connection between internationalisation and brand development, producing the understanding that, for DFEs, success is measured by their creative ascendancy, not competitive advantage. As a result of the product and brand development routines and embedded capabilities of the collection lifecycle, organic growth establishes the brand within the fashion industry and market. The distribution stage of the collection lifecycle is the point at which new knowledge is integrated into the future operational activities to enable the continual growth and ascendancy of the DFE brand within future iterations of the collection lifecycle. The following section discusses the DFE's overall process of organisational learning.

### **7.8 Organisational Learning**

The emergence of the importance of organisational learning and brand development within this study can be explained by their intertwined nature in the evolution of the firm as it gains experience and creates new knowledge through interaction. Interactions with stakeholders provoke and influence decisions made at each stage of the collection lifecycle. These decisions impact the overall development of the firm, influencing brand identity and international growth. Organisational learning assists with the alignment of the product development process and brand to most effectively utilise resources and capabilities (Grant 1991; Collis 1994; Zahra et al. 1999; Luo 2000; Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009). As the DFE progresses through stages of the collection lifecycle, they are also progressing through a process of organisational learning. This section discusses the process of organisational learning and its relationship to the DFE's dynamic capabilities.

As the DFE evolves through interaction and collection development, it generates learning and experience within the international fashion system, facilitating reflection and planning and decision-making (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Brennan & Garvey 2009; Casillas et al. 2010; Altinay et al. 2015). This shifts the enterprise from a reactive approach to a proactive perspective. The shift in approach occurs over time, through continual development of collections, and also as the DFE undergoes new experiences:

Proposition 7: Organisational learning occurs through a process of improvisation, gained learning and experience, reflection and planning, decision-making and knowledge integration.

This research identified five stages of organisational learning for entrepreneurial DFEs. Operating on a continuum from reactive to proactive, DFEs move from a position where they improvise while working through new learning experiences, before reflecting to develop a plan that enables decision-making and knowledge integration for future similar experiences and routines (Table 7.5). DFEs use the enactment of the operational and dynamic capabilities as source of organisational learning, adopting the process of ‘creative search’ to ‘transform their core knowledge into a large variety of new applications, [indicating] that the entire causal understanding of their firm’s strategic

**Table 7.5 Organisational Learning**

<b>Improvisation</b>	‘There was a lot of foundational stuff that was happening. There was lots of trial and error. [ The former creative director] was never formally trained, and [the owner] had come from PR. So neither of them, to be fair, really knew what they were doing. And so there was a lot of: “Oh we’ll try this. Oh that’s not really working, we’ll try that”. In terms of manufacturing and their supply chain and all of that stuff’ (Participant 13).
<b>Learning &amp; Experience</b>	‘You could think of it as a spirit of constant improvement but it means that you’re never quite comfortable. Now we thought: “Oh, we know what we’re doing, we know what we’re doing”. Which could have been potentially a time that we would move back into menswear and then the game kind of changes a little bit and circumstances shift, and you look at numbers in a slightly different way, and actually, you look at maybe we should be doing this with the collection. And you know, now with this change into the way that we— right down to the way that we source fabrics and order, that’s completely different for us. And getting our head around that. And then I think it will be a couple of seasons, I think that we need to get that process kind of worked out and ironed out’ (Participant 13).
<b>Reflection &amp; Planning</b>	‘We’re in like 23 countries and we’re a team of four people. It doesn’t make sense. So the idea is to back away. And maybe if some of these countries are not. Maybe if the collection isn’t heavy enough for them or warm enough from them, we loose some of these countries unfortunately. And we focus back into a few temperatures of weather and locations in terms of retail. And sadly, or maybe that takes three years to learn, is to re-gear and try to understand some statistical data and what is the best part of the collection’ (Participant 14).
<b>Decision-making</b>	‘I think— when I joined— I think the team was trying to make a really conscious decision. That basically was the time. So for example, if we’re getting pulled into doing stories that are like “the next wave”, “the next generation”, sometimes for whatever reasons we have to do it... [But] It [rejecting the emerging designer “label”] is a really conscious decision that we made a long time ago’ (Participant 4).
<b>Knowledge Integration</b>	‘All I cared about was just this freedom of expression and new ideas and innovation. But now that we have that sort of bent, now we’re just trying to make everything look really good, and feel really good. And make it worth the \$300 for your bra. And make it feel really nice. So I think the luxury aspect and the sort of sophisticated-ness, was a huge point in the rebranding ... I really felt like we needed a facelift and a grown-up brand and not just a weird teen experiment. It felt like a growing up process for us. We wanted to feel more refined and sophisticated ... So I think that’s what the new website and logo reflects. It’s a little more polished’ (Participant 1).

identity is not yet developed and managers experience continuous disambiguation' (Pandza & Thorpe 2009: S127). Similarly, Fillis (2001) highlights the different approaches to strategic development, describing a continuum between opportunistic, haphazard methods exhibited by entrepreneurial enterprises and 'sequential decision-making'. In the earliest stages of the firm's founding, during the initial introduction of the collection to market, the DFE is reactive to feedback and opportunities (Forsgren 2002), as explained by the following participant:

The very beginning. The day. The first two weeks. We didn't know. We didn't have a plan. There was no plan. And then within two weeks we realised what stores were interested and what publications were interested, and we realised the level of brand that we were going to be (Participant 5).

As the DFE consistently demonstrates longevity and maintains network relationships with stockists, editors, manufacturers and suppliers, it is able to turn reactive daily practice into routines, incorporating planning for the future (Weerawardena et al. 2007). This process of organisational learning allows the DFE to increase its resources and alter capabilities in a proactive negotiation with market forces.

This perspective of organisational learning is consistent with dynamic capabilities, which argues that organisational learning is a process of (operational and dynamic) capability development, and it is a dynamic capability in and of itself (Easterby-Smith et al. 2009). Like other dynamic capabilities, organisational learning is embedded in the operational activities, processes and routines (Teece et al. 1997; Zollo & Winter 2002; Ambrosini et al. 2009). Additionally, as the capabilities and resources evolve over time, the DFE refines its routines, altering for example, the garment finishing, textiles, price-points, manufacturers, etc., in order to align the brand with market opportunities and long-term goals. Any major change or original experience requires the DFE to again transition from improvisation to knowledge integration, incorporating incremental learning (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Forsgren 2002).

The ability of the enterprise to integrate knowledge from the external environment illustrates its absorptive capacity (Zahra & George 2002; Newey & Zahra 2009). Throughout the collection lifecycle, the entrepreneurial activities influences the alignment of resources to capture external knowledge in new situations to create new

operational capabilities (Zollo & Winter 2002; Zahra et al. 2006; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009). The process of organisational learning builds skills at the levels of both operational and dynamic capabilities through the repeated execution of tasks (Luo 2002; Zollo & Winter 2002).

In either the macro evolutionary or micro experiential learning level, the 'trial and error' of 'figuring it out' can be described as *improvisation*, where the action and capability emerges from the doing (Zahra & Filatotchev 2004). In this unstructured period, goals lack clear definition and decision-making is based on necessity and discontent with the current situation (Pandza & Thorpe 2009). Improvisation occurs in instances where the DFE is operating 'without adequate time or resources to plan fully, and without [a] large repertoire of prior experience', forcing the company 'to improvise to create or enact solutions' (Zahra et al. 2006: 937). In many cases, early in the development of the company, the everyday practice of running the business is improvised.

Decisions are reactive to opportunities, based on meeting immediate needs and deadlines. This is exhibited in designers resolutely reaching out to stakeholders within the fashion industry, utilising and developing their personal and professional network to seek sales, press and produce the collection using available resources. For DFEs within the early stages of development, their practice becomes their plan and process in the sense that they are only able to do what do they need to do, getting by day-to-day. In this instance, the DFE is 'figuring it out as they go'.

Over time, improvisation transitions to more systematic experimentation (Zahra et al. 2006). However, improvisation is distinct from experimentation because it occurs within unplanned experiences where reaction to events inform actions as they occur, whereas experimentation is more closely related to trial and error in which it is deliberate in the use of routines to inform future action based on cause-and-effect relationships to understand what is working for the DFE in practice (Zahra et al. 2006).

The reactive approach to interactions and decision-making begins the process for organisational learning. This facilitates learning and experience gained through interaction within the high velocity environment (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000) of the fashion system as the DFE negotiates with stakeholders to develop meaning surrounding the brand, as evidenced by the following quote:

It's an experience thing. When you're ten years younger you don't have that experience behind you so you don't know ... you still have that kind of fire in your belly, you still have that instinct to go: "No, I disagree, this is what I believe in". Experience just backs that up and makes you more— it makes it stronger (Participant 21).

The second component of organisational learning is the process of generating *learning and experience*, which the DFE undergoes via interaction with the fashion system. The learning of the DFE is path dependent based on what they already know (Morgan et al. 2003; Zahra et al. 2006). The experience and learning derived from the collection lifecycle is the catalyst for developing both dynamic and operational capabilities (Easterby-Smith et al. 2009). It is characterised by participants as a learning curve, continual improvement, making mistakes, and the activity of 'paying attention' to the 'big picture' of operating a firm in the fashion system, understanding how the system works and how elements are connected to and within the company. For example, the following participant referenced the learning derived from budgeting for the collection:

You build a budget, for a collection if you've never done it before, it can be all over the place. And oh look, FedEx is our biggest expense. I never even thought about FedEx or something like that (Participant 7).

Interaction with stakeholders ignites the DFE's interpretation and reaction, requiring reflection and planning to process feedback and experience, and draw connections to its own objectives. The concept of *reflection and planning* is exhibited by the DFE actively avoiding bad opportunities and experiences, working to efficiently utilise resources, changing course (pivoting), working backwards from goals, setting limitations, problem-solving and utilising intuition. Based on this period of reflection, the DFE incorporates research, data and knowledge into the *decision-making* process in alignment with the vision for the brand.

This leads to *knowledge integration* that incorporates new knowledge into planning for specific areas of the company, the refinement of operational capabilities in the pursuit of objective and operational goals compared to positive and negative environmental realities, and the alignment or reconfiguration of resources. This allows the DFE to incrementally adjust their routines in line with their capabilities.

The alignment of decisions with goals and market opportunities is the execution of knowledge integration, so that the DFE now has a plan of action for future similar experiences. Therefore, the development of DFEs is an iterative process between improvisation and knowledge integration; activities are reactive (and routines are non-existent) based on the day-to-day practice of the company in new, unfamiliar, non-routinised processes or activities, as illustrated by the following quote:

You don't [know when you are ready to take the next step].  
You don't. You try and you swing and if you fail, that is what it is. You know part of entrepreneurship is understanding that every kind of step forward is a risk. But more importantly it's understanding that risk could mean positive or negative returns. And you have to accept both (Participant 12).

As the enterprise gains learning and experience, they are able to plan accordingly and make decisions in the pursuit of growth. Thus, organisational learning is itself a dynamic capability that alters DFE's product and brand management routines (Cepeda & Vera 2007). Repeated practice is a learning apparatus that develops dynamic capabilities, creating a deeper understanding of process and increasing the effectiveness of routines (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000; Forsgren 2002; Aramand & Valliere 2012). Transitioning through the collection lifecycle engages interactions with stakeholders (buyers, editors, consumers) that spur learning and experience, facilitating reflection and planning, which impacts decision-making.

As a result of organisational learning in the DFE, knowledge is integrated into future patterns of behaviour as the expression of opinions and beliefs (articulation) and the creation of written tools for guidance (codification) (Zollo & Winter 2002). The process of organisational learning encodes experiences into routines (Luo 2000). As a result, 'dynamic capabilities emerge from the coevolution (continuing interaction and mutual adjustment) of tacit experience accumulation processes with explicit knowledge articulation and codification activities' (Zollo & Winter 2002: 344). The articulation and codification of brand elements, stemming from the core values, provides guidance for product development (Merrilees 2007; Gromark & Melin 2011).

As a result, DFEs begin refining the capabilities, practices and routines for product expansion or the further focusing of collections to illustrate the core of the brand. The distribution process becomes more discriminatory, targeting specific stores in specific

geographical regions, denying access to stores that may not ultimately serve the brand's goals. These are examples of how reactive decisions evolve to that of proactive decision-making. The experience of events provides opportunities for capability development, so that the DFE is able to create and implement a plan of action for future similar events. This process has a cumulative effect (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001) on the DFE, so that increased experience further refines dynamic and operational capabilities (Collis 1994).

The dimensions in the process of organisational learning indicate how DFEs respond to market influences based on existing resources and capabilities. The progression from improvisation to knowledge integration illustrates how learning and experience is incorporated to gain additional resources and achieve specific outcomes. Organisational learning (for both specific experiences and over time) parallels the evolution of the DFE through the basic social process, so that the development of knowledge coincides with the development of the brand. The concept of brand co-creation further illustrates how interactions and experiences are sources of organisational learning for the DFE. This is discussed in the next section.

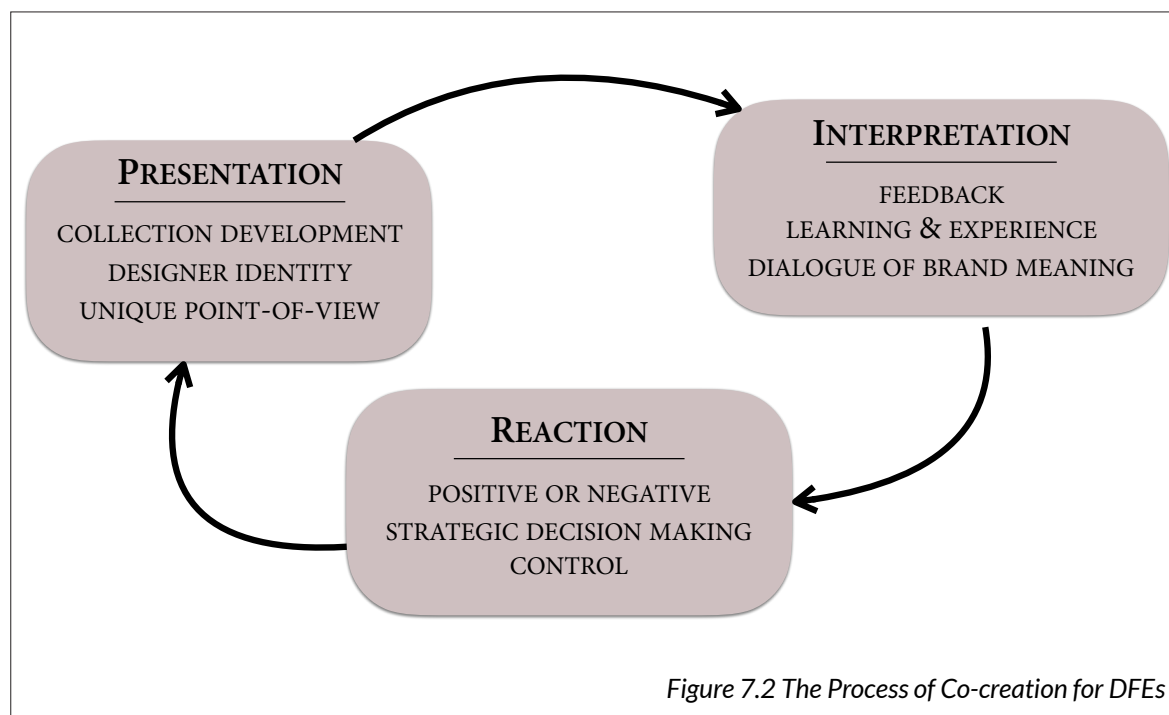
### **7.9 Brand Identity Co-creation**

Like dynamic capabilities, the concept of co-creation, descendent from service-dominant logic, is related to the resource-based view of the firm (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Grönroos 2008, 2011; Payne et al. 2008; Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). These two areas of research converge within the concept of organisational learning in which interactions between dynamic capabilities and operational routines occur as a result of internal entrepreneurship and innovation in reaction to external environmental triggers that serve as co-creation experiences (McKelvie & Davidsson 2009; Newey & Zahra 2009; Voyer et al. 2017).

The concept of co-creation emerged during interviews as participants continuously discussed the reception of the brand by industry stakeholders during points of interaction, and their reactions and incorporation of feedback into product development adaptations and future decision-making (Table 7.6). For the DFE, co-creation can be categorised as a process of presentation, interpretation and reaction, which occurs as a result of product development and interaction within the fashion system (Figure 7.2). The enterprise's brand identity emerges from and is driven by meaning that is cumulatively

**Table 7.6 Emergence of the Concept of Co-creation Throughout Each Phase of Research**

<b>Phase I</b>	
<b>Co-creation themes</b>	Brand is created in marketplace Importance for DFE of integrating in fashion system
<b>Phase II</b>	
<b>Co-creation concepts</b>	Requests, demands and feedback from buyers, editors, influencers Getting design ideas from interaction Positive and negative reaction to feedback via decision-making for collection and brand
<b>Phase III</b>	
<b>Co-creation process</b>	Presentation: designer identity, collection development, unique point-of-view Interpretation: feedback, requests and demands of stakeholders (specifically buyers and editors); dialogue of brand meaning; reflection and planning Reaction: positive or negative; decision-making; control as firm seeks integration into fashion system Outcome: 'signature'/brand attributes discovery; network integration; in/out brand identity creation; refinement and alignment of brand identity elements
<b>Phase IV</b>	
<b>Additional properties &amp; dimensions (brand adjacencies)</b>	Press categories: brand profile, designer profile, designer mention: support program, DFE growth, celebrity, fashion week, collection review, emerging designer, collaboration, behind the scenes. Press distribution: multi-tier vs. top tier outlets (fashion magazines and blogs) Press quality and quantity of brand/designer mentions and profiles



*Figure 7.2 The Process of Co-creation for DFEs*



created and defined through this process (Hatch & Schultz 2010; Frow et al. 2011; Urde 2013):

Proposition 8: From the perspective of the DFE, co-creation is a process of presentation of ideas, interpretation of interaction experiences and positive or negative reaction to externally created brand meaning.

Brands are ‘co-created through the interaction and social processes of multiple stakeholders’ (Kennedy & Guzmán 2016: 315). Within the DFE, co-creation is a process of presenting ideas, interpreting experiences, and reacting to learning in the discovery and definition of brand identity (Figure 7.3). The process of presentation-interpretation-reaction allows the DFE to identify characteristics that provide its unique market position. This interactive process is negotiated by individuals and the firm within a social system to achieve an agreed upon brand meaning (Ligas & Cotte 1999). As part of the typology of co-creation, co-meaning creation is the ‘interaction between actors that produce new meanings and knowledge through multiple encounters over time’ (Frow et al. 2011: 3). In practice, co-creation is an iterative process of interaction between the firm and stakeholders, whereby the firm ultimately decides what will be incorporated into the brand.

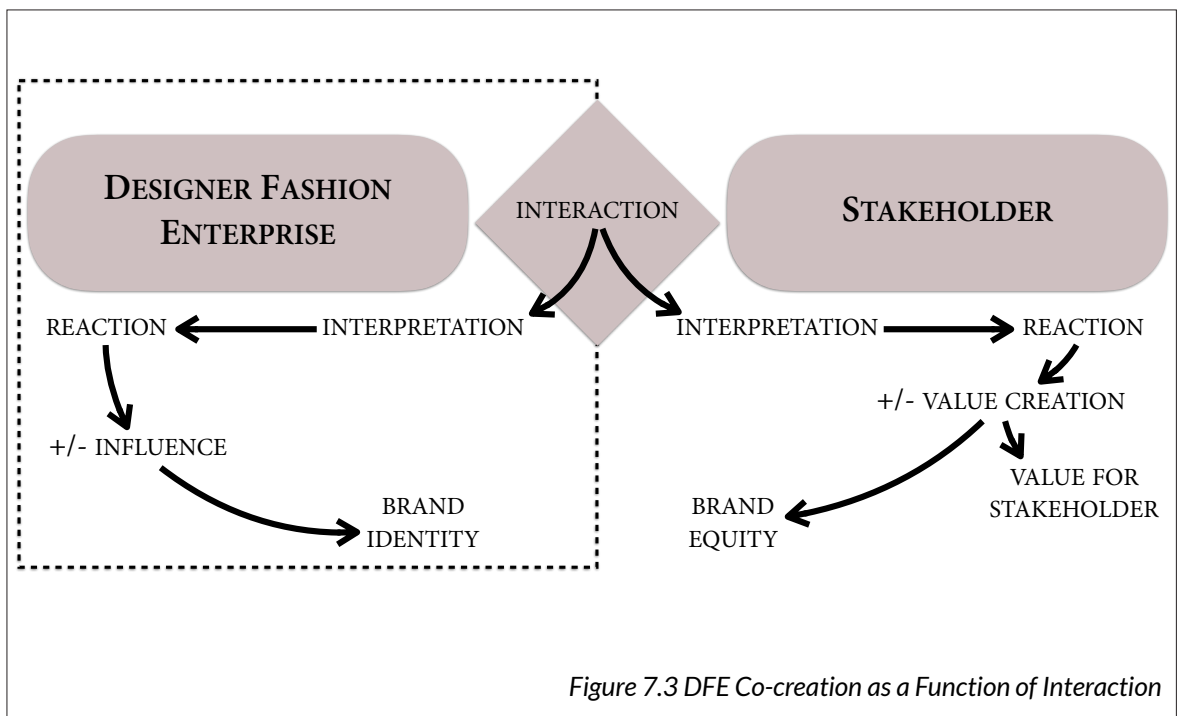


Figure 7.3 DFE Co-creation as a Function of Interaction

For the DFE, co-creation is a process of organisational learning that impacts brand identity development. It is through the co-creation process that they are able to evolve and grow the business while remaining true to the core of the brand identity (Urde 1999, 2013). Co-creation is a function of interaction (Frow et al. 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2011; Vásquez et al. 2013; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016), because both the firm and stakeholder are educated about the brand from the experience.

As previously discussed, the combination of collection development activities and the designer's identity provides a foundation for the internal development of brand identity (Urde 1999; 2013). Many participants described the process of 'discovering' their identity, which was 'always there', clarified with experience, as evidenced by the following quote:

The core is still the same because it's [the designer's] sensibility. It's changed just because being in the business on your own and having no net behind you, you have to be crafty enough to know that every time you do a collection, you put everything you have once again in it. And you need to make sure that you don't go overboard, otherwise, you close. We've evolved in a sense that we know better our customers now. We know better how the machine works: delivery, production, how the press works, how people react. We are less— we are more lucid, just the overall picture of how the business runs. In fashion, in our own personal business, who we're dressing, and what they're looking for when they come to see us (Participant 9).

Within the DFE, the designer is the storyteller and the brand reflects the story of the enterprise's identity, carrying the message of the core values underlying the organisation and its products (Salzer-Mörlling and Strannegård, 2004; Urde, 2013). For example:

I think ultimately you start the message. And it's a little bit like broken telephone in a way. And then you can get kind of— you also have to be very clear with what your message is, that you can see how you communicate this message will be easily translated into consumable bite-sized bits. And so I think, ultimately, it is the designer's responsibility to carry that message first. And whether it gets diluted or misconstrued half-way through, that's something that you can't control. But I do think that if your message is strong and personable, there's no reason why they would take that— take something that is perfectly good to talk about and change it up (Participant 19).

DFEs discover their core values (aesthetic principles) through interaction, learning and internal innovation, and not necessarily in direct conscious competition to peer companies. It is through the process of interaction that DFEs learn and refine their understanding about their target consumers. For DFEs, interaction within the fashion system is an innovative resource for the firm which allows it to gain knowledge and experience (Frow et al. 2015). Co-creation, beginning with the interactions as a result of the presentation of the collection, contributes to the external development of brand identity (Urde 2013; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). The process of co-creation begins at the point of interaction (Payne et al. 2008; Payne et al. 2009; Frow et al. 2011; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016; Voyer et al. 2017).

For the DFE, a first major point of interaction is the presentation of a ‘capsule’ collection to the designer’s personal and professional networks as an entry point into the fashion system. It continues to gain momentum throughout several seasons of collection development as the enterprise gains more awareness, support and feedback within the industry. Co-creation interactions are a continual source of learning to discover the brand identity externally in alignment with the aesthetic principles (da Silveira et al. 2013; Urde 2013). For instance, the following participants explain:

You have to identify brand attributes and things like that. And sometimes they’ll tell you something different than to what other people think. And we had a Harvey Nickels feature and they wrote a really good line that we really liked ... So it’s good, it’s matching what we’re thinking (Participant 3).

It’s little tweaks rather than the full direction of the collection. So I think the co-creation thing is quite important, because it helps it move in the right direction. It adds a little something. I don’t think it’s a bad thing. Having said that, I have seen brands have too much feedback, take it all on board, try to deliver and please everybody, and the collection was a disaster and nobody liked it (Participant 23, agent).

Feedback in the form of encouragement, demands, requests, observations, recommendations, acceptance, support and assistance, promotion, sales and usage provides external influence on the development of brand identity (Urde 1999, 2013). The impact of the co-creation process can occur quickly — sometimes even as early as the first collection — or evolve over many seasons of action and interaction. These

interactions illustrate how co-creation affects companies *from the DFE's perspective*, in that co-creation is about filtering how the collection and brand messaging is being interpreted through understanding what is actually communicated based on the feedback received, as evidenced by the following quotes:

I think the thing is that, you know we do speak to and listen across our entire network. But then we also filter a lot (Participant 25).

What we've learned quite quickly over the years is that you—no one is going to make your business work or happen apart from you. That's it. Yet, you will be showered with opinions... And if you were to listen to all of those opinions you'd be spinning. You've have no clear direction. So I think in the last couple of years, we've really solidified exactly what it meant to us. And why we were doing it. And you filter who you allow to engage in that space, because you know who gets it (Participant 21).

Co-creation also provides the DFE with a broader and alternative influences beyond the consumer; buyers and editors directly influence the brand through co-creation experiences. In other words, brand co-creation is derived from alternative sources to consumer engagement across a broad array of stakeholders and thus, brand development is an interaction of symbols between stakeholders and the firm (Urde 1999). The interpretation of co-creation experiences, such as buyer and editor feedback, presents challenges and opportunities for the integration of the DFE into the fashion system as they seek sales and press. The DFE's interpretation of feedback influences product development (Boyle 2007). Relying too heavily on feedback may create a situation in which the DFE experiences a loss of direction. Therefore, the DFE's reaction to co-creation can be positive or negative, in which feedback is either accepted or rejected in the process of decision-making.

To establish a unique position within the market the DFE reacts to associations by making strategic decisions, for example, rejecting editorial placements for 'emerging designers,' cultivating relationships and pursuing co-creation experiences that reflect its desired identity. The reaction component of the co-creation process recognises that there is 'push back' against images or ideas that do not align with the designer's vision, as evidenced by the following quotes:

Now really, creatively it's my opinion and my opinion alone. That's it. I'm pretty strict about it now actually. [The sales manager] can ask for this in this colour, that's pretty much the extent of it. But you get what you get. Once you give someone an inch they take a mile. I've had Bergdorf Goodman come in here and say: "I love this top, but you should shorten the sleeve and lengthen the bottom, and make it more airy and change the fabric". "Well then it's not that top. Then it's your top." And I don't want to do that anymore. Because it's so disingenuous (Participant 6).

Having someone else say what your brand should be to you is quite a lot like — [shocked sound] "Why can't it be this?! We want it to be this. And we're the brand so we'll do it!" (Participant 13).

Positive or negative reaction to feedback through adaptive decision-making ultimately affects and allows the DFE to control the brand. The argument that brands must relinquish control (Kennedy & Guzmán 2016) implies that brands have a choice in engaging in co-creation experiences. However, the choice (and control) of the DFE lies in how they react to co-creation interactions, not in how those interactions are interpreted by others. The process of co-creation is not about giving up control, but about nurturing a mutually beneficial dialogue of interaction that involves both education of and learning from stakeholders. Within the global fashion system, how the DFE responds to individual interpretations of the brand allows the firm to maintain control. However, much of the current literature on co-creation encourages a reactive and erratic approach to marketing (market orientation), rather than an experimentation and innovation-led approach based in the aesthetic principles developed and discovered by the enterprise (brand orientation).

Market orientation requires the DFE to have explicit knowledge based on 'customers' expressed wants and latent needs, competitor capabilities and strategies, channel requirements and developments, and the broader market environment' (Morgan et al. 2007: 910). Service-dominant logic and co-creation perspectives imply that because 'consumers form relationships with brands that mirror their social relationships', that companies should identify and service consumer needs to co-create the brand (Payne et al. 2009: 380). Within a service-dominant logic paradigm, service is positioned as the core of the enterprise's mission, so that competencies are applied solely for the benefit

of the consumer (Lusch & Vargo 2006; Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2012; Skålén & Hackley 2011). The emphasis on customisation within service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Lusch & Vargo 2006) can actually erode the creation of a brand, especially in the early stages of firm development. The objective of service-dominant logic is to shift understanding of markets from a production-oriented, mechanistic, and functional approach to a 'humanistic', relationship-based model (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2012). But its prescription of firm activities — the customised servicing of consumers — does not accurately represent DFE behaviour in the marketplace.

It is often the case that DFEs do not have access to actionable, quality knowledge about their target consumer group prior to initial presentation and interaction with the market (Swoboda et al. 2009). For entrepreneurial firms, such information may not be available at the launch of the enterprise and may be difficult to acquire during the first years of development. Furthermore, 'customers are rarely able to understand or articulate complex needs; nor are they always capable of envisioning the future' (Ind & Watt 2005: 65). The literature on service-dominant logic and co-creation over emphasises the power of the consumer/customer which can distract the DFE during the design process, stagnate innovation and divert the entrepreneurial firm. Urde (1999) argues that:

Regarding the brand as an unconditional response to customers' wants and needs can bring with it a risk that its strategic values as an expression of the organisation's identity and competitive advantage might be neglected. In the ambition to be market-oriented, there is a danger that the brand identity will be to an ever greater degree adapted and designed to purely satisfy customers (120).

The implications of this research show that because of limited pre-existing market knowledge, the (direct) influence of other stakeholders beyond the consumer, and the innovation-led approach to product development, co-creation does not exhibit as much depth of influence as previously presented in service-dominant logic literature, but it does exert more breadth. Additionally, co-creation is not a phenomenon in which the DFE gives up all control over the brand as the interactions DFEs experience present both challenges and opportunities for alignment with the external environment, requiring interpretation and reaction.

The existing framework of co-creation ignores the entrepreneurial orientations of the designer-founders, disregarding the perspective and innovative contribution of the enterprise. DFEs exhibit entrepreneurship through innovation in products, processes, organisational structures and distribution channels, and each of these are sources for the properties that define brand identity (Jantunen et al. 2005; Ambrosini et al. 2009; Urde 2013). Indeed, the brand identity would not exist if the designer did not initially introduce innovations to the market (Hatch & Schultz 2010). It is the firm that ultimately controls the direction of the brand through the design of the collections.

Because the DFE also holds power in the co-creation process, it is not service of consumers, but innovation that is 'the mechanism by which organisations produce the new products, processes and systems required for adapting to changing markets, technologies and modes of competition' (Lawson & Samson 2001: 378). Thus, the entrepreneurial activity of introducing new products enables the DFE to generate market knowledge, improving understanding of customers, consumers and other stakeholders (Zahra & Nielsen 2002).

Indeed, this perspective more accurately represents the economic value of creativity and innovation. Value is created when an offering is used (Lusch & Vargo 2006; Grönroos 2008; Payne et al. 2008; Grönroos 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2011, 2013; Ind & Coates 2013), but the brand must create an offer prior to its use and adoption by stakeholders. The misalignment of goals, resources and capabilities results in negative value creation or 'co-destruction' (Storbacka et al. 2012). Additionally, the innovation and meaning connected to that value (Ind & Coates 2013; Frow et al. 2015), the defining elements of the brand, begin and end with the firm who introduces them through the development of each collection. Brand value is co-created not only through producer-consumer interaction, but with stakeholders (Balmer & Greyser 2006; Merz et al. 2009; Hatch & Schultz 2010; Helm & Jones 2010; Iglesias et al. 2013). The co-creation of value is the point at which a dialogue is started between the DFE and stakeholder (Hatch & Schultz 2010; Frow & Payne 2011; Grönroos 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2011; Ind & Coates 2013). Co-creation is a process of negotiation within the fashion system. It is the interaction with stakeholders that strengthens both brand value and identity (Gyrd-Jones & Kornum 2013).

The interaction and reaction process is a way of perceiving both what an organisation is (identity) and how it is perceived (image) that provides a holistic conceptualisation of the enterprise (Rode & Vallaster 2005; Abimbola & Vallaster 2007; Vásquez et al. 2013). For entrepreneurial DFEs, a brand orientation perspective is better suited to explain how companies integrate market knowledge by means of interaction through the deployment and continual development of their capabilities and resources built on brand identity. In this way, brand orientation provides a better means of understanding the relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and co-creation as a ‘deliberate approach to brand building where brand equity is created through interaction between internal and external stakeholders’ (Gromark & Melin 2011: 395). As the basis for Urde’s (2013) CBIM model, brand orientation recognises the interaction between internal and external elements for brand identity development and more holistically explains the nature of market based relationships (Table 7.7) (Reid et al. 2005). As companies become differentiated not by the tangible features of their products but the aesthetic qualities of their brands, marketing is no longer about the making and selling of

**Table 7.7 Service-Dominant Logic: Conceptual Transitions - Progress Towards Brand Orientation**

From Lusch & Vargo (2006)			
Goods-dominant logic concepts	Transitional concepts	Service-dominant logic concepts	Brand orientation
Goods	Services	Service	Engagement
Products	Offerings	Experiences	Relationship
Feature/attribute	Benefit	Solution	Fulfilment
Value-added	Co-production	Co-creation of value	Co-creation of value and identity with stakeholders
Profit maximisation	Financial engineering	Financial feedback/learning	Feedback & learning for organic growth
Price	Value delivery	Value proposition	Innovation proposition
Equilibrium systems	Dynamic systems	Complex adaptive systems	Dynamic social systems
Supply chain	Value-chain	Value-creation network/constellation	Network collaboration
Promotion	Integrated marketing communications	Dialogue	Value grounded dialogue
To market	Market to	Market with	Market interaction
Product orientation	Market Orientation	Service orientation	Brand orientation

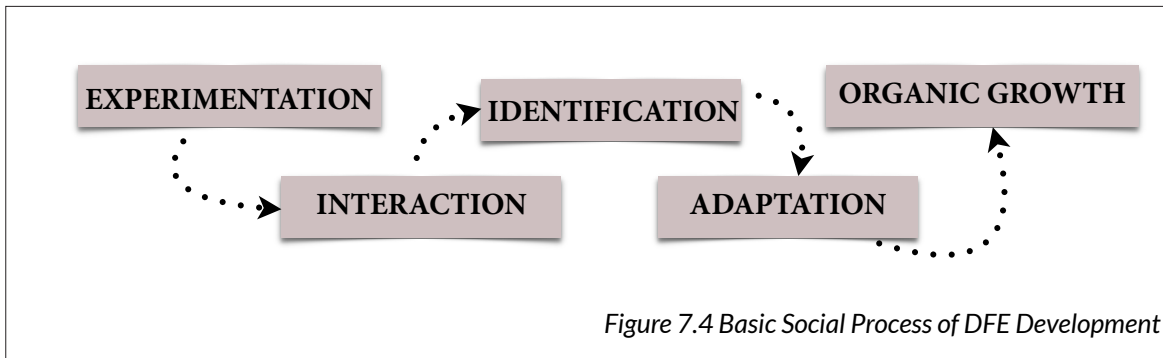


product, or the customisation of services, but the exchange of meaning in a dialogue of interaction (Urde 1999; Ind & Coates 2013).

The findings of this research show how co-creation is a process of organisational learning embedded in the capabilities of the DFE. From the perspective of the DFE, the stages of co-creation — presentation, interpretation and reaction — require reflection and planning as a result of interaction and experiences, the identification of opportunities for market alignment, and the adaptation of the firm as it reacts (positively or negatively) to how it is perceived by stakeholders. Collectively, co-creation as a function of organisational learning impacts the development of brand identity as the DFE integrates knowledge from the external market environment. It is the operational capabilities of the enterprise — designing, presenting, selling, producing and distributing the collections — that provide the DFE with co-creation experiences for organisational learning that contributes to brand identity development. The following section presents the theoretical framework derived from the core category of the collection lifecycle, combining the previously discussed elements of the basic social process into an integrated theory.

#### **7.10 DFE Dynamic Brand Development Framework**

Within the global fashion system, meaning is negotiated between the DFE and stakeholders via social interaction over time (Ligas & Cotte 1999; Hatch & Schultz 2010; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014). The collection lifecycle is the catalyst for this interaction. The *DFE Dynamic Brand Development Framework* emerged from the data through the categorisation of concepts, identifying levels of abstraction from daily practice through dynamic capabilities and organisational learning. As DFEs work through the logistics of designing, selling and producing product, the enterprises progress through an evolutionary process of development, which can be defined by periods of experimentation, interaction, identification, adaptation and organic growth (Figure 7.4). In this way, the collection lifecycle not only describes the activities of DFEs, but also emerges the basic social process (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998) and dynamic capabilities by which they develop brand identity. As a set of dynamic capabilities for brand development, the basic social process alters the firm's activities, resources and operational capabilities, influencing brand identity and internationalisation. It is this process that connects the development of the collection,

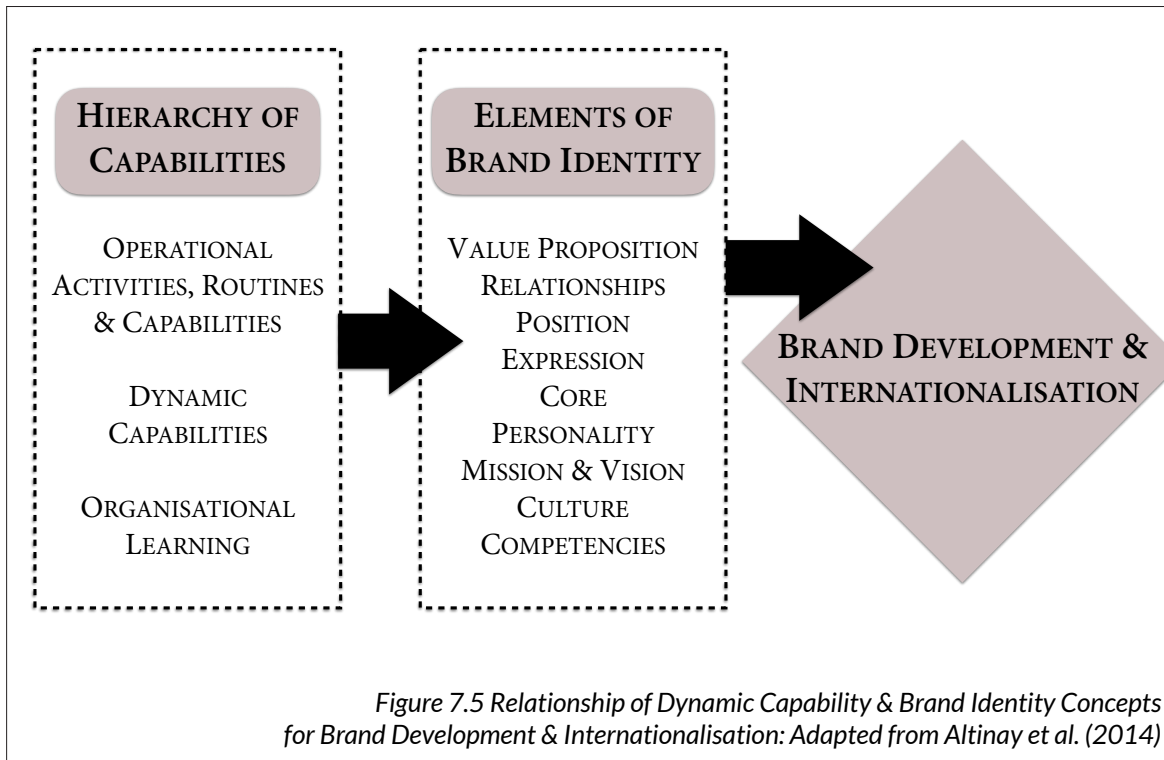


creation of brand identity and process of organisational learning, each of which impact internationalisation capabilities (Table 7.8).

The resource-based view establishes that products and resources are two concepts of the same construct, in that each have developmental paths, recognisable patterns and lifecycles that must be renewed (Wernerfelt 1984; Helfat & Peteraf 2003). This perspective supports the conceptualisation of the collection lifecycle as the core category, relating product development processes, resources and capabilities to progressive stages of evolution and renewal. The unique combination of resources derived from the product development process of creating collections within the fashion industry provides the DFE a set of routines for brand development that is a dynamic capability (Alvarez & Busenitz 2001; Lawson & Samson 2001; Mort & Weerawardena 2006; Teece 2007, 2012; Aramand & Valliere 2012). Thus, the concept of dynamic capabilities can be used to explain the continual process of DFE brand development and its impact on internationalisation (Figure 7.5).

Despite the argument that many young designers ‘disavow’ commerce in relation to the ‘art’ and creativity of their collections (Entwistle & Rocamora 2006; Rieple & Gornostaeva 2014), DFEs within this study predominately see the inherent value in the commerciality of the products through the economic sustainability of their companies and the legitimisation of their firms within the market in relation to other brands and stockists. Indeed, while designers may disconnect from the potential commerciality of a product during the initial design activities — focusing on innovation — they re-evaluate garments during the latter design activities in preparation for sales. In this way, similar to the description of the field of fashion at London Fashion Week, ‘while

Table 7.8 Relationship between the Collection, Brand Development and Organisational Learning for DFEs			
Dynamic Capability	Collection	Brand Development	Organisational Learning
<b>Experimentation</b>	Part of the design process. Trying new things. Innovation.	Discovering and defining boundaries based on codified elements from collection development: Aesthetic principles.	Launch point: experimentation in the market. Trial and error when knowledge and skills are lacking. Experiential learning. Reactive decision-making: Improvisation.
<b>Interaction</b>	Presenting the collection to personal and professional network. Participation at fashion week. Market interactions with stakeholders during day-to-day operations.	Gaining support and developing relationships: Network integration. Interpretation and reaction (rejection or acceptance) of brand meaning by others. Perception of stakeholders (brand image).	Gained learning and experience. Co-creation experiences: source of learning as well as opportunities for brand acceptance by market (validation, value creation, brand equity). Interpretation of feedback that affects design, collection, distribution, communication, etc.
<b>Identification</b>	Identifying signature elements, garments.	Positioning: Identifying unique place/gap in the market. Identifying brand adjacencies with stockists, peers/competitors, consumers, geographic regions.	Reflection & planning based on experiences and interactions. Identifying opportunities for growth, support, brand awareness.
<b>Adaptation</b>	Minor alterations based on buyer requests or geographic areas. Custom or exclusive collections for specific stockists.	Control and balance between adapting to fit with feedback and requests, and confidently standing behind what the brand stands for. Consistency and newness. Setting limitations for decision-making.	Decision-making: Making adjustments, refinement or leveraging based on reflection and planning. Alignment of management competencies: resources, capabilities, goals and objectives.
<b>Organic Growth</b>	Adding new product categories. Adding new styles or colour ways to the range plan.	Increasing brand awareness within the fashion industry and market via communication activities and touch points. Establishment of unique brand identity and position.	Development of plans to achieve personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals: Knowledge Integration. Enhanced capabilities for internationalisation: increased stockists, self-throughs, growth of annual turnover, gaining investment.



commerce is materialised distinctly from the creative process, it nevertheless is shown as complementary to it’ (Entwistle & Rocamora 2006: 739). Indeed, the ‘clear intention to make a profit and grow the venture’ is one of the elements of success for entrepreneurial DFEs (Burrows & Ussher 2011: 71-72).

Within the interviews, the development of the DFE is described by the participants as a process of ‘controlled’, ‘organic’ and ‘intuitive’ growth. The DFE works through the collection lifecycle of design, presentation, sales, production and distribution to define, validate and establish its position within the international fashion marketplace (Ashton 2006; Malem 2008; Rieple & Gander 2009). This may entail appearing larger or more stable than the actual current situation of the firm to gain trust and illustrate consistency within the industry through collaborations, investments, stockists, product categories and retail operations. During the course of interactions, buyers and editors look to each other for cues about the stability and positioning of the firm. DFEs use their market positioning and network relationships to indicate current and potential future success. Buyers, editors and other key members of the fashion system act as stakeholders capable of co-creating brand meaning with DFEs (Hatch & Schultz 2010; Frow & Payne 2011;

Kennedy & Guzmán 2016), influencing the brand development and internationalisation process.

For DFEs, brand development and internationalisation is an instinctive process of continual decision-making based upon unique configurations of resources and capabilities. The basic social process (Figure 7.6) includes experimentation to discover aesthetic principles, interaction to achieve network integration, identification of brand adjacencies, adaptation to control, and organic growth to establish the brand within the industry. This process operates during the development of individual collections and the overall evolution of the DFE. In other words, the set of dynamic capabilities DFEs use to develop brand identity is embedded in and emerges from the day-to-day operations of the collection lifecycle. Branding is something that is continuously ‘done’ in order to create a ‘master plan’ for the organisation to realise (Järventie-Thesleff et al. 2011). The dynamic capability process of experimentation, interaction, identification, adaptation and organic growth illustrates how resources and capabilities derived from the product development operations of the collection lifecycle contribute to the discovery and codification of brand identity elements.

Overall, the theoretical framework explains the corresponding steps and interconnection of three separate processes: collection lifecycle activities, dynamic brand development capabilities defining key resources, and organisational learning (Table 7.9). Each cycle spins independently of each other at the unique pace and situation of the DFE. The collection lifecycle metaphorically symbolises the overall development of the enterprise as it integrates organisational learning into decision-making processes for the reconfiguration of operational and dynamic capabilities. The collection lifecycle functions as the core category for brand development and internationalisation because

**Table 7.9 DFE Dynamic Brand Development Framework**

<b>Activity / Routine</b>	<b>Dynamic Capability Basic Social Process</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Capabilities</b>	<b>Organisational Learning</b>
Design	Experimentation	Aesthetic Principles	Improvisation
Presentation	Interaction	Network Integration	Learning & Experience
Sales	Identification	Brand Adjacencies	Reflection & Planning
Production	Adaptation	Control	Decision-making
Distribution	Organic Growth	Establishment	Knowledge Integration

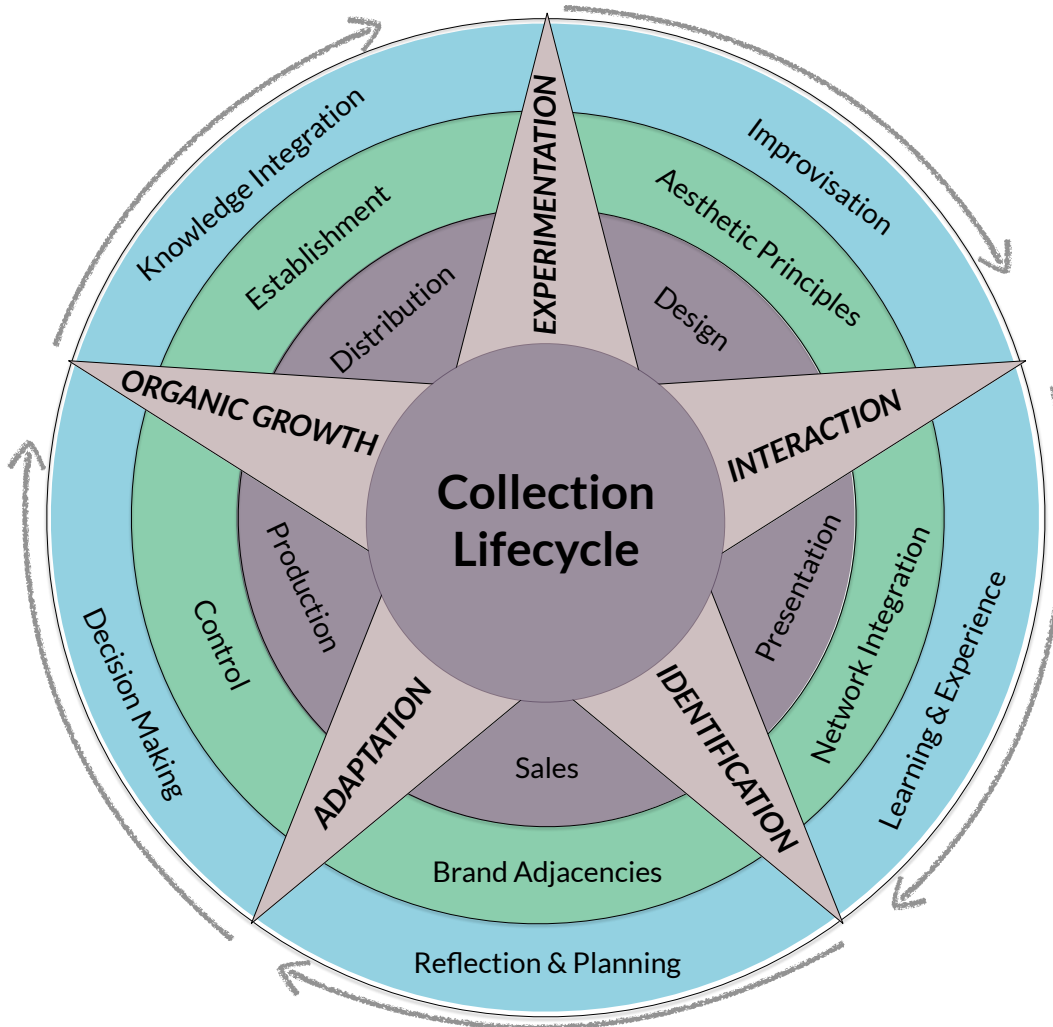


Figure 7.6 DFE Dynamic Brand Development Framework

these capabilities are embedded in and emerge from the operation of the daily routines. It is through product development — and the interaction within the fashion system that that entails — that brand identity is created. As a set of activities, the collection lifecycle is a micro process with macro influences, permeating through the company from the initial collection development to facilitate creating a brand identity. Following this, the alignment of resources and capabilities within the DFE is a mid-range process connecting the micro to the macro. At the outermost level, the overall organisational learning process of the enterprise evolves over time. It is the macro perspective that operates as third-order capabilities to impact both operational and dynamic capabilities (Collis 1994).

Pragmatically, the framework provides an accessible approach for the alignment and refinement of product development resources in connection to both the brand identity and external market opportunities. The product development process of design, presentation, sales, production, distribution is relatively understood by the DFE, even with little or no prior experience: newly founded DFEs seek to develop and distribute collections. The related decisions to each stage — discussed previously as properties and dimensions in relation to elements of brand identity (see Chapter 6: Research Analysis) — provides a framework for brand orientation in relation to the firm's resources. These are the decisions made in relation to each step within the collection lifecycle that over time develops brand identity. The resulting resources and capabilities provide an orienting goal for each stage, as the brand evolves through interactions and organisational learning: discovery of aesthetic principles, developing network relationships, identifying brand adjacencies, controlling production and brand through adaptation, and organically growing the brand to establish a position within the market. As the DFE evolves, it incorporates organisational learning for the refinement of both the collection and brand identity. The alignment of resources, operational and dynamic capabilities, and organisational learning co-creates brand meaning to establish a consumer following, a distinctive image within the industry, and international sales in relation to the firm's brand identity. This process of alignment is the implementation of brand strategy (Gromark & Melin 2011). Thus, the process of brand development holistically affects the marketing and internationalisation capabilities of the firm,

producing implications for distribution, sales, positioning, promotional activities and communication (Borden 1964; Bick et al. 2003; Rust et al. 2004).

The process of experimentation is connected to the development of the collection through innovation; developing the brand identity through an iterative 'design' process born from the designer's background and influence of place, defining the aesthetic principles of the firm. Experimentation occurs at the earliest stages of development where designers often create capsule collections and initially present them at fashion week, artistic design competitions or commercial pop-up shops. During this period, the designer is likely to be managing sales and PR in addition to other aspects of the business. This period of experimentation can last for about three to four seasons (two years) while the designer gains initial traction in the industry via engagement with their personal and professional network. Three seasons is also the point at which the enterprise can be considered to be in 'full production' where they are managing all aspects of multiple collections simultaneously (see A.24 on page 415). By the fourth season, the designer has experience with the design, presentation, sales, production and distribution of a full year's worth of product. The buyers' 'wait and see' period exists prior to the third and fourth season, a period when new designers may generate a larger percentage of their sales from private clients or a small number of boutique stockists.

It is this initial traction within the industry where co-creation begins to have an observable impact as editors and buyers provide feedback and support during interactions at fashion week or sales appointments, for example. This is correlated with the total amount of exposure a firm has within the industry, whether it happens over the period of several seasons or years, or whether it occurs within a short timeframe in the case of enterprises who launch their firms with great fanfare. Each opportunity for the DFE to present their collection is an opportunity for interaction with stakeholders and for the industry to exert its influence. The process of presentation (at fashion week) generates direct feedback during interactions, as the DFE seeks to integrate into the fashion industry network. The concept of co-creation of brand identity emerged in the research data as an opportunity for organisational learning that incorporates the influence of buyers and editors in addition to, and more directly than, consumers (Payne et al 2008; Helm & Jones 2010; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016). Co-creation begins at points



of interactions and continues with the DFE's interpretation and reaction to experiences, as the enterprise identifies opportunities and adapts the collection and brand to market influences.

In the third stage — identification — the enterprise begins to discover and reflect on the brand identity in relation to market opportunities. By this point, they have produced enough collections to begin to see common characteristics carried throughout — the 'common thread' — and the designer is often 'discovered' within the industry. PR and sales also gain momentum, allowing the DFE to utilise increased resources to re-invest in the firm and hire additional (or initial) employees. The process of identification is connected to the recognition of sales opportunities for each season's collections, formulating the sales strategy for targeting stockists. The sales process represents the identification of the DFE's position within the fashion industry, including the market positioning by defining the price-point, brand adjacencies and target consumers throughout international markets. This requires reflection and planning to position the brand within the industry based on market opportunities.

The fourth stage is a period of adaptation where the DFE makes adjustments to the branding, management, collection development and/or sales process in preparation for continual growth. The adaptation process is represented by the production process, which requires product adaptations, to some extent and as necessary, to buyers' needs. Additionally, the adaptation to market opportunities produces limitations and control for the brand as the DFE generates increasing negotiation power in the market (Vásquez et al. 2013). It is at this point that decision-making is required to develop brand strategy, which is created and implemented in the alignment of resources and capabilities for the codification of brand identity elements that guide decision-making (Gromark & Melin 2011).

The final stage is a period of organic growth as the DFE focuses on the establishment of the brand within the fashion system. The organic growth process is connected to the distribution of the collection to wholesale accounts, e-commerce and/or the DFE's own retail establishment, and the distribution of the brand via communication activities. Organic growth is realised, on an international scale, through product category expansion, increased sales and/or increased brand awareness. This is the point at which

new knowledge is integrated into product and brand development capabilities to achieve actionable objectives. It can take a period of eight to ten years for designers to achieve a point of increased financial and brand stability. By this stage, the label is ready for or has achieved formal investment for scalability, though they may choose to forgo this option in favour of their independence.

This theoretical process is not complete after the fulfilment of a single 'collection lifecycle', because the DFE continually incorporates organisational learning from participation in the fashion industry in order to evolve its operational and dynamic capabilities. The development of the organisation continues with every iteration of the collection lifecycle. The end goal for the DFE is a moving target in which the brand identity continually develops in adaptation to the global fashion industry.

The theoretical framework presents a customisable construct for growth. In reality, many DFEs fail at various points by never really aligning their resources to fit with a brand identity and sustainable market positioning, balanced with controlled adaptations as the social system of the fashion industry shifts over time. The misalignment of resources and brand identity within the fashion industry can be exhibited as a failure to develop cohesive collections, secure press or buyers, meet distribution or production deadlines, secure reliable sourcing and manufacturing, or achieve consistent sell-throughs to the end-consumer. For other DFEs, the failure to maintain alignment can be exhibited as the inability to: sustain buyers or press over time; overcome the 'emerging designer' image (and are thus replaced); sustain cashflow beyond the initial collections; grow their niche beyond their immediate market of conceptual clients, private clients, or 'fashion victims'; filter feedback in a balanced approach, neither accepting too much (exhibiting a lack of focus), nor not incorporating enough feedback (showcasing a lack of flexibility); realise a consistent profit; grow resources to increase distribution, or collection breadth and depth; seek out and/or take advantage of opportunities; and define and strive for long-term success. If the DFE goes out of business, it falls of the cycle completely. In other words, if the DFE is not actively designing, presenting, selling, producing and distributing its product, it is not in business and it is not experiencing the theoretical process of development, including the renewal of operational and dynamic capabilities as a result of organisational learning.

Therefore, not every case can be considered to be successful and many DFEs 'fall off' as their brand identity, alignment and network integration becomes haphazardly disorganised. Organic growth is unique for each individual company, as no two companies make identical decisions, perform using the same timing, or operate under the same capabilities and resources. Some move slower, some move faster, some fail and drop out, some remain stable, while others find success at various levels and experience exponential growth. Some companies move forward or backward through stages of growth, while others are able to seemingly leap, or progress rapidly, within a single season as they gain momentum. This understanding provides additional evidence that while dynamic capabilities allow the enterprise to alter its resource base, it does not guarantee success (Ambrosini et al. 2009).

For these reasons, each level of the theoretical framework spins independently in accordance with the resources available to the enterprise and its negotiation within the fashion industry. For example, as DFEs introduce more than two collections per year, the collection development wheel speeds up. Some enterprises may quickly reach alignment of resources with their brand identity as a result of the creation and use of dynamic brand capabilities, and/or they may be able to progress faster through stages of organisational learning integrating new knowledge into the existing practices and routines of the enterprise. Therefore the development of the collection, alignment of resources and process of organisational learning all rotate independently, and yet remain interdependent.

The routines of the collection lifecycle are stable and predictable patterns of behaviour and activities for generating current revenue and profit (Zollo & Winter 2002; Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Pandza & Thorpe 2009). The elements of brand identity define the operational attributes of the enterprise, such as marketing capabilities, distribution development, promotion skills, internationalisation knowledge, and relationship development, that are impacted by the dynamic capabilities of the enterprise (Luo 2000; Morgan et al. 2003; Rust et al. 2004; Zontanos & Anderson 2004; Fang & Zou 2009). It is at this level that knowledge is integrated for the creation of capabilities to enhance the routines of the enterprise for product development and distribution (Helfat & Peteraf 2003; Pandza & Thorpe 2009). Thus, the codification of brand identity elements also

serve as a process for the development of dynamic capabilities in the same manner as methods for research and development, problem-solving, knowledge-sharing, marketing knowledge development and absorptive capacity mechanisms (Easterby-Smith et al. 2009). For this reason, within the theoretical framework, dynamic capabilities are illustrated as points that span across each layer of activities and routines, capabilities and resources, and organisational learning processes. The activities and capabilities are distinguished within this framework to show how the routine of the collection lifecycle is a coordinated set of tasks that utilises organisational resources to achieve desired results (Helfat & Peteraf 2003).

In developing the theoretical framework, established theoretical perspectives from the research literature applicable to the brand development and internationalisation of DFEs were compared to the research findings. Because of its connection to both internationalisation and marketing capabilities (Moore & Fairhurst 2003; Vorhies & Morgan 2005; Sapienza et al. 2006; Yalcinkaya et al. 2007; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009; Wilden & Gudergan 2014), the concept of dynamic capabilities was used as a 'lens' to explore and explain the process of brand development of DFEs who operate within the global fashion system. For internationalisation, the network theory that spans both the born global (Bell et al. 2003) and updated Uppsala model (Johanson & Vahlne 2009) is most relevant. However, the unique internationalisation behaviour of DFEs provides further evidence for the overlap between the two perspectives that defines internationalisation as an entrepreneurial process within a network (Fan & Phan 2007; Schweizer et al. 2010). The early internationalisation behaviour of DFEs exhibits their capability for exploitation of opportunities as well as their adaptability to the external environment (Sapienza et al. 2006).

During the research interviews, it became apparent that internationalisation was a process similar to domestic distribution that occurred within the context of the global fashion system. However, there is dimensional diversity in the level of internationalisation based on the resources and capabilities of the enterprise, including brand identity. Internationalisation is a result of the dynamic capabilities of the DFE, in which brand identity is a renewable resource that is co-created within the fashion system through the basic social process. The process of brand development is a dynamic

capability. For the participants, branding begins with the designer's identity but evolves based on the learning and experience garnered through the development of collections. The development of collections is an iterative process of negotiation with stakeholders throughout the fashion system. Through the practice of developing collections, the DFE defines its positioning at the same time as identifying opportunities. It simultaneously works to define itself and 'fit' within the market.

Within brand development, a combination of both organisational models (de Chernatony 2001; Ghodeswar 2008; Urde 1994, 1999, 2003, 2013) and co-creation models (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård 2004; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2008; Atwal & Williams 2009; Hatch & Schultz 2010) are pertinent to the creation of DFE brands, whereby the co-creation process is applied, filtered and managed from the perspective of the organisation. Building on Urde's (2013) CBIM, the elements of brand identity — that create the platform for the brand strategy — are discovered, defined and aligned using dynamic capabilities and organisational learning.

The elements of brand identity define what the brand is and sets forth the boundaries within which it can change and develop (Knox & Bickerton 2003; Merrilees 2007; Urde 2013). The process of brand management encompasses the unique mix of elements that define the brand as well as the development of capabilities for its evolution (Knox & Bickerton 2003; Gromark & Melin 2011; Voyer et al. 2017). In this way, brand management includes the interaction, communication, negotiation with stakeholders to understand existing brand perceptions, and the interpretation, adaptation and reinforcement of the desired brand identity (Iglesias et al. 2013). Overall, the brand identity is not solely something that the DFE possess, but is dynamically created (Järventie-Thesleff et al. 2011; Vásquez et al. 2013). It should be adaptable and flexible to environmental changes, while maintaining a consistent and stable sense of self (Miloch et al. 2012; Silveira et al 2013; Kennedy & Guzmán 2016).

The theoretical framework explains the complex, variable and path dependent process through which business and brand development is accomplished. There are individual decisions related to each stage of the collection lifecycle, but it is the individual DFE's approach, beginning with the designer-founder (Altinay & Wang 2011), that creates a unique and established brand. The theoretical framework provides a structure

for organisational learning, and the creation and refinement of capabilities connected to the day-to-day activities of the enterprise; it is not prescriptive of any one set of decisions among the myriad of options available to DFEs. Instead, it is the alignment of decisions between the designer-founder, goals and environment (industry, network and market opportunities) that establishes the brand. This framework illustrates a path for DFEs, as entrepreneurial companies, to transition from the initial emergence in the market to professional management, sharpening the formation of business models (Zahra & Filatotchev 2004; Merrilees 2007). The following section concludes this chapter, providing an evaluation of the integration and verification of the core category. It also presents an overview of the implications derived from the research findings and analysis.

### 7.11 Conclusion

As the core category and basis for the theoretical framework, the collection lifecycle provides a grounded connection between the day-to-day descriptive activities of DFEs and their relational, developmental path within the fashion system. The daily activities feed into the organisational learning of individuals within the firm, which serves to create and refine operational and dynamic capabilities for brand development and internationalisation. The progression through this cyclical process can be conceptualised using the collection lifecycle as a metaphor for the theoretical process of experimentation, interaction, identification, adaptation and organic growth, which assisted in the development of eight propositions (Table 7.10) and defined relationships between concepts (Table 7.11) (Bacharach 1989). This chapter discussed the findings, analysis and theoretical understandings derived from this research in relation to existing literature.

The theoretical framework presented in this thesis illustrates the creation and development of entrepreneurial DFEs operating in the creative industry of the global fashion system. The creation of this model provides new theoretical insights about the development of entrepreneurial brands in the course of internationalisation. Through the activities, resources and capabilities, and process of organisational learning it explains the basic social process of how London and New York DFEs create their brands and grow. Organising the theoretical development of the DFE around the collection lifecycle provides a relatable structure to understand the successful progression of an enterprise

<b>Table 7.10 Research Propositions</b>	
<b>Proposition 1</b>	The internal development of brand identity is designed through an experimentation process to discover aesthetic principles.
<b>Proposition 2</b>	Presentation of the collection generates interactions with the brand to facilitate network integration.
<b>Proposition 3</b>	Sales and growth opportunities are created through the identification of brand adjacencies, positioning the DFE within the international fashion market.
<b>Proposition 4</b>	The brand is produced through the adaptation of the DFE in an effort to control how it is received by the network, industry and market.
<b>Proposition 5</b>	The establishment of the brand is achieved via the organic growth of the DFE. Success is measured by the creative ascendancy of the brand.
<b>Proposition 6</b>	Brand development is a dynamic capability that impacts the operational capabilities and resources. Internationalisation capabilities are enhanced when there is alignment of brand identity elements.
<b>Proposition 7</b>	Organisational learning occurs through a process of improvisation, gained learning and experience, reflection and planning, decision-making and knowledge integration.
<b>Proposition 8</b>	From the perspective of the DFE, co-creation is a process of presentation of ideas, interpretation of interaction experiences and positive or negative reaction to externally created brand meaning.

operating in the global fashion industry. As a core category, the collection lifecycle is a generalised conceptual model that is central to the daily practice of the research participants (Glaser 1978; Corbin & Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin 1998; Douglas 2003; Miles et al. 2014). It reflects the structure of the fashion industry in developing, producing and selling collections globally through the creation and use of operational and dynamic capabilities. Because of its connection to dynamic capabilities, the basic social process represented in this thesis by the collection lifecycle maintains room for growth into other substantive areas working towards a grounded grand theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). While the collection lifecycle within this study is intimately related to the development of fashion collections, it could also be thought of as an ‘innovation lifecycle’ that explains the development and distribution of brands in other industries, particularly in the creative fields, in an entrepreneurial environment and on an international scale. As the core category, the collection lifecycle is defined by its sub-categories, properties and dimensions. Each of these elements were researched until reaching a point of theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Furthermore, using the analysis method outlined by Corley and Gioia (2004) and Altinay et al. (2014), the emerged concepts from the data were conceptualised in relation to a hierarchy of

**Table 7.11 Relationship of Concepts to Research Propositions**

	<b>Proposition</b>	<b>Collection Lifecycle Stage</b>	<b>Related Brand Identity Element</b>	<b>Dynamic Capability</b>	<b>Impacted Capabilities &amp; Resources</b>
<b>1</b>	The internal development of brand identity is designed through an experimentation process to discover aesthetic principles.	Design	Core Value Proposition: Collection Development Personality: Designer Background & Influence of Place Culture: Behaviour & Attributes	Experimentation	Aesthetic Principles
<b>2</b>	Presentation of the collection generates interactions with the brand to facilitate network integration.	Presentation	Relationships: Fashion System, Support Programs, Consumers & Stakeholders, Personal & Professional Network	Interaction	Network Integration
<b>3</b>	Sales and growth opportunities are created through the identification of brand adjacencies, positioning the DFE within the international fashion market.	Sales	Position: Market Positioning (Sales Strategy, Targeting Stockists, Consumers, Price-points)	Identification	Brand Adjacencies
<b>4</b>	The brand is produced through the adaptation of the DFE in an effort to control how it is received by the network, industry and market.	Production	Competencies: Management, In-house & Out-sourced Resources, Investment & Finance	Adaptation	Control
<b>5</b>	The establishment of the brand is achieved via the organic growth of the DFE. Success is measured by the creative ascendancy of the brand.	Distribution	Position: Internationalisation Mission & Vision: Goals Expression: Communication	Organic Growth	Establishment



**Table 7.11 Relationship of Concepts to Research Propositions**

	<b>Proposition</b>	<b>Theoretical Concept</b>	<b>Action / Interaction / Process</b>	<b>Impacted Concept</b>
<b>6</b>	Brand development is a dynamic capability that impacts the operational capabilities and resources. Internationalisation capabilities are enhanced when there is alignment of brand identity elements.	Brand Identity Creation	Dynamic Capability Process: experimentation, interaction, identification, adaptation & organic growth.	Codification, refinement & alignment of CBIM elements. Internationalisation capabilities.
<b>7</b>	Organisational learning occurs through a process of improvisation, gained learning and experience, reflection and planning, decision-making and knowledge integration.	Organisational Learning	Occurs throughout stages of the collection lifecycle (activities and routines) and during new experiences.	Creation & enhancement of operational & dynamic capabilities.
<b>8</b>	From the perspective of the DFE, co-creation is a process of presentation of ideas, interpretation of interaction experiences, and positive or negative reaction to externally created brand meaning.	Co-creation	Presentation of the collection and interaction of the DFE in the external environment (co-creation experiences), interpretation of stakeholders' feedback (encouragement, demands, requests, observations, recommendations, support and assistance, promotion, usage, sales data, etc.), followed by DFE reaction (positive or negative).	Function of and opportunity for organisational learning. Impacts brand identity creation, specifically network integration, identification of brand adjacencies, and adaptation and control of the brand within the external environment.

capabilities (operational and dynamic capabilities, as well as organisational learning) (Ambrosini et al. 2009) and Urde's (2013) elements of brand identity.

Within the design process of the firm, specific decisions are made which influence and define the aesthetic principles of a brand. The brand identity is designed throughout the process of product development, and is path dependent on several factors, including the background of the designer, influence of place and collection development. The analysis illustrates that entrepreneurial DFE brand development is a dynamic capability process beginning with experimentation based on the designer-founder's background, personal identity and the design of collections. Each collection is brought forth through design experimentation, presentation and interaction that generates feedback (co-creation experiences) leading to the identification of opportunities. How the DFE interacts with the fashion industry influences their capacity for network integration during the presentation stage.

Through a continual process of co-meaning creation (Frow et al. 2011) with the fashion industry, the DFE generates a dialogue surrounding the brand, identified through interaction as brand adjacencies, assisting in the refinement of brand identity as the enterprise gains experience. The sales process requires the DFE to clearly articulate positioning within the global fashion marketplace, discussed through a common dialogue of brand adjacencies. Within the social context of the fashion system, the brand is co-created through interaction with buyers, editors and consumers (Kennedy & Guzmán 2016), in an environment where the DFE maintains power in interpreting and incorporating positive and negative feedback about the label, collections and products. Interactions within the industry and market result in the production and adaptation of the collection for stockists' requirements and requests. Production of the brand, both in terms of product and brand strategy, requires the DFE to recognise and enact their power to control through decision-making in response to market feedback. Distribution is the point at which the DFE realises organic growth through international sales and brand awareness, establishing the brand in the industry, and creating experience, consistency, longevity and heritage. The distribution of product and brand generates industry validation, alignment of resources and renewal of capabilities through organisational learning and knowledge integration.

As the core category, the collection lifecycle is a way of conceptualising the process of brand development as a whole. The brand is the outcome of the relationships between a DFE and its stakeholders, constructed through the collective and continuous development of collections that define the business model and enable internationalisation. The process of experimentation, interaction, identification, adaptation and organic growth begins at the collection level, which propels the DFE up through levels of theoretical abstraction, aligning resources and capabilities with the integration of new knowledge. The collection lifecycle as the basis for the theoretical framework and basic social process is the bridge between the seasonal development of the collection and the overall development of the DFE. The capabilities discussed at each stage of the collection lifecycle do not work in isolation; they are all intertwined with each other.

As a function of organisational learning, co-creation is observable throughout interactions during presentation, sales, production and distribution. Furthermore, the interpretation of co-creation experiences correlates with reflection and planning and the identification of market opportunities. This leads to decision-making, or the DFE's positive or negative reaction to co-creation experiences in the adaptation and control of the brand throughout distribution and communication activities. The control, exhibited by the limitations the DFE places on decision-making in relation to brand identity, is connected to organic growth that sustains the brand in alignment with firm resources and capabilities.

However, it is the dynamic capabilities that allow the DFE to also adapt its brand identity to the external market demands of the international fashion system. In this way, the dynamic capabilities that facilitate brand development codify the brand identity elements and impact internationalisation. At the same time, identifiable market opportunities and interactions as a result of internationalisation behaviour are a source of organisational learning that feed back into the brand development process. This reciprocal process simultaneously allows the entrepreneurial DFE to codify brand identity elements, setting limitations for decision-making (aesthetic principles), while also flexibly adapting the brand to align with international market opportunities (brand adjacencies).

The basic social process and the core category of the collection lifecycle provides the framework for the connections between brand development and internationalisation of the DFE. It is through the brand development process in connection with the collection lifecycle, that the DFE *designs* their brand identity in relation to international market opportunities. For DFEs, authenticity is produced (Gander 2011), and thus there is no point of origin for the brand; it is co-created between designer(s), buyers, editors and other stakeholders through a dialogical process that encourages the definition and identification of aesthetic principles and brand adjacencies through interaction.

The brand is a resource for the firm that is discovered, identified and adapted through interaction within the hyper-competitive and dynamic environment of the global fashion system. Through practice, DFEs develop capabilities to adapt to that system. Thus, the continual and organic development of the brand is a dynamic capability process. The ability to align the unique resources surrounding the brand identity in relation to the fashion industry is a dynamic capability because it allows a DFE to make opportunity-oriented, timely decisions altering capabilities in preparation for future growth (Barreto 2010). The alignment of the elements of brand identity help the DFE to internationalise. In this sense, the brand permeates all aspects of decision-making (Gromark & Melin 2011). The connection of the brand development process to internationalisation indicates how the brand serves as a guide for global distribution. The aesthetic principles provide the foundation for the brand identity, which serves as a guide for internationalisation and highlights the overlap between born global, network theories and the Uppsala Model (Bell et al. 2003; Johanson & Vahlne 2009; Cavusgil & Knight 2015).

Overall, the decisions related to brand development and internationalisation follow a continual process of organisational learning, whereby during new experiences the DFE improvises, making 'ad hoc' reactive decisions. However, this produces learning and experience, followed by reflection and planning, decision-making and knowledge integration for future similar experiences. This is a process of knowledge creation that DFEs can use as a resource for daily practices. Furthermore, the understanding derived from the intersection of brand development and internationalisation highlights the

unique approach of DFEs to the concept of competitive advantage whereby they are more characteristically pursuing a concept of *creative ascendancy*.

Co-creation and competitive advantage are two evaluative measures that are recommended as projective tools to formulate a business model and/or product development innovations (Vargo & Lusch 2004; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Lusch & Vargo 2006; Merz & Vargo 2009; Grönroos 2008, 2011; Grönroos & Voima 2011). However, in practice this does not work because it is not the method by which DFEs create successful companies. In the case of co-creation, following a technique in which the firm is completely reactive to the consumer and/or competitors limits innovation. It is not that competitive advantage and service-dominant logic of marketing (co-creation) do not offer valuable theoretical interpretations. Indeed, the elements of these theoretical concepts are crucial to understanding the successful development of companies operating within industry in retrospect. Competitive advantage and co-creation each emphasise elements — competitors and consumers — which are nearly impossible to accurately focus on during the initial and entrepreneurial development of the firm's product offering. Core competencies exist from the initial design of the collections, prior to accurate competitor or consumer understanding. From this initial starting position, the full platform of brand identity elements are discovered, identified and refined through the interaction within the industry. Co-creation is a source of organisational learning through interactions with industry stakeholders, including peers/competitors. Because of this understanding, there is much to be considered regarding the concept of competitive advantage. For an entrepreneurial DFE operating in the global fashion industry, it is not about 'beating out' competitors, capturing consumers, seducing them into a market oriented relationship of co-creation or achieving sales at the expense of others, but about achieving the ultimate potential of the firm within the market in alignment with the brand. The goal is not market share but organic growth.

Indeed, profitability is not driven by market share (Reddy et al. 2009); now, and increasingly in the future, profitability will occur within a diversity of business models. Additionally, not every DFE should be a global lifestyle brand: there is innovation to be developed in designing new approaches to integration into the fashion system or disrupting the system altogether. This research points to significant cases whereby,

**Table 7.12 New Theoretical Understandings**

<b>Brand Identity</b>	Elements of brand identity are discovered, codified and refined over time; they are embedded in the routines of the collection lifecycle. The core of the DFE's brand identity is the AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES.
<b>Internationalisation</b>	The brand is a guide for internationalisation decision-making via alignment of brand identity elements with the market environment. DFEs distribute to various stockists based on successful network integration as well as BRAND ADJACENCIES.
<b>Born Global</b>	Internationalisation of DFEs doesn't fit any previously identified model based on comparison of motivations, objectives, expansion patterns, pace, distribution methods, internationalisation strategies and financing (see Bell et al. 2003).
<b>Dynamic Capabilities</b>	Brand development is a dynamic capability. The basic social process of experimentation, interaction, identification, adaptation and organic growth emerges from the operational capabilities and influences the definition and refinement of brand identity elements.
<b>Organisational Learning</b>	While progressing through the activities of the collection lifecycle, DFEs undergo a process of organisational learning – improvisation, learning and experience, reflection and planning, decision-making and knowledge integration – that facilitates the creation of dynamic capabilities and the co-creation of the brand.
<b>Co-creation</b>	From the perspective of the DFE, co-creation experiences (interactions) are opportunities for organisational learning that require the firm's interpretation and (positive or negative) reaction. This influences the creation of brand identity as the DFE seeks to align the brand with externally created brand meaning and value.
<b>Competitive Advantage</b>	CREATIVE ASCENDENCY: DFEs are validated within the industry by their peers (brand adjacencies) and where they sit on the shop floor. Their success is measured by organic growth and the achievement of their unique personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals, not market share.

success is measured not by the size of the firm but by its stability and establishment within the industry. Most importantly, success is measured by the firm's ability to achieve its own goals, not in relation to competitors or merely consumer acquisition.

The insights presented in this chapter provide the foundation for the contributions to this study which establishes new understanding in relation to the creation of brand identity, the co-creation process of interaction, the concept of competitive advantage reconfigured as creative ascendancy, the internationalisation process of DFEs in relation to brand development, and the internationalisation model of DFEs within the global fashion system (Table 7.12). The following chapter will draw the final conclusions of the thesis including its contribution to knowledge, recommendations for future research and limitations of the study.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### 8.1 Chapter Overview

This research aimed to examine the brand development and internationalisation of entrepreneurial womenswear designer fashion enterprises (DFEs) based in London and New York. This chapter connects the research findings to implications for existing theory and practice, delineating a clear contribution to knowledge. Also, this chapter presents future considerations for research, followed by the limitations of the research study. It concludes with a brief summary of final outcomes. Supported by the theoretical and contemporary basis for this research, this chapter pulls together the final conclusions, highlighting the defining elements of DFEs that assists in the establishment of their brands within their base cities, domestic markets and across international borders. Significantly, this chapter considers the contribution of this research to existing understandings of brand development and internationalisation through the use of dynamic capabilities in examining entrepreneurial DFEs.

Utilising grounded theory's methods, including constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling and co-current data collection, generation and analysis, this thesis produces findings grounded in data that expands existing knowledge of the fashion brand development process (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Semi-structured in-depth interviews, observation at New York, London and Paris fashion weeks, and analysis of websites, social media and press were utilised. Due to the nature of the fashion industry schedule, data gathering was divided into four phases, which immediately

followed the presentation of designer collections at fashion week. This worked to improve the potential of including as many participants as possible by connecting with designers and their representatives before they were involved in the creation of the next season's collections. Sources of data were chosen using a process of theoretical sensitivity to follow leads as they emerged within the research, working to a point of theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

The participants of the study were purposively chosen from a collection of womenswear DFEs launched between 2005 and 2014 with studios based in London or New York. The ten year age range of the firm indicates the entrepreneurial birth of the brand and provided for a range of diversity of firms along the developmental process towards business maturity and economic sustainability. This is supported by previous research which determined that DFEs require an average of eight years to reach maturity and establish within the industry (Karra 2008). A database of womenswear designers was created using websites relating to both London and New York fashion weeks, and the BFC's and CFDA's Vogue Fashion Funds. This database was used for the recruitment of participants and online data gathering in Phase IV. Due to the diverse nature of the businesses, while all the participants were required to produce a womenswear collection, many also produced products in other categories including menswear and accessories, among others. The participants also produced among a range of price-points including contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry-designer and designer luxury, often innovating within or defining new niche segmentations. The brands distributed their products via one or more wholesale (department store, speciality boutique, online) or retail (flagship, e-commerce, private clients) channels.

The first phase served as a pilot and investigated the broad aspects of the research topic using four semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore and discover the initial concepts and categories. The analysis of this fed into Phase II, which was integral to discovering the bulk of codes and categories that would ultimately define the core category for theoretical development. Following this, interviews, activities and a qualitative survey in Phase III collectively worked to verify and refine the previous data analysis and findings. By the conclusion of the interview portions of the research, 38 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 DFEs and four support



organisations. Nine designer fashion firms and two support organisations (sales and PR agencies) were based in New York, and 11 designer fashion firms and two support organisations were based in London. The categories, properties and dimensions defined from the data analysis assisted in the initial creation of a theoretical framework from which to understand the brand development and internationalisation capabilities of DFEs operating within the global fashion system. As an accompaniment, the fourth phase helped to generalise and verify the findings using a larger sample of DFEs. The data gathered in this phase used readily available information online for 149 brands, including websites, social media and press articles in a systematic manner to examine and measure specific properties and dimensions of the theoretical framework.

Collectively, the concepts derived from each of the four phases of data gathering were conceptualised using dynamic capabilities as the 'lens' by which to understand the brand development and internationalisation processes of entrepreneurial DFEs. To this end, the resources and capabilities originating from the stages of the collection lifecycle were analysed in relation to elements of brand identity to understand how the process of brand development emerges from and is embedded in the firm's operational activities. In this effort, the analysis of the concepts utilised the method outlined by Corley and Gioia (2004) and Altinay et al. (2014), delineating the categories into first-order concepts, second-order themes and third-order aggregate dimensions. This process refined the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the research categories, properties and dimensions in comparison to understandings obtained from the literature in relation to dynamic capabilities, brand development and co-creation, and internationalisation in the fashion industry.

All of these research activities functioned to achieve the aim and objectives of this research (Table 8.1). Through the examination of internationalisation and brand development, this thesis sought to understand how entrepreneurial DFEs define success in global markets, identifying immediate and long term goals; create and define their brand identity within the firm; translate their brand identity into brand messaging; utilise communication activities to convey their brand vision; and develop brand capabilities for growth. In addressing these objectives, this thesis explains how DFE brand identity is developed internally within the organisation, as well as externally through co-creation

**Table 8.1 Summary Response to Aim & Objectives**

<b>Aim</b>	Identify the resources and capabilities of SME womenswear design firms with studios based in London and New York founded between 2005 and 2014, and their effect on brand development and internationalisation.	DFE Brand development is a dynamic capability that as a basic social process is embedded in the operational activities of the collection lifecycle. The brand guides and enhances internationalisation capabilities.
<b>Objective 1</b>	Define success in global markets, identifying immediate and long-term goals.	Goals can be categorised as personal, operational, objective and ultimate. DFEs are seeking the establishment of the brand within the industry & market, measured by creative ascendancy.
<b>Objective 2</b>	Create and define their brand identity.	Brand identity is created and defined both internally and externally, emerging from operational capabilities. Aesthetic principles and brand adjacencies are discovered and identified through interaction and network integration.
<b>Objective 3</b>	Translate their brand identity into brand messaging.	Brand messaging is created via a dialogue of interaction within the fashion system in relation to brand adjacencies and in alignment with the elements of brand identity.
<b>Objective 4</b>	Utilise communication activities to convey their brand vision.	Communication activities function as a distribution activity for the brand to encourage sell-throughs, target stockists and editors, and increase brand awareness. Messaging within communication is a result of the alignment between brand elements and the ultimate goal (vision) in relation to identified market opportunities.
<b>Objective 5</b>	Develop brand capabilities for growth.	Organisational learning and co-creation experiences enhance dynamic brand development capabilities for the continual alignment of the brand identity with the external market environment on a global scale. Organisational learning is a process of improvisation, learning and experience, reflection and planning, decision-making and knowledge integration.

experiences as a result of the creation and refinement of resources and capabilities that codify elements of brand identity. Furthermore, this research identifies the characteristics of DFE internationalisation behaviour as encompassing attributes from both born global and stage (Uppsala) models, in which networking capabilities are central to the successful sales and distribution of the brand throughout the global fashion system. Finally, this research explores how the processes of brand development and internationalisation are related to each other and embedded in the capabilities of the DFE by relating the

operational product development process of the collection lifecycle to the dynamic creation of brand identity, which guides internationalisation.

The research findings illustrate how the DFE defines success as the establishment of the brand, through organic growth via increasing brand awareness, sell-throughs and product categories in relation to personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals to achieve creative ascendancy. The brand identity of the DFE is created both internally, through product development innovation, and externally as a result of co-creation experiences that provide the company with organisational learning as it interacts with stakeholders (Urde 2013). The basic social process of experimentation, interaction, identification, adaptation and organic growth defines the dynamic capability of brand development, which codifies and refines elements of brand identity in relation to an international market environment. As the DFE interacts, it generates a dialogue surrounding the brand to develop and refine messaging in accordance with negotiated meanings. To convey brand messaging in alignment with their vision, the DFE utilises communication activities for the distribution of the brand to encourage sell-throughs, target buyers and editors, and increase brand awareness. The process of producing collections and participating within the fashion industry facilitates an organisational learning process of improvisation, gained learning and experience, reflection and planning, decision-making and knowledge integration for the enhancement and adaptation of the DFE's operational and dynamic capabilities. Collectively, these objectives reach the aim of the research by identifying the resources and capabilities, defined in the terms of the participants, and their relationship to and impact on brand development and internationalisation. Most significantly, because the brand is a guide for internationalisation, all elements relating to the collection development activities — design, presentation, sales, production and distribution decisions — must be in alignment with the elements of brand identity emanating from the core values that define the DFE's aesthetic principles. The achievement of the aim and objectives provides a starting point for understanding the contribution to knowledge provided by this research, which is discussed in the following section.

## 8.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis contributes to knowledge about the brand development and international growth of entrepreneurial DFEs. Through a grounded theory methodological approach, this thesis explores the basic social process by which entrepreneurial DFEs create and develop their brand identity, connecting that process to the progression of the firm through distinct stages of product development, and its relation to internationalisation. Answering calls for research, this thesis advances theory regarding how dynamic capabilities are created, as well as their role in SME development in relation to brand management and internationalisation (see Ambrosini & Bowman 2009; Easterby-Smith et al. 2009; Newey & Zahra 2009; Cavusgil & Knight 2015). This research provides a unique contribution in several areas.

Prior to this study, there existed a lack of research in relation to DFEs, brand management and internationalisation within the literature. Previous research on the fashion industry has predominately focused on the retail environment, ignoring the SMEs who operate as entrepreneurial firms at the pinnacle of the fashion industry. The research findings and analysis begin with a descriptive analysis of the product development process of the collection lifecycle. Following this, the resource and capabilities related to that process were analysed in relation to elements of brand identity to understand how brand development is emergent from and embedded in the operational capabilities of the DFE. In doing so, this research extends this understanding beyond the descriptive analysis of these enterprises, presenting a theoretical framework to understand the relationships between variables.

Through the development of a theoretical framework and a series of eight propositions about the development of product and brand, this thesis provides an explanation about the relationship between resources, operational and dynamic capabilities, and organisational learning. The theoretical framework illustrates the relationship between the operational activities, dynamic capabilities and organisational learning processes DFEs undergo in the course of brand development and internationalisation within the fashion system. By relating the elements of brand identity to the operational capabilities of the enterprise, the theoretical framework explains how brand development is a dynamic capability that can alter, enhance and leverage

the firm's resource base in an international market. Furthermore, the understanding derived from this research explains how as a dynamic capability, brand development impacts internationalisation by delineating the boundaries of the brand identity. Reciprocally, internationalisation is an opportunity for organisational learning about the external environment that affects brand identity through the firm's adaptation to market opportunities. Finally, as a function of organisational learning, the concept of co-creation emerged from the data as a way to explain external influences on the development of brand identity as the DFE presents, interprets and reacts to interactions with stakeholders.

The framework's properties and dimensions offer avenues for the custom alignment of an individual DFE's resources and capabilities as they react, respond and innovate within the 'new world order' of the fashion industry (Amed 2016a; CFDA 2016). This framework can be used to explain the entrepreneurial development of DFEs, connecting divergent areas of research such as branding and internationalisation.

The theoretical framework presented in this thesis is verifiable because it is an abstract rendition of the data relating the concepts that were generated during analysis from incidents of action and interaction (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Birks & Mills 2011; Miles et al. 2014). It is therefore reasonably generalisable to a larger population of DFEs, particularly within London and New York. The development of the theoretical framework was continuously refined throughout analysis to ensure that it was representative of each case within the study (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Additionally, through the properties and dimensions of each of the sub-categories, the theoretical framework maintains clearly illustratable variation to accommodate the specific situation and circumstances of individuals (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Corbin & Strauss 1990).

In addition to the properties and dimensions presented in the research findings, this is exhibited in the discussion of the comparative analysis between London and New York. The theoretical framework presented in this thesis can be used to evaluate the success of firms, assist firms seeking further development, and provide guidance for firms yet to be launched. Within the industry, this theoretical framework can be used as a guide for new DFEs and entrepreneurial firms currently in existence. Finally, it can also be used as an evaluative model to assess the successful progression and growth of entrepreneurial

firms in relation to the designer-founder's personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals, by categorising the alignment of specific resources and capabilities represented by the individual properties and dimensions. Therefore, the theoretical framework presented in this thesis is applicable in both an academic and practice-based setting.

In relation to this, the theoretical concepts presented in this thesis connect areas of research — brand development and internationalisation — which were previously connected only to a limited degree in the literature. This thesis argues that through common variables, such as the fashion industry network, dynamic capabilities and co-creation of value, that the brand is a guide for the internationalisation and growth of the DFE. Furthermore, this research extends current understanding about these areas of research. In relation to co-creation, this research focuses on the DFE's reaction to co-creation experiences *in practice*. This means that, while value is co-created through network interaction, the defining elements of brand identity begin and end with the firm who introduces them through the development of each collection and discovers them in the practice of interaction and communication with stakeholders within the fashion industry. The co-creation of brand identity is observable within this research through the DFE's interpretation of and reaction to positive or negative interaction experiences that produce organisational learning about the external market environment. As the DFE gains learning and experience, the integration of knowledge facilitates the adaptation and control of the brand, and thus co-meaning creation in a dialogue of interaction between the DFE and its stakeholders.

As such, marketing recommendations in relation to service-dominant logic which argue for the focus on researching and identifying a target consumer group, developing a relationship and dialogue with that group in order to learn about and continuously develop products, services and experiences which fulfil their needs, does not accurately explain the full nature of interactions of entrepreneurial DFEs in their networks, the industry and market. In short, the success of these firms is not solely dependent on the identification of a consumer group and the fulfilment of their needs, nor is it their only goal. While the existing understanding of service-dominant logic extends knowledge about the dynamics of marketing, it still falls short of making marketing practices 'humanistic' (Vargo & Lusch 2012). In contrast, this research extends this

understanding further by recognising the value and meaning creation (as a result of brand identity definition and discovery of aesthetic principles) that correlate with the DFE's presentation, interpretation and reaction to marketplace interaction. Through the recognition of both parties' contribution to the 'relationship', understanding about co-creation is extended to include the actual practice of how entrepreneurial enterprises develop products and learn about their customers, consumers and stakeholders through interaction, discovering aesthetic principles and identifying brand adjacencies which create the brand identity and guide decision-making, including those decisions related to internationalisation. Thus, the feedback co-creation experiences provide — encouragement, demands, requests, observations, recommendations, acceptance, support and assistance, promotion, usage and sales data — is filtered by the enterprise who continually uses the brand's identity — developed out of the products: the collection — to guide future interactions, network integration and the establishment of the brand. This thesis explains the process by which co-creation experiences generate organisational learning and how the resulting new knowledge is integrated to alter the DFE's resources, operational and dynamic capabilities.

In relation to internationalisation specifically, this research extends understanding of the process in a globally networked, competitive and collaborative industry. The literature previously identified two primary types of international firms: traditional and born global (Bell et al. 2003; Cavusgil & Knight 2015). However, DFEs do not singularly fit the parameters of these categories. Thus, the entrepreneurial firms in operation within the fashion industry today have defined their own path of internationalisation through the industry's globally connected network. This research extends understanding of internationalisation to incorporate the unique development paths of these firms, providing further evidence of the connections between stage and born global models (Johanson & Vahlne 2009). In addition to this, through the centrality of knowledge development within the firm via learning and experience within the industry network, this research connects understanding of brand development and internationalisation. Specifically, the theory presented here illustrates how brand development is a dynamic capability that produces brand identity used to guide internationalisation.

Lastly, in relation to new theoretical concepts presented, this research provides insight about the understanding of competitive advantage. Much of the management literature defines the success of the firm in relation to competitive advantage. This means that success within the academic literature is defined by the advantage one firm has in comparison to others operating in the industry. However, the concept of competitive advantage failed to emerge during the course of data collection and analysis. While concepts connected to the idea of competitive advantage are clearly identified in the data, DFEs envision their success differently. As such, when interacting within the industry, DFEs are more likely to draw comparisons to peer firms — brand adjacencies — to validate their positioning within the market and share a common dialogue about the placement of their products in relation to others. This insight requires the understanding of success and the concept of competitive advantage to be re-interpreted and understood differently, as the concept of *creative ascendancy*. While these enterprises do indeed compete with other firms, they are also indirectly and/or directly supported by their peers. More importantly, these firms define their own success in relation to the achievement of the personal, objective, operational and ultimate goals of the firm and its designer-founder(s). This provides an entry-point for the re-examination of the concept of competitive advantage in future research studies.

In summary, this thesis presents an original contribution to knowledge by extending existing understanding within the fields of brand management, internationalisation and fashion business research. Through the development of eight propositions, it presents an original theoretical framework about the resources and capabilities for brand development within an international context, relating the creation of collections to brand identity.

### **8.3 Limitations of the Research**

The aim of this research was to identify resources and capabilities of DFEs in the course of brand development and internationalisation. However, there are several limitations.

The operation of entrepreneurial SMEs in the fashion industry is the focus of this study. While the fashion industry is often compared to other creative industries, the applicability of the theory developed here to other industries is yet to be compared and



tested. As such, there is a limitation to the generalisability of the theory presented in this thesis to SMEs in other industries. However, it is arguable that, with future research, these connections can be made.

Additionally, this thesis primarily focused on entrepreneurial DFEs, their support network of public relation agents and sales agents, and their management level employees. While this research identified the importance of buyers and editors to the successful integration of DFEs in the fashion system, it did not include these individuals as interview participants because the focus of this study originated from the DFE outwards into the industry. Therefore, understanding about the buyer and/or editor relationship with these firms presented in this research is one-sided and from the perspective of the DFE. The research can be enhanced and extended in the future by including these groups.

This research collected data using semi-structured in-depth interviews, observation at fashion weeks and analysis of publicly available websites, press and social media. The information gathered is limited by the access of the researcher to the particular set of enterprises who volunteered to participate in the study. While this research incorporates a diverse set of DFE participants, the data and findings are limited to those enterprises who had availability to participate in interviews and by the information they chose to share during the discussions. Along with this, the research from New York participants was skewed to those who were slightly more established in the industry in comparison to the London based participants who tended to be slightly younger companies. Additionally, the data gathering and analysis in the fourth phase of research is limited to properties and dimensions within the framework in which information was publicly available. Given the intimate aspects of brand development and internationalisation to the internal operation of DFEs, it is impossible to explore every category, property and dimension of the framework using only publicly available information.

Furthermore, the difference in cultural dynamics of the two cities under investigation makes it impossible to achieve a truly equitable balance in the comparison between London and New York. During the course of study, the researcher was based in London which provided greater opportunity to access local designers. In contrast, several week-long trips were utilised to gather data with the New York participants. However, the

London designers proved less likely to respond to interview requests despite the larger potential sample set from this location. In comparison, New York based designers were far more likely to respond and volunteer their participation in the project. Similarly, the unique characteristics of New York and London potentially limit the generalisability for DFEs in other cities, especially those located outside fashion capitals.

Finally, while hypothetical comparisons could be drawn between the SME organisation and that of larger, established firms, the focus of this research is situated in the theoretical development of a framework of micro and SMEs. Drawing comparisons may be helpful in the future, but doing so is beyond the scope of this project. Therefore, the analysis of this work is limited by the focus on SMEs only, and the generalisability in comparison to larger firms is limited.

#### **8.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to the limited research into the business management and development of entrepreneurial DFEs operating within the global fashion system, this research presents an initial theoretical framework which can be used as a guide in the development of future research within the field.

There are multiple avenues of expansion of the research presented here, including the extension and verification of the theoretical framework presented in this thesis through a comparison study of DFEs based in other locations, including non-fashion and/or non-western capitals. This would help to understand the influence of the fashion network and system as a resource to DFEs within the entrepreneurially oriented fashion cities of London and New York in comparison to other locations. Additionally, the insights could be extended through the analysis of entrepreneurial fashion design firms that operate in other product categories outside of women's ready-to-wear. Particularly, the development of fashion tech offers new areas of inquiry at the intersection between fashion design and technological innovations, and the development of businesses around this burgeoning sector of the market.

Because of the importance of the fashion system to the development of these firms, future research could dive more deeply into the support network to identify and clarify areas of assistance needed by these entrepreneurial firms, in addition to the supplementary benefits support initiatives offer emerging designers. Although this

research incorporates aspects of the support provided by the extensive fashion network for entrepreneurs from a business management perspective, there remains room for growth in this area. Significantly, this research project sought to understand the fashion system from the perspective of the entrepreneurial DFE. It would be interesting to examine the fashion enterprise from the perspective of other areas of the industry, network and consumer market.

While a longitudinal study was not a feasible approach for this project, conducting such a study would provide a better opportunity to research the complex and dynamic process of entrepreneurial DFE development within the industry over an extended period of time. This would be particularly useful for further understanding of how DFEs transition beyond the 'emerging' and 'expansion' entrepreneurial stages of growth into larger segments of annual turnover and/or beyond the ten-year age limit of this study. This would also assist in adding to the dimensional variability between DFEs that succeed in establishing a profitable brand and those that go out of business.

It would also be interesting to explore the financial aspects of developing a DFE. Several of the participants discussed a 'fashion curve' to characterise the pattern of experiencing growth of sales in line with growth of debt, so that as the company grows, it takes continually more resources to sustain it. This concept was too broad to explore fully within this research, and it would require a significantly different and more involved form of access to the population group. That said, using a case study approach to understand the investment and finance options for DFEs would provide an additional avenue of research and new understanding into how these companies integrate into the fashion system.

Finally, research within the field of fashion is often conducted from a cultural studies approach. In this regard, the opportunity exists to re-approach this project's interview transcripts from a cultural studies perspective, which was otherwise beyond the scope of the current project. This would offer the opportunity to draw connections across methodological boundaries and further verification of the findings of this research. In relation to this, the use of grounded theory within other areas of study within the fashion or other creative industries, particularly at the intersection of brand development

and internationalisation, offer the opportunity to continue to build theory in related substantive areas.

### 8.5 Research Outcomes

In many ways, this research project has inspired additional questions, concepts and ideas for future research. The creation of DFEs within the fashion industry is a dynamic and rich context for understanding aspects of creative entrepreneurship, economic development, innovation, strategic management, and of course, brand development and internationalisation. As much as entrepreneurial DFEs reflect the current era, they also represent optimism for the future. This research project was born from the observation of these 'emerging designers' in the fashion media in relation to theoretical concepts within the academic literature. The aims and objectives of this project were constructed to explain and explore the gap between brand development and internationalisation of entrepreneurial DFEs that operate in the SME sector.

This research also importantly explores the development of the brand, from the perspective of the organisation, within a social system. A surprising but welcome finding of the research included the discovery that the concept of competitive advantage has been taken for granted for too long within the literature. From an entrepreneurial perspective, the concept of creative ascendancy is more appropriate for creative companies who integrate into the social and economic system in which they participate. Collectively, the findings of this research illustrate how entrepreneurial DFEs create brand identity and internationalise within the global fashion system through an intertwined process encompassing operational resources, dynamic capabilities and organisational learning.

By reaching its aim, this research contributes knowledge to brand development, internationalisation and fashion management research. The use of grounded theory as a methodology was appropriate given the lack of existing substantive knowledge within the literature. As a result of this approach, a theoretical framework was created to explain the development of entrepreneurial DFEs in relation to the central element of their companies: the collection. The process of organisational learning for the DFE enhances the operational and dynamic capabilities to target sales and distribution opportunities globally, facilitating internationalisation. Brand identity permeates every decision. The development of brand identity is a dynamic capability process embedded

in and emergent from the collection lifecycle activities and the alignment of resources through the interaction of the DFE within the fashion system. The process of the collection lifecycle facilitates interactions for organisational learning, providing avenues for identifying opportunities for international expansion based on the brand's aesthetic principles and brand adjacencies. This perspective also illustrates how the brand is intimately created from and connected to the product development process for the enterprise, serving as a guide for internationalisation on a global scale.



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### Global Branding For Fashion Entrepreneurs: How SME Womenswear Design Firms Develop Their Brand To Compete Internationally

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You are being invited to participate in a research project. Before you decide to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

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**Purpose of the Project:** The purpose of this project is to understand the processes, methods and strategies used to define and develop the brands of entrepreneurial fashion companies competing in an international context.

**Who is organising the research?**

The primary researcher of this project is Jennifer E. S. Millspaugh, a PhD candidate at the London College of Fashion (LCF). LCF is part of the University of the Arts London (UAL), which has approved this project to conduct research related to this topic. A committee of qualified researchers, headed by Senior Research Fellow Simon Thorogood, supervises this project. Contact details for the UAL's research office is listed below.

**Why were you asked to participate? Do you have to take part?**

You are being asked to participate because your company has been identified as an early-stage womenswear apparel design firm located in London or New York, or you are offering support services to designers as a showroom manager, PR agent or photographer. Participation in this project is voluntary and you have the option to discontinue participation at any time. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

**What will happen if I choose to take part?**

If you participate, we will meet for a one-on-one interview, which will last approximately one hour. During the interview I will ask you about your role in developing a fashion brand, the methods and strategies you use to create that brand within the marketplace, and your immediate and long term goals for the brand. If we both find that it will help the research, I will also observe you for a length of time we agree.

**Are there any disadvantages and/or risks to participate?**

I do not foresee any disadvantages or risks to participating in this project. By choosing to participate you have an opportunity to shed light on an undocumented process, which may help you or future small design firms navigate a path towards a sustainable business model.

**Whom do I contact if something goes wrong?**

If during the course of this project you believe that the research is being conducted in an unprofessional manner, please contact the research office of the University of the Arts London at the contact information listed below.

**Will the information I share be kept confidential?**

YES. The information (data) that you supply during the course of the interview and/or observations will be separated from your identity. Your identity as an individual will not be revealed in the publication of the interview and/or observation research results.

**Will my participation in the project be kept confidential?**

YOUR CHOICE. You also have the option to have your participation in the project acknowledged in a separate section of any publications of the research. However, your identity will always remain anonymous and separate from any section discussing the interview/observation research data.

**What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The data collected from this research project will be securely kept indefinitely for the use in relevant research projects. The results of this research project will be published as a doctoral thesis. When the research is complete you will be made aware of its publication from the contact details you have provided. You will be able to access a copy of the thesis from the London College of Fashion's library. The results will also be used for publication in academic journals and/or a book.

**Note: information about your brand that is available in the public domain.**

Because the researcher will be analysing data from social media, websites and news sources that is publicly available online, your brand may be identified in any discussion of this portion of the research. There will be no associative link between information you share during the interview/observation portion of the research and information that is already available online.

---

Thank you for participating in this research project.

---

**Research Contact Information:**

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## A.2: Consent Form

### Global Branding For Fashion Entrepreneurs: How SME Womenswear Design Firms Develop Their Brand To Compete Internationally

You are being invited to participate in a research project. Before you decide to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the attached information sheet carefully before signing your consent below. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

I have read the information sheet about the research project which I have been asked to take part in, and I have been given a copy of this information sheet to keep. What is going to happen and why it is being done has been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions.

I understand that if I choose to participate, information that I supply during the course of our interviews and/or observations may be recorded and used as data for this and/or future relevant research projects.

I understand that in all publications of the research findings, my professional name and contact information will be kept anonymous.

#### I understand that I have given my consent for the following to take place:

	to be interviewed.
	to be audio-taped during the interview.
	to be observed.

Having given consent, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time for any reason without disadvantage to myself.

#### Participation Acknowledgement

I would like my company's participation in the project acknowledged. This will always remain separate from any discussion of research data. There will be no associative link between your identity and the information you share during the interview/observation.

#### Note: information about your brand that is available in the public domain.

Because the researcher will be analysing data from social media, websites and news sources that is publicly available online, your brand may be identified in any discussion of this portion of the research. There will be no associative link between information you share during the interview/observation portion of the research and information that is already available online.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participation in the study, which has been fully explained to me.

<i>Participant's Name (Print):</i>	<i>Researcher's Name (Print):</i>
	<b>Jennifer E. S. Millspaugh</b>
<i>Participant's Signature:</i>	<i>Researcher's Signature:</i>
<i>Date:</i>	<i>Date:</i>

#### Research Contact Information:

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### A.3: Interview Request Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I'm a PhD researcher at the London College of Fashion conducting a study on emerging womenswear designers based in London and New York City. Your company would make an excellent case study, and I would like to invite you to participate in the research project.

The research will include a semi-structured interview designed to ask you a few questions regarding your experience in developing your company and brand. We'll mostly be having a conversation about the experience in building & communicating the company's identity. It is my hope that information gained from the interview can provide insight and ideas that will help create new resources to assist entrepreneurial designers with the business development process. If you choose to participate, your identity will remain anonymous in the publication of any research results and the interview should last approximately one-hour.

Would you be interested in meeting me for a 1-hour conversation?

Please don't hesitate to contact me via email if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration. Any help you could offer is greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer E. S. Millspaugh  
PhD Candidate  
London College of Fashion  
University of the Arts London

#### A.4: Karra (2008) DFE Characteristics

<b>Designer Fashion Enterprise Characteristics: Centre for Fashion Enterprise, London From: Karra (2008: 48-49)</b>			
	<b>Micro Company</b>	<b>Small Company</b>	<b>Medium Company</b>
<b>Age</b>	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not relevant
<b>Annual turnover</b>	£10,000 to £249,000	£250,000 to £2 million	£2,000,000 plus to £8,000,000
<b>No. of stockists</b>	2 to 10	15 to 50	50 to 250 approx and one distributor in a major market
<b>No. of full-time employees</b>	1 to 2 usually designer and manager – alone	2 (Designer, plus a Studio Manager) to 7 (incl. production manager)	10 to 30 (Designer, in-house Sales Manager; Studio Manager; Production Manager; a book-keeper)
<b>Other employees</b>	2+ un-paid interns; plus approx 2 freelance pattern cutters/ machinists. Friends help out	4+ un-paid interns; plus approx 4 freelance pattern cutters/ machinists/stylists employed as needed during the product development cycle	8 to 25+ un-paid interns; plus in-house pattern. Has a business partner or managing director. In-house pattern cutters/machinists. Influential stylists. In-house sales director. In-house production and sourcing team. In-house book- keeper/ financial controller
<b>No. of intermediaries contracted</b>	Freelance PR agency; possibly a sales agent; maybe accountant, legal	Freelance PR agency; possibly a sales agent; accountant, legal	Accountant and legal advice
<b>No. of collections produced yearly</b>	2 to 4; one for autumn/ winter; one for spring/ summer and the more experienced doing either seasonal pre collections, diffusion type collection or consultancy collections	2 to 4; one for autumn/ winter; one for spring/ summer and the more experienced doing either seasonal pre collections, diffusion type collection or consultancy collections	6 to reflect international markets, diffusion lines; plus pre-collections for both seasons

**Designer Fashion Enterprise Characteristics:  
Centre for Fashion Enterprise, London  
From: Karra (2008: 48-49)**

	<b>Micro Company</b>	<b>Small Company</b>	<b>Medium Company</b>
<i>(continued)</i>			
<b>How are sales made?</b>	Personal contacts or perhaps contracted sales agent	Likely to be through a contracted sales agent or exhibitions	Likely to be through in-house Sales Director; but maybe with specialist regions (e.g. Japan) through an agent or distributor
<b>Own store?</b>	No	No	A key flagship store in a destination location would be usual
<b>Online sales?</b>	Usually only through on-line stockists	Only through on-line stockists. Does not have own on-line store at this stage	Likely to have one on-line stockist and maybe exploring own on-line store at this stage
<b>Any products other than ready-to-wear?</b>	Perhaps but unusual at this stage	Maybe small licensing contracts with footwear, sun-glasses or accessories (bags) brands. Note the designer is likely to be paid a fixed design commission, rather than percent of net profits based on sales	Growing small licensing contracts with footwear, sun-glasses or accessories (bags) brands; maybe swimwear and lingerie collaborations. Perfume maybe. Note the designer is likely to be paid a fixed design commission, or percent of net profits based on sales

## A.5: Demographic Data Survey

Input devices: Google Survey & Quick Tap Survey (iPad App)

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 +

What is your nationality?

Do you (the designer / creative director) have design school training in fashion?

- Yes
- No

Where is your company primarily based?

- London
- New York City

What year was the label / company founded?

What is the age of your company in years?

What is your job title?

How many full-time employees work for the label (including yourself)?

How many part-time employees work for the label (including interns)?

How would you categorise your company? [Note: categories adapted from (Karra 2008)]

- Artisan - Driven purely by aesthetic motivation.
- Solo - Individual Designer focused on growth.
- Creative Partnership - Two creative people
- Designer & Business Partner - One creative and one business partner.
- Designer & Licensing Partner - Designer under royalty contract.
- Designer & Manufacturer - Designer in contractual agreement with manufacturer.
- Partnership with Investor - Designer in partnership with a formal investor.
- Other

What parts of the day-to-day business are 'in-house'? (please list)

What parts of the day-to-day business are 'out-sourced'? (please list)



Do you SOURCE internationally? (in at least ONE other country)

- Yes
- No

Do you SELL internationally? (in at least ONE other country)

- Yes
- No

If you SELL internationally, approximately what percentage (%) of the business (sales) is 'international'?

- Less than 25%
- 25% - 50%
- 50% - 75%
- 75% - 100%

Is the label / company profitable?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

What is the company's annual turnover (sales)? [Note figure categories adapted from (Karra 2008) and USD equivalents (£1 = \$1.67) at the time of the first interview.]

- Less than GDP £50, 000 / USD \$80, 000
- GDP £51, 000 - £150, 000 / USD \$81, 000 - \$250, 000
- GDP £151, 000 - £250, 000 / USD \$251, 000 - 400, 000
- GDP £501, 000 - £1 million / USD \$801, 000 - \$1.7 million
- GDP £1 million - £2 million / USD \$1.7 million - \$3.3 million
- GDP £2 million - £10 million / USD \$3.3 million - \$17 million
- Prefer not to say

Is the company funded by (select all that apply):

- Yourself (Self-funded)
- Friends & family
- Loans
- Corporate sponsorship(s)
- Manufacturer group
- Private investor(s)
- Luxury group

## A.6: Interview Questions: Phases I, II & III

*[Note: These questions are also summarised in a table in Concurrent Data Collection, Generation & Analysis]*

### Phase I - Interview Questions

*[Note: These questions were a launching point for the conversation. Follow up questions were used throughout the interview to explore concepts introduced by the participants.]*

- Tell me the story of how the company was started.
- How would you describe the company's identity or story? How has it evolved?
- How do you share the story? What methods do you use?
- What is it about this brand that no one else is doing? What makes it unique?
- Tell me about the collection lifecycle.
- Tell me about the sales & distribution process — what is that like? Do you source internationally or sell internationally?
- What is the ultimate vision or goal for this company?

### Phase II - Interview Questions

*[Note: For new participants, some of the Phase I questions were used as well. Not all of these questions were used in every interview, depending on time and the discussion that took place.]*

- Is there any news that you'd like to share? (for repeat participants)
- What are the major milestones that the company has evolved through?
- What are some of the things that you've done to help your company to grow and develop? What's worked? What hasn't? Why?
- What are the things that make you able to grow?
- How do you know when you're ready to take the next step?
- Have you ever been in a position where you felt like the company's development or growth was out of control? When? What was it like?
- Are you a brand? At what point did the label become a 'brand'?
- What is it about this brand that no one else is doing? What makes it unique?
- Do you want the brand to be consistently viewed as representative of particular elements? How do you control that when distribution is so diverse?
- What's your next major step in the development of your company? Immediate & long-term goals? What resources do you need to achieve them?
- What do the collections & individual garments say about the designer? What do you want them to say? How does it change/evolve? What stays the same?
- Social Media: Why is it so important? What do you use it for? What do you say? How do you say it? Is there a connection between social media consumers and financial success? Or is it just a form of PR/awareness or editorial success? Is it a community of people interacting with each other or do they just interact with the

brand?

- The fashion community is often viewed as very 'cut-throat' but it's also so collaborative. What makes this brand 'good enough' to be a part of the community?
- How important are the relationships that the company develops with collaborators? Can you give me an example of when a relationship made a big difference?
- What are some of the stages of growth the company goes through?
- What is a branding strategy? What are some of the branding strategies that you incorporate in your business?

### **Phase III - Interview Questions**

*[Note: For new participants, some of the Phase I & Phase II questions were used as well. Not all of these questions were used in every interview, depending on time and the discussion that took place.]*

#### **Primary Questions:**

- How does the company's identity impact the strategies and decision-making processes of the firm?
- How important is it to be defined by where you create the product or where it's produced? To what extent does that influence and impact the identity of the company?
- To what extent are the buyers, editors, industry, and network influential in defining what the brand is? And ultimately opening up or limiting access to consumers?
- How important it is to have a girl/woman? Does the girl/woman describe the consumer or muse or both? Or reflect the brand?
- Is being commercial, wearable, desirable in opposition to being creative / conceptual / editorial-worthy?

#### **Secondary Questions:**

- At what point did the identity of the company begin to solidify? Did anything change at that point? Such as the approach to thinking about the company?
- How important are imagery and visuals for communicating?
- When you mention a brand that you admire to what extent does their business model or aesthetic influence the decisions you make?
- What's a better strategy, focusing on creating great product or creating an image in the industry and market? Should you focus on sales or PR? One more than the other or both equally?
- When is it a good idea to expand into other product categories?
- How would you describe the approach to decision-making? Has it changed over time?

**Support Agency: Sales, PR & Showroom - Interview Questions**

*[Note: These questions were a launching point for the conversation. Follow up questions were used throughout the interview to explore concepts introduced by the participants.]*

- Please tell me how and why you started your company?
- How many clients do you have?
- How would you describe the growth of your company?
- What are your goals?
- What makes you unique?
- Do you support designers branding and growth efforts? How?
- When you're bringing on a new designer & discussing your plan with them, what are those conversations like?
- Do you notice things about their brand that maybe they don't notice? Do you point it out to them?
- Do you notice things about their growth and distribution that maybe they don't notice? Do you point it out to them?
- Most important part of your job?

## A.7: Qualitative Survey: Phase III

### Input device: Quick Tap Survey (iPad App)

*[Note: The survey was formatted and executed using iPad app Quick Tap Survey. The questions were designed based on information derived from the codes and categories of Phases I & II].*

Where is your company based?

- New York City
- London

How closely do these terms describe your consumer / muse?

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

- Youthful
- Mature
- Working
- Modern
- Artistic
- Worldly
- Girl
- Woman
- Strong
- Independent
- Leisurely
- Charity event patron
- Other

How would you describe the firm's wholesale distribution strategy (to stockists / retailers)?

Totally Open (will accept any stockists) - A Little Open - Neutral - A Little Targeted - Highly Targeted

- When the firm was founded
- After 2 years (4 seasons)
- Now
- In the future

In which regions do you currently sell? (select all that apply)

- Globally
- Asia
- Australia
- Europe
- North America
- Middle East
- South America

In which COUNTRIES do you currently sell? (Countries listed were pulled from the interview transcripts)

- Japan

- Saudi Arabia
- Kazakhstan
- Germany
- China
- Italy
- USA
- Belgium
- United Kingdom
- Australia
- France
- Canada
- Other

In which CITIES do you currently sell?

- Antwerp
- Los Angeles
- Paris
- Tokyo
- New York City
- Sydney
- London
- Taipei
- Others?
- Dubai
- Atlanta
- Milan
- Shanghai
- Berlin
- Hong Kong
- Moscow
- Singapore
- Dallas
- Shanghai
- Holland

To which STOCKISTS do you sell?

- Nordstrom
- Not Just a Label
- Own Retail Shop
- Harvey Nickels
- Joseph
- Net-a-Porter
- Bergdorf Goodman
- Matches
- Brown's
- Neiman Marcus
- Saks
- Barney's

- Gilt Group
- Intermix
- Dover Street Market
- Pop-up Shops
- Liberty
- Others?

Please rate how closely you agree with the following:

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

- We build close relationships with our stockists.
- We're focusing on selling domestically prior to international expansion.
- When we sell to a new region we focus on the top stockists in that area.
- Where we sell (stockists / geography) influences the design of our collections / garments.
- We think about where we sit on the shop floor in relation to our peers / competitors.

Please mark which product categories you produce:

Yes, From the Start - Currently - On Occasion - Future Plans - Not Applicable

- Womenswear
- Menswear
- Shoes
- Handbags
- Cosmetics
- Accessories
- Lingerie
- Evening Wear
- Outerwear
- Fashion Tech

Please rate how closely you agree with the following:

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

- 'Commercial' is a dirty word.
- The collections are designed to fill a gap in the market.
- There is a larger opportunity in the market to sell products at a contemporary price-point compared to designer luxury.
- We aim to produce products that are a great value / quality for money.
- The price-point for the product has increased since starting the company.

Is the company:

Highly Commercial - Somewhat Commercial - Commercially Conceptual - Somewhat Conceptual - Highly Conceptual

Where does the collections fall along the spectrum?

Perfect for Every Day - Desk-to-Date / Day-to-Night - Nights Out - Special Occasions

How would you describe the price-point of the collections? (Select all that apply)

- Contemporary
- Advance Contemporary

- Entry-Designer
- Designer Luxury
- Atelier Couture
- Bespoke

How would you describe the stage of growth?

- Start-up
- Early
- Emerging
- Established

What words describe your collections? (Select all that apply)

- Good for celebrity
- Beyond trend
- Desirable
- Innovative
- Trend setting
- Conceptual
- Wearable
- Artisan
- Conceptually commercial
- Commercial
- Affordable
- Heritage
- Basic fashion garments

For PRESS, which promotional tools do you use? (Select all that apply)

- Store visits / trunk shows
- Public relations
- Blog
- Stylists
- Fashion week presentation
- Fashion films
- Website
- Logo
- Posters, postcards, etc.
- Fashion week catwalk
- Collection press release
- Photography
- Interview media training
- Social media
- Showroom
- Lookbook
- Celebrity placement
- Word-of-mouth

For BUYERS, which promotional tools do you use? (Select all that apply)

- Store visits / trunk shows



- Public relations
- Blog
- Stylists
- Fashion week presentation
- Fashion films
- Website
- Logo
- Posters, postcards, etc.
- Fashion week catwalk
- Collection press release
- Photography
- Interview media training
- Social media
- Showroom
- Lookbook
- Celebrity placement
- Word-of-mouth

For BRAND AWARENESS, which promotional tools do you use? (Select all that apply)

- Store visits / trunk shows
- Public relations
- Blog
- Stylists
- Fashion week presentation
- Fashion films
- Website
- Logo
- Posters, postcards, etc.
- Fashion week catwalk
- Collection press release
- Photography
- Interview media training
- Social media
- Showroom
- Lookbook
- Celebrity placement
- Word-of-mouth

To encourage SELL-THROUGHS, which promotional tools do you use? (Select all that apply)

- Store visits / trunk shows
- Public relations
- Blog
- Stylists
- Fashion week presentation
- Fashion films
- Website
- Logo

- Posters, postcards, etc.
- Fashion week catwalk
- Collection press release
- Photography
- Interview media training
- Social media
- Showroom
- Lookbook
- Celebrity placement
- Word-of-mouth

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following:

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

- The brand identity is defined by the designer.
- The brand identity is defined by the collections.
- The brand identity is discovered over time.
- The brand identity is defined by the fashion industry.
- The brand identity is defined by the consumers.

How do you use the following SOCIAL MEDIA tools:

Not Used - Maintain Presence - Post On Occassion - Post Daily - Actively Engage

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Tumblr
- Pinterest
- Instagram

When is it a good idea to seek formal investment?

From the Start - Earlier the better - After a while - Once firmly established

Which investment strategies would you consider? (Select all that apply)

- Finance partner / private investor
- Sponsorships
- Grants
- Luxury group
- Investment group
- Award / competitions
- Freelance projects
- Angel investor
- Personal savings / self-financed
- Reducing costs
- Loans
- Manufacturer partnership
- Creative use of resources
- Parents
- Friends & family

Which of the following are In-house or Out-sourced?

Always In - Now In - Both In & Out - Now Out - Always Out

- Design
- Sales agent / sales team
- PR
- Sample making
- Production
- IT / web design
- Accounting
- Legal
- Warehouse
- Showroom

What was the launching point of the company?

- Experimenting in the market
- Winning award / competition participation
- Strategic entry based in R&D
- Other

What attributes describe the DESIGNER(S)? (Select all that apply)

- Authentic
- Passion
- Able to re-develop / re-think / re-do
- Can handle rejection
- Dedication
- Courageous
- Teamwork
- Honest
- Work ethic
- Faithful
- Patient
- Lucky
- Able to work under pressure
- Design integrity
- Confidence
- Thankful
- Trust
- Aggressive
- Ambition
- Acceptance

What attributes describe the BRAND? (Select all that apply)

- Authentic
- Passion
- Able to re-develop / re-think / re-do
- Can handle rejection
- Dedication
- Courageous
- Teamwork

- Honest
- Work ethic
- Faithful
- Patient
- Lucky
- Able to work under pressure
- Design integrity
- Confidence
- Thankful
- Trust
- Aggressive
- Ambition
- Acceptance

What attributes describe the EMPLOYEE(S)? (Select all that apply)

- Authentic
- Passion
- Able to re-develop / re-think / re-do
- Can handle rejection
- Dedication
- Courageous
- Teamwork
- Honest
- Work ethic
- Faithful
- Patient
- Lucky
- Able to work under pressure
- Design integrity
- Confidence
- Thankful
- Trust
- Aggressive
- Ambition
- Acceptance

What is the designer's background?

Non-Fashion - Fashion - Both - Self-Taught

- Education
- Professional experience
- Design skills

Which personal goals do you (the designer) have in relation to the company?

- Continue to design
- Earn a living
- Achieve aesthetic vision
- Life enjoyment / happy
- Achieve respect / renown

- Work-life balance

What Strategic Goals do the company have for the future?

- Increase brand awareness
- Distribute to specific regions or stockists
- Increase sales by a forecasted amount
- Open or maintain a flagship retail store
- Hire additional employees
- Gain formal investment
- Shift manufacturing or production
- Shift product positioning
- Shift design aesthetic
- Shift price-point
- Shift target consumer

What is/are the ultimate goals of the firm?

- Financially successful / profitable
- Business survivability & longevity
- Global lifestyle brand
- Create a legacy or heritage
- Multidisciplinary design firm
- Scalable
- Maintain independence / family run
- Remain small firm

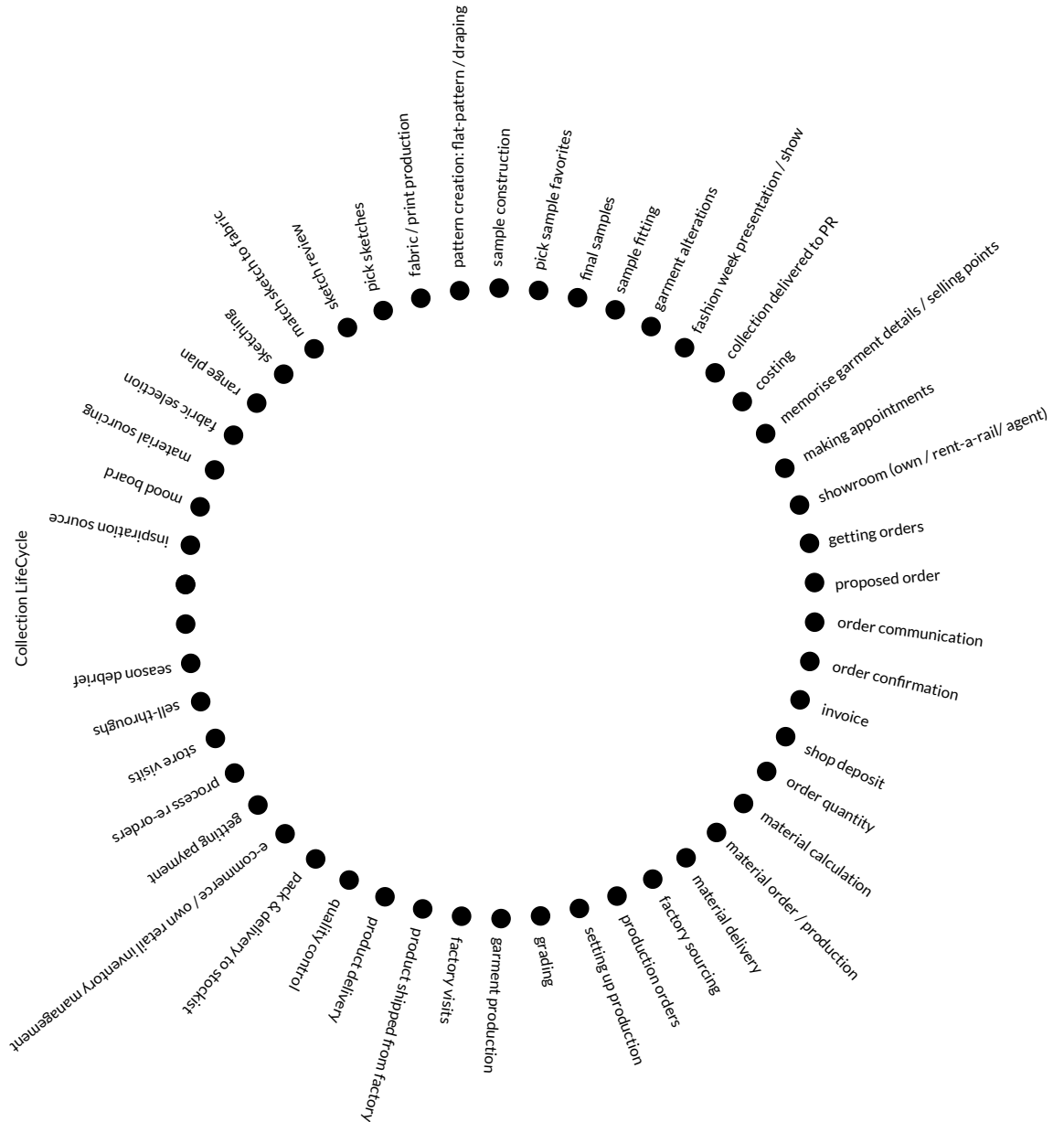
Which of the following brands reflect the enterprise's business model aspirations? (select all that apply)

- Alexander McQueen
- Alaïa
- Badgley Mischka
- Burberry
- Chanel
- Diane von Fürstenberg
- Dior
- Dries Van Noten
- Gucci
- Helmut Lang
- Isabel Marant
- Jean Paul Gaultier
- Kate Spade
- Lanvin
- Marc Jacobs
- Marni
- Michael Kors
- Phillip Lim
- Prada
- Ralph Lauren
- Rodarte

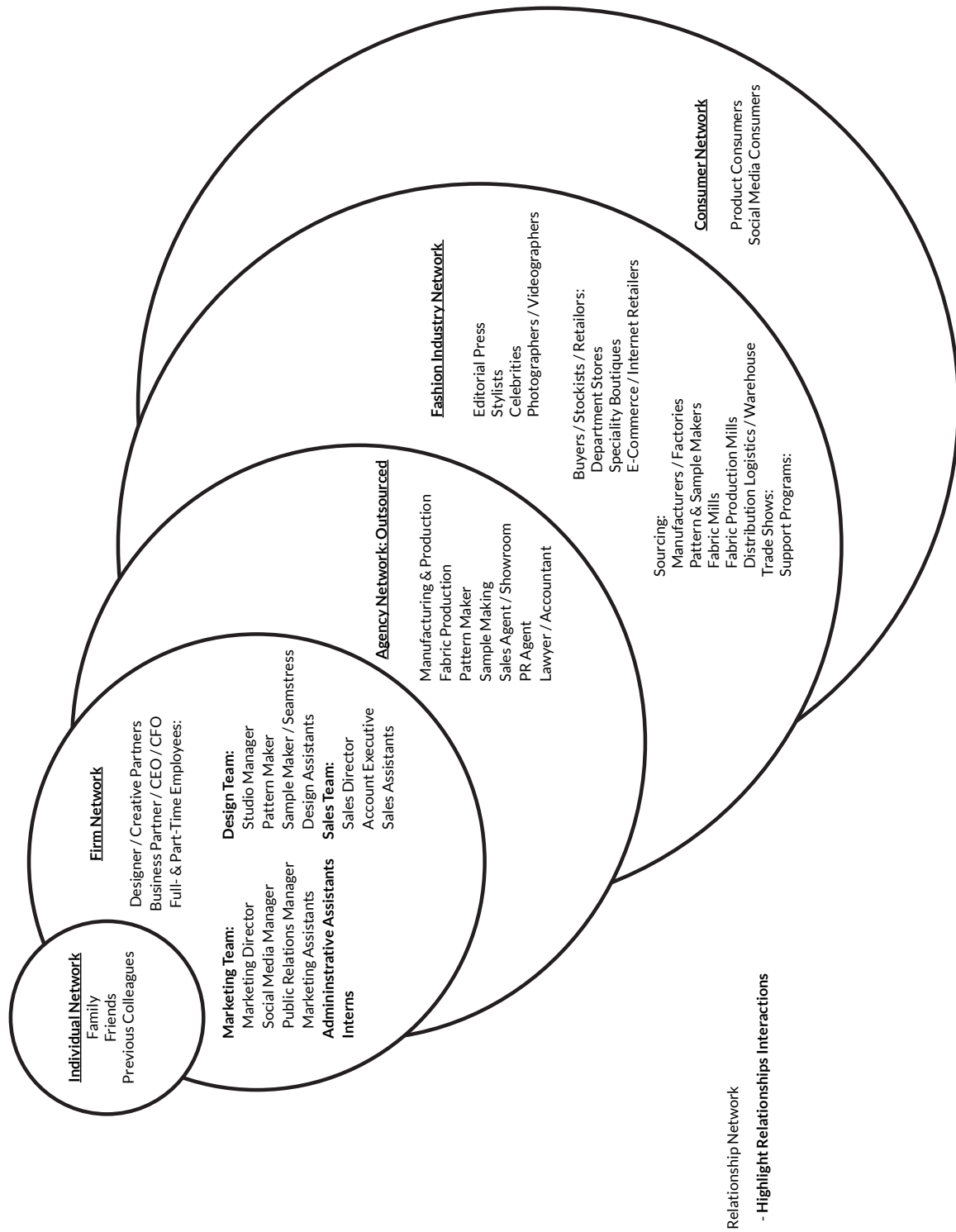
J.E.S. Millspaugh

- Takoon
- Theory
- Tom Ford
- Valentino
- Vera Wang
- Saint Laurent
- Zac Posen
- COS
- H&M
- Proenza Schouler

## A.8: Phase III Activities: Collection Lifecycle



## A.9: Phase III Activities: Network





## A.10: Phase III Activities: Timeline

Words that describe the brand: \_\_\_\_\_

Words that describe the girl/woman/mouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark on the timeline significant events, for example:

- Awards / competitions participated / won
- 1st time events
- Major business decisions / strategy changes
- When tasks were brought in-house or out-sourced: showroom, PR, sales agents, production, sampling, etc.
- Hiring of key employees / adding new positions
- Acquiring key stockists or distributing in new countries, regions, etc.
- Product category additions
- Reaching break-even, profitability or gaining investment
- Adding collections: pre-fall/pre-spring

Today

Founded

# A.1.1: Phase III Activities: Timeline Results

Brand	Founded	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4			
		Pre - Start	1st Season	2nd Season	3rd Season	4th Season	5th Season	6th Season	7th Season	8th Season	9th Season
3	2013		SS14	AW14	SS15	AW15	SS16				
		Art Exhibition		PR Agent	LFW Presentation	LFW Presentation					
		Won Award		Vogue UK	1st Full-Time Employee	Collaborations					
				Support Program							
22	2007		AW07	SS08	AW08	SS09	AW09	SS10	AW10	SS11	AW11
			Support Program	Support Program	Support Program	Support Program					
			LFW Catwalk	LFW Catwalk	LFW Catwalk	LFW Catwalk					
			PR Agent								
17	2012		AW13	SS14	AW14	SS15	AW15	SS16			
		Won Award	Fashion Week Catwalk	New York show	London Showroom	Event in Middle East					
		Fashion Week	Paris Showroom	Vogue Italy	Award Nomination						
				Hired Production Manager	Studio Manager Hired						
					Moved into Studio						
					PR Agent						
4	2008		AW08	SS09	AW09	SS10	AW10	SS11	AW11	SS12	AW12
			3 Major Stockists	PR Agent				Win Award	International PR Agent	Director of Marketing/Comm	Director of Sales
									Win Award	Win Award	Win Award
									Pre-Spring Launched		
8	2007		AW07	SS08	AW08	SS09	AW09	SS10	AW10	SS11	AW11
			First Runway		Dressed Celebrity	Win Award		Major Fashion Brand Collaboration		Non-Fashion Brand Collaboration	Beauty Collaboration
6	2010		AW2011	SS12	AW12	SS13	AW13	SS14	AW14	SS15	AW15
			Design Strategy: Artisanal, One-off Pieces	PR Agent (1st)		Design Strategy: Added Sportswear	Sales Agent(2)	Get 1st Stockists		No Fashion Show	Fired Design Consultant
				Design Strategy: Eveningwear		PR Agent (2nd)	Hired Design Consultant	Design Strategy "Fashion Fashion" Sportswear		New Production Team's Strategy	
				Sales Agent						Shift Design Direction	
10	2009		SS10	AW10	SS11	AW11	SS12	AW12	SS13	AW13	SS14
			Exceptional Press					Win Award	Launched with Saks		
			Launched with Barney's NY								
1	2010		SS12	AW12	SS13	AW13	SS14	AW14	SS15	AW15	SS16
		pop-up shop	Dress Celebrity	Dress Celebrity	Dress Celebrity	Dress Celebrity	2nd Runway Show	Milk Made Runway	Milk Made Runway	Made Runway	
		experimental pieces	Showroom			1st Runway Show	Won Award	Major Fashion Brand Collaboration		Dress Celebrity	
			PR Agent			Dress Celebrity	Exceptional Press			Fashion Tech Collaboration	
5	2008		AW08	SS09	AW09	SS10	AW10	SS11	AW11	SS12	AW12
			3 Major Stockists	Added approximately 10 stockists	Hired Assistant Designer	Introduced Resort Collection	"Crew A LOT- TOO MUCH- Contracted After	Launched e-comm	Award nomination		In-house sales strategy shift
			Exceptional Press, Time, Vogue, NY Times	Showroom	NYFW Presentation	New PR Agent	After this we focused on slow & steady growth"				Award nomination
			Dress multiple celebrities	Hired Production Manager	Anna Wintour attention	Added Shoe Collaboration					
			PR Agent		Jewellery Collaboration						
19	2010		SS11	AW11	SS12	AW12	SS13	AW13	SS14	AW14	SS15
			First Lookbook	1st Stockists: NY & Middle East	Stockist: Liberty London	Hired 1st Employee	Collaboration	Support Program	Stockist: Fortnum & Mason	First Catwalk	On Schedule LFW
			Vogue	Emerging Blog- Review			Scarf Collection	Dressed Celebrity		Invited to meet HRH Prince Charles	Major Stockist: Boon the Shop South Korea
			Dress Celebrity					London Showrooms: New York		Won Award	Major Stockist: The Outnet
21	2012		SS14	AW14	SS15	AW15	SS16				
			Feedback from Stockists: Women buying Menswear smaller sizes requested	Developed shirt line & took to market		1st Capsule Collection: Well received & large orders placed with key stockists	Produced largest women's collection to date.				
					Women's Showroom in Paris	Continued with Paris Showroom	Continued growth: gaining further stockists				



## A.12: Phase IV: Data Gathering Input Form

### Input device: Google Survey

Brand Name: {text field}

Location: {selection}

- London
- New York

Website Pages: {multi-selection}

- About/Bio
- Collections
- Stockists
- Contact Form
- Contact Details
- e-store
- T&C (terms and conditions)
- Videos
- Blog
- Social Media Feed
- Social Media Links
- Press
- Image Gallery / Feed
- N/A / Website down / No website
- Newsletter / Mailing list
- Other: {text field}

About Page Text: {text field}

Product Categories: {multi-selection}

- Womenswear
- Menswear
- Evening
- Accessories
- Shoes
- Handbags
- Cosmetics
- Lingerie
- Outerwear
- Fashion Tech
- Other: {text field}

Contact: {multi-selection}

- PR Agent
- Sale Agent
- Own Sales
- Own PR

- Other: {text field}
- Product Category: {selection}
- Bespoke
- Designer Luxury
- Advance Contemporary / Entry Designer
- Contemporary
- Unknown
- Other: {text field}

Stockist Page - Number of Stockists: {text field}

Stockist Page - Regions {multi-selection}

- Australia
- US
- UK
- Europe
- North America
- South America
- Africa
- Middle East
- Asia
- Unknown
- Online
- Other: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - US: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - UK: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - North America: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - South America: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - Europe: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - Middle East: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - Africa: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - Australia: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - Asia: {text field}

Stockist Per Region - Online: {text field}

Sales Distribution: {multi-selection}

- Department Store
- Boutique / Speciality Store
- e-commerce
- Own e-commerce
- Flagship Store
- Unknown
- Other: {text field}

Social Media Platforms (links from website): {multi-selection}

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- Instagram
- Unknown
- Other: {text field}

Press Example 1: {text field for webpage link}

Press Example 2: {text field for webpage link}

Press Example 3: {text field for webpage link}

## A.13: Phase IV: Stockist Measurement & Stage of Growth

Stockist Measurement & Stage of Growth Category			
Stage of Growth	Number of Stockists		
	~£5K sales per stockist per season calculation	~ participant group calculation	CFE (Karra 2008)
<b>Capsule</b>	0-5	0-5	2-10
<b>Start-Up</b>	6-15	6-15	
<b>Early*</b>	16-50	16-30	15-50
<b>Emerging*</b>	51-100	31-54	
<b>Expansion*</b>	100+	55-100+	50-250

*\*Sales are diversified from various options after consistent development: sales per stockist increases, number of individual outlets ('doors') increases, number of collections produced per year increases, and e-commerce sales increases.*

## A.14: Phase IV: Collections, Price-points & Stockists Data



Phase IV Data - Collections, Price-Point, Stockists (1of5)

Brand Name	Location	Year	Year Category	Collections Per Year	Product Price-Point	Shop	Total Stockists	USA	UK	Online	North America	South America	Europe	Middle East	Africa	Australia	Asia & Russia	% International
1205	London	2010	3	2	Contemporary	0	37	2	3	0	1		2	1			25	83.78%
3.1 Phillip Lim	New York	2005	5	6	Contemporary	1												
A Moi	New York	2014	1	2	Entry Designer	1	5	3	0	2							2	80.00%
Adam Lippes	New York	2012	2	4	Designer Luxury	1	83	37	4	5	2		11	8		2	14	55.42%
Adeam	New York	2011	2	3	Entry Designer	1	26	10	1	4				2		1	4	46.15%
Alessia Prekop	London	2012	2	2	Entry Designer	1												
Alexis Barrrell	London	2010	3	2	Advanced Contemporary	0												
Altuzarra	New York	2008	4	4	Designer Luxury	0	106	42	5	16	4		21	6			12	60.38%
AntiPodium	London	2006	5	2	Contemporary	0												
Ashley Williams	London	2013	1	2	Contemporary	1	14	3	1	0							8	92.86%
Assembly New York	New York	2009	3	2	Contemporary	1												
Baja East	New York	2013	1	4	Designer Luxury	1	30	18	2	4	1		2				3	40.00%
Barbara Casasola	London	2013	1	2	Entry Designer	1	1	0	0	1								100.00%
Bellavance	New York	2014	1	2	Contemporary	0	1	1	0	0								0.00%
BIBHU MOHAPATRA	New York	2009	3	3	Designer Luxury	0												
BRANDON SUN	New York	2012	2	2	Designer Luxury	0												
Chris Benz	New York	2007	4	0	Unknown	0												
Chris Gellinas	New York	2013	1	2	Advanced Contemporary	0	5	2	0	3								60.00%
Christian Siriano	New York	2008	4	4	Designer Luxury	1	60	27	1	11	2	1	1	15			2	55.00%
Christopher Kane	London	2006	5	4	Advanced Contemporary	0	43	0	7	5	8		6	1			16	83.72%
Chromat	New York	2010	3	2	Entry Designer	1	25	14	2	0	1		2			2	4	44.00%
Claire Barrow	London	2013	1	2	Advanced Contemporary	1	12	3	1	0			3			1	4	91.67%
Clon8	London	2012	2	2	Contemporary	1												
Corrie Nielson	London	2010	3	2	Entry Designer	0												
Creatures of Comfort	New York	2010	3	3	Contemporary	1	3	2	0	1								33.33%
Creatures of the Wind	New York	2008	4	2	Designer Luxury	0	24	16	0	4			1	2			1	33.33%
CUSHNIE ET OCHS	New York	2008	4	4	Designer Luxury	0	129	78	1	8	3	4	12	11		3	9	39.53%
Daniel Cerdán	London	2014	1	2	Entry Designer	1												
DANIEL VOSOVIC	New York	2010	3	2	Advanced Contemporary	0												
Daniella Kallmeyer	New York	2011	2	2	Contemporary	1	5	4	0	1								20.00%
Danielle Romeril	London	2012	2	2	Advanced Contemporary	0	12	3	1	1			2				5	91.67%

Phase IV Data - Collections, Price-Point, Stockists (2 of 5)

Brand Name	Location	Year	Year Category	Collections Per Year	Product Price-Point	Shop	Total Stockists	USA	UK	Online	North America	South America	Europe	Middle East	Africa	Australia	Asia & Russia	% International
David Koma	London	2009	3	3	Contemporary	0	63	17	1	5	2		19	11		1	4	93.65%
Dominic Louis	New York	2012	2	2	Contemporary	0	7	6	0	1								14.29%
Eckhaus Latta	New York	2012	2	2	Contemporary	1												
Edeline Lee	London	2012	2	2	Entry Designer	0	4	1	1	0			1	1				75.00%
Ekaterina Kukhareva	London	2009	3	2	Designer Luxury	1	16	2	3	0			4	4			3	81.25%
Electric Feathers	New York	2010	3	2	Advanced Contemporary	1	24	18	1	2	1		2					25.00%
Emilia Wickstead	London	2009	3	2	Designer Luxury	1	15	2	4	5			2	2				73.33%
Emilio de la Morena	London	2007	4	3	Designer Luxury	0												
Erdem	London	2005	5	4	Designer Luxury	1	134	48	10	13	3		17	7		4	32	92.54%
Eudon Choi	London	2009	3	2	Contemporary	0	24	0	3	4			2	6			9	87.50%
Faustine Steinmetz	London	2013	1	2	Designer Luxury	1	15	4	2	1							8	86.67%
Felder Felder	London	2006	5	2	Contemporary	0												
Filiani	London	2014	1	0	Unknown	0												
Frabolas Arias	New York	2008	4	2	Designer Luxury	0	3	2	0	0	1							33.33%
Fyodor Golan	London	2010	3	3	Entry Designer	1	20	1	1	0	2		3	5			8	95.00%
Georgia Hardinge	London	2010	3	2	Contemporary	0	13	1	0	1				7			4	100.00%
GEORGINE	New York	2013	1	2	Designer Luxury	0												
Giulietta	New York	2011	2	4	Designer Luxury	0	17	6	0	5			3	2			1	64.71%
HAD	London	2014	1	3	Unknown	0	5	1	2	0			1				1	60.00%
Haizhen Wang	London	2012	2	2	Unknown	0												
Harbison	New York	2013	1	2	Designer Luxury	0	3	2	0	0				1				33.33%
Helen Lawrence	London	2014	1	2	Designer Luxury	0												
Hellessy	New York	2012	2	3	Entry Designer	0	21	17	0	3							1	19.05%
HEMYCA	London	2009	3	2	Designer Luxury	1	6	1	1	1				1		2		83.33%
Heehwan Simulation	London	2010	3	2	Designer Luxury	0	10	0	0	1			2				7	100.00%
Holly Fulton	London	2009	3	2	Designer Luxury	0	31	2	0	7	1		5	4			12	100.00%
Huishan Zhang	London	2011	2	3	Entry Designer	0												
Isa Arfen	London	2011	2	3	Entry Designer	0	35	6	3	8	1		5	5			7	91.43%
J. JS Lee	London	2010	3	3	Contemporary	0	11	1	1	0	1			2			6	90.91%
Jamie Wei Huang	London	2014	1	2	Advanced Contemporary	1	10	0	0	3			1	1			5	100.00%
Jason Wu	New York	2006	5	4	Designer Luxury	1												

Phase IV Data - Collections, Price-Point, Stockists (3of5)

Brand Name	Location	Year	Year Category	Collections Per Year	Product Price-Point	Shop	Total Stockists	USA	UK	Online	North America	South America	Europe	Middle East	Africa	Australia	Asia & Russia	% International
JAY GODFREY	New York	2007	4	10	Contemporary	1	224	174	3	10	9	4	4	10			3	19.20%
Jen Kao	New York	2007	4	0	Unknown	0	16	8	0	3				1			4	50.00%
Jena Theo	London	2009	3	0	Advanced Contemporary	0	18	0	0	2			4	3			9	100.00%
Jonathan Cohen	New York	2011	2	2	Contemporary	0	9	9	0	0								0.00%
Jonathan Simkhah	New York	2010	3	4	Contemporary	1												
Julia Koral	London	2014	1	2	Designer Luxury	1												
Kaelen	New York	2010	3	3	Contemporary	1	15	11	0	2	1					1	26.67%	
Laain	London	2014	1	2	Contemporary	0	4	2	1	1								75.00%
Le Klitt	London	2014	1	2	Contemporary	1	16	2	3	0			2			8	75.00%	
Lisa Perry	New York	2007	4	6	Contemporary	1												
Louise Alsop	London	2013	1	2	Contemporary	0												
Louise Goldin	London	2005	5	0	Unknown	0												
Lucas Nascimento	London	2011	2	0	Unknown	0												
Lyn Devon	New York	2005	5	2	Designer Luxury	0												
M. Patmos	New York	2011	2	6	Contemporary	1	84	57	1	6	1		1			2	16	32.14%
Marina London	London	2011	2	2	Contemporary	1	6	0	2	3					1			66.67%
Marios Schwab	London	2005	5	4	Contemporary	0												
MARISSA WEBB	New York	2013	1	4	Contemporary	1	74	60	0	7	2		2	2		1		18.92%
Marques Almeida	London	2010	3	2	Designer Luxury	0												
Martine Jarigaard	London	2014	1	2	Advanced Contemporary	0	5	0	0	5								100.00%
Mary Katrantzou	London	2009	3	4	Designer Luxury	1	254	34	17	34	4	6	76	25	2	7	49	93.31%
MATHIEU MIRANO	New York	2012	2	3	Designer Luxury	0												
Meadham Kirchhoff	London	2006	5	0	Unknown	0												
MESKITA	New York	2012	2	0	Contemporary	0												
Michael van der Ham	London	2012	2	3	Designer Luxury	1	14	1	4	1			1	5			2	71.43%
Ming	London	2012	2	2	Contemporary	0	8	0	1	1							6	87.50%
Misha Nonoo	New York	2010	3	6	Contemporary	1												
Molly Goddard	London	2014	1	2	Unknown	0	8	1	1	0			2				3	75.00%
Mother of Pearl	London	2011	2	4	Contemporary	0	84	7	4	6			7	12		3	45	95.24%
Nom De Mode	London	2014	1	2	Contemporary	1												
Ohne Titel	New York	2007	4	4	Contemporary	1	46	24	0	0	9	2	1	4			6	47.83%

Phase IV Data - Collections, Price-Point, Stockists (4of5)

Brand Name	Location	Year	Year Category	Collections Per Year	Product Price-Point	Shop	Total Stockists	USA	UK	Online	North America	South America	Europe	Middle East	Africa	Australia	Asia & Russia	% International
OSMAN	London	2008	4	4	Entry Designer	1	38	4	9	4			7	8			6	76.32%
Ostwald Heigason	London	2008	4	0	Unknown	0												
palmer/harding	London	2011	2	3	Contemporary	1												
Peter Pilotto	London	2009	3	4	Designer Luxury	0	200+											
Phelan	New York		1	2	Entry Designer	0												
Phoebe English	London	2012	2	2	Entry Designer	1	15	2	1	0			2				10	93.33%
PRABAL GURUNG	New York	2009	3	4	Designer Luxury	0	58	24	1	8	3	2	7	9			4	58.62%
Public School	New York	2008	4	4	Contemporary	0	80	40	2	21	2		6	3			6	50.00%
Rachel Antonoff	New York	2009	3	1	Contemporary	1												
Reed Krakow	New York	2013	1	0	Designer Luxury	0												
Rejina Pyo	London	2013	1	2	Entry Designer	0												
Roksanda Ilincic	London	2005	5	4	Designer Luxury	0												
Rosie Assoulin	New York	2013	1	3	Designer Luxury	0												
Ryan Lo	London	2013	1	2	Entry Designer	0												
Ryan Roche	New York	2011	2	2	Advanced Contemporary	0												
Sally Lapolite	New York	2010	3	4	Designer Luxury	0	13	6	0	3				1			3	53.85%
Saloni	London	2011	2	4	Contemporary	1	47	8	12	11			9	4			3	74.47%
SAUNDER	New York	2011	2	2	Contemporary	1	4	2	0	0				1			1	50.00%
Sea-Ny	New York	2007	4	4	Contemporary	1	352	135	6	13	8		101		1	4	84	61.65%
Self-Portrait	London	2013	1	2	Contemporary	1												
SHRIMPS	London	2014	1	3	Contemporary	1	50	10	4	6			18				12	92.00%
Sibling	London	2008	4	4	Contemporary	1	17	2	4	3			2				6	76.47%
Simone Rocha	London	2011	2	2	Designer Luxury	0												
Sophie Theallet	New York	2007	4	3	Designer Luxury	0												
stevental	London	2012	2	2	Advanced Contemporary	0												
Sumarie	London	2009	3	2	Designer Luxury	1	27	2	7	9			7				2	74.07%
SUNO	New York	2008	4	4	Entry Designer	1	70	44	0	10	1		2	5		1	7	37.14%
Suzanne Rae	New York	2010	3	2	Contemporary	0	21	12	0	3	2						4	42.86%
Tanya Taylor	New York	2012	2	3	Contemporary	1	71	43	1	8	5	4	1	1		1	7	39.44%
Teatum Jones	London	2010	3	2	Entry Designer	0	19	2	5	5				6			1	73.68%
Tessa Edwards	London	2011	2	2	Designer Luxury	0												

Phase IV Data - Collections, Price-Point, Stockists (5 of 5)

Brand Name	Location	Year	Year Category	Collections Per Year	Product Price-Point	Shop	Total Stockists	USA	UK	Online	North America	South America	Europe	Middle East	Africa	Australia	Asia & Russia	% International	
The Blonds	New York	2007	4	2	Designer-Luxury	0													
Thomas Tait	London	2011	2	2	Entry Designer	0													
TIMOWEILAND	New York	2009	3	6	Contemporary	1													
Todd Lynn	London	2006	5	4	Contemporary	0													
TOME	New York	2011	2	4	Entry Designer	1	44	15	0	8	2			4		3	12	65.91%	
Trademark	New York	2013	1	4	Contemporary	1													
Trager-Delaney	London	2012	2	1	Entry Designer	0	9	2	3	3			1					66.67%	
Tribune Standard	New York	2011	2	0	Unknown	0													
Tucker	New York	2006	5	6	Contemporary	1													
Veda	New York	2008	4	3	Contemporary	1													
Veronica Beard	New York	2010	3	4	Contemporary	1	218	197	0	7	6	2	2	4				9.63%	
VIVIENNE HU	New York	2012	2	3	Contemporary	1													
WAYNE	New York	2007	4	0	Unknown	0													
WENDY NICHOL	New York	2007	4	2	Designer-Luxury	1	2	2	0	0								0.00%	
Wes Gordon	New York	2010	3	3	Designer-Luxury	0	20	12	0	4	1		1	1			1	40.00%	
Whit	New York	2010	3	3	Contemporary	1	35	19	0	4	1	1	1	1			8	45.71%	
William Okpo	New York	2010	3	3	Contemporary	0	5	5	0	0								0.00%	
Yang Du	London	2009	3	2	Unknown	0													
Yifang Wan	London	2012	2	2	Unknown	0													
Yolke	London	2013	1	2	Contemporary	1	10	0	7	2							1	30.00%	
Yui Ateller	London	2012	2	2	Unknown	0													
Yuna Yang	New York	2010	3	2	Unknown	0	14	5	0	0				1			8	64.29%	
Yuzzo London	London	2013	1	2	Unknown	1	10	0	0	0				3			7	100.00%	
Zana Bayne	New York	2010	3	4	Designer-Luxury	1	9	6	1	0			1				1	33.33%	
Zoë Jordan	London	2012	2	2	Contemporary	1	26	2	6	2	2		5	2			7	76.92%	

## A.15: Phase IV: Internationalisation Rate Analysis

### Phase IV: Rate of Internationalisation Analysis (1 of 2)

	% International	Total Stockists #	USA #	UK #	Online #
Total	65.55%	3277	1394	168	341
Mean	65.91%	39	16	2	4
Median	100.00%	17	4	1	3
Mode	100%	5	2	0	0
High	100%	352	197	17	34
Low	0%	1	0	0	0
<b>London</b>					
Year Category 1 (2013-2014)		160	26	22	19
Mean	83%	12	2	2	1
Median	92%	10	1	1	1
Mode	100%	10	0	0	0
Total Designers	22	22	22	22	22
Total Data	13	13	13	13	13
Unknown	9	9	9	9	9
High	100%	50	10	7	6
Low	30%	1	0	0	0
Year Category 2 (2011 - 2012)		260	32	38	36
Mean	81%	24	3	3	3
Median	77%	14	2	3	2
Mode	67%	N/A	2	1	1
Total Designers	23	23	23	23	23
Total Data	11	11	11	11	11
Unknown	12	12	12	12	12
High	95%	84	8	12	11
Low	67%	4	0	1	0
Year Category 3 (2009 - 2010)		564	67	46	74
Mean	89%	38	4	3	5
Median	91%	19	2	1	2
Mode	100%	N/A	2	1	0
Total Designers	20	20	20	20	20
Total Data	15	15	15	15	15
Unknown	5	5	5	5	5
High	100%	254	34	17	34
Low	73%	6	0	0	0
Year Category 4 (2007 - 2008)		55	6	13	7
Mean	76%	28	3	7	5
Median	76%	28	3	7	5
Mode	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Designers	4	4	4	4	4
Total Data	2	2	2	2	2
Unknown	2	2	2	2	2
High	76%	38	4	9	4
Low	76%	17	2	4	3
Year Category 5 (2005 - 2006)		177	48	17	18
Mean	88%	89	24	9	9
Median	88%	89	24	9	9
Mode	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Designers	9	9	9	9	9
Total Data	2	2	2	2	2
Unknown	7	7	7	7	7
High	93%	134	48	10	13
Low	84%	43	0	7	5

Phase IV: Rate of Internationalisation Analysis (2 of 2)

	% International	Total Stockists #	USA #	UK #	Online #
New York					
Year Category 1 (2013-2014)		118	86	2	16
Mean	39%	20	14	0	3
Median	37%	5	3	0	3
Mode	N/A	5	2	0	0
Total Designers	11	11	11	11	11
Total Data	6	6	6	6	6
Unknown	5	5	5	5	5
High	80%	74	60	2	7
Low	0%	1	1	0	0
Year Category 2 (2011 - 2012)		371	206	7	41
Mean	37%	34	19	1	4
Median	39%	21	10	0	4
Mode	N/A	N/A	6	0	0
Total Designers	18	18	18	18	18
Total Data	11	11	11	11	11
Unknown	7	7	7	7	7
High	66%	84	57	4	8
Low	0%	4	2	1	0
Year Category 3 (2009 - 2010)		460	331	5	34
Mean	37%	35	25	0	3
Median	40%	20	12	0	2
Mode	33%	N/A	5	0	0
Total Designers	20	20	20	20	20
Total Data	13	13	13	13	13
Unknown	7	7	7	7	7
High	64%	218	197	2	8
Low	0%	3	2	0	0
Year Category 4 (2007 - 2008)		1112	592	18	96
Mean	41%	93	49	2	8
Median	44%	65	34	1	9
Mode	33%	N/A	2	0	0
Total Designers	18	18	18	18	18
Total Data	12	12	12	12	12
Unknown	6	6	6	6	6
High	62%	224	174	6	21
Low	0%	2	2	0	0
Year Category 5 (2005 - 2006)		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mean	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Median	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mode	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Designers	4	4	4	4	4
Total Data	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	4	4	4	4	4
High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### A.16: Phase IV: PR & Sales Agents Analysis

Phase IV: PR & Sales Agent Analysis													
	Total	London	New York	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Own PR	Own Sales	PR Agent	Sales Agent	Unknown
London	78			22	23	20	4	9	17	56	38	14	11
New York	71			11	18	20	18	4	33	52	29	11	10
Year 1	33	22	11						13	21	15	7	5
Year 2	41	23	18						16	30	21	10	5
Year 3	40	20	20						16	27	20	8	6
Year 4	22	4	18						14	19	5	0	3
Year 5	13	9	4						6	11	6	0	2
Own PR	65	32	33	13	16	16	14	6		64	4	2	0
Own Sales	108	56	52	21	30	27	19	11	64		47	5	1
PR Agent	67	38	29	15	21	20	5	6	4	47		24	1
Sales Agent	25	14	2	7	10	8	0	0	2	5	24		1
Unknown	21	14	11	5	5	6	3	2	0	1	1	1	
Total	149	78	71	33	41	40	22	13	65	108	67	25	21
<b>Total minus unknown</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>					
<b>Own PR %</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>55%</b>					
<b>Own sales %</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>					
<b>PR agent %</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>55%</b>					
<b>Sales agent %</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>					
<b>Inclusive Total</b>													
<b>Own PR %</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>46%</b>					
<b>Own Sales %</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>85%</b>					
<b>PR Agent %</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>46%</b>					
<b>Sales Agent %</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>					
<b>Unknown %</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>15%</b>					



## A.17: Phase IV: Product Categories Analysis

Phase IV: Product Categories Analysis

	Total	London	New York	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Accessories	Evening	Fashion Tech	Handbags	Lingerie	Menswear	Objects	Outerwear	Shoes	Womenswear
London	78			22	23	20	4	9	23	10	1	6	4	7	0	26	11	78
New York	71			11	18	20	18	4	25	17	2	12	2	8	5	37	9	71
Year 1	33	22	11						9	3	0	4	1	2	1	14	4	33
Year 2	41	23	18						12	6	3	0	1	4	0	15	4	41
Year 3	40	20	20						14	8	2	4	3	4	1	19	6	40
Year 4	22	4	18						7	9	1	4	1	2	3	10	3	22
Year 5	13	9	4						6	1	0	3	0	3	0	5	3	13
Accessories	48	23	25	9	12	14	7	6		13	2	18	5	8	5	29	20	48
Evening	27	10	17	3	6	8	9	1	13		0	7	2	1	1	18	9	27
Fashion Tech	3	1	2	0	0	2	1	0	2	0		0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Handbags	18	6	12	4	3	4	4	3	18	7	0		0	3	2	13	9	18
Lingerie	6	4	2	1	1	3	1	0	5	2	1	0		1	0	1	2	6
Menswear	15	7	8	2	4	4	2	3	0	1	0	0	1		0	7	4	15
Objects	5	0	5	1	0	1	3	0	5	1	0	2	0	0		3	1	5
Outerwear	63	26	37	14	15	19	10	5	29	18	1	13	1	7	3		15	63
Shoes	20	11	9	4	4	6	3	3	20	9	1	9	2	4	1	15		20
Womenswear	149	78	71	33	41	40	22	13	48	27	3	18	6	15	5	63	20	149
Total	149	78	71	33	41	40	22	13	48	27	3	18	6	15	5	63	20	149
% of Total																		
Accessories	32%	29%	35%	27%	29%	35%	32%	46%	48%	67%	67%	100%	83%	53%	100%	46%	100%	32%
Evening	18%	13%	24%	9%	15%	20%	41%	8%	27%	0%	0%	39%	33%	7%	20%	29%	45%	18%
Fashion Tech	2%	1%	3%	0%	0%	5%	5%	0%	4%	0%		0%	17%	0%	0%	2%	5%	2%
Handbags	12%	8%	17%	12%	7%	10%	18%	23%	38%	26%	0%		0%	20%	40%	21%	45%	12%
Lingerie	4%	5%	3%	3%	2%	8%	5%	0%	10%	7%	33%	0%		7%	0%	2%	10%	4%
Menswear	10%	9%	11%	6%	10%	10%	9%	23%	0%	4%	0%	0%	17%		0%	11%	20%	10%
Objects	3%	0%	7%	3%	0%	3%	14%	0%	10%	4%	0%	11%	0%	0%		5%	5%	3%
Outerwear	42%	33%	52%	42%	37%	48%	45%	38%	60%	67%	33%	72%	17%	47%	60%		75%	42%
Shoes	13%	14%	13%	12%	10%	15%	14%	23%	42%	33%	33%	50%	33%	27%	20%	24%		13%
Womenswear	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## A.18: Phase IV: Social Media Analysis

Phase IV Data: Social Media Platform Analysis																				
	Total	London	New York	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Blogspot	Facebook	Google+	Instagram	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Tumblr	Twitter	Unknown	Vimeo	Weibo	YouTube
London	78			22	23	20	4	9	1	50	1	45	2	10	10	51	15	1	3	3
New York	71			11	18	20	18	4	0	53	3	55	0	20	13	44	11	1	1	6
Year 1	33	22	11						0	20	1	26	1	6	5	20	5	1	2	0
Year 2	41	23	18						0	30	1	28	0	8	6	28	7	0	1	3
Year 3	40	20	20						1	28	0	24	1	11	8	26	8	1	0	4
Year 4	22	4	18						0	18	0	17	0	3	3	14	2	0	0	1
Year 5	13	9	4						0	7	2	5	0	2	1	7	4	0	1	1
Blogspot	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Facebook	103	50	53	20	30	28	18	7	1	4	4	86	2	29	23	88	0	1	4	9
Google+	4	1	3	1	1	0	0	2	0	4		4	0	2	0	4	0	0	1	2
Instagram	100	45	55	26	28	24	17	5	1	86	4		2	29	20	82	0	1	4	8
LinkedIn	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Pinterest	30	10	20	6	8	11	3	2	1	29	2	20	1	8	8	27	0	1	1	4
Tumblr	23	10	13	5	6	8	3	1	0	23	0	20	0	8	22	0	1	0	0	4
Twitter	95	51	44	20	28	26	14	7	1	88	4	82	1	27	22	0	2	2	3	8
Unknown	26	15	11	5	7	8	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vimeo	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1
Weibo	4	3	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	1	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	1
YouTube	9	3	6	0	3	4	1	1	1	9	2	8	0	6	4	8	0	1	1	1
Total	149	78	71	33	41	40	22	13	1	103	4	100	2	30	23	95	26	2	4	9
Blogspot	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	100%	1%	0%	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	11%
Facebook	69%	64%	75%	61%	73%	70%	82%	54%	0%	100%	100%	86%	100%	97%	100%	93%	0%	50%	100%	100%
Google+	3%	1%	4%	3%	2%	0%	0%	15%	0%	4%	0%	4%	0%	7%	0%	4%	0%	0%	25%	22%
Instagram	67%	58%	77%	79%	68%	60%	77%	38%	100%	83%	100%		100%	97%	87%	86%	0%	50%	100%	89%
LinkedIn	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pinterest	20%	13%	28%	18%	20%	28%	14%	15%	100%	28%	50%	29%	50%	3%	35%	28%	0%	0%	25%	67%
Tumblr	15%	13%	18%	15%	15%	20%	14%	8%	0%	22%	0%	20%	0%	27%	0%	23%	0%	50%	0%	44%
Twitter	64%	65%	62%	61%	68%	65%	64%	54%	100%	85%	100%	82%	50%	90%	96%	86%	0%	100%	75%	89%
Unknown	17%	19%	15%	15%	17%	20%	9%	31%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Vimeo	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%	11%
Weibo	3%	4%	1%	6%	2%	0%	0%	8%	0%	4%	25%	4%	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	25%	11%
YouTube	6%	4%	8%	0%	7%	10%	5%	8%	100%	9%	50%	8%	0%	20%	17%	8%	0%	50%	25%	100%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## A.19: Phase IV: Collections Per Year & Price-Points Analysis

Phase IV: Collections per Year & Price-Points Analysis																				
	Total	London	New York	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Adv. Contemporary	Contemporary	Designer/Luxury	Entry Designer	Unknown	Collections 0	Collections 1	Collections 2	Collections 3	Collections 4	Collections 6	Collections 10
Total	149	78	71	33	41	40	22	13	12	56	42	22	17	12	2	74	24	30	6	1
London	78			22	23	20	4	9	8	25	18	15	12	6	1	50	10	11	0	0
New York	71			11	18	20	18	4	4	31	24	7	5	0	1	24	14	19	6	1
Year 1	33	22	11							11	8	6	2	25	3	3	3	0	0	0
Year 2	41	23	18						3	16	7	10	5	3	1	22	9	5	1	0
Year 3	40	20	20						4	16	14	4	2	1	1	20	9	7	2	0
Year 4	22	4	18						0	7	9	2	4	4	0	4	3	9	1	1
Year 5	13	9	4						1	6	4	0	2	2	0	3	0	6	2	0
Price-point Unknown	17	12	5	4	5	2	4	2												
Contemporary	56	25	31	11	16	16	7	6							1	24	11	12	6	1
Adv Contemporary	12	8	4	4	3	4	0	1							0	10	0	1	0	0
Entry Designer	22	15	7	1	13	5	3	0							1	13	5	3	0	0
Designer Luxury	42	18	24	8	7	14	9	4							20	7	14	14	0	0
Collections 0	12	6	6	2	3	1	4	2	1	1	1	0	9	1						
Collections 1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0						
Collections 2	74	50	24	25	22	20	4	3	10	24	20	13	7	7						
Collections 3	24	10	14	3	9	9	3	0	0	11	7	5	1	1						
Collections 4	30	11	19	3	5	7	9	6	1	12	14	3	0	0						
Collections 6	6	0	6	0	1	2	1	2	0	6	0	0	0	0						
Collections 10	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0						
Percentages																				
Price-point Unknown	11%	15%	7%	12%	12%	5%	18%	15%						75%	0%	9%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Contemporary	38%	32%	44%	33%	39%	40%	32%	46%						8%	50%	32%	46%	40%	100%	100%
Adv Contemporary	8%	10%	6%	12%	7%	10%	0%	8%						8%	0%	14%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Entry Designer	15%	19%	10%	3%	32%	13%	14%	0%						0%	50%	18%	21%	10%	0%	0%
Designer Luxury	28%	23%	34%	24%	17%	35%	41%	31%						8%	1000%	9%	58%	47%	0%	0%
Collections 0	8%	8%	8%	6%	7%	3%	18%	15%	8%	2%	2%	0%	53%	8%						
Collections 1	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	5%	0%							
Collections 2	50%	64%	34%	76%	54%	50%	18%	23%	83%	43%	48%	59%	41%							
Collections 3	16%	13%	20%	9%	22%	23%	14%	0%	0%	20%	17%	23%	6%							
Collections 4	20%	14%	27%	9%	12%	18%	41%	46%	8%	21%	33%	14%	0%							
Collections 6	4%	0%	8%	0%	2%	5%	5%	15%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%							
Collections 10	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%							

### A.20: Phase IV: Own E-commerce Analysis

Designers with own e-store / shop hosted on their own website

	Year Category 1	Year Category 2	Year Category 3	Year Category 4	Year Category 5	Total
Shop w/ Stockists Data	12	12	13	8	1	46
Total Designer Data	19	22	28	14	2	85
% w/ Shop Data	63%	55%	46%	57%	50%	54%
Shop Total	17	17	18	10	4	66
Total Designers	33	41	40	22	13	149
<b>% w Shop Total</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Shop London Data	9	5	6	2	1	23
Shop London Total	13	8	6	2	1	30
Total London Designers	22	23	20	4	9	78
<b>% London Designers Shop</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>38%</b>
Shop NY Data	3	7	7	6	N/A	23
Shop NY Total	4	9	12	8	3	36
Total New York Designers	11	18	20	18	4	71
<b>% New York Designers Shop</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>51%</b>
Shop Unknown Stockist	5	5	5	2	3	20
Total Unknown Stockist	14	19	12	12	11	68
<b>% Shop w/ Unknown Stockists</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>

(1 of 2)

Details	
Shop w/ Stockists Data	Designers with a shop for which there is data on stockists
Total Designer Data	Total number of designers for which there is stockist data
% w/ Shop Data	Percentage of designers who have a shop and share stockist data out of all the designers who share stockist data
Shop Total	The number of designers who have a shop total
Total Designers	The total number of designers in the database
% w Shop Total	Percentage of designers who have a shop out of those in the database
Shop London Data	The number of designers who have a shop, who are based in London, who share stockist data
Shop London Total	The number of designers who have a shop who are based in London
Total London Designers	Total number of London designers in the database
% London Designers Shop	The percentage of London designers in the database who have a shop
Shop NY Data	The number of designers who are based in New York, who have a shop, who share stockist data
Shop NY Total	The number of designers who are based in New York who have a shop
Total New York Designers	Total number of designers based in New York
% New York Designers Shop	The percentage of designers based in New York who have a shop
Shop Unknown Stockist	The number of designers who do not share stockist data who have a shop
Total Unknown Stockist	The total number of designers who do not share stockist data
% Shop w/ Unknown Stockists	The percentage of designers who do not share stockist data, who have a shop

(2 of 2)

## A.21: Sample Memos

### Interview 1 Memo: 2 April 2014 — Immediate Impressions

- Successful right off ... but how?
- Hobby turned job
- Rapid growth — controlled — doesn't want to get too big too fast.
- How soon international?
- Showroom / sales = outsourced.
- 35 stockists
- Mentioned wanting larger 'advertising' budget
- ! the brand is the collection — its evolution
- Aesthetically described consumer ... not demographically
- Social media — likes computers
- Want to hire a business manager — CEO — answers emails all day, not design, sets concepts, mood boards.
- Cash flow — prayer, income only twice a year.
- "Successful" despite being unlike other designers who start with \$200,000 ... she started with only \$5,000.
- Business plan already out of date.
- Showroom/Sales Agent — Not connected to the selling process ... therefore not connected to internationalisation process?
- Evolution to structured deadlines — Organisation; but always last minute.

### Interview 1 Memo: 10 June 2014 — Update

- Timeline:
- 2008 started taking it seriously
- 2011 - first celebrity exposure
- 2012 - moved into 'real' studio (not home-based).
- At about year 3 - has currently 3 paid full-time and 4 interns.

Reflecting on student work — resources are limited — shows a reflection on her own naiveté: 'If I knew then what I know now'. Knowledge learned from experience. There's a period of experimentation where the designer 'tries things on' in the marketplace from collection to collection. Then one season takes off. This season is also closely related to her previous professional background. It's the key element that creates her unique voice in the market. And it's the key element of her brand story. The brand name is no longer necessarily connected to its original inspiration or meaning. But it is still personally connected to the designer.

There's a period of identity creation, where the experimentation occurs. It's almost like related to a 20-something going through that period of 20-something-ness of figuring out who they are.

Expanding into various markets — not only is she internationalising right from the start, she's also quickly expanding her product breadth across different product ranges.

Two roads to success: editorial & commercial. Appealing to a celebrity audience & press vs. appealing to general audience. She does both. Creating a collection that translates across boundaries. {like creating inter-disciplinary connections}

Gaming consumption! Consumers engaging with the brand they can't afford on social media ... like a game, for both designer & consumers. It's a consumer question: why do people consume social media ... related to the consumption of games? Fashion and social media online for women is like gaming for guys? Why do people consume games: escape, aspirational, self-invention? Social media is a way for the brand to create its own self-invention.

- Two definitions of editorial.
- Big thing for brands: creating editorial content (communication) & sending pieces out for celebrity endorsement.
- Influencers may not be celebrities, necessarily.
- Discrimination - financial discrimination — brand doesn't fit the stereotypical start-up story of large initial financial investment. Bootstrap.
- Brand success — not thinking of creating a new business model ... the product is new, the point of view is new. But the business model itself may be very aspirational according to previous designers or brands. Changes to the business model are created by market demands and environments?
- Talks about wanting to not have to worry about trends, but defines her customer as a trend driven consumer. ...
- Brand foundation: natural process, unique perspective / background (how related?)  
Diffusion line v. license: diffusion = design control, licensing = release of design control.
- Brand identity.
- The fashion system — every six months, creates a forced deadline, snapshot in time of creative thinking. But having key pieces from season to season allows for evolution. Pursuit of perfection.

### **London Fashion Week - SS15 - September 2014**

*Presentation 1:* art installation where the audience is as much a participant as observer. Gallery like display. Very little actual looking at the clothes — it's more about taking pictures of the collection, of being 'in' the collection. Clothing style is overall — 'editorial'. Display amazing to see the detail of the garments but felt a bit stagnant after a few minutes. Limited collection. Expensive set / materials.

*Presentation 2:* emotionally moving, well organised and exhibited a context that you maybe wouldn't expect from a presentation.

*Showroom conversation 1:* Toning down editorial to make things covetable. Forgoing presentations to focus on sales.

*Showroom conversation 2:* CEO first, designer second. Desire to be an international brand.

*Presentation 3:* Use of fashion film. —> fashion editorial —> designer control in a co-creation world. So much focus on the consumer aspect of co-creation that we forget that designers have to initially create and present their identity.

*Conversation 3:* Brand Architecture — Something simple that you can distribute to your people so they can talk intelligently.

*Presentation 4:* amazing presentation / lookbook shoot during presentation. Used space well. Money saving resources. Domino effect of models (7 + 1 to change = 8 models total).

*Key points:*

- Innovative use of resources.
- Innovation in presentation.
- Things that illustrate the brand.
- Tools, tactics, strategies and resources.

#### **Controlling Growth - November 2014**

Controlling Growth is the intersection of internationalisation and branding {I'm not sure this is exactly right ...}. Growth does happen in stages and those stages are defined by segments of financial success — segmented in the sense that demographics are segmented by age {as an example}. There's not inherently a difference between 29 and 30. But there is a difference in a 20 - 29 age group and a 30-39 age group. - While growth stages are defined into financial segments, they are marked by milestones closely related identity, image, and ultimately branding. There is an overlapping of segmentation of firm age, financial success, & brand identity development.

Internationalisation still happens at the outset — so the firms are 'born global' — which can be illustrated by the networks exhibited during fashion week: designers from various countries exhibiting at NY Fashion Week and designers from London & New York {& other places} selling in Paris. This illustration created a problem which created a definition of what it means to be a London or New York based design firm: studio based.

So while these firms are 'born global,' their growth still moves through a period of EXPERIMENTATION to DEFINITION to ... {something else - not sure of the word here}. This progression shapes their strategy for their end/ultimate goal, how they move through the network, the consumer definition, & the key elements of their brand (specifically defined by some labels as a 'Brand Book').

As they grow through stages {milestones} they make clearly focused decisions about their consumer, their key garments, textures, colours, and brand descriptors which they use in the education of their employees and stakeholders via messaging and



presentation. This also influences their strategy for growth in who they sell to, how, what markets, whether they use social media or not, what editorial outlets they court, and what messages they share.

In this idea of ‘controlled growth’ there is also the counter of it being ‘out of control’ and the fact that recognising that certain factors are out of their control {or more than they can handle at the moment, etc.} or require their influence in the face of CO-CREATION --> there are certain elements that the ‘market’ places on them — both good & bad — that they have to adopt or take counter-steps to refute. {For example, one designer is trying to present her label as wearable & more than black in spite of it being labeled in the marketplace as all about black. And another designer is trying to break-out of the ‘next big thing / emerging designer’ box they are continually placed in by editorial outlets. They are ready to be a brand ... not an emerging brand. There are other examples as well.}

### **Developing Collections & Brand - 13 January 2015**

Designers go through a set process in creating each collection; they are taught the steps necessary to achieve a focused, cohesive collection either through a formal or self-taught fashion education. Fashion designers don’t re-invent how to design, they simply design based on a set process adopted throughout the industry and dictated by the fashion schedule that begins and ends with fashion week. The end result of the design process is the collection, often described as the heart of the brand, or simply, ‘the brand’ by participants. Each garment, and cumulatively the collection(s), illustrates specific attributes about the brand. In this sense, successful firms design the company, injecting the same focus and clarity to their business model as they do to their brand identity as illustrated through each collection. This design covers all aspects of creation: collection strategy, distribution strategy, management strategy and brand strategy. If the collection is the brand, as it is described by designers, then all aspects of the company (need to) support its design, which is created with a singular tone-of-voice, authenticity and integrity.

Therefore, the initial theoretical proposal is that successful designers create their companies with the same authenticity and integrity (based on their background and personal identity) used in designing their collections. Integrity is understanding the DFE’s own unique brand story. It is related to confidence and the desire to maintain that core story throughout the continual evolution of the company. Integrity is very much connected to controlling growth. These are all human behaviours connected via the operation of the firm within a social system. The unique point-of-view carried throughout each collection is the manifestation of their design aesthetic; this thread becomes the brand identity. The collection is an illustration of the brand identity initially presented to their network, the industry and the market. In short, successful designers design their companies the same way they design their collections, incorporating three principles:

1. As in designing a collection, designers undergo a set process in creating their company.
2. Successful implementation of this (sometimes iterative) process dictates how designers move through various stages of development.

3. Both the process and the stages of development are influenced and acted upon by internal and external forces.

In this sense, the process of creating a company is a design process, requiring the same thinking as in design: experimentation. Collection development and business development don't need to be separate and opposing processes because they are the same thing. Just as in the practice of creating fashion where the end result is unknown until the completion of the collection, successful companies don't know exactly what the end result will be to their brand, distribution and management strategies. Their development requires continual experimentation and reflection, just as their everyday practice, background and resources is the starting point of their strategy.

### **Internationalisation & Sales & Brand - 18 February 2016**

It was a New York designer who said, 'Shipping to Tokyo was the same thing as shipping to LA, it's just a different address.' When she discussed her internationalisation process, explaining that her external showroom and sales agent gathered sales and she received the orders and filled them, often having little interaction with the retailer buyers. But other designers emphasised a more hands-on approach to sales and the importance of having sales in-house because it keeps it close to the design process. New York designers talked about this more than the London brands. But they emphasised that it didn't have an overt influence on the inspiration of collections from season-to-season, but sales was an important source of information as to how they were doing in the market, it was their connection to who was buying their clothes, and the feedback they got from buyers — whether it was rejected or accepted — to guide future design decision-making. Rather than location, it was more the different designer's perspective that influenced how they incorporated feedback. Individually, throughout New York and London, designers either accepted or rejected feedback. I think it depends on how well their interpretation fits with their own design philosophy, personality, image of what they are doing. For example, one London designer talked about how she got feedback that she should do more coats because they really are selling well. And she said that's great because she loves to do coats. The designers who appear to be not struggling — they were making progress, had examples of upcoming projects and opportunities, and didn't just talk in a 'wishful' manner but had a clear sense of direction — had a strong sense of who they were and what they were doing. It was important that they were building a business. They emphasised a focus on product and sales. It wasn't just about their own design and creation. But that interaction within the industry was important. They wanted to be a part of the industry, 'make a small contribution.'

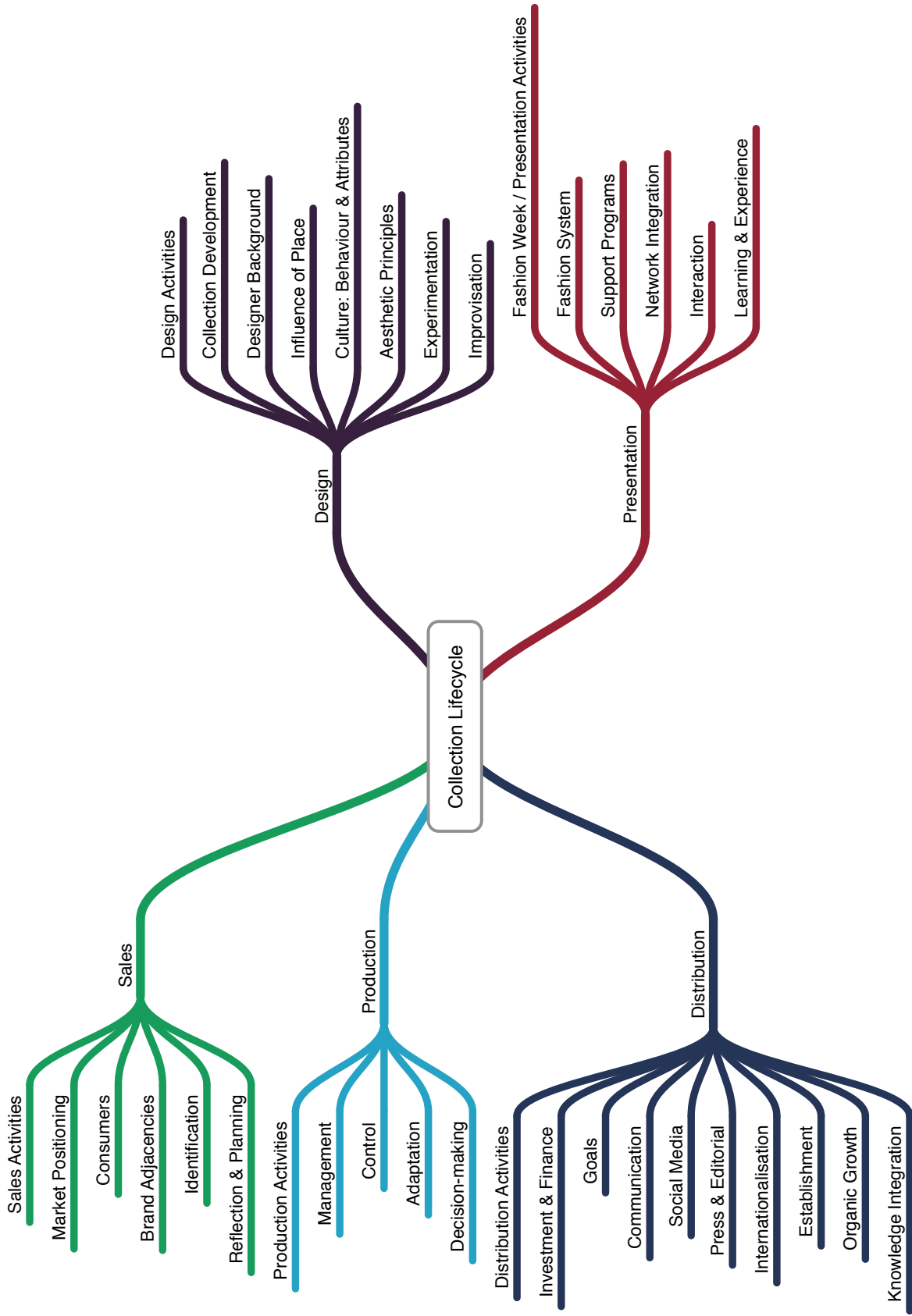
And I waited then for a long time to actually contribute a collection chiefly out of respect. Just because the market is more saturated now than ever, but it's always been over saturated, quote end quote,' (Participant 7).

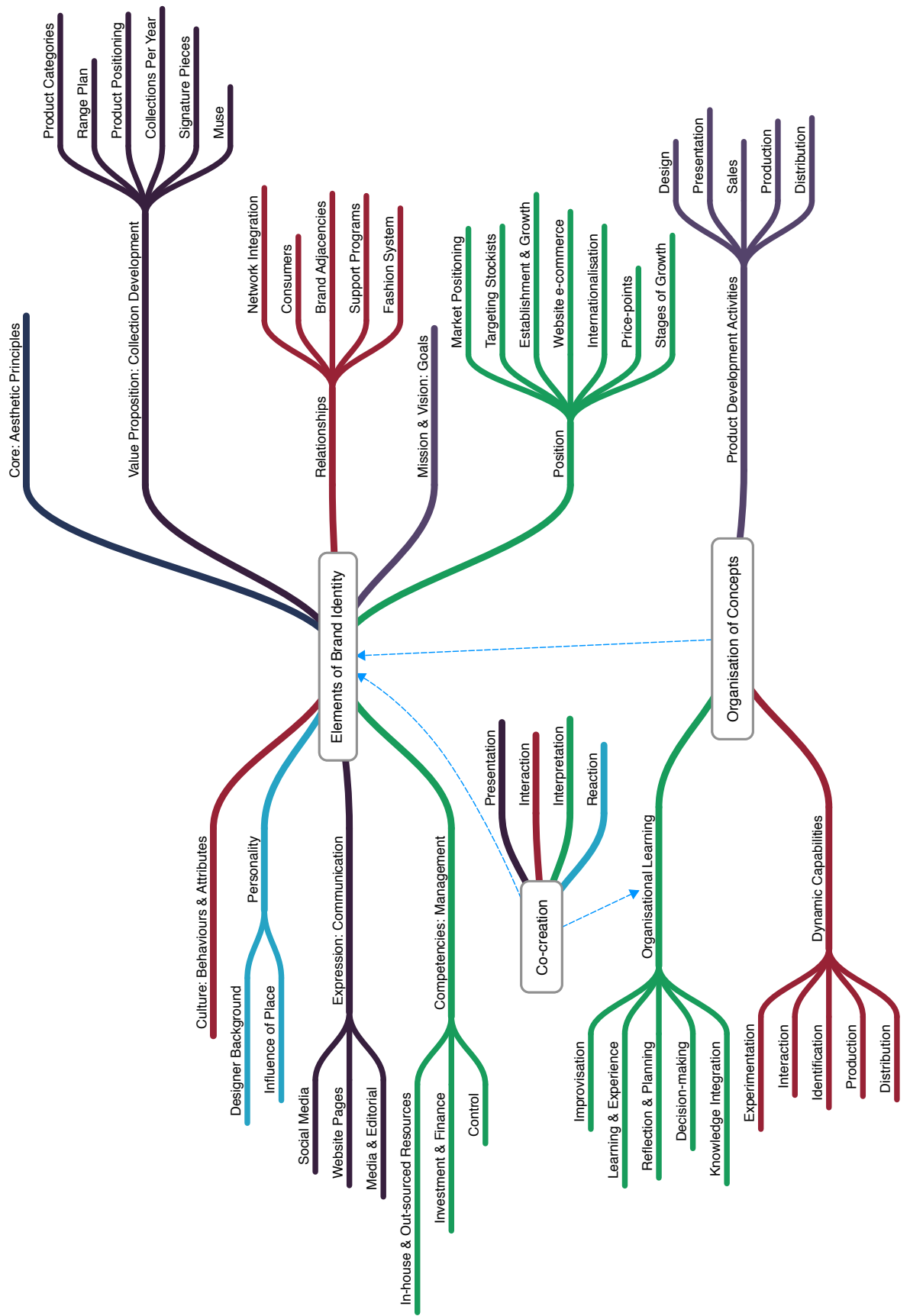
I can think of a friend who started with kind of like a distressed t-shirt. It did very well. But it wasn't a collection. It was an idea, it was a concept. But they were selling lots of them. They received investment and they had to figure out how to turn

that one article, and whatever the concepts were and the rules that were in that article into a full collection. For that designer, that's when that turned into a brand, essentially. ... Usually when you're starting as an emerging designer you have a few pieces that are popular and that are getting out there. So people know you by your coat, or pair of pants, or a certain fabric that you use. So you're not known yet for your design until you've contributed enough until say either pants, skirts, dresses or whatever cross-platform you choose, in accessories and things, you don't have enough information publicly available about yourself to be considered a brand, (Participant 7)

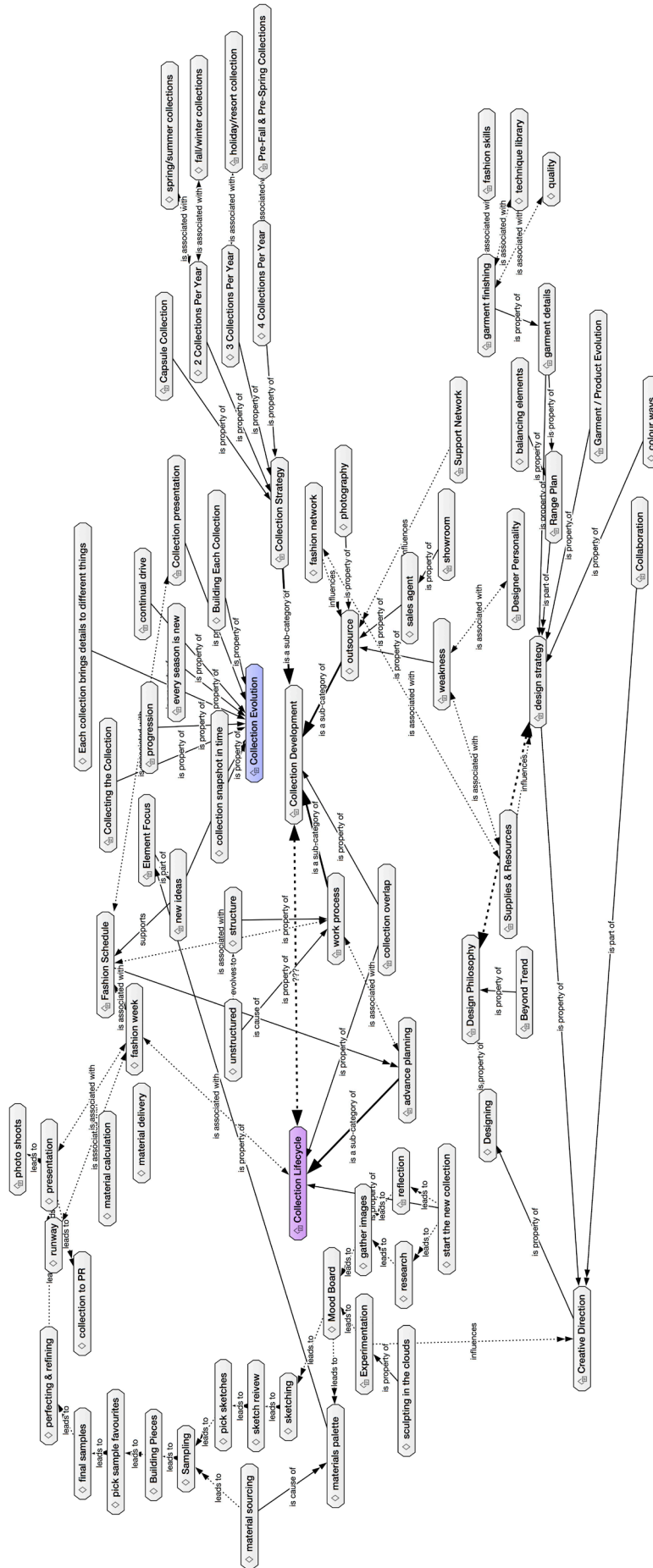
This is evidence that it's the identifiable image that defines that it is a brand. But as Participants 21 & 22 said, it is the designers that define what it is. They create a space for definition of the brand and while they are showered with opinions, they control who gets to engage with that space. Who has influence on the decisions they make to run their business. The designers are the directors for the brand. They provide it a direction.

# A.22: MindNode Pro Mind Map

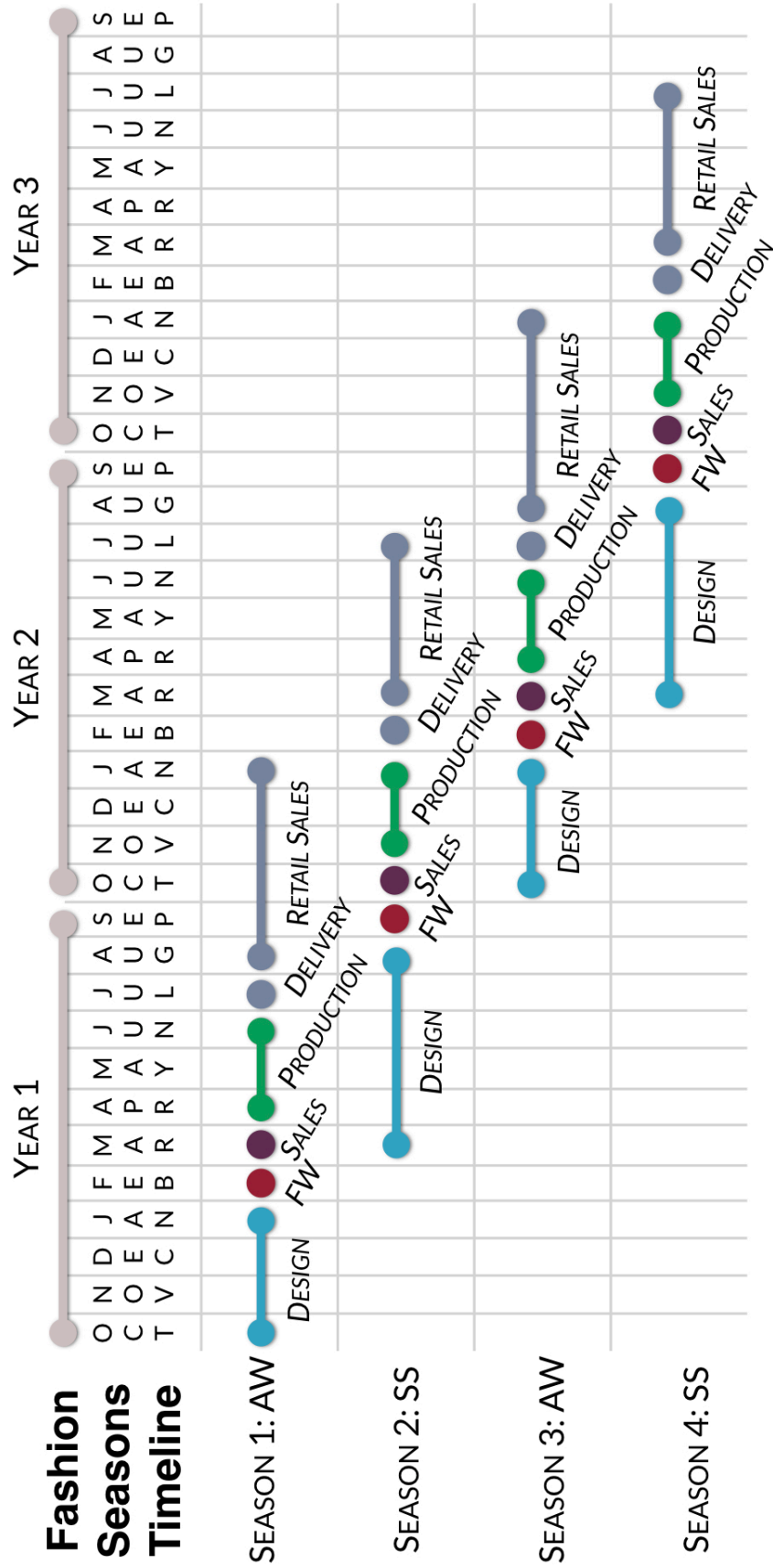




# A.23: Atlas.ti Network



A.24: Fashion Seasons Timeline



## A.25: Phase II: Coding Matrix

December 2014; Phase II: Coding Matrix (Scott 2004; Scott & Howell 2008)

Category	What	When	Where	Why	How	Consequence
Company Structure	Personal Identity & Background Personal & Professional Network	Pre-Company Initial Start up Ongoing Evolution	In London & New York (?) ... Fashion Centres	Background and Resources influences the strategies	The skills and personality of the designer influences how the company is structured and how resources are put to use.	The authenticity and integrity of the designer influences its market acceptance and brand identity development. Origin of the brand
Background & Resources = Foundation	Management / Finance / Ownership Commitment: Personal & Company Learning & Experience {Designer}					
Design Process	<b>Collection Development</b> Sales and Distribution Marketing & Communication	Initial Start up, evolves throughout as resources change.	International sourcing and distribution within the fashion industry network.	Collection development/ lifecycle is created around the fashion industry schedule. All designers require engagement with the fashion industry network.	Strategy begins as the practice of the everyday, and then through learning and experience growth in resources and network acceptance →	The company begins to plan, think and make strategic decisions, resulting in a clear identity and further growth.
Strategy & Momentum	<b>Positioning</b> Fashion Industry Network {Collection}					
Co-creation	Industry, Market and <b>Network</b> Consumer/Customer (External forces on brand identity and strategy) {Community}	Throughout the company's development; has more influence as the company grows in brand awareness up to a point when the company limits the influence of feedback.	Has greatest influence in early and emerging stages. (Update: I would say now greatest influence up to Early stage, by the emerging stage the DFE already has experience in the negotiation of its brand via co-creation)	Strategy and company structure are still in formation. Buyers and editors (and the end consumer) place demands/ requests on the designer to increase the product's desirability to the individual making the request. Feedback can be conflicting and overwhelming.	Through <b>presentation</b> at fashion week and via direct-to-consumer sales and social media.	The designer/company makes strategic decisions based on the influence of co-creation which can be positive or negative. Something the designer accepts, or rejects and works to refute.
Network Engagement						
Brand Identity	Output of the first three categories which affect the desirability of the product, unique point-of-view, brand consistency.	Throughout development but gets stronger/solid as the brand grows in awareness.	Designer/Company - Clear and defined. Network - Unique positioning Market - Growing awareness	The brand identity is <b>designed</b> via the authenticity of the designer, the creation of strategy, and the filter of the market (brand image).	Via the intuitive nature of development.	Brand identity is a consequence. Increased brand awareness.
Design						
Organic Growth	Successful financial development via increased sales and product output.	Organic growth happens throughout. Targeted growth happens as firms become more established.	On an international level.	Output of the company structure (resources), strategy and acceptance of the industry and market.	Via the intuitive nature of development.+ engagement with the network	Increasing sales, opportunity and firm stability.
Growth						
Learning Controlled Growth	Combination of all elements: inputs and outputs.	The company has: - clear brand identity & image in the market. - sustainable strategy - successful financial growth	Established firms & Ongoing development internationally.	Iterative process as the firm grows in learning and experience in the industry.	Combination of the 5 sub-categories.	Brand success in a global market!
BSP?						



## A.26: Coding Paradigm

December 2015: Coding Paradigm				
Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it.</i> WHO & WHAT?	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out.</i> WHEN & WHERE?	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>	Consequences <i>Consequences it produces?</i>
<b>Aesthetic Principles</b>	<p>Designer &amp; their design aesthetic; defined as codes of the house; design rules that guide the brand.</p>	<p>Designing the collection over time. They're always there, but they take awhile to pin down. "Always been there" "authenticity". Connected to the collection, designer; exist from day one but becomes clear and evolves over time.</p>	<p>Informs the design of the collections going forward; informs other decisions about the brand; "what they stand for"; interacts with the collection strategy, the network (who and what markets to target), tone of voice for messaging, how they describe the collection during interaction.</p>	<p>Component of defining the brand. Creates a guide for decision making.</p>
<b>Behaviours &amp; Attributes</b>	<p>Designers and employees; personality traits and behaviours</p>	<p>Defines the approach of the designer during interaction: getting sales/press and reaching out for help. Talking about the collections/brand. 'Confidence', dedication, integrity, luck, redevelop/rethink/redo ... not repeating but not wholly new ideas either. Building, evolution</p>	<p>Behaviour is an action of the designer and also their perspective / personality: dedication, continual drive, passion. Informs organisational culture</p>	<p>Ability to reach out and develop relationships, seek and create opportunities</p>
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	<p>Household name, visibility: it's a goal and a measurement of success both within the fashion industry and within the consumer market</p>	<p>Via social media and press during daily interaction. Broader brand awareness occurs during collaborations with large established retailers as well or participation in support programs</p>	<p>Social media, press, collaborations, support programs, (key) retailers, celebrity endorsements, ... any communication opportunity</p>	<p>Increases the visibility of the DFE within the industry and market, first part of getting new customers/ consumers developing a following</p>

December 2015: Coding Paradigm			
Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it. WHO &amp; WHAT?</i>	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out. WHEN &amp; WHERE?</i>	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>
<b>Brand Strategy</b>	all the elements that create the framework around the brand identity	Brand identity defined by aesthetic principles, DNA, concept, culture, brand adjacencies. It is the production of defining the elements that define the brand	Assisted in development by ambassadors/advocates, co-creation; Expressed through touch points (points of interaction): the collection, communication activities, employees, positioning, artefacts
<b>Co-Creation</b>	feedback, demands, requests, communicated impressions, support, recognition of others' control	presentation of the brand, and collection to the fashion industry, personal network, consumers	interaction with buyers and editors, consumers, influencers, key industry individuals, personal and professional network
<b>Collection Strategy</b>	all the elements and activities that go into product development; number of collections per year, key garments, budget to do collection, range plan, product category	from design through production	decisions made throughout the design and production process. Creates and is guided by the aesthetic principles, brand, resources
<b>Communication</b>	media and activities that facilitate interaction with the collection/designer/brand; where the brand is experienced with press, buyers, consumers, network, potential investors, other stakeholders	online, in-store, fashion week, media, collaborators, any point of interaction with the brand at any time.	happens via presentation of the brand/collection/designer ... i.e. the designer/collection/brand presents an opportunity for interaction or seeks interaction at points of collection development and distribution
			Consequences it produces?  Provides necessary limitations: consistency and evolution; brand awareness, impact and image
			produces reactions to the brand which the DFE must interpret and react to either positively or negatively
			product positioning in the market in relation to price-point, quality, potential press and stockists
			brand awareness, (social media) engagement, sales, relationship development

December 2015: Coding Paradigm				
Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it.</i> WHO & WHAT?	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out.</i> WHEN & WHERE?	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>	Consequences <i>Consequences it produces?</i>
<b>Consumer</b>	learning about and defining the consumer, who the designer designs for (self, muse, target); consumer behaviour & attributes (global, demographics, girl/woman), educating/cultivating core consumer (full-price) base	learn about the consumer over time; the fastest source of consumer information is their own ecommerce; sometimes they discover that the consumer is not who they expect they are (older); demographically target same consumer based on income, but aesthetically can educate and cultivate their own unique consumer following	two types of consumers based on point of interaction: aspirational/editorial consumer via social media who are avid/casual followers of the brand but unable to purchase due to price but might be able to one day, the other type is the product consumer	sell-throughs, engagement, relationship development; learning produces a clarified target group (knowledge)
<b>Decision Making</b>	data and knowledge to make decisions (not) enough, passing on opportunities, accepting opportunities, sifting focus of resources	points in time when a decision is made, but also recognising what information is required to make those decisions.	knowledge and experience (lacking, gaining, using); related to the development of strategy	keeps with or changes activities or strategies
<b>Design</b>	all the elements and activities related to the design of the collection; part of the collection strategy	is the start of the collection and company, and repeats for each collection the company produces, it's a routine that evolves over time based on feedback from consumers, editors, buyers, influencers, stakeholders	experimentation influenced by the designer and their background, interacts with others via personal and professional network, fashion system and consumers, reaction to this interaction (co-creation) produces aesthetic principles	produces the collection, knowledge and experience with the routine of creating a collection (for sales), refinement and consistency, defines the brand

December 2015: Coding Paradigm			
Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it. WHO &amp; WHAT?</i>	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out. WHEN &amp; WHERE?</i>	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>
<b>Designer Background</b>	who the designer is and the elements that make up their influence on the collection, designs and brand	beginning with the launching of the company (launch pads), but also includes the designer's relationship to their location (influence of place), education, previous (fashion) experience	illustrated in the decisions of the designer and employees: informs the aesthetic of the collections, the resources (tangible and intangible) of the company, and the ultimate heritage/story that is created by the brand
<b>Designer Brands / Aspirational Mentor</b>	These are all the other brands mentioned within the interviews, including large established brands, peers and competitors	Elements of other brands which the focal DFE admires/dislikes informs the decisions, perspectives, goals of the company.	DFEs look to other brands as reference points, it may be a small aspect of a business model, the involvement of the designer in the business aspects (or not), overall aesthetics (brand adjacencies), they may have direct formal (via support program) or informal (personal network) mentorship, or indirect admiration/disdain
<b>Distribution City</b>	These are all the stockists, cities, countries, regions that were mentioned in the interviews; also includes press and collaborations	In relation to sales distribution and/or fashion week; communication distribution	Begins with presentation of the brand, garments or collection; stockist in various regions are acquired via sales
			Consequences it produces?  path dependency of the company and brand
			Being able to discuss similarities and differences with other brands in the industry helps create brand positioning; it also provides long-term goals and vision, but not necessarily season-to-season design imitation
			Internationalisation and brand awareness, global distribution, key stockists, key press outlets

December 2015: Coding Paradigm				
Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it.</i> WHO & WHAT?	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out.</i> WHEN & WHERE?	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>	Consequences <i>Consequences it produces?</i>
<b>Distribution</b>	All the elements and activities related to the distribution of the finished product(s)	Includes types of distribution options (e-commerce, wholesale, consignment, retail, pop-up), relationships and agents to facilitate distribution, an international or domestic emphasis, customer service (shipping and returns for e-commerce), sell-through measurement and incentives, approach to distribution of the product (targeted or open)	Includes the logistics of delivering product to retailers in the case of wholesale, encouraging sell-throughs at boutique/specialty stores and department stores, and the interaction with the end consumer either via shop associates or directly	Self-through of product is of key importance, this is the point at which cash flow is generated and growth is realised
<b>Experimentation</b>	Refers to the process of experimentation by the designers either in creating their company and/or the design of the collections	The first three seasons are described as a period of experimentation, especially for slower growth brands. Experimentation also refers to the process of experimenting to design new product ("sculpting in the clouds")	Trial and error and creation: it is apparent in situations where previous knowledge and experience is lacking, especially in the earliest stages of the company when the brand is still finding its footing. But is also expressed each season during the design process & new situations/experiences	Positioning within the market and product innovation

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Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it. WHO &amp; WHAT?</i>	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out. WHEN &amp; WHERE?</i>	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>
<b>Fashion System</b>	The fashion system is the entire fashion industry and its supply chain; also includes the schedule of sales and distribution within the system, shifts and changes occurring within the industry (e-commerce & new business models) which disrupt the system	The fashion machine falls within it as the closed group of influencers that have power and control within the industry (Ann Wintour is an example). The fashion network also falls within it as the network of relationships that help or hinder a DFE's progress	For the DFE the goal is to integrate into the network and develop a firm positioning via the development of relationships  The relationships throughout the supply chain provide access to tangible and intangible resources
<b>Fashion Week</b>	All the elements and logistics associated with showing at fashion week via a showroom, presentation or catwalk show including venues, locations, models, guest lists, hair and makeup, lighting, etc.	Fashion Week are key points within the fashion schedule. Designers show at either London or New York fashion weeks and may travel to Paris for sales.	It is a period of presentation for the DFE brand to interact and showcase their involvement within the industry. Some view it as a necessary advertising expense to connect with stockists, press and consumers and generate PR buzz around the collection  This period of time is an important opportunity to generate brand awareness, sales and develop relationships with members of the industry

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Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it.</i> WHO & WHAT?	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out.</i> WHEN & WHERE?	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>	Consequences <i>Consequences it produces?</i>
<b>(Organic) Growth</b>	Includes the concepts related to expansion, stages of growth measured by the DFEs, and resources to grow, entrepreneurship, internationalisation	Growth occurs as a result of sales, self-throughs, and press. It also refers to the personal growth of the designer based on learning and experience. Growth trap: requiring financial resources to gain employees while at the same time requiring employees to gain financial resources. Designer personal growth: aesthetic evolution of the designer	Growth is expressed as a measure of brand awareness (increased press), sell-through rate, number of stockists, number of employees, and specific financial stages. It also is expressed by limiting decisions in an effort to control growth in relation to goals, aesthetic principles (brand alignment of aesthetic - positioning - opportunities)	Increased resources and power within relationships to negotiate better terms for sales margins; increased brand awareness; personal fulfillment of the designer
<b>Imagery &amp; Visuals</b>	Communication tools that express the brand, collections	Produced via relationships with photographers, graphic artists, press (editorial)	Via social media, websites, editorial press; means of connecting with consumer	Illustrates the brand and its consistency with the aesthetic of the collections, its heritage, its messaging
<b>Influence of Place</b>	What it means to be an American/New York, British/London/European or International designer; being influenced by where the designer is from/located; being influenced to adapt designs for target distribution geographic locations	During the design process as inspiration source, adaptation of the collections for specific regions, and positioning of the company via interaction with buyers and press	During presentation of the collection/designer/brand; it is part of the designer's background (path dependence); it is part of the dialogue for how to discuss the brand	Path dependence, inspiration for design innovation, market positioning

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Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it. WHO &amp; WHAT?</i>	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out. WHEN &amp; WHERE?</i>	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>
<b>Investment &amp; Finance</b>	All the elements related to financial structure of the company (independent ownership < —> formal investment by luxury group); cash flow and budgeting, alternative sources of funding (collaborations, freelancing)	Throughout the development and growth of the company, financial capital is a key resource	<p>Budgeting, seeking and getting investment, reconfirming non-financial resources to accommodate budget shortfalls</p> <p>Measure of growth or profitability of the company in relation to its historical position; produces increased resources (employees) to facilitate further growth; lack of resources creates limitations that can hinder growth or spur innovation</p>
<b>Launch Point</b>	The event that launched the company	Can be an art exhibition or project, formal competition or support program, experimenting in the market by introducing new product to 'see if it sells'; proactively planning (strategic entry); related to the designer's personality (confidence and commitment) and resources	<p>It is the path dependent result of designers background and previous experience, network relationships and the start of the company and may form a part of the brand story</p> <p>Produces opportunity for engagement within the fashion system, a specific event may provide financial resources and impetus for starting the company</p>
<b>Learning &amp; Experience</b>	Learning about the business, collecting data, development of the designer and company based on interaction	Connected to decision-making and organisational learning	<p>It may be expressed as trial and error (lack of learning and experience) or as planned practice; result of interaction</p> <p>Helps to identify the brand and opportunities for growth</p>



December 2015: Coding Paradigm				
Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it. WHO &amp; WHAT?</i>	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out. WHEN &amp; WHERE?</i>	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>	Consequences <i>Consequences it produces?</i>
<b>Management</b>	The management of the 'business': Business model, employees, and resources	Includes the relationship of the designer to the 'business' aspects of the company, managing of the day-to-day aspects of the business, meeting deadlines	Planning (or not) according to resources; developing them processes and changing them as the company grows (dynamic capabilities), identifying SWOT (un)consciously	Decision-making and action; plans and competencies
<b>Market Positioning</b>	All the elements and range of decisions along dimensions related to the positioning of the brand and collections within the market	Price-point, commercial or conceptual garments, celebrity endorsement, brand adjacencies, core product categories, target consumers, 'filling a gap', product use (day-to-night)	Influences and is influenced by the consistent design of the collections (aesthetic principles)	Market segmentation, brand adjacencies (where it sits on the shop floor). goal is alignment across dimensions connecting to the brand and collections (product)
<b>Network</b>	A key resource for the firm; it is the personal and professional relationships the designer/employees/brand develops with stakeholders	During interaction of the designer/ employees/brand with others at various touch-points throughout the design, development and distribution of the collection	Ability to access resources throughout the supply chain to develop product, generate press and gain sales, sell-through; it is the support system for the company/brand	Brand ambassadors, opportunities, access to resources, limitations
<b>Improvisation</b>	The absence of planning in which the everyday practice of management guides decision-making (meeting deadlines); reactive	During (management) decisions: experimentation, trial and error, 'figuring it out as you go'; during the earlier stages of the company; during a lack of learning and experience	Making reactive decisions, changing and switching back and forth between opportunities, growth by necessity	Learning and experience; opportunities for progress/growth (forward or backward /positive or negative)

December 2015: Coding Paradigm			
Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it. WHO &amp; WHAT?</i>	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out. WHEN &amp; WHERE?</i>	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>
<b>Press &amp; Editorial</b>	Editorial placement & features, public relations 'buzz'	Within the (fashion) media; primarily online and print throughout the development of the collection; helpful to encourage sell-throughs when featured garments are in-store	Facilitated and encouraged by network relationships, existing PR buzz, product innovation, celebrity placements/styling/endorsement
<b>Product Category</b>	The categories of products produced by the DFE: womenswear, menswear, accessories, etc.; includes main collection and diffusion lines/collaborations	Part of the collection strategy and business model; key (1st) product categories can become signatures; also includes extensions into other (adjacent or complementary) product categories	The design, development and distribution of the collection
<b>Sales Strategy</b>	All the elements and logistics related to the sales of the collection prior to production	During the presentation of the collection to wholesale buyers via a showroom, sales agent or in-house sales director; during scheduled periods of the year (fashion week for main collections)	Interaction with buyers throughout the global fashion system
<b>Showroom</b>	The elements related to the point of wholesale orders; showroom may be run by an independent agent (outsourced) or by the internal sales team (own retail, permanent in-studio, short-term, rent-a-rail)	Its a visual, physical space to showcase the collection to buyers and other stakeholders; most important during sales periods throughout the fashion schedule	It is a point of interaction for the DFE with industry stakeholders (press and buyers); independent showrooms provide a positive (objective third party) and negative (filter between sales and design) for the DFE brand
			Consequences it produces?  Brand awareness; validation of network integration; market positioning; sell-throughs  Market positioning; product category extensions are an example of growth  Wholesale orders; increased number of stockists, international distribution  Positive or negative feedback, recommendations, requests, sales, support

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Category	Conditions <i>Conditions that give rise to it. WHO &amp; WHAT?</i>	Context <i>Context in which it is carried out. WHEN &amp; WHERE?</i>	Actions / Interactions <i>Action / Interaction by which it is expressed? WHY &amp; HOW?</i>	Consequences <i>Consequences it produces?</i>
<b>Social Media</b>	A direct link to aspirational consumers and target/ actual consumers (& other stakeholders); also includes all the resources related to its management	Online; DFEs exhibit different levels of engagement for different platforms either no presence, presence (having a profile), posting occasionally, posting frequently, active engagement	Its a communication tool that is used in alignment with the resources and brand	Increased brand awareness; sales; consumer following
<b>Reflection &amp; Planning</b>	Developing a business plan, changing management decisions, advance planning, working backwards from goals	Proactively avoiding negative opportunities or seeking positive opportunities; during the management of the business including the design, development and distribution of the collection	Proactive planning, reflection and forecasting, interpretation and incorporation/rejection of positive/negative feedback	Knowledge, direction, goals
<b>Knowledge Integration</b>	In opposition to improvisation - this is a proactive approach to decision-making	After learning and experience that creates routines for decision-making within the management of the company and design of the collections	Reflection & planning, and decision-making; reaction to the implementation of learning, making adjustments	Action towards goals
<b>Support Program</b>	Competitions and industry organisations that offer formal support for emerging designers and DFEs	At the launch of the company and throughout its development and evolution; part of the fashion network and machine	Help provide financial and other tangible and intangible resources	Launch of the company, increased brand awareness, relationship development, skills development, financial resources, validation within the fashion system

## A.27: Participant Brand Synopsis

Participating Brands Synopsis	
<b>Brand ID</b>	1
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2010
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Solo - Individual designer focused on growth.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Accessories, Lingerie, Fashion Tech
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Financially Successful / Profitable, Business Longevity, Become a Global Lifestyle Brand, Become a Multidisciplinary Design Firm, Create a Legacy or Heritage
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-funded, Loans
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, PR, Samples, Production Tech, Web Design, Warehouse Management
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Wholesale Sales, PR, Production, Accounting, Legal, Showroom
<b>Brand ID</b>	2
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2013
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Solo - Individual designer focused on growth.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Accessories, Lingerie
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Financially Successful / Profitable, Become a Global Lifestyle Brand
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Manufacturer Partnership, Corporate Sponsorships
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, Sample Making, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	PR, Photography, Production
<b>Brand ID</b>	3
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2013
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Solo - Individual designer focused on growth.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability, Global Lifestyle Brand, Financially Successful / Profitable, Create a Legacy / Heritage
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Sponsorships, Grants, Freelance Projects
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Sample Making, Production, Web Design,
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Production, Accounting, Legal, Showroom

<b>Participating Brands Synopsis</b>	
<b>Brand ID</b>	4
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2008
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Partnership with Investor
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Handbags, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Global Lifestyle Brand, Maintain Independence / Family Run, Financially Successful / Profitable, Create a Legacy / Heritage, Scalable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Private Investor, Investment Group
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Production, Accounting, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Legal, Warehouse,
<b>Brand ID</b>	5
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2008
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Creative Partnership - Two creative people.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Accessories, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Global Lifestyle Brand, Financially Successful / Profitable, Multidisciplinary Design Firm, Create a Legacy / Heritage, Scalable, Remain Small Firm
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Friends & Family, Creative Use of Resources
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, Sample Making, Web Design, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Legal, Warehouse, Showroom
<b>Brand ID</b>	6
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2010
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Solo - Individual designer focused on growth.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Remain Small Firm, Maintain Independence / Family Run, Financially Successful / Profitable, Global Lifestyle Brand, Create a Legacy / Heritage, Multidisciplinary Design Firm
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Friends & Family, Private Investor
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Warehouse, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Legal, Showroom

<b>Participating Brands Synopsis</b>	
<b>Brand ID</b>	7
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2006
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Solo - Individual designer focused on growth.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Menswear, Accessories, Shoes, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Maintain Independence / Family Run, Financially Successful / Profitable, Scalable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Retail, Warehouse, Showroom, Production
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Production, Web Design
<b>Brand ID</b>	8
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2007
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Designer and Business Partner
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Accessories, Lingerie, Evening Wear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Global Lifestyle Brand, Maintain Independence / Family Run, Financially Successful / Profitable, Remain Small Firm, Create a Legacy / Heritage, Multidisciplinary Design Firm, Scalable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Freelance Projects, Awards & Competitions
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, PR, Wholesale Sales, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Legal, Warehouse, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	PR, Accounting, Legal, Warehouse
<b>Brand ID</b>	10
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2009
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Designer and Manufacturer
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Menswear, Shoes, Handbags, Accessories, Lingerie, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Global Lifestyle Brand, Financially Successful / Profitable, Scalable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Friends & Family, Private Investor, Loans, Sponsorships, Manufacturer Partnership, Grants, Reducing Costs, Freelance Projects, Creative Use of Resources, Investment Group, Awards & Competitions
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Design, PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Legal

<b>Participating Brands Synopsis</b>	
<b>Brand ID</b>	11
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2004
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Partnership with Investor
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Evening Wear, Accessories
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Multidisciplinary Design Firm, Global Lifestyle Brand, Financially Successful / Profitable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Private Investor
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Accounting, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Warehouse
<b>Brand ID</b>	12
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2006
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Employed Designer
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Global Lifestyle Brand, Financially Successful / Profitable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Private Investor
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Accounting, Wholesale Sales, Web Design, Sample Making
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Sample Making, PR, Region-Specific Wholesale Sales, Production
<b>Brand ID</b>	13
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2011
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Partnership with Investor
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Handbags, Shoes, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Financially Successful / Profitable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Private Investor
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Sample Making, Wholesale Sales
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	PR, Production, Accounting, Web Design
<b>Brand ID</b>	14
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2011
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Artisan - Driven purely by aesthetic motivation
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Handbags, Accessories, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Financially Successful / Profitable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, PR, Sample Making, Wholesale Sales, Accounting
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Production

<b>Participating Brands Synopsis</b>	
<b>Brand ID</b>	15
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2011
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Creative Partnership - Two creative people.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Financially Successful / Profitable, Create a Legacy / Heritage, Global Lifestyle Brand
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Private Investor
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Web Design, Warehouse, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Legal
<b>Brand ID</b>	16
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2013
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Solo - Individual designer focused on growth.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Outerwear, Evening Wear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Create a Legacy / Heritage, Financially Successful / Profitable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Sample Making, Wholesale Sales
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Sample Making, PR, Production
<b>Brand ID</b>	17
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2013
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Creative Partnership - Two creative people.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Evening Wear, Outerwear, Fashion Tech
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Financially Successful / Profitable, Business Survivability / Longevity, Remain Small Firm
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Private Investor, Friends & Family, Freelance Projects
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, Sample Making, Web Design, Warehouse, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Production, Accounting, Legal, Showroom



Participating Brands Synopsis	
<b>Brand ID</b>	19
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2011
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Creative Partnership - Two creative people.
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Accessories, Lingerie, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Financially Successful / Profitable, Maintain Independence / Family Run, Scalable, Business Survivability / Longevity, Create a Legacy / Heritage, Multidisciplinary Design Firm
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded, Friends & Family, Sponsorships, Freelance Projects, Grants
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Production, Warehouse
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Legal, Showroom
<b>Brand ID</b>	21
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2009
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Other: Designer Brand
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Menswear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Global Lifestyle Brand, Financially Successful / Profitable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Undisclosed
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, Web Design, Warehouse, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	PR, Sample Making, Production, Accounting, Legal, Showroom
<b>Brand ID</b>	22
<b>City</b>	London
<b>Year Established</b>	2007
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Partnership with Investor
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Shoes, Handbags, Accessories, Evening Wear, Outerwear
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Global Lifestyle Brand, Financially Successful / Profitable, Scalable, Multidisciplinary Design Firm
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Private Investor, Angel Investor, Private Investor, Friends & Family, Loans, Sponsorships, Awards & Competitions, Friends & Family, Creative Use of Resources
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Production, Web Design, Accounting, Warehouse, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Sample Making, Production, Legal

<b>Participating Brands Synopsis</b>	
<b>Brand ID</b>	23
<b>City</b>	New York
<b>Year Established</b>	2009
<b>Category (Karra 2008)</b>	Other: Designer Brand
<b>Product Categories</b>	Womenswear, Evening Wear, Outerwear, Accessories, Shoes
<b>Ultimate Goals</b>	Business Survivability / Longevity, Scalable, Global Lifestyle Brand, Innovative & Non-Traditional Business Model, Financially Successful / Profitable
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Self-Funded
<b>In-House Activities</b>	Design, Wholesale Sales, PR, Sample Making, Web Design, Showroom
<b>Out-Sourced Activities</b>	Production

## A.28: Categories: Phases I, II, III & IV

Phase I: Broad Concepts	Phase I: Cod Sorting	Phase II: Categorising	Phase III: Categories, Properties & Dimensions	Phase IV: Additional Dimensions
Photography	The Collection	Collection Development	Collection Lifecycle	
How they tell their story	Collection Lifecycle	Product Category		
Brand is the Collection	Collection Development	Aesthetic Principles		
Create and Define Message	Designing	Design	Design Activities	
	Collection Evolution			
	Putting the Collection Together		Collection Development	
	Making Collections (Work Process)		Product Category	Product Categories
	Orders (Factory Delivery   Factory Ship)		Signature Pieces	Collections per year
	Production Cycle		Garment Positioning	
	Buying Schedule (Fashion System)		Garment Usage	
	Sales & Distribution		Range Plan	
	Starting the new collection		Muse	
	Company Structure	Management	Planning for Opportunities	
	Business Side	Investment & Finance	Management	
	Finance Strategy	Market Positioning	Market Positioning	Price - point
	Ownership		Identification	
	Supplies & Resources		Price-point	
	Positioning		Brand Adjacencies	
	Market Positioning		Consumer Description	
	Marketability Evolution		Launch Point	
	Sides of Fashion		Experimentation	
	Two Types of 'Editorial'		Business Model	

Phase I: Broad Concepts	Phase I: Cod Sorting	Phase II: Categorising	Phase III: Categories, Properties & Dimensions	Phase IV: Additional Dimensions
	Broad Market			
	Commercial Market = Product Segmentation			
	Higher Volume			
	Differentiation			
	Key Pieces / Garments		Brand Definition	
<b>Branding</b>	Core of Brand	Brand Strategy	Aesthetic Principles	
<b>Diverse Definitions</b>	Core Idea (Inspirations)	Brand Awareness	Collection Descriptions	
<b>Own Brand</b>	Designer Personality	Influence of Place	Designer Background	
<b>A 'Brand'</b>	Brand Name		Influence of Place	
<b>Evolves Organically</b>	Starting Out		Aspirational Brands / Designer Brands	
<b>Instinctive</b>	Communicating Core Idea			
<b>Created in the Marketplace</b>	Brand & Designer Connections		Designer / Brand / Employee Attributes	
<b>Related to Personal Identity</b>	The Brand Starting Point			
	Building the Brand		Brand Strategy	
	Brand Identity		Production Activities	
	Sustainability		Adaptation	
	Consumer Introduction (Consistency)		Garment Adjustments	
	The Brand Experience		Alignment	
	Orbiting: Community vs. Following		Production Strategies	
	Lifestyle		Factories	
	Designer Background	Designer Background	Goals	
	Non-Fashion	Launch Point	Personal	
	Personal Background		Operational & Objective	

Phase I: Broad Concepts	Phase I: Cod Sorting	Phase II: Categorising	Phase III: Categories, Properties & Dimensions	Phase IV: Additional Dimensions
	Fashion Background		Ultimate	
	Switching Careers		Control	
	Education Background		Quality Control	
	Commitment	Behaviour	Brand Control (reaction) /	
	Experimenting	Experimentation	Controlling growth	
	Turning Point Decisions	Planning for Opportunities		
	Job Decision	Learning & Experience		
	Next Step	Decision Making		
	Push Forward	Improvisation		
	Own Opportunities	Reflection & Planning		
	Personality Type	Knowledge Integration		
	Success: Vision & Goal			
	Personal Success			
	Brand Success: Commercial & Fashion Industry Acceptance			
	Marketing & Fashion			
<b>Internationalisation</b>	Distribution	Distribution	Distribution Activities	
<b>Survival</b>	Online & Retail	Distribution City	Distribution	
<b>Instantaneous</b>	Locations	Sales Strategy	Internationalisation	
	Wholesale Accounts	Showroom	Wholesale	Rate of Internationalisation
	Geographic Market Targeting		Retail	Website ecommerce
	Growth	Growth	Sell-throughs	
	Controlled vs. Uncontrolled Growth		Expansion	
	Describing Words for Growth		Sales Strategy	
	Expanding: Two Types		Qualitative Statements	PR & Sales Agents

Phase I: Broad Concepts	Phase I: Cod Sorting	Phase II: Categorising	Phase III: Categories, Properties & Dimensions	Phase IV: Additional Dimensions
	Growth Talking		In/Out Resources	# of Stockists & Growth Rate
	Growth Goals		Targeting Top Stockists	
	Future Growth Opportunities		Sales Activities	
	Ability to Grow			
<b>Network</b>	Network	Network	Network	
<b>Personal Relationships</b>	Personal Network	Fashion System	Fashion System	
<b>Professional Relationships</b>	Professional Network	Support Program	Presentation Activities	
<b>Integration into FASHION SYSTEM</b>	Trade Conventions & Fashion Weeks		Fashion Week	
	Fashion Network		Network Integration	
	Reliance on Network			
	Network Support			
	Network Learning		Growth	
	Fashion Schedule		Stages of Growth	
	Network Partnership		Organic Growth	
	Fashion City: New York & London		Seeking Investment	
	Network Contribution			
	Other Brands Mentioned			
	Co-creation: Interactions & Reactions	Co-creation: Interactions & Reaction	Co-creation: Interaction & Reaction	
	Network Demands		Buyer / Editor Feedback	
	Consumer Demands		Press & Editorial	
	Positive & Negative Influence			
	Market Demands			
	Brand Ideas from Market			
<b>Social Media</b>	Communication	Communication	Communication	

Phase I: Broad Concepts	Phase I: Cod Sorting	Phase II: Categorising	Phase III: Categories, Properties & Dimensions	Phase IV: Additional Dimensions
Crucial Communication	Marketing Strategy	Imagery & Visuals	Social Media usage /	Website Pages
Connection with Consumers	Outreach Program	Press & Editorial	engagement	Social Media Platforms
Editorial & Product Consumers	Website	Social Media	Promotional Tools	Press Categories
Consumers Defined Aesthetically	Designer Representation (Image)	Fashion Week		
	Social Media			
	Promotional Tools			
	Media			
	Communication Activities			
	Consumer / Customer	Consumer		
	Consumer Learning			
	Consumer Identification			
	Gather Consumer Data			
	Description & Demographic			
	Describing Things	Designer Brands		



## A.29: Categories, Properties & Dimensions

Category	Sub-Category	Property	Dimensions
Design	Design Activities	Inspiration source, mood board, material sourcing, fabric selection, range plan, sketching, match sketch and fabric, sketch review, pick sketches, fabric and print production, pattern creation: flat pattern, draping, sample construction, pick sample favourites, sample fitting, garment alterations, final samples	
	Collection Development	Product Categories	Womenswear, menswear, shoes, handbags, cosmetics, accessories & jewellery, lingerie & swim, evening-wear, outerwear, fashion tech, other: objects/art/home/interior design/etc.
		Signature Pieces	Targeted <--> multiple Over time: from the start, currently, on occasion, in the future, no plans
		Range Plan	Details, materials, silhouettes
		Product Positioning	Consistency Balance of garment types, styles, options Resource efficiency Incorporation of feedback from wholesale sales, sell-throughs, buyers and editors, network
		Muse	Commercial <--> Conceptual: In-between, polar, both Collection description Garment Usage: Everyday, day-to-night, nights out, special occasion, multiple
		Collections Per Year	Ideal consumer, aspirational individuals, girl/woman Design for: self, friends/family, celebrity, consumer
	Brand Personality & Culture	Designer Background	1 (non-seasonal), 2, 3, 4, 6, 10
		Influence of Place	Personal identity Personality and behaviour (related to culture) Education & experience: Fashion / Non-fashion Launch Point: planned entry, product experimentation, fashion competition, winning award, art exhibition
		Corporate Culture	London / New York; British / American / International Inspired by studio base Manufacturing Designing for locations: climate and culture Percentage of Internationalisation
			Designer / brand / employee attributes

<b>Design (cont.)</b>	<b>Brand Core</b>	<b>Aesthetic Principles</b>	AKA: codes of the house, brand DNA, brand signature, unique point-of-view, 'pillars', attributes Always present, discovered over time 'What the brand stands for' Process and result of experimentation	
		<b>Fashion Week / Presentation Activities</b>	Showroom / presentation / catwalk, model selection, fitting, hair & makeup, set design / music / lighting, run-of-show, invitation & promotion, sponsorship & financing, photographer, lookbook	
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Fashion System</b>	<b>Fashion System</b>	Fashion schedule, stylists, fashion machine: power, suppliers, manufacturers, buyers, editors, peers / competitors, photographers	
		<b>Support program</b>	Collaborations, diffusion line, exhibitions, competitions, awards, sponsorships, incubator programs	
		<b>Network Integration</b>	<b>Personal and Professional Fashion /Non-fashion</b>	Strong & weak ties Resource & capability Designer(s) & employees
			<b>Network Relationships</b>	Individual network Agency network (out-sourced) Internal network of firm: marketing, design, sales Industry network: buyers, editors, sourcing, etc. Consumer community: product/actual, media/editorial, aspirational
			<b>Stakeholders</b>	Suppliers/mills/manufacturers, sales agents/showrooms, fashion industry influencers, buyers, editors, media, industry experts/universities, mentors & advisors, community organisations, government, professional associations/ support programs, collaborators/ partners, customers: stockists, retailers, private clients, photographers stylists, hair & makeup, competitors/press, general public, employees, formal & informal investors, consumers: actual, editorial, aspirational
			<b>(Buyer &amp; Editor) Feedback</b>	Encouragement, demands, requests, observations, recommendations, acceptance, support and assistance, promotion, usage
		<b>Sales</b>	<b>Sales Activities</b>	Costing, memorise garment details / selling points, sales appointments, invoice, shop deposit, order quantity, collection delivered to PR (for in season media promotion)
<b>Showroom</b>	Own, rent-a-rail, agent			
<b>Getting orders</b>	Negotiation > proposed order > order communication > order confirmation			

Sales (cont.)	Market Positioning	Sales Strategy	Own wholesale sales, private clients Sales agent(s) / Sales director Hybrid: agent and sales director Direct-to-consumer Involvement: more <—> less & agency influence
		Targeting stockists	Doors / sales volume Aesthetic image Reputation in fashion industry Price-point category Totally open <—> highly targeted
		Price-point	Diffusion line (mass/better), contemporary, advanced contemporary, entry designer, designer luxury, bespoke
		Consumer Description	Consumer personality Income: price-point Discovered / refined over time Personality: youthful, mature, working, modern, artistic, worldly, strong, independent, leisurely, charity event patron, etc. Demographic: younger <—> older; non- descriptive Girl / woman
	Brand Adjacencies	Media/press, stockists, peers / competitors, consumers, geographic market location Process & result of Identification & Reflection and planning	
Production	Production Activities	Material calculation, material order / production, material delivery, factory sourcing, production orders, setting up production, grading, garment production, factory visits, quality control, production shipped from factory, production delivery (to stockists or DFE)	
		Factories	International, local, internal, quality, minimums, production ethics
		Garment Adaptation	Minor in-season adjustments based on feedback: length, colour, sleeve, etc.
	Stockist exclusives Next season adjustments based on sell-through data, evolution		
Control	Quality Control	At manufacturer, studio, 3rd party warehouse Spot checks (10%) – 100%	
	Brand Control	Setting limitations; Reaction to interactions and market interpretations; decision-making	

<b>Distribution</b>	<b>Distribution Activities</b>	Ecommerce / own retail inventory management, delivery to stockists, getting payment, store visits, stock swaps, PR & social media push, sell-throughs, season debrief			
		Private Clients			
		Retail	Ecommerce, flagship, multi-brand store, pop-up shop, none		
		Wholesale	Boutiques / speciality shops, department stores, ecommerce, none		
	<b>Communication</b>	Message / Narrative	The story the brand tell, what it has to say. It is uniform, clear, easy-to-digest, cultivated over the long term, sharable, consistent		
		Language	The words used to describe the brand, tone-of-voice		
		Imagery & Visuals	Photography, videography, art direction - making visual connections with consumer, customer, audience, considering where images will be used		
		Purpose	Increase brand awareness, encourage sell-throughs, influence buyers, influence editors		
		Media	Logo; website; blog; social media; fashion films; lookbook; photography, imagery & visuals; posters, postcards, etc.; collection press release; fashion week: presentation, catwalk; public relations; stylists; celebrity placement; interview media training; word-of-mouth; showroom; store visits / trunk shows		
			Social Media: Platforms —> blogspot, Facebook, google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Twitter, Vimeo, Weibo Usage —> not used, maintain presence, post occasionally, post daily, active engagement		
			Website: about/bio, bespoke, campaigns, celebrity, charity, collaborations, collections/archive, contact details, contact form, ecommerce, flagship, image gallery, multi-brand retail, newsletter signup, partners, press, projects, search function, single image as webpage, social media feed, social media links, stockists, legal, videos, other, website down		

<b>Distribution (cont.)</b>	<b>Communication (cont.)</b>	Media & Editorial	Multi-tier <--> top tier Traditional & new media Quality & quantity
			Press Matrix: Company profile, designer profile, designer mention, fashion week, celebrity, behind-the-scenes, DFE growth, support program, collection review, emerging designer, collaborations
	<b>Growth &amp; Establishment</b>	Goals	Personal: Continue to design, earn a living, achieve aesthetic vision, be happy, respect and renown, work-life balance
			Strategic: Increase sales, brand awareness, gain investment, hire employees, own retail store, distribute to specific stockist or region
			Ultimate / Vision: Business survivability, global lifestyle brand, maintain independence, profitable, create legacy or heritage, remain small, scale the business, become multidisciplinary design firm
		Stages of Growth (financial milestones, sales volume / annual turnover)	Capsule: < £50K Start-up: £51K - £150K Early: £151K - £500K Emerging: £151K - £2 million Expansion: £2 million - £10 million
		Investment and Finance	Cash flow, seeking investment, funding sources
		In-house / Out- sourced Resources	Employees: Full-time, part-time PR, sales, showroom, sample-making, design, production, web-design, accounting, legal, warehouse
		Internationalisation: Number of stockists / Key stockists	Targeting: regions, countries, cities, stockists Emphasis: domestic <--> international Approach: reactionary, open, targeted, strategic
		Organic Growth	Brand awareness, increased product categories / range plan, increased sales, increased stockists
Controlling / Limiting Growth			
Working to Establish within the industry			
Integration of new knowledge			

### A.30: Coding Analysis Using Altinay et al. (2014)

Concept	Theme	Aggregate Dimensions
<p>Building pieces, each collection, iterative process, fabric/garment/product innovation and creation, technicality</p> <p>Design activities: inspiration source; mood board; material sourcing; fabric selection; range plan; sketching; match sketch and fabric; sketch review; pick sketches; fabric and print production; pattern creation: flat pattern, draping, CAD; sample construction, pick sample favourites; sample fitting; garment alterations; final samples</p> <p>Designer’s creative outlet for passions, designer as artist, designing for self</p> <p>Design for consumer: produceable product</p> <p>Design according to schedule</p> <p>Use of embellishments, buttons, embroidery, technology, techniques</p>	<p><b>Design</b></p>	
<p>Presentation activities: Showroom / presentation / catwalk, model selection, fitting, hair &amp; makeup, set design / music / lighting / seating, run of show, invitation &amp; promotion, sponsorships &amp; financing, photographer, lookbook</p> <p>Presenting to the network/industry makes a record of the brand aesthetic, first impression; designer identity; unique point-of-view</p> <p>Presenting the collections via appointments, or fashion week</p> <p>Interaction with the network and industry</p> <p>Merchandising and styling: curating how products are presented</p> <p>Fashion week as advertisement to the industry that you’re a participant.</p> <p>Fashion Week: New York open/democratic fashion schedule vs. London curated, Paris fashion week = sales</p> <p>Fashion Week: Generates awareness, influence on press and sales</p>	<p><b>Presentation</b></p>	<p><b>Product Development Capabilities</b></p>
<p>Sales activities: costing, memorise garment details/ selling points, sales appointments, invoice, shop deposit, order quantity, collection delivered to PR for in season media promotion</p> <p>Showroom: provides access to buyers, but also increased competition at point of wholesale; is an added component between collection creation and sales, which can be positive or negative. Types: own, rent-a-rail, agent.</p> <p>Getting orders: negotiation, proposed order, order communication, order confirmation</p> <p>Wholesale vs retail</p> <p>Achieving margin objective in pricing: taking hits on items (loss leaders) and having higher margin on other items (cash cows), average overall margin</p>	<p><b>Sales</b></p>	

Buyers in the industry have a strategy for how they purchase from emerging designers	<b>Sales (cont.)</b>	<b>Product Development Capabilities (cont.)</b>
Buyers (clients) accepting the growth of the DFE as they expand to other stockists vs exclusivity		
Sell-throughs: percentage of product that sells at full retail price		
Considering sales floor placement in relation to peers/competitors		
Connection between getting editorial to get sales and the need to have distribution points (sales) to get editorial.		
Materials and production costs, financing production process based on size of production run	<b>Production</b>	
Environmental sustainability, ethical component, fair wages, responsible manufacturing		
Production activities: material calculation, material order/production, material delivery, factory sourcing, place production orders, setting up production, grading, garment production, 'first offs', factory visits, quality control, production shipped from factory, product delivery to stockists or DFE		
Factories: international, local, internal: reputation, specialities and capabilities of manufacturers in developing world, European manufacturing, American manufacturing.		
Garment adaptations: minor in-season adjustments based on feedback: length, colour, sleeve, etc.; stockist exclusives; next season adjustments based on sell-through data, design evolution		
Spreading the production across multiple factories to reduce the risk and experiment with manufacturer relationships.	<b>Distribution</b>	
Distribution activities: ecommerce / own retail inventory management, delivery to stockists, getting payment, store visits, stock swaps, PR & social media push, sell-throughs, season debrief.		
Private clients, Consignment		
Retail: ecommerce, flagship multi-brand store, pop-up shop, none.		
Wholesale: Boutiques / speciality shops, 'starter stockists,' department stores, ecommerce, none.		
Department stores: punitive based on results, price breaks for emerging designers		
Repeat stockists: maintaining relationships		
e-commerce shipping and returns		
Consumer accessibility		
Distribution location: stockists, cities, countries, regions		

<p>Steps of collection development: design, presentation, sales, production, distribution</p> <p>Expansion &amp; evolution of collection over time. Newness &amp; consistency, repeating &amp; new. Collection is a snapshot in time. Collections have rules that translate into brand.</p> <p>Limited resources: every piece of the collection counts, no room for error</p> <p>Project categories: Targeted approach or multiple: Womenswear, menswear, shoes, handbags, cosmetics, accessories and jewellery, lingerie and swim, evening-wear, outerwear, fashion tech, other: objects/art/home/interior design/ etc.</p> <p>Over time: from start, currently, on occasion, in the future, no plans</p> <p>Licensing, diffusion line</p> <p>Signature pieces: details, materials, silhouettes</p> <p>Range plan: consistency; balance of garment types, styles, options; resource efficiency; incorporation of feedback from wholesale sales, sell-throughs, buyers and editors, network</p> <p>Product positioning: commercial to conceptual: in between, polar or both; collection description; garment usage: every day, day-to-night, special occasion, multiple</p> <p>Muse: ideal consumer, aspirational individuals, girl/woman. Design for self, friends/family, celebrity, consumer.</p> <p>Collections per year: capsule, 1 (non-seasonal), 2, 3, 4, 6, 10</p>	<p><b>Collection Development</b></p>	<p><b>Value Proposition</b></p>
<p>Relationships in the network are a 'bridge' to opportunities; serendipity of meetings/connections; stakeholders can be brand ambassadors, champions; strong and weak ties</p> <p>Networking, breaking in to the network, building/courting relationships, reaching out to potential stakeholders, creating connections; maintaining relationships is a social and intimate process</p> <p>Being accepted and worthy of being part of the network; making a meaningful contribution</p> <p>Individual network: personal and professional relationships of designer and employees; agency: out-sourced; internal: marketing, design, sales; industry: buyers, editors, sourcing, etc.; consumer community: product/actual, media/editorial, aspirational</p> <p>Asking for and getting help, industry support, formal mentorships</p> <p>Network gives objective feedback to showroom or sales agent</p> <p>(Buyer &amp; Editor) Feedback: Encouragement, demands, requests, observations, recommendations, acceptance, support and assistance, promotion, usage</p> <p>Evolution: changes in the network, birth of new relationships and death of old ones</p>	<p><b>Network Integration</b></p>	<p><b>Relationships</b></p>



Stakeholders: consumers (actual, editorial, aspirational); customers (stockists, retailers, private clients); suppliers, mills & manufacturers; sales agents & showrooms; fashion industry influencers, buyers & editors; media; mentors & advisors; industry experts & universities; community organisations; government; professional associations & support programs; photographers, stylists, hair & make-up artists; employees; competitors / peers; general public; formal and informal investors.	<b>Network Integration (cont.)</b>	<b>Relationship (cont.)</b>
Global market size = opportunity vs. market saturation = competition	<b>Fashion System</b>	
Fashion calendar / buying schedule: set process for how things work in the fashion industry: showroom/ sales process, presentation (getting into fashion week), editorial promotion		
Industry influencers: buyers, editors, stylists, photographers, bloggers		
Trade shows, fabric fairs and mills, fashion week		
Fashion Cities: New York, London, Milan, Paris, garment districts		
Fashion machine, politics and power, market/network support, established luxury brands, fashion group, manufactured demand, 'it' brands	<b>Support Programs</b>	
Reliance: relying on the fashion system for sales and wholesale distribution, can be positive or negative		
British Fashion Council, Centre for Fashion Enterprise, CFDA, Fashion Fringe, Euro Festival, Vogue Fashion Fund, New Gen		
Support / competition for emerging designers	<b>Consumers</b>	
Government support, incubators, accelerators, collaborations, consultancies, competitions		
Consumer personality: youthful, mature, working, modern, artistic, worldly, strong, independent, leisurely, charity event patron, etc.		
Income: price-point, market size		
Target market discovered / refined over time		
Demographic: younger < - > older, or non-descriptive	<b>Brand Adjacencies</b>	
Consumer network: product/actual, media/editorial, aspirational		
Associations, partners, retailer relationships: replacement for marketing campaign, extend financial resources		
Complementary competitors, peers		
Business model aspirations, aspirational designer mentors	<b>Market Positioning</b>	<b>Position</b>
Price-point: diffusion line (mass/better), contemporary advanced contemporary, entry designer, designer luxury, bespoke		
Attributes that describe collections: good for celebrity, beyond trend, trend setting, desirable, wearable, affordable, innovative, basic fashion, conceptual, commercial, commercially conceptual, artisan, heritage.		

Targeting consumers based on description, alignment, aesthetic	<b>Market Positioning (cont.)</b>	<b>Position (cont.)</b>
Targeting celebrities (to generate press) that fit with (consumer) aesthetic		
Sales strategy: own wholesale sales, private clients; sales agent(s), sales director; hybrid: agent and sales director; direct-to-consumer		
Targeting stockists: doors and sales volume, aesthetic image alignment, reputation in fashion industry, price-point category. Totally open to highly targeted	<b>Internationalisation</b>	
Consumption power: geographic areas that have the demand to purchase product: US, Asia, Middle East		
Sourcing, manufacturing and distribution		
Targeting: regions, countries, cities, stockists		
Emphasis: Domestic to International		
Approach: reactive, open/indiscriminate, targeted, exclusive/limited	<b>Establishment</b>	
Percentage of internationalisation		
Aesthetic, product quality, pricing, distribution alignment		
Awareness of the firm's status/positioning within the market is necessary to facilitate growth.		
Brand is 'on trend' with garments, materials in the market, receives validation based on positions in store and media		
Growing up process, polished, maturity	<b>Designer Background</b>	<b>Personality</b>
Financial stages: milestones based on annual turnover: capsule <£50K, start-up £51k - £150k, early £151K - £500K, emerging £151k - £2 million, expansion £2 million - £10 million		
Organic growth: increase in annual turnover (sales), number of stockists/individual distribution points ('doors'), product categories, brand awareness (visibility, household name, industry/public awareness).		
Beginning of the 'thread' that connects the collections together		
Background & life history: individual stories of how the designer's came to occupy their current position		
National origin, urban origin (fashion/non-fashion city)	<b>Influence of Place</b>	
Education background: fashion / non-fashion, self-taught		
Professional background: fashion / non-fashion		
Designer's knowledge, story, strengths		
Practice of fashion: always done fashion, fashion as hobby		
Design Philosophy: Designer's approach to design, elements and ideas that continually work with, related to aesthetic principles		
Identifying as a London, New York; British, American, international designer/brand		
Inspired by where studio is based		
Designing for locations: climate and culture		
Manufacturing & distribution locations associations		

<p>Pillars, DNA, unique point-of-view, core, signature</p> <p>Always present, discovered over time</p> <p>Provides consistency, crystallised, reliability, defined identity</p> <p>Key elements embedded in collections</p> <p>Defines and creates differentiation, distinctive, hallmarks</p> <p>What the brand stands for</p> <p>Repeatable, tangible, textural design details</p> <p>Limitations, lens, filter, framework around an identity, way of thinking</p> <p>Transferable &amp; translatable: concepts have rules that translate into collections.</p> <p>Basis for brand universe /world</p> <p>Artefacts: brand name, logo; muse, girl/woman, models; brand book, typology, hang tags, graphic design; beverage, flowers, music, physicality, packaging, store aesthetic</p>	<b>Aesthetic Principles</b>	<b>Core</b>
<p>Personal goals: continue to design, earn a living, achieve aesthetic vision, be happy, respect and renown, work-life balance</p> <p>Objective goals: Increase sales, brand awareness, gain investment, hire employees, own retail store, distribute to specific stockist or region, shift manufacturing &amp; production, shift product positioning, shift design aesthetic, shift price-point, shift target consumer</p> <p>Operational goals: gain traction, create an impact on industry/network, generate following to make it easy for stockist/consumer to 'buy in', operate 'outside' fashion system / distribution, institutionalise brand within fashion system</p> <p>Ultimate goals: business survivability, global lifestyle brand, maintain independence, profitable, create legacy or heritage, remain small/niche, scale the business, become multidisciplinary design firm</p>		
<p>Internal and external dissemination</p> <p>Purpose: increase brand awareness, encourage sell-throughs, influence buyers, influence editors</p> <p>Components: message/narrative, media, language, imagery and visuals</p> <p>Message/Narrative: the story the brand tell, what it has to say. It is uniform, clear, easy-to-digest, cultivated over the long term, sharable, consistent</p> <p>Media: logo; website; blog; social media; fashion films; lookbook; photography; posters, postcards, etc.; collection press release; fashion week: presentation, catwalk; public relations; stylists; celebrity placement; interview media training; word-of-mouth; showroom; store visits / trunk shows</p>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Expression</b>

<p>Website pages: bio/about, bespoke, campaigns, celebrity, charity, collaborations, collections/archive, contact details, contact form, ecommerce, flagship, image gallery, multi-brand retail, newsletter signup, partners, press, projects, search function, single image as webpage, social media feed, social media links, stockists, legal, videos, other, website down.</p> <p>Language: the words used to describe the brand, tone-of-voice</p> <p>Imagery and visuals: Photography, videography, art direction - making visual connections with consumer, customer, audience, considering where images will be used</p>	<p><b>Communication (cont.)</b></p>	<p><b>Expression (cont.)</b></p>
<p>Platforms: blogspot, Facebook, google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Vimeo, Weibo</p> <p>Usage/engagement level: not used, maintain presence, post occasionally, post daily, active engagement.</p> <p>Means of increasing brand awareness, garnering a community, as a broadcast medium, source for editorial or aspirational consumers, support e-commerce</p> <p>Posting in social media has to be flexible and reflect the aesthetic principles of the firm</p> <p>Reward system: has to makes sense for the brand/ designer, where they can generate fans and visibility, that they are doing it for the right reasons, that they can make a contribution and innovate with their presence</p>	<p><b>Social Media</b></p>	
<p>Media is a filter between consumer and brand</p> <p>Recommending story ideas to press, issuing press releases</p> <p>Responding to requests for samples</p> <p>(Designer) conducting interviews</p> <p>Targeting specific press based on alignment, prestige, pitching ideas for particular sections ('real estate') in media outlets</p> <p>Segmentation: Multi-tier &lt;--&gt; top tier; traditional and new media, quality and quantity</p> <p>Press Matrix: company profile, designer profile and designer mention / fashion week, celebrity, behind-the-scenes, DFE growth, support program, collection review, emerging designer, collaborations</p>	<p><b>Media &amp; Editorial</b></p>	
<p>Entrepreneurial Orientation: starting, owning, growing a company; mentality of the designer has to fit with entrepreneurship, development and importance of understanding that being in fashion industry is being in business</p> <p>Designer personality and behaviour, image and presentation</p> <p>Hiring and management of employees and interns</p> <p>Belief in the brand, having a connection to the brand</p> <p>Aggressive, ambition, being nice, confidence, continual drive conviction, courages, dedication, faithful, hardworking, high pressure, honest, hunger, integrity, luck, passion, patience, can handle rejection, team effort, work ethic</p>	<p><b>Behaviour &amp; Attributes</b></p>	

Design integrity, authenticity	<b>Behaviour &amp; Attributes (cont.)</b>	<b>Culture (cont.)</b>
Diversity, ethical production practices, social purpose		
Trend setting, follow trends, beyond trends, non-trend based		
Wanting to be a brand within fashion; though might have other components: green, ethical, etc. but positioning the brand as a fashion brand primarily		
Origin/Heritage: The history of the brand's evolution; it's beginning; the reason why it was created		
Capacity, resources: time, skills, finances, knowledge, experience	<b>Management</b>	<b>Competencies</b>
Company structure: the overall design of the enterprise relating to market positioning, investment, role of the designer and partners, etc.		
In-house & Out-sourced resources: Employees - full-time or part-time / PR, sales, showroom, sample-making, design, production, web-design, accounting, legal, warehouse		
Launch Point: Strategic entry, product experimentation, fashion competition, winning award, art exhibition		
Early formal investment in the firm presents challenges when there is a undefined identity or a lack of process, progress and planning	<b>Investment &amp; Finance</b>	
Cash flow supports production and continued sustainability of the enterprise, network relationships assist in making things work		
Seeking investment: from the start, earlier the better, after a while, once firmly established		
Funding sources: self-funding, freelance projects, family and friends, private investor or patron, angel investor, formal investment via luxury group or private equity firm, partnership with manufacturer, partnership with retailer, short term 'bridge' loans for production costs, reducing costs.		
Fashion curve: growth by dept, the more you grow, the more financial resources required to fulfil production and sales orders, requiring investment		
Smart money: investors as mentors		
Quality control: at manufacturer, studio, 3rd party warehouse; spot checks (10%) to 100%	<b>Control</b>	
Educating the client/customer/consumer to garner understanding		
Transition: actively working to shift the brand from one perception to another		
Relinquishment of control: outsourced activities / agency relationships, to consumers in creation of meaning.		
Limitations set in regards to production, media outlets, stockists, etc. to control quality, communication and distribution.		

Figuring it out, making it work, trial and error	<b>Experimentation</b>	<b>Dynamic Capabilities</b>
Innovation: able to redevelop, rethink, reinvent, redo		
Creating a collection and it finds a consumer; launching point for company		
Process of discovering collection and brand aesthetic especially in first 3 seasons		
Necessity inspires change in process, activities	<b>Interaction</b>	
Interactions with stakeholders – editors & buyers, retailer, mentors, network relationships – demands, feedback, support, advice, encouragement, endorsement		
Consumer demands, control & use, how they ‘make a story within the collection’		
Interactions mirroring the market, ‘matching thinking’ vs. serving as challenges, barriers to innovation	<b>Identification</b>	
Identifying signature pieces, identity, aesthetic principles, expectations for growth and development, consumer, patterns in sales and design		
Recognising, interpreting network influence on brand, power of the press		
Understanding the box of how others define the brand – Brand Image – amalgamation of people, the image in your head, what other people perceive the brand to be, recognisable, reputation.		
Awareness of consumer/stakeholder experience with the brand		
Empathise with consumer segment: identifying a gap in the market via network learning and experience		
Identification of opportunities, future possibilities, forecasting is necessary for growth	<b>Adaptation</b>	
Garment adaptations / changes in design due to production limitations; production minimums, lead times (2-4 months)		
The brand having to work within the parameters to gain sales and editorial		
Designer/brand’s reaction to interactions, experiences, interpretations can be positive or negative		
Creating alignment between product development, communication and distribution; shift focus of resources, negotiating, compromise		
Making a plan, then making adjustments based on realities; balancing consistency and change	<b>Organic Growth</b>	
The growth and success of the company is measured by achieving its unique goals: creative ascendancy		
Dynamic, ‘something’ changes season to season: (continual) evolution, changing the brand, renewal		
Calculated, measured, controlled, organic, comfortable growth in line with resources prioritising profitability, survivability vs uncontrolled, not aligned with resources		
Growth pattern: fast track or incremental improvement		
Tipping points for garnering momentum: winning awards, art exhibitions, press & sales, specific collections that are on target		

Reacting to opportunities as they occur, not thinking ahead.	<b>Improvisation</b>	<b>Organisational Learning</b>
Day-to-day: doing what needs to be done every day to manage the business: answering emails, making phone calls, meeting deadlines		
Unconscious strategy: what you do is your strategy, 'there is no plan'		
Undefined, unstructured, no previous knowledge		
Gaining knowledge, gathering research, data about consumer, customer, industry. Consumer spending as a source of data	<b>Learning &amp; Experience</b>	
Constant improvement based on experience, environmental interactions		
Making mistakes, continual learning		
Avoiding bad opportunities, experiences	<b>Reflection &amp; Planning</b>	
Seeking opportunities		
Building, curating, documenting		
Creative thinking, problem solving, working backwards, pivoting/changing, remaining flexible, reducing risk	<b>Decision-making</b>	
Feeling of progress and development: making decisions based on reflection		
Making conscious decisions about the collection, strategy, brand, business model		
Passing on opportunities (good or bad)		
(Not) enough data for making decisions		
Making priorities, focus on what is important, pick and choose among options	<b>Knowledge Integration</b>	
Developing routines and processes		
Being proactive and/or reactive in planning or 'setting strategy'		
Developing a plan for the enterprise; what the brand is effects this		
Development and evolution of processes and practices based on resources, logistics, strengths and weaknesses		

## A.31: DFE Dynamic Brand Development & Internationalisation

Outline of DFE Dynamic Brand Development & Internationalisation							
Activities & Routines	Dynamic Capabilities (P6)	Operational Capabilities & Resources	Elements of Brand Identity		Resources & Capabilities for DFE Brand Development & Internationalisation	Organisational Learning (P7)	Co-creation (P8)
			Core	Value Proposition			
Design (P1)	Experimentation	Collection Development: product categories, range plan, product positioning, muse, collections per year Designer Background, Influence of Place Behaviours & Attributes of designers & employees (entrepreneurial orientation)	Personality	Culture	Aesthetic Principles	Improvisation	
Presentation (P2)	Interaction	Fashion Week, Fashion System, Support Programs, Personal & Professional Network Consumers & Stakeholders	Relationships		Network Integration	Learning & Experience	Co-creation experiences (interactions with stakeholders)
			Position		Brand Adjacencies	Reflection & Planning	Interpretation
Sales (P3)	Identification	Market Positioning: sales strategy, targeting stockists, targeting consumers, collection descriptions Management: company structure, in-house & out-sourced resources, launch point, investment & finance	Competencies		Control	Decision-making	(Positive or negative) Reaction
			Position				
Production (P4)	Adaptation	Internationalisation Communication: purpose, message/narrative, media, language, imagery & visuals Goals: personal, objective, operational & ultimate	Position		Establishment	Knowledge Integration	
			Expression	Mission & Vision			
Distribution (P5)	Organic Growth						



