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University for Business and Technology Faculty of Business,
Management and Economics



BBA Thesis:

Building Strong Brands:

An Examination of the UBT Brand Building Experience

Prepared for the degree “Bachelor of Management, Business, and Economics”

Under the supervision

Of

Dr. Mukesh Bhargava

Submitted to

University for Business and Technology – UBT

By

Metihe Kastrati

(20040075/B)

Executive Summary

Branding has become an extremely effective way for organizations to communicate with the customer in today's competitive business environment. In a fiercely competitive market scenario, branding seems to be emerging as the new focus of marketing, PR, design and strategic planning. A brand is a valid and reliable measure of long term success. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the concept of branding. The study also examines how companies can build better brands, measure brand equity, and assess how advertising and other efforts impact the brand value.

In addition to that, this paper is also looking at ways for enabling the University for Business and Technology (UBT) to become the best known university in Kosovo. The word 'best' can have different meanings or interpretations. However, the word 'best' in this study is defined as the delivery of good education, the prospect of good jobs for graduating students, good processes within the university and maintaining a good image both inside and outside the university.

The research uncovers details about the major factors that potential student considers when choosing a university with the aim of spotlighting these factors so that the University can focus on improving these areas, and hence, effect an increase in increasing its attraction to students. The application of the research findings would provide cues for the advertising campaign and media decisions that would maximize the response rates for UBT.

Taken together, these perspectives will help UBT to plan what it can do to improve its performance. In addition, the guidelines provided here can be also used by other companies in the service sector to manage their brand building exercise.

Acknowledgements

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The data collection process was one of the most difficult stages. In this regard, I would like to thank the University President and my professor, Dr. Edmond Hajrizi, for helping me get in touch with company representatives. Furthermore, I also thank him for granting permission to include UBT as the main example in my thesis/dissertation.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDA	Attention / Interest / Desire / Action
AUK	American University in Kosovo
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EU	European Union
IT	Information Technology
KEC	Kosovo Energy Corporation
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
PTK	Post of Telecommunication in Kosovo
TV	Tele Vision
UBT	University of Business and Technology
UP	University of Prishtina
UT	University of Tetova

0.0 The research area

When I started my studies at UBT, I was eager to know more about Marketing as a subject. Even then I thought, like the majority of people, that marketing was another word for advertising. However, thanks to all our marketing professors, I quickly realized that the field of marketing is immeasurably broader and contains many more challenges than I had initially conceived.

One of the most interesting issues is the concept of branding which is the focus of this paper. Why I chose to look at branding would perhaps be of interest to the reader.

Owing to the fact that we are still a new country, and hence, the majority of companies are in the first decade of their operation in a free market, the need for branding products, services, enterprises as well as people is emerging as a fundamental issue. But this is not the only reason why branding is so important to our business community.

An important reason is that most of the entrepreneurs, marketing managers and CEOs are not familiar with the concept of branding. Therefore, the way they interpret the brand is that “brand can be a name, logo, or design...” This is the common perception about brands. No one links the brand with facets such as the promise, perceptions, feelings and other essential issues that are fundamental to branding.

Moreover, a majority of our business representatives think that in order to build a strong brand companies only need to spend a lot of money on advertising. In this paper I will try to articulate that this is not the only way in which companies can build their brand.

The above mentioned reasons, coupled with the facts that UBT is struggling to create its own brand and has a committed student body,, prompted me to explore how UBT could build a strong brand. The subsequent sections explain the evolution of the research, the findings and conclusions.

1.0 What is brand?

Branding should be considered more than just a business buzzword. There are several interesting opinions and definitions regarding branding. In its simplest form, a brand is a noun. It is the name attached to a product or service. However, upon close inspection, a brand represents many more intangible aspects of a product or service: a collection of feelings and perceptions about quality, image, lifestyle and status (Dexter et al, 2007).

Brand can be a name, term, symbol, or design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers (Kotler, 2001, p.216). Why does one brand have twice the share of another when there is no difference in the product attributes or performance and both brands sell for the same price? The answer is a difference in perceptions. Perception can be influenced through positive and negative communication experiences, but not controlled.

A brand is essentially a seller's promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits and services consistently to the buyers (Kotler, 2000). A brand promise should deliver a certain set of benefits, both rational and emotional. Rational benefits for a University's brand would include reputation, academic excellence, research status, links with industry, and employment record. Emotional benefits include location, quality of life, personality, culture, and empathy.

Branding affects every point of contact with a company's stakeholders - text and image, printed and online communications, media reports, word of mouth, etc. Perhaps one of the most important things to keep in mind about branding is that it lives entirely in the mind of customer, therefore, the brand identity is not what a marketer creates but what customers perceive has been created. Hence, we should be careful in our communication with our target audience. Our communication must take into account who our customers are and the environment they live in because every customer has a series of filters through which he receives messages that seem important for him. What settles into his or her brain is the only true identity the brand has created and all the rest we could say are wasted messages. If we get down to the detail, everything is a brand, because we build our understanding of the world by creating associations about everything. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to the customer from the organization.

It is interesting to note in this context that majority of expert opine that brand implies a direct promise to customers. Consequently, we focus first on the brand promise to a customer.

2.0 What is brand Promise and how does it relate to the consumer?

Frequently associated with this brand essence is the concept of brand promise. The term is used, amongst others, by (Kapferer, 2004), (Aaker, 1996), and (de Chernatony, 1999). All three authors imply that the brand in its essence makes a promise to the prospective customer. Walter

Landor, of international strategic branding consultancy Landor, goes even further: “Simply put, a brand is a promise. By identifying and authenticating a product or service it delivers a pledge of satisfaction and quality”. The author considers this brand promise a cornerstone of his research: it is this promise that should be fulfilled.

2.1. Creating the promise

Creating the promise means defining the brand. A good brand promise is memorable and desirable. It cannot be effective if nobody remembers it, and is no good either if nobody wants it! The promise must be unique and identified with you alone. A good brand promise evokes feelings, because feelings drive actions.

It is worth remembering that good promise is not something you can make for a day. It comes through a deep understanding of your marketplace and your customers. In addition it comes from a deep understanding of the capabilities and motivations of the people in your company.

2.1.1 Making the promise

Making a brand promise requires a different attitude and skills from making an ad. Once you have created the promise, the next (and not so trivial) step is to somehow inject it into the minds of your customers, your staff and everyone who receives anything from you or has any impact on what you deliver.

Making a promise is all about positioning the company and its products in the minds of customers and against your competitors. But when you are making the promise be sure you can keep it.

2.1.2 Keeping the promise

Creating and making the right promise is one thing, but more important is your honouring it.. Keeping promises means managing capability. It means consistent processes that are capable of delivering what is required. It means technology and systems which are reliable and usable. It means motivated people who are willing and able to deliver the goods.

It is good to start and ask yourself, do you know the promise that you're communicating? Before you answer, keep in mind that your brand promise is not a list of offerings. Your promise extends beyond your brochure's product listing. Therefore, let me remind you that when you face a new business day, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the promise that I make to my customers?
- How do I let my customers know about that promise?

- What are the products and services that I offer to my customers? Do these products and services relate to my brand promise?
- What products and services do I need to get rid of to ensure that I'm sticking to my brand promise?
- What products and services could I add to help fulfill my promise?
- If I fail to keep my promise, what will it cost me, both financially and professionally?

As you answer these questions, think about your employees as well as your customers. Is your promise to your employees the same as the one to your customers? Employees are your champions when you are not around. If you are not keeping your promise to your employees, will they have the energy to pass on positive messages to customers?

I would strongly recommend that companies live up to their promise and in order to spend more time basking in brand enthusiasm instead of crisis control.

2.2 How customers relate to promises

We now have an idea about brand promise, having established that there is a brand essence and that it implies a promise. We should, therefore, focus on how this essence and its promise relate to the customer.

The most comprehensive way to describe how brands are connected to the consumer is the Brand Touch Point Wheel (Davis and Dunn, 2002). Figure 1 shows this touch point wheel.

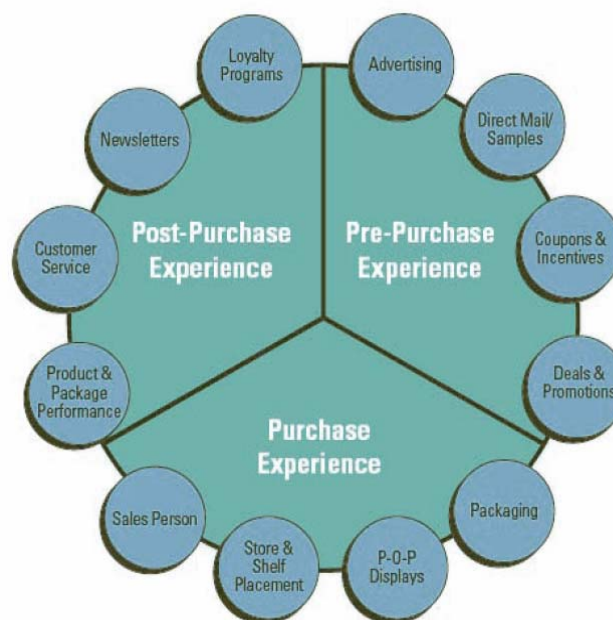


Figure.1. The brand touch point wheel (Davis and Dunn, 2002)

Although the model is very useful, the author modestly argues that from a product branding point of view it seems rather concise. As can be seen in figure 1, the product is one little cell in the post purchase experience segment of the touch point wheel. But it is clear that the product plays a huge role as brand touch point in all three segments of the wheel. Maybe not in its physical form, but surely present in pre-purchase (product based advertising, word of mouth based on product quality and interaction), purchase (trying the product in the store, being attracted by it, comparing it to other products) and post purchase (the interaction with the product, servicing the product etc.).

3.0 Brand equity

Perhaps a good starting point is examining some common definitions of brand equity. Brand equity has been defined as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1998). Previously, (Aaker, 1991) defined brand equity as “a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm’s customers”. His five components of brand equity were:

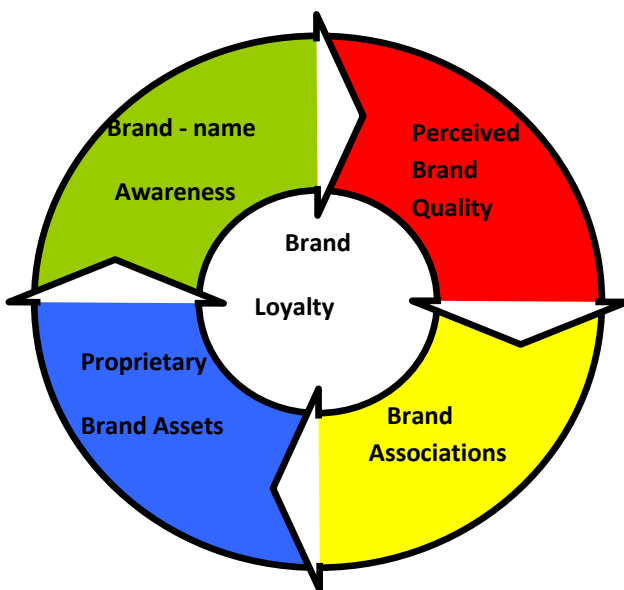


Fig.2. Five elements of Brand Equity

Brand name awareness, brand associations, perceived brand quality, proprietary brand assets (such as patents, trademarks, and channel relationships), and brand loyalty, which he defines as “measure of the attachment that a customer has to brand.” According to Aaker, the first four elements strongly influence the fifth, brand loyalty.

Marketing communication directly impacts three of the brand equity-building elements that Aaker identified: brand name awareness, brand associations, and perceived brand quality.

Although brand equity is intangible, the elements that determine brand equity, such as trust and satisfaction, can be tracked and measured. The company can also measure brand loyalty by determining the percentage of customer's category purchases and repeat purchase.

Having information about what brand equity means is not sufficient. In order to better manage the brand equity we should first know how to measure the current situation of our brand because what is measurable can be controlled and managed. Through my research I found different methods from different experts on how they think brand equity should be measured. The table below shows how Aaker and Keller write about several approaches to valuing a brand:

Brand measures	Aaker	Keller
Association		X
Awareness	X	X
Differentiation	X	
Distribution coverage	X	
Leadership	X	
Market share	X	
Perceived quality	X	X
Perceived value	X	
Personality	X	
Price premium	X	
Loyalty	X	X

Table.1. Recommended Applied Brand Equity Management

Most experts conclude that brand measures should be uniquely designed for each firm and that multiple measures are required to provide a true picture of brand health. The greatest consistency across the recommended measures appears in the areas of "perceived quality" and "user satisfaction/loyalty." Aaker and Keller all recommend these measures as foundational, although Aaker gives that distinction to price premium, Keller to brand associations).

The value of the brand can not be measured precisely, but it can be estimated roughly (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). However, according to Keller (2003) qualitative research is often a useful first step in exploring customer, product and the brand perception.

As Albert Einstein once said "Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted." Therefore deciding on appropriate measures of brand equity can be a tricky and difficult proposition because the brand is made up of intangibles that are not easily measured. I would use different brand measures that could provide us with a review of UBT brand equity.

From the table below we can have an idea about the current situation of the brand equity that UBT and AUK have. The rating was based partly on the research that I will detail later in this paper and partly on the rating indicated by my three year experience as part of the UBT student community.. It is of paramount importance that I was actually a UBT customer and therefore uniquely positioned to know the students' real perception, feelings and emotions and use this authentic hands-on information for rating the brand equity measurements.

Brand Equity Measures	UBT	AUK
Brand Awareness	Low	Medium
Brand Association	High	High
Perceived quality	Medium	High
Loyalty	Low	Medium

Table.2. Brand Equity Measures of UBT & AUK

Brand awareness measures the accessibility of the brand in the customers' memory, ability to recognize or recall that the brand is member of a certain product category. The reason why UBT was rated as low in brand awareness was that during the research, UBT was mentioned by just 9% of the potential students, AUK by 14%. Brand association is anything linked in memory to a brand. Once more this question was included in the research and potential students were positive about both universities.

Perceived brand quality is the customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose relative to alternatives. UBT was ranked as the best university in 20% of the cases by potential students along with AUK which gained the highest position in the minds of 30% of the potential students interviewed compared to all other universities.(For more information see p.30) Satisfaction would be the strongest determinant of the brand health. Based on my discussion with nearly all UBT students, the majority of them are not satisfied with the university. Another factor that could measure satisfaction is the number of students that choose UBT for the Masters programs and those who choose other universities for continuing their studies, because a customer who purchases one product from a firm and is satisfied may be willing to extend his or her relationship with the firm to additional products or services. Therefore, from the total number of the UBT graduate students which are 43 students just one (2%) of them is continuing to study at UBT. 4 of them (10%) are studying in other universities outside Kosova. But the most important thing is that other students who are not continuing their Master programs do not consider UBT as one of their possible choices for future postgraduate studies.

In case of AUK, of the total number of graduate students, 6 % of them are continuing postgraduate studies at this particular university. But other students couldn't obtain enrolment in the MS program since until recently applicants were required to have 3-4 years of post undergraduate work experience before they were admitted into the program. For some other

students the major reason why they are not continuing is the fee charged for the Masters program at AUK.

Based on this information and rating I speculate that the wealth of the UBT brand should be improved on every measured parameter in order to reach a strong brand position. In addition it is useful to think of brand equity as the premium a customer is willing to pay for a branded product or service, compared to an identical unbranded version of the same product or service.

3.1 Brand elements and leveraging secondary associations for building brand equity

Marketers must employ every possible tool to quickly and inexpensively create brand equity. They should skillfully choose brand elements (names, Web URLs, logos, symbols, characters, slogans, jingles, packaging, and signage) and leverage secondary associations, which link the brand to people, places, or things with their own associations. (Keller, 2002)

From a marketing management perspective, however, there are three main sets of brand equity drivers.

The choices for the brand elements or identities- this includes names, Web URLs, logos, symbols, characters, slogans, jingles, packaging, and signage.

The product and service and all accompanying marketing activities and programs- e.g. Devolli Company is the local brand in Kosovo and their success in the market place has resulted from a series of well designed and well executed marketing activities and programs. In addition to that they also have a variety of relatively high quality products (Vita milk, Tango juices, Prince café, etc) compared to other domestic brands. They also control retail distribution plus they are doing a huge marketing campaign (outdoors, TV ads, promotions, patronage rewards, sponsorship etc). They have also motivated and trained their employees. Their products are sensibly priced and the company is getting positive word -of - mouth.

Marketers indirectly transfer other associations to the brand by linking it to another person, place, or thing - here again we can cite the example of Devolli Company who use some famous domestic actors and singers in their advertising campaign. They also place their products on one of the most famous shows in Kosovo called “The modern Family”.

The second set is the central brand equity driver, since at the heart of the marketers’ brand building efforts are products and services and the associated pricing, distribution, and communication strategies. The first and third sets, however, can make a fundamental impact on brand equity.

3.2 Choosing Brand Elements

A number of brand element options exist, and a number of criteria are relevant for choosing the right ones. The most common ones are names, logos, symbols, characters, slogans and packaging. Marketers can choose different brand elements to build brand equity, to enhance customer's brand awareness to facilitate their formation of strong, favorable and unique brand association.

There are six criteria for choosing brand elements, each with specific considerations:

- *Memorability*- How easily can consumers recall the brand element? Is the brand element memorable at both purchase and consumption stages? Usually the memorable elements are short names.
- *Meaningfulness*- How credible is the brand element, and how suggestive is it of its product category? Is it descriptive and persuasive?
- *Likability*- How aesthetically appealing is the brand element? Is it fun and interesting?
- *Transferability*- Can marketers use the brand element to introduce products in the same or different categories? Can the brand element cross geographic and cultural boundaries and market segments?
- *Adaptability*- How flexible and easy is it to update the brand element?
- *Ability to be protected*- Can marketers legally protect the brand element? Can they shield it from the competition, or can others easily copy it?

The first three criteria focus on how marketers can build brand equity. The last three are more defensive, and concern how marketers can leverage and preserve brand equity in the face of different opportunities and constraints. Because different brand elements have different advantages, it is important to "mix and match" them to maximize their collective contribution to brand equity.

3.2.1 Brand name

The foundation of your brand is its name. After its uniqueness wears off, it will be your brand name against the brand names of your competitors in the marketplace. So, how can we create a brand name that will be positioned as a good brand name in the market?

"First, it should be able to communicate on its own without a lot of advertising," says James Dettore, president of the Brand Institute in Boston, MA, US. It should be easy for everyone to pronounce it and it has to have positive associations around the world and at least to have positive association in various languages. We can also take an example of the American University in Kosovo and see the importance of the brand name. Most of the potential students thought that AUK is the best university in Kosovo even that they do not have any other information about quality of education, professors, curriculums, etc, but based their opinion on the name and the positive association that our people have about America. As a result we can say that the brand name can say a lot about you even with no additional information and advertising people can create an image associated to your brand name.

Besides making sure that people from all or most ethnic backgrounds will accept your brand's name, it should also be memorable and easy to communicate in packaging and advertising.

3.2.2 Logo

By now, you are aware that a brand is much more than a name or logo. However, these elements are associated with brand image for one primary reason: they are crucial. A logo is a symbol that visually represents your company. Because of its prominence on letterheads and product packaging, the logo is often the first brand element that your buyers see.

The logo should not be altered or redrawn in any way, because it weakens the brand integrity. It is good to have two sizes of logo to choose from. In addition to size the brand should also have a standardized color scheme. By following the specification of size and colors the company can ensure a more consistent application of the logo across a wide range of media (news paper Ad, brochures, stationery, recruitment advertising, clothing, gift and promotional items etc.)

In order to maintain the brand's integrity and to ensure consistency of communication, certain uses of the logo should be avoided:

- Rearranging the color
- Creating the logo in any other colour than in standard ones
- Stretching or condensing the logo
- Creating your own logotype (e.g. by changing the font style)
- Rearranging the order of the logo
- Using the logotype without the crest (e.g. just using University for Business and Technology and not the circle)
- Changing the proportions of the elements within the logo
- Placing the logo on a busy (???) background
- Placing the logo on a photographic or coloured background which has insufficient contrast
- Using the old logo if there is a new one.

3.2.3 Slogan

A slogan is a memorable motto of phrases used in a political, commercial, religious and other context as a repetitive expression of an idea or purpose. When considering a slogan for your company, keep your objectives in mind. Slogans should be short and memorable; the slogan should represent positive feelings about your business. They are claimed to be the most effective element for drawing peoples' attention. Therefore, a slogan is also important for branding. When branding think about what makes your company different from your competitors and keep your audience in mind. It is useful when you are creating a slogan to think about current trends and attitudes because you would want your slogan to be timely and audience- relevant. (See Appendix 1. Slogans used)

Your slogan should be placed everywhere. Consider placing the slogan on company stationery, and business cards along with your logo. If you plan to make an advertising campaign be sure to display your slogan especially on billboard advertising, TV and radio.

A good slogan has certain benefits:

- Tells your prospects the benefits you offer them.
- Shows how you position yourself versus your competitors.
- Makes your business memorable to prospective customers.

It is not preferred to habitually change the slogan or to use different slogans at the same time because when customers become familiar with your slogan you can easily confuse them with frequent changes.

3.2.4 Typeface - Font

Typefaces and fonts are another important brand element especially for service companies because they usually have to do more with writing. Having a standard typeface helps companies keep their brand identity.

When the typefaces and fonts are selected, it is good to define when and how to utilize typefaces and fonts, e.g. which will be used in electronic communication, memos, invitation letters, business letters, brochure, certification, diplomas etc.

3.2.5 Photography

A single photograph can say a thousand words. Photographs are considering key in communicating a sense of real value, real achievements and real life successes.

When choosing photography one should consider not only the suitability of the brief subject matter, but also the role these images play in communicating quality, personal growth of a company, and other benefits of especial importance for the audience.

The photographs should be people focused and they are essential in creating a real life feel, of a university. People pictures may turn the idea of learning into a real experience. Characteristics that a picture can communicate are liveliness, friendliness, activity, emotive significance etc.

It is essential to not over style a shot; it needs to be authentic and emotive which will only come from a “real” image that captures some spontaneity pictures and “life as it happens”, not from a formal approach.

However, the best test of a brand element’s contribution is what consumers would think about the product or service if they knew only its name or logo, for instance.

Beside the brand elements that are described above, let me come back to secondary associations for building brand equity.

3.3. Secondary associations

Another way to build brand equity is to leverage indirect or “secondary” associations, to link the brand to an entity. The figure below shows how marketers link the brand to an entity by transmitting buyer’s indirect association with a brand.

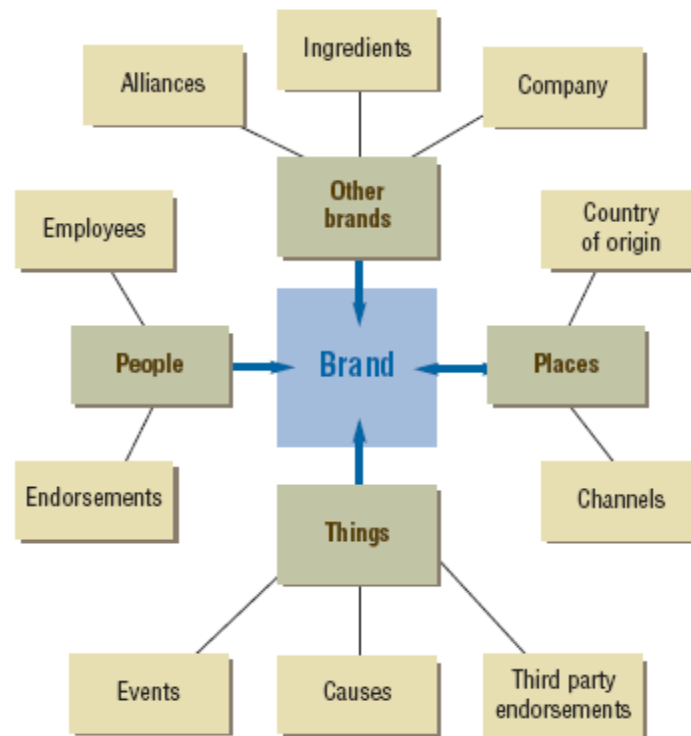


Figure.3. Secondary sources for brand knowledge ¹

As we can see marketers’ link brand to the company through different branding strategies. They also link countries or geographic regions through identification of product origin and the channel distribution through their channel strategies. They also link the brand with other brands through co-branding, company representatives’ through endorsements, sporting or cultural events. They could also attach sponsorship and third party sources through awards or reviews.

In general the secondary association may affect customers who have lack in – depth information about quality of product or service. Such customers may make decisions based on the secondary association such as the country from which the product came from, e.g. in Kosovo, the German products are usually at the top in any buying decision just because people have the impression that the majority of German products are the best in Europe.

¹ Kevin Lane Keller, Article “Branding shortcuts”, September/October 2005.

Even if consumers buy into the association, leveraging secondary associations may be risky, because marketers give up some control of the brand image. It may become very difficult to manage the transfer process in order that customer link to a brand only the relevant secondary association. Moreover this may change over time because as the customer has more information about the entity the secondary association may be or not be advantageous for a brand.

4.0 Importance of branding

These days, business and technological trends are becoming sophisticated enough to duplicate anything in a matter of weeks or months. If marketers are not capable of following a competitor's lead, they may be able to do a better job or sell the product or service at a lower price. The question then becomes, "What competitive edge do I have to offer that cannot be copied by anyone else?" The answer? Your brand. This is, therefore, the true importance of branding

A brand is the one thing that you can own that nobody can take away from you," says Howard Kosgrove, vice principal of marketing at Lindsay, Stone and Briggs Advertising in Madison, Wis. "Everything else, they can steal. They can steal your trade secrets. Eventually, your patents will expire. Your physical plant will wear out. Technology will change. But your brand can go on and live. It creates a lasting value above and beyond all the other elements of your business."

Creating a strong brand identity will build mind share — one of the strongest competitive advantages imaginable. As a result, customers will think of your business first when they think of your product category e.g. think about one of the world's most popular athletic shoe companies, Nike. The importance of branding is exemplified by the fact that when you hear Nike, you think athletics and "Just Do It." A great brand name and association has catapulted Nike to the top of its industry (Fuchs, 2007).. Or maybe a better example for a University is to look at Harvard University. When students think about the best university in the world the immediate answer to this question is Harvard University. There are a considerable number of reasons for this: university tradition, investment in quality, employing the best professors and supporting them in discovering new things. One more important factor is that Harvard has produced many famous alumni. Among the best-known are political leaders John Hancock, John Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Pierre Elliot Trudeau, philosopher Henry David Thoreau, poets like T.S Eliot and E.E. Cummings, Actor Jack Lemmon, architect Philip Johnson, biologists James D. Watson, economists Gregory Makiw and Martin Feldstein among others.

Another aspect of the importance of branding is that customers are willing to pay more for branded product or services compared to unbranded ones. In other words, branded companies can charge premium prices for their products. Also, the importance of branding needs to be voiced to your employees so that your message is clear to all of your employees and the public. If you have a vision or goal statement, then you need to voice the importance of branding here also. Employees need to understand the importance of branding so that it is communicated in the

office and to consumers every day. The message you are trying to get across in branding depends on your employees putting it out there to consumers.

5.0. Branding instruction for the top university

I suspect that when it comes to attracting students, recruiting faculties or winning grants, we should surely think of universities as brands. Universities are more aware of this than ever; some have groomed themselves into leveraging their equity beyond the traditional educational arena; as a result their success should not be surprising.

Like many successful brands, universities have learned that the brand is one such core asset that can transcend categories to sell almost anything. The power brands of the university industry successfully reach across and beyond the educational sector. Harvard, Stanford and Oxford credibly and successfully sell summer camps for twelve-year olds, cheerleading classes, T-shirts, holiday tours, and even financial services. Here are some of the branding lessons we can glean from universities:

5.1. Focus on the experience, not on the product

As in most industries, universities offer very similar "products" at first glance. But the best universities define a world of difference behind the B.A., M.B.A., M Eng, or Ph.D. The students from the top universities say that the degree is merely an excuse for the overall experience. Do students remember the mathematics classes? Usually not, but, the things that they most likely remember are good experiences on University football games, breakfasts with the President and as well as bad ones like problems with schedules, freezing classes, etc.

5.2. Speak in one voice

Keeping it simple also means presenting yourself clearly and coherently to your stakeholder. It is very important for a university to encourage alumni involvement for this reason. Universities that have a problem on this issue are usually those which have a decentralized college system.

Students are simultaneously members of the university and of a college. This arrangement splits loyalties, confusing the claims of ownership over the fond memories of those youthful days, fragmenting the power of the brand. Consequently, external stakeholders such as corporations and foundations support university-wide initiatives, whilst the colleges work at delivering the brand promise.

5.3. The brand exists in the people

The critic would argue that universities are not as generic as we characterize them to be, that they provide unique environments of learning and challenge. And the brand is particularly potent because universities almost always celebrate the key element of the brand: its people.

Universities are motley collections of individuals who, somehow, come together to define and redefine an idea, an ideal. By building strong emotional connection between disparate groups of independent-minded students and professors, universities transform themselves into universes of unmistakable loyalty.

6.0 Better Branding

Companies are getting smarter about branding. Earlier, they were ready to spend unprecedented sums but later they discovered that more does not mean better. Many promotional efforts have been indiscriminate, focusing on aspects of brands that did not drive customers buying patterns.

Just a few companies are starting to build their brands more scientifically and the key here is that those companies are forward-looking and approach market segmentation with a more precise understanding of the needs of customers and brand identity. Therefore, companies should undertake more rigorous research on data-bases about branding.

This new approach to branding may not only require new skills in the marketing department but also involvement of other functional areas ranging from product development to operations to customer service, to help deliver the brand.

6.1 Segmentation

Marketers have traditionally based their segmentation scheme on current conditions such as the size, income, age, and ethnicity of various target populations; estimates of their consumption and loyalty; and information about their locations, lifestyles, needs, and attitudes.

It was also thought: segmenting existing customers by their profitability could be a major source of differentiation and, subsequently, customer retention (Reichheld, 1996).

Today marketers must start spotting delivering trends and work out how the changes will affect a segment, and assess the impact on future profitability.

6.1.1 Trend spotting

Trend spotting can be fun. But that alone is not necessarily going to make you or your company more money. The way we see it, in a nutshell, is that tracking consumer trends is one way to gain

inspiration, helping you dream up profitable new goods, services and experiences for your customers. Consider the impact of an increase in the frequency of on-the-move eating and the growing popularity of high-protein, low-carbohydrate food. Nearly all the world's most popular brands in the food industry started to produce diet products (soft drinks, chocolates, etc.)

Human beings, and thus consumers, don't change that much. Their deep needs remain the same. Therefore, whenever anything catches your fancy while spotting and tracking trends. Please remember that not everything applies to everyone, and that virtually every trend has its anti-trend.

Furthermore, the new doesn't always kill the old. E-commerce may be booming, but real world retail is far from dead. Do you agree?

6.1.2 Follow the money

Once marketers have spotted meaningful trends, the next challenge is to determine their probable impact on the customer landscape and the likely profitability of the resulting segments. Rapidly growing ones may not be the most profitable down the road, so it's vital to translate growth projections into dollars and cents.

Volume is one part of the story, but variables such as capital requirements, changing rates, and earnings from sideline services are important as well. Such insights help marketers decide which segments to target and how to go after them in order to return their investment.

6.2 Building the brand

Once marketers have defined the most promising future segments, they must rethink the brand - an increasingly complex process. Today, cost-effective brand building depends on knowing precisely what consumers care about and tailoring the brand accordingly.

New analytics provide an approach which combines two important concepts: first defining a brand and then actually delivering it through a variety of what marketers call "touch-points" (see Figure.1.) the sites where consumers interact with it.

6.2.1 Define the brand

Defining a brand involves emphasizing its key benefits and attributes for consumers. In this paper we see different definitions from different authors. Hence we might say that marketers could promote many tangible and intangible brand attributes, but the goal is to uncover the relevance of each to consumers and the degree to which it helps distinguish the brand from those of competitors. Certain analyses shows that there would be a number of features that differentiate the company from competitors, but in reality they don't matter to customers and this surely is not what one is seeking through branding.

The figure below shows some of the attributes that brand will possibly deliver to consumers.

High Relevance	<p>“Antes” Features that are important to consumers but are provided by all competitors at similar level.</p>	<p>“Drivers” Features that are both important to consumers and highly differentiated from those of competitors</p>
Low Relevance	<p>“Neutrals” Features that are irrelevant to consumers</p>	<p>“Fool’s gold” Features that are distinctive but do not drive consumers’ loyalty to brand</p>
	Low	High

Differentiation

Figure 4. What really matters?

Some attributes are important even though customers expect them from any competitor called antes. These aren’t the centerpiece of either brand, because they don’t distinguish the companies brand from other competitors. Nonetheless, such basic brand benefits can’t be ignored. If we take an example in services companies like hotels for example if they will offer dirty rooms or uncomfortable beds, rooms without telephone and other basic facilities, even that those are offered by all other competitors, these are still important for the brand.

The most successful brands emphasize features that are both important to consumers and quite differentiated from those of competitors and these features are called “brand drivers”. Some companies try to distinguish themselves by providing customers with the emotional benefit of feeling (smart, fun, etc). e.g. Holiday Inn Express delivers its smarter and fun brand through touch-points such as quality breakfasts, assurances that it’s on-line etc..

With the brand antes and drivers defined, a critical issue remains: how to deliver them cost-effectively. For that reason if an airline company, for instance, decided that the most cost-effective way to deliver a considerate brand was to speed up its check-in and security-clearance procedures, it might strive for performance levels dramatically exceeding those of competitors such as a two-minute check-in and a five-minute security clearance.

6.2.2 Getting away from guess attributes

Traditionally, the elements that deliver a brand’s value to the consumer have been identified through costly trial and error. The process involves posing direct questions about a brand’s

functional benefits, analyzing the results through techniques such as conjoint analysis, and then taking a series of creative leaps that qualitative research may not validate.

We should also pay attention to traditional techniques because they are good for developing the relationship between a brand's attributes and the most cost-effective touch-points for delivering them.

Today, marketers can eliminate much of the guesswork by applying social science techniques to identify the underlying brand attributes driving loyalty among specific customers. And this is not because the techniques are new but because marketers are only now beginning to apply these in branding. Moreover, they have become aware that targeting precisely what customers care about is the core of efficient brand building.

6.2.3 Investing in analyses

Companies should invest more in analyses if they want to better build their brands. It is not necessary that marketers employ so much effort in discovering the brand attributes in case there is a much simpler and easier method. The first step could be; developing a questionnaire that probes a number of tangible and intangible attributes, asking consumers to rate the brand and its competition in each dimension and linking these dimensions to consumer loyalty.

By such analyses marketers may have a clear picture about the brand's tangible and intangible attributes which are important for consumers. In addition to that they might also do conjunction analyses to see the relationship between each brand's elements rather than trying to determine the importance of individual elements.

And this is not all, when marketers complete the research and analyses they will have information like; which touch-points correlate best with the brand's essence and the relationship between touch points and the desired brand positioning.

6.3. Advertising and the effect on branding

The major challenge today in this busy world is getting people's attention. Earlier TV advertising was a most effective media vehicle for getting people's attention. Now TV advertising seems to be losing its effectiveness because of the increasing number of TV channels and reduced watching of television by certain groups.

The result is that marketers must consider other methods of getting consumer attention and here are some possibilities: sponsorships, mentions on talk shows, product placement, street-level promotions, celebrity endorsements, etc. However, if a country had only a few TV stations, radio stations, and newspapers, mass marketing would be effective.

Advertising alone does not build a brand. What advertising could do is increasing the brand awareness, but, on the contrary, in some research papers I found that aided awareness is only weakly correlated with brand health and customer commitment. As Len Vickers, the former head of corporate marketing at General Electric Co warns, “It’s not just about what you say, but what you do as a company (to build a brand).”

The purpose of advertising is to influence consumer perceptions about the brand (e.g., associations tied to quality, benefits, personality, and aspirational user imagery). Communications should use whatever creative content will do the best job of persuading. But, ultimately, this content is like an influential public speaking that shapes perceptions, not an end in itself. The advertising loses its credibility once customers believe that the communications was designed to persuade and sell them some idea.

Sometimes advertising can be inadvertently brand-diluting. In many companies, the line aspect of advertising includes promotion, which is unrelated to brand-building and can even erode the brand. In these cases promotions can contribute to attracting lower-value, price-sensitive customers.

Companies go wrong when they fixate on advertising alone. They also go wrong because they sometimes try to build brand awareness before establishing a clear brand position. You have to know who you are before you can convince anyone of it.

Mass advertising can help build brands, but authenticity is what makes them last. (Schultz and Yang, 1997) They should be considering active tools that you pull out of your toolbox when you are building a brand. Therefore, we should bear in mind that public relations and word-of-mouth marketing are playing a growing role within the marketing mix to build and maintain brands.

7.0 Brand positioning

Positioning is about the position a brand occupies in the minds of consumers. When you are thinking of positioning your brand in the consumers mind, you have to first define who you are and identify your position compared to all other competitors that offer similar product/services, then you have to build your strength. Do not forget that no body can be all things to all people Therefore, you have to know in- depth your market and your target customers. Next, you have to find ways to differentiate yourself, also promoting benefits of your product or service. You need to create clear messages and, most importantly, ensure everyone is giving the right message.

Brand positioning starts with establishing a frame of reference, which signals to consumers the goal they can expect to achieve by using a brand. Choosing the proper frame is important because it dictates the types of associations that will function as points of parity and points of difference.

Strong, favorable, unique associations that distinguish a brand from others in the same frame of reference are fundamental to successful brand positioning. There is not just one-dimensional

view of differentiation. Careful analysis shows that there are three types of brand differences: brand performance associations (relate to the ways in which a product or service attempts to meet customers' functional needs), brand imagery associations (when making choices based on experience – such as where to get a haircut or eat dinner, consumers use brand imagery associations), and consumer insight associations (generally used when a brand's performance and imagery don't differ much from those of the competition). By considering each of these kinds of differences, you can better target your message and define your positioning.

Companies sometimes invest too heavily in points of difference that can easily be copied. Positioning needs to keep competitors out not draw them in. A brand that claims to be the cheapest or the hippest is likely to be leapfrogged.

Positioning is not created by marketers or the individual brand itself but how others perceive it. What marketers could do is create strategies that encourage the customers to accept a particular positioning in his or her mind. Positioning can be achieved through several means, including brand name, image, service standards, product guarantees, packaging and the way in which it is delivered. In fact, successful positioning usually requires a combination of these things.

Brand positioning is a tough task. Once you've found one that works, you may need to find a modern way to convey the position, but think hard before you alter it. Some companies may think they can reposition a brand, but this is nearly always difficult and sometimes impossible.

8.0 The research project

As we see from the literature review, the essence of branding is that it lives in the mind of stakeholders (customers, employees, suppliers, etc) and their perception about the brand. This research brings in the perception regarding the UBT brand from three points of view.

In the beginning, as potential students what are the things to which people at this stage give weight? How do they get information about different universities? What is an ideal university from their point of view and other important information are covered in this project. After that as a UBT student what are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of this University? What are the ways in which UBT can achieve customer satisfaction? The final part of this project is to see what kind of candidates, skills and qualities companies look for.

8.1 Phase 1. What Are The Perceptions Of Potential Students?

The reason for doing this survey was analyzing the perception about UBT and its competitors from a customer's point of view. The data was collected by face – to - face interviews and the questionnaire included thirteen questions which were grouped into five major groups:

1) Awareness of private universities, 2) Factors influencing choice, 3) Ideal university, 4) Awareness and rating of UBT and 5) Demographics of respondents (see Annexure 4).

8.1.1. Awareness of Private Universities

What are some of the private universities that you know about? was the first question asked to twenty potential students and the responses are shown in the table below:

Universities Mentioned	First Mentioned (% of Total)	Second Mentioned (% of Total)	Third Mentioned (% of Total)	Total Mentioned (% of Total)
FAMA	3.75	11.25	5.00	23.75
ILIRIA	7.50		7.50	18.75
AAB	6.25	1.25	2.5	15.00
AUK	3.75	3.75	2.5	13.75
Dardania		6.25	3.75	11.25
UBT	3.75	2.50	1.25	8.70
Victoria				2.50
Universum				2.50
Biznesi			1.25	1.25
Rezonanca				1.25
ABC		1.25		1.25
TOTAL	25.00	25.00	25.00	100.00

Table 3. Universities that are mentioned by potential students

As we can see from this table, the university that gained attention of the majority of potential students is FAMA University because 24%² of interviewees mentioned this university and it was mostly mentioned as the second university which gives us the idea that people do not need to think much to recall this university. ILIRIA is ranked as the second known university with 19% and it's the university that is mostly mentioned once we ask this question. This is why it's ranked at the highest percentage in the first mentioned university category and at 8% in the third mentioned university.

The reason which assures ILIRIA this kind of position is a large investment on the marketing programs, especially on the mass media advertising.

AAB is also in a stable position if we talk about awareness, because it is the third ranked university with 15% of responses. In 7% of the cases it was mentioned as a first mentioned response. In a country with more than eighteen new universities to be ranked a third mentioned university is in a good position because the respondents were asked to rank the top three choices only.

² All figures have been rounded off to the nearest whole number to make these easy to read.

AUK is the fourth ranked university in terms of awareness with 14%. The next one is Dardania with 12% and in the sixth position is UBT with 8.7% responses.

In 4% of the cases, UBT is mentioned as the first university, in 3% cases as second mentioned university, in 1% third, and in 1% fourth. Even though UBT has invested considerably in advertising e.g. TV ads, billboards, leaflets etc these figures are not very impressive for a university that aspires to be the best university in South East Europe. Also, these figures are not consistent with the AIDA model where getting attention and awareness is an important first phase of the process. One way for getting peoples' attention is using mass media and concentrating on telling people who you are and what your unique selling proposition is. If, however, UBT can't convince customers that their product or service is worthy of purchasing, no amount of advertising budget, billboards or public relations will help achieving their sales goal.

In the second question which was "Of these mentioned universities, which one would you rank as the best?" and getting the respondents to rank the top three. The results are shown in the table below:

Name of the university	Best (%)	Next Best (%)
AUK	30.00	21.00
UBT	20.00	15.78
AAB	20.00	15.78
FAMA	15.00	21.00
ILIRIA	10.00	10.52
Dardania		15.78
Biznesi	5.00	

Table 4. Best universities in the mind of potential students

This table gives an idea about people's different opinions. Even if the majority of them know about universities like FAMA and ILIRIA they do not think they are the best universities. Thus having people awareness does not necessarily mean that they think you are the best university.

Based on this table we can say that the best university in the minds of potential students is AUK because it was ranked in 30% of the cases as the best one and in 21% as next best. Whenever AUK is mentioned, in 55% of the cases it is ranked as the best, UBT is mentioned 27% as a major competitor followed by AAB 9%, ILIRIA 9% and FAMA with 9%.

The main reason why people think that AUK is the best university in Kosovo lies in the name of this University - American University in Kosovo - and the partnership it has with one of the American universities. Other reasons were it having the best accommodation compared to other universities, good professors, and a good way of learning, also, possibilities for student's

placement, and methodologies that encourage students to become competitive. Interviewees also mentioned reasons like they hearing on TV that it's the only university which fulfills the university standards and the degree is acceptable in US and Europe. They also linked the high price with high quality. These were the reasons why AUK has the privilege of being considered the best university in Kosovo.

Other interviewees thought differently. 20% of potential students refer to UBT as the best university and 16% ranked it as the next best. When UBT and other universities are mentioned in 50% of the cases UBT was ranked as the best, in, 38% AUK and in 13% ILIRIA.

The main reasons why those people think that UBT is the best university in Kosovo is because of good international professors, accreditation and the degree being internationally acceptable. Other reasons were: friend's recommendation, good environment and also good projects done by UBT students. The reasons, for ranking UBT as the next best are almost the same as the reasons for ranking it the best.

AAB is the university which is also ranked by 20% of potential students as the best university and by 16% as next best. This university gains the opportunity to be considered as the best university where UBT is not mentioned and is compared more with domestic universities. Reasons why potential students thought that AAB is the best are: good accommodation and good connections with companies for student placement.

FAMA was ranked best university by 15% of people interviewed. Reasons are good accommodation, good professors and large number of student. Reasons for ranking FAMA as the next best university in 21% of the cases are that this university has branches in every city of Kosovo, a large number of students and some special departments.

ILIRIA is the best university for 10% of people asked and the reason is because they heard that it is the best university in Kosovo.

8.1.2. Factors influencing choice

Table 5 summarizes the factors the respondents rate as being important in making the choice of the University.

Factor	% Mentioned
Quality of Professors	31.67
Students Placement	25.00
Good education plan	21.66
Classes in English	13.33
Reputation of school	6.70
Tuition	1.67

Table 5. Factors That Influence Potential Students Choosing the University

Based on this Table3 we can conclude that Good education plan, Quality of professors and Students placement are three major factors that would influence most of the students in choosing a university as best. What UBT should improve in order to address these three factors is students placement, because they are not well organized in this field but are taking care of the other two.

8.1.3 People that mostly impact the decision about university are:

Family is very important for everyone and it seems to have a strong impact on choosing a high involvement product like a university in this case. Consequently, UBT should consider family especially parents as a part of the UBT target group, because if they prefer UBT for their children's education in most of the cases they will prevail. It would be important to follow up this work with trying to find out how parents perceptions of universities and which ones they would recommended.

Members	% Mentioned
Family	53.57%
Friends	32.14%
School teachers	10.70%
Colleagues at work	3.57%

Table 6. People That Have a High Impact on The Student's Decision

Friends also had influence on a large numbers of interviewees. This factor pushes us to consider what we should do for those people who are influenced by friends. Maybe one idea could be a 5% discount on tuition fees for every student who brings in a friend to UBT. For every additional friend the discount could increase by 2%.

School teachers could also influence people and usually possess more credibility than other people. Perhaps the reason why colleagues at work were not considered so much of an influence was because the majority of the interviewed people were young and maybe unemployed.

8.1.4. Sources of information

“What are some of the sources that you will use to get information about different universities?” was the question used to unearth the sources of information about different universities.

Sources	Percentage mentioned
Media	34.21
Past students	23.68
Family/friends	18.42
Current students	18.42
School teachers	5.26

Table 7. Sources of information

This table shows the responses of the people interviewed. As we see the media was the source that is used by a good number of people for getting information about different universities, and this factor indicates that UBT should continue to use the media as a very important information tool.

Past students were also an important source for a reasonably large number of people. Knowing this fact, UBT has to improve relationships with students because they already will have one generation which can be considered alumni. Bearing in mind the hypothesis that satisfied customers tell around three other people and in case of dissatisfaction tell about fourteen people we need to care about our customers, since they are a credible source of information for aspirants. The same thing could be applied to current students because they were also mentioned as sources of information by 18.42% of the interviewees. This was a high figure across all universities.

Moreover, family/ friends are mentioned by 18.42% and school teachers are used as the source for getting information about different universities by 5.26% of the potential students.

8.1.5. Ideal university

An Ideal university was described by students in different terms. The statistics below show which are the most important things that an ideal university should have:

Factors Considered Important	% Mentions
Good jobs for students	28.00
Good professors	28.00
Good process	22.41
Good curriculum	14.00
Low costs/tuition	3.50
Easy to get admission	3.50

Table 8. How Potential Students Describe an Ideal University

Nearly everyone thought that an ideal university must have good professors because they are at the core of a university's success. The same percentage of that sample mentioned good jobs for students. The reason why they may think so is because of the large number of unemployed and the weak economic situation. Nearly all people who decide to study expect a better future, especially good job. If UBT can build up this sector it will create a center of attention for a huge number of people who will be motivated to choose UBT for their studies. In addition it would also enhance UBT's brand image.

Another thing that needs to be mentioned in this table is that interviewees gave more weight to a good process than to a good curriculum. This proves that process is a very important factor for a university that wants to become the best university. Therefore, UBT should have a good process within the university.

"Easy to get admission" is not linked so much with an ideal university. The majority of potential students said "hard to get admission" seems to be more qualitative. Also low cost was just mentioned a few times because they knew a really good private university could not be inexpensive.

Another question regarding the ideal university was "Which university would you think is an ideal university in the Kosovo region?"

Name of an ideal university	Percentage
None	40%
AUK	15%
UP	15%
UBT	10%
ILIRIA	10%
AAB	5%
FAMA	5%

Table 9. Ideal University in Kosovo

These were potential students' opinions. As we can see the majority of them thought that there is no ideal university in the Kosovo region. However the thing which surprised me is 15% of potential students thought that the University of Prishtina is an ideal university and this percentage is good if we compare it with other universities mentioned. I was curious to know why they think so and why they were saying that the quality of one is more credible than other universities. I would conclude from this research that credibility is the major factor that gives the University of Prishtina that kind of position. Thus, attaining credibility is something that all Universities should put more efforts on.

8.1.6. Awareness and Rating of UBT

The results of this survey indicate that 30% of the sample size hadn't heard about UBT. Another 15% of them had just heard the name mentioned but had no other information. But among the 55% of those who heard about UBT nearly all things mentioned were in favor of UBT. They mentioned things like good and international professors especially for the architecture department. They also talked about English lectures and afternoon classes which make this university a good one for studying in.

The questionnaire also addressed questions about rating UBT's level of education and quality of professors. The table below shows how potential students rated UBT's level of education.

Rating scale	Percentage
Very high	5%
High	45%
Medium	20%
No information	30%

Table 10. Rating the level of UBT

As we can see most of the interviewees have a good opinion regarding UBT level of education. However, on other hand, a considerable number of people have no information regarding the level of education that is delivered in UBT.

Potential students were asked to also rate the quality of UBT professors, and the results are as below:

Rating scale	Percentage
Medium	5%
High	50%
Very high	10%
No information	35%

Table 11. Rating the Quality of Professors

Based on these results we could say that potential students either have a good opinion about UBT or do not have any information. Hence, what we should do again is to invest more in external communication and increasing the awareness of people. These results also tell us that UBT professors are also UBT's strength, and this strength is also known by a good number of people.

When interviewees were asked for the language used in the UBT lectures the answers were:

Language used	Percentage
English	20%
Albanian	0%
Both English and Albanian	45%
Don't know	35%

Table 12. The language used on the UBT lectures

The majority of people know that UBT has also established lectures in the Albanian language. This is why they tick the Albanian English box on the questionnaire but another 20% of them still think that UBT has just English faculty. 35% do not know which language is used.

8.1.7. UBT Image

The last question regarding UBT was to measure the image that UBT has for potential students. Again, 35% of them didn't have any information but another 55% of the sample responded well and nearly all things associated with UBT were good. In fact, 25% mentioned international and good professors, 22% pointed out that it is a good university and 8% of them talked about things like afternoon classes, UBT appearance and MBA classes.

There were not so good responses from 10% of the sample who thought that the UBT building didn't look like a university but like a big house and also it was expensive.

8.1.8. Demographics of the respondents

Here is some information about demographics of the respondents: 55% of them were female, 45% were male and the average age of the respondents was 19.9 years old. The youngest person was 17 years old and the oldest was 27.

9.0. Phase 2. What are the perceptions of UBT students regarding the UBT Brand?

The data for this research was collected from second year students using a focus group interview. There were 20 students from the English track of the Business faculty and the interview lasted 90 minutes. The discussion structured around six open-ended questions which were based on value propositions which described meanings of the word “best” (see Appendix 2). Those value propositions do not describe just the meaning of the word “best” but they are also considered as a parameter for measuring the quality level of a university. Those were proposed by the founder of UBT, Prof. Edmond Hajrizi. In this survey each student had the chance to discuss the questions and there were also sub - questions and proposals by students which made the discussion effective. The data was collected by taking notes and I tried to capture exact phrases and statements made by participants.

9.1. Value Proposition: Good Education

9.1.1. Key issues discussed by students regarding Good Education were:

9.1.2 Positives:

Most students expressed general satisfaction with the quality of professors and they were also positive about the curriculum they are following. They also liked working on projects and in teams.

9.1.3. Areas for Improvement:

Some students suggested that examination procedures should be better controlled, as they were not happy about the possibility for weaker students to cheat in exams or about attendance not being counted. A large number of students mentioned that they do not have sufficient amount of literature in the library, especially the books that are prescribed by professors. Nearly every student said that exchange of experience was the thing that was mostly mentioned by UBT staff and they thought that they should send students to study in other European universities for a semester. Participants also proposed that the summer school procedure should be the same for every student. Some students also pointed out that they face difficulties in contacting professors mostly about clarifying uncertainties regarding exams and questions about projects.

9.1.4. Recommendations:

Based on the key issues that are mentioned above we can say that UBT is successful with the first two parameters about good education - offering a high quality of professors and having one of the best curriculums in Kosovo's universities. However, having good professors and good

curriculums is not sufficient for delivering a good education. There are many things that need to change for achieving the peak of good education.

Recommendations for closing the gap between the current situation and achieving the best educational standards would be:

- UBT should implement strict rules for not allowing students to cheat (See Appendix 3. Ensuring Academic Integrity).
- Checking student attendance is also one factor that is connected with good education. A reasonable ratio in my opinion would be students with less than 80% of class participation cannot take the examination in that particular course.
- Students shouldn't have problems with accessing literature. The university should possess at least five copies for each book that is prescribed by professors.
- It is important for students to take part in international summer schools. They will gain experience and profit from being part of the wider European student body. Information about summer schools should be available to all students at the beginning of the semester; at least basic information such as location of the summer schools, the documents required costs etc.
- Exchange of experience is also an important factor because students perceived it as part of a quality education and also it is one way of proving UBT's internationality. Also, students can see that the quality that is offered in international universities is the same or similar to UBT's quality. Also through this, UBT fulfils one of the promises that they offer to the students.
- It is important for students to have support from professors when they do projects or when they want to discuss with professors concerning tests.

9.2. Value Proposition: Good Jobs

9.2.1 Key issues discussed by students regarding Good Jobs were:

9.2.2. Areas for Improvement:

Nearly everyone mentioned that there should be some initiatives by the university in this area because there is a responsibility for student placements. They also proposed having regular and clear procedures about internships because some of them did not have good experience in this area; another student suggested that graduates would value support from the university when they apply for a job.

9.2.3. Recommendations:

For UBT it is clearly time to start to consider and implant systems to help students find good jobs. One reason is that UBT already has a graduate generation and they are interested in having good jobs and the second is because this will attract potential students to choose UBT for their studies. The university can access their alumni group who own companies or who work in good positions in public administration.

What should UBT do for students to get good jobs?

- First, committing student coordinators for each faculty to collect CVs from all
- Students who are interested in finding jobs. The coordinator can make a UBT student year book, which would be delivered to companies and institutions in Kosovo, so when they need employees they will have a significant number of choices fast and without organizing any job contest
- Second, student coordinators should maintain contact with companies and institutions so they can be informed about vacancies and inform students where and how to apply.
- Third, student coordinators should use similar procedures to develop an internship program because one good possibility for a student to find a job is through an internship.
- Fourth, UBT can support students when they apply for job by writing recommendation letters. This should assure students a better chance when applying for a job.

9.3. Value Proposition: Good Process Flow

9.3.1. Key issues discussed by students regarding Good Process were:

9.3.2 Areas for Improvement:

This was the proposition that nearly all students in the focus group discussion were not satisfied with. They considered this as UBT's weakness. All of them complain about inefficient management of the timetable and not being informed on time about lectures. Further, the majority of students were unhappy about the time taken to get test results. Some of the participants also mentioned that there is no system of scholarships for current students. Finally, the library procedures were criticized for being complicated and requiring permission for borrowing books.

9.3.3 Recommendations:

One appropriate way for developing good processes would be for each faculty to have at least one student coordinator

- The coordinator should be in charge of managing the schedule in a student-friendly way. For example, spreading lectures more evenly across the semester and scheduling examinations during free time. This is very important because students would have the chance to show better examination results. Also, this would increase their motivation and they would value this method of managing their schedule. The coordinator would be in charge of informing every student in time about the schedule.
- There should be clear examination standards designed for teaching staff. (See: Appendix 4. Improving Academic Feedback and Reporting)
- UBT, as a university that cares about quality, should also have scholarships for students who achieve quality in this institution. Ways of awarding scholarships could be:
 - Students in a first term with average grade higher than 95% would have 100% of the tuition fee cut,
 - Students in a first term with average grade higher than 90% would have 50% of the tuition fee cut,
 - Students with higher than 85% average grade would have 25% of the tuition fee cut.
- There should not be a need for asking the administrative staff for every book which is taken from library. Every student should have the right to take books from the library using a loan system.

9.4. Value Proposition: Good Image

9.4.1 Key issues discussed by students regarding Good Image were:

9.4.2. Positives:

When they were asked what comes to their mind when they think about UBT, most business students mentioned that they have the best professors. A good number of them mentioned quality as the word that is spoken about UBT personnel.

9.4.3. Areas for Improvement:

A large number of participants thought that when UBT is mentioned they think of the weak point, which is the management of this institution. The question of the double degree was mentioned by nearly every student. Some of the students mentioned this even without knowing the meaning of the double degree. The issue of having English & Albanian lectures was discussed and some students expressed the view that there has been a decrease in the brand image with the opening of faculties teaching in Albanian. They think that this fact will confuse the UBT internationality, and they will be considered the same as students of inferior quality

who attend lectures in Albanian. All students insisted that there should be a clear differentiation between those students who learn in English and those who learn in Albanian.

9.4.4. Recommendations:

When we had a discussion about image most of the things mentioned by students were good, but;

- There needs to be clarification of the double degree question because nearly everyone mentioned this point. UBT staff must explain this misunderstanding and make it clear that students will receive their degree from UBT, which is recognized by the Ministry of Education in Austria.
- One suggestion was to have Golden and Silver diplomas because it associates a better value with lectures in English.

10.0. Phase 3: What are the companies' perceptions and expectations regarding UBT?

This survey brings in important information from the labor market. This information would be useful both to UBT and students. The data was collected from different companies and institutions in Kosovo. Companies that participated in this sample were the biggest companies in terms of employment capacity, reputations and growth potential.

The sample consists of: Ministry of Trade and Industry, New Co Ferronickel, KEC, PTK, ProCredit Bank, Raiffeisen Bank and K.S Dukagjini. The interviewed persons were usually HR managers and sometimes managers together with the administration director or with the person who is member of the board in the hiring process.

The interviews were structured around sixteen open-ended questions (see Appendix 4) and, in general, it was a face - to - face interview. However, a few companies had the questionnaires filled in by the managers that were directly linked with this specific field and then returned them to us.

The reasons of doing this research was to get an idea of what are the things required by the labor market when they recruit students to enable us to see if UBT students are prepared enough to compete in this market. Alternatively, to identify specific skills or qualities that companies are looking for which can be imparted during the studying period. Another reason was receiving the companies' opinion regarding UBT as well as students. In other words, in case of job contests what are the companies' perceptions regarding education quality for candidates who came from UBT.

10.1. Skills needed when companies are hiring business students

Skills that companies are looking for differ from company to company; they also depend on the vacancies candidates apply for and sometimes on the company's main line of business.

Skills that were mostly mentioned by nearly all companies were communication skills, computer skill and personal skills. For companies like Banks beside education background and general skills, communication skills were one of the most important skills because usually positions that are mostly suitable for students without work experience are that of Customer Relation Officer, Cashier and Accounts Officer and these positions are called "front desk" positions and have direct contact with customer. This is why the communication skills are considered important.

Interpersonal skills were also emphasized by the majority of companies and those companies were from different fields: Banking, production, ministry, public and private companies.

Team work and managerial skills were considered important skill by some private companies who could not imagine a good worker without those skills.

For MTI, the knowledge of regulations was the most important skill that they are looking for when hiring business students.

Some production companies also pointed out that if candidates possessed technical skills this would be considered an advantage.

10.1.1. How companies judge if applicants have these skills?

Nearly each of the company managers mentioned that they would judge those skills based on interview. Public companies have an interview board which is based on rules and consists of four members who independently give points to the applicants. Some companies have multiple rounds of interviews mostly for managerial positions resulting in a strong competition between candidates.

Most companies considered tests a good method for judging the applicants' skills. Some companies, like banks, use different methods. They bring into play the so called "initiative-action- results" method. They ask candidates for particular examples from their studies or from their daily life when they faced a problem or difficulty and evaluate what was the action taken and the end -result of that action. Such examples help them to have a better picture about the candidate.

Probation period was also mentioned as a way for some companies to judge if the candidates have the above - mentioned skills.

Copies of diploma, recommendation letters and application forms were several times mentioned by some interviewees as criteria for evaluation.

10.1.2. Qualities needed when companies are hiring business students

The answers regarding qualities were largely similar to the responses concerning candidates' skills for some companies, but there was a good number of responders that considered very important the education background, in particular, the average grade of candidates and work experience.

A large number of companies mentioned team work as a very important quality that they are looking for. Strong analytical and convincing skills are considered very important qualities for banks that participated in this sample.

Some companies are looking for qualities like intelligence and, the way candidates present themselves. How candidates present themselves is taken as an indicator of how they would present their company to the public.. .

Being an outgoing person, easy to adapt in a new working environment and willingness to cooperate were also mentioned as important qualities by some companies.

10.1.3 How companies judge if applicants have these qualities?

Nearly each and every company used the same methods to judge the candidates' skills and qualities. Beside the interviews, tests, diplomas, CV and recommendation letters the candidates' qualities are judged mostly through a probation period which is usually three months.

10.2. Skills needed when companies are hiring computer science students

On the questions related to the computer science students, the answers were almost the same as those for business students, the biggest difference stemming from the fact that some companies outsource this service. They contract with companies that are specialized in this area. In addition, to these companies which might need technical employees, they mentioned as very important the educational background especially high grades and most importantly, the ability to handle efficiently, the Microsoft office programs, familiarity with programming, knowledge of the English language and know-how on databases.

Some companies, in addition, mentioned that if applicants had received specialized training in the computer science field that would be an advantage for them.

10.2.1. How companies judge if applicants have these skills?

The way of judging those skills was the same as that they employed in judging applicants from other fields. All companies use written tests and interviews for evaluating the candidates' skills. Some of them give assignments to the computer science candidates and based on the results they form estimates about the potential skills of each candidate. In addition, some companies also use the probation period in order to judge better the candidate's skills.

10.2.2. Qualities needed when companies are hiring computer science students

Most of companies considered education and experience as a very important quality for computer science students. A good number of companies mentioned that the ability to preserve companies' secret information is a very important quality because employees have access to a lot of secret information. Varied IT training, technical qualities, team work and personality were also mentioned several times.

10.2.3. How companies judge if applicants have these qualities?

The methods that companies use to judge all employees are almost the same. These include tests, interviews, CV and other necessary documents that could establish some of the candidate's qualities as well as the probation period.

10.3. Company's experience

I formulated questions that relate to companies' experience with students in order to obtain some information regarding the company's ability and desire to recruit students. Other information that may be interesting is the time period that students were recruited, and from which universities these students graduated. I also obtained some information about competitors such as what did they do in this area, experiences of the students with those companies etc. In the main those questions were structured in such a way so as to obtain general information from companies' perspective regarding UBT students as well as other universities. This information clarifies the lack of relationships and network which exists between UBT and companies.

During the year 100% of companies in this sample have hired students to work in their companies. Therefore we could conclude that companies in this sample have the ability and desire to recruit students besides the approximately 34 students each company has recruited. These students were recruited for different time spans:

- For internship companies hired 33.34% of students,
- For part time jobs they hired 41.67% of students, and
- For full time jobs companies hired 25% of students.

As these figures show, students have quite good chances of being hired by companies for full time jobs, because most of the times students that were hired for full time jobs had earlier finished internships with those companies. Therefore, internships should be considered a good start for students to get jobs.

Some managers thought a part - time job is considered an appropriate arrangement for both parties, because students have time for studying and companies mostly need part time workers during the summer season because a large number of regular employees are on vacation, and also when employees are in medical cessation or birth cessation. The table below shows from which universities were those recruited:

University Name	Percentage that Take Part
UP	30.77%
AUK	15.38%
University of Tetova	7.69%
ILIRIA	7.69%
Dardania	7.69%
Pjeter Budi	7.69%
Victory	7.69%
Did not target any specific university	15.38%

Table 13. Recruitments rate

This data gives us the information that most of those recruited were from the Public University of Prishtina. Therefore, 31% of interviews mentioned this university. This ratio could be because most of the companies on this sample were public companies and they mentioned some regulations that relate to recruits being from UP. Moreover, some companies talked about scholarships that they give to some bachelor students, the majority of those students being from the Public University of Prishtina.

During this research I found out that around 15.38% of companies thought that they recruited students from AUK, If we compare this figure with other private universities mentioned we can see that it is the leading number It proves that AUK will have to move forward with the process of internship and students placement. In addition to other universities mentioned like: UT, ILIRIA, Dardania, Pjeter Budi, Victory, a large number of managers did not target any specific university Therefore 16% of the responders ticked the box indicating this. Through this research I encountered another interesting thing namely, 8% of the companies mentioned that they had recruited them from University of Tetova in Macedonia. This fact gives us the impression that with a good university management system students could have the opportunity to finish the internship in foreign countries.

One of the main questions in this research was getting information concerning managers' experience with the latest recruiting. Were they satisfied with the quality of those students? On the basis of this information we could get an idea about the level of competition between students in the labor market.

In the main all companies were very satisfied with the students that they had recruited. Companies described their satisfaction by stating that students were professionally prepared and were interested in their job. They were surprised that students could successfully handle the projects. In most of the cases the students exceeded the company's expectations.

10.4. Companies experience with UBT students

Now we come to the key questions of this survey, the questions which were developed to give us significant information from the company's perspective e.g. Did they hire any students from UBT? How would companies rate the quality of those students and finally what are the companies' expectations from UBT students?

Even those companies that didn't mention specifically mention that they also recruited students from UBT, on questioning, replied in favor of UBT.

43% of the companies had hired UBT students, 29% did not hire UBT students and 28% did not remember that UBT students were part of the recruiting. Through this research I asked companies to rate the quality of UBT students based on what ever they knew about those students and the results of this question are shown in the table below:

Rating	Percentage
Low	-
Medium	-
High	57.14%
Very High	14.28%
Don't Know	28.57%

Table 14. Rating the quality of UBT students

As we can see from these figures the majority of managers had a good opinion regarding UBT students. This is an advantage for students as well as for the university. It is hoped that in the future with an improvement in the student's placement area this 29% that have no information regarding UBT students should decrease significantly.

I asked managers to let me know their expectation from UBT students and nearly every one expects these students to be well -prepared professionally, possess modern innovative ideas, and be practical and up to date. These expectations are basically built from information like UBT

having special connections with Vienna and having international professors. That is why companies expect UBT students to be on par with EU students and also have cutting edge knowledge imbibed from international professors to enable them to work efficiently and to also know how to help companies and their society.

10.5. Companies interviewed

These are detailed in the Table below.

Company Name	Ministry of Trade and Industry	KEC	PTK	New Co Ferronikeli	ProCedit Bank	Raiffisen Bank	K.S Dukagjini
Location	Prishtina	Prishtina	Prishtina	Drenas	Prishtina	Prishtina	Prishtina
Main Line of Business	Government	Power	Post and Telecom.	Nickel Production	Banking	Banking	Insurance
Number of employees	155	7443	2500	1003	879	650	102

Table 15. Company's details

11.0 Conclusion

Now we came to the final part of this paper and I hope that readers have by now got a broad understanding about the branding concept. In addition to this the research example will illustrate how to start the first step of the branding process starting from customers and bearing in mind that brands live entirely in the mind of beholder.

However, I remind all the persons who read this paper that in addition to the traditional interpretation of the brand "brand is a name, logo, term..." to think that that brand is nothing more than a promise, special relationship, and that communication is what delivers promises and drives this relationship. These relationships however, must provide added value for customers; otherwise the relationships will soon becoming less valuable.

Moreover, the brand lies at the very heart of the organization and determines corporate actions. Therefore the organization needs to understand and communicate, **internally** (to employees, shareholder) and **externally** (to current consumers, potential consumers, suppliers), the essence of its brand. The most successful brands are those that focus not solely on the tangible value but also on the intangible value perceived by the customer.

In order to build a strong brand, companies must realize that brand-making is an interactive process between company and consumer. In addition, strong brands may not require as much continued investment as competitors (with weaker brands) to maintain the success of the brand.

Further, it is important to remember that brand elements and secondary associations are two brand building devices in every marketer's tool kit. Savvy marketers will ensure they get as much as possible out of each one.

In order to get the right brand management at your company it would be helpful to consider the following seven questions:

- Is your brand fulfilling the addressable market? (Start with the consumer)
- Can you define your brand position distinctively? (Points of difference that's make sense to consumers)
- Does marketing = branding = advertising in your company? (Synchronize these elements)
- Is branding being "off-shored" to your advertising agency?
- If customer satisfaction is breaking down, who calls the meeting? (Who leads the charge)
- Does brand-related tracking and budgeting go beyond advertising and promotion?
- Do you understand that brand-making is a marathon and not a sprint?

In addition to that, strong brands spot the trends and make a group of people to follow their trends Another way that companies can employ to build their brands for less money is with a forward-looking segmentation and sophisticated analytic tools that increase the precision of defining and delivering a brand.

With respect to UBT, my general opinion is that this university has a good opportunity for building a strong university brand by first defining the need for brand building, second understanding the importance of branding, third measuring the current situation of the brand, and fourth, formulating the new brand strategy.

Besides my recommendations and comments, with the aim of transforming UBT into the best University in Kosovo, I give below my suggestions for improvements in several areas:

- Differentiation between Albanian and English Faculty, (UBT Golden, UBT Silver). This approach would also help in differentiating them from the competitors. It would thus enhance the prestige of the university especially for the students following the English track.
- Not over- promising.
- Use universities strengths (university accreditation and professors) to increase people's awareness about UBT,
- Ensuring Academic Integrity,

- Improving internal process and effectiveness of the administration,
- Good treatment of academic and administration staff ,
- Appropriate learning facilities,
- Having UBT representatives or sales agent in other main cites of Kosovo,
- Developing better contact with companies and institutions with respect to student's placement.

The best universities succeed because they live and breathe the basic rule of branding; that a brand's value exists solely in the minds and hearts of its community. This is more important for universities than many corporate organizations as these provide intangible services. The university brand thrives on the persuasive power of this communication. Because a university stands for certain values, it will attract people who share those values and who in turn perpetuate and strengthen the brand.

Appendix 1.

UBT slogan proposal

- 1. Always learn from experts**
- 2. UBT for those who insist on the best**
- 3. UBT is key to your success**
- 4. You will learn by doing**

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Introduction: Hi, My name is Metihe Kastrati. I am completing my research and would like your time to answers some questions about higher education in Kosovo. There are no right and wrong answers. All the information you provide will be kept confidential.

0 Awareness of Private Universities.

Q1. First, some questions about PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES in KOSOVO. What are some of the private universities that you know about? (Record names below. If more than 1 is mentioned ask Q2. If they mention only one university or do not know any universities, skip to Q3).

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

Q2. Of these Universities mentioned, which one would you rank as the best? Why? And the next best? Why? (Write down below)

Top University: _____

Reasons: _____

Next best: _____

Reasons: _____

Factors Influencing Choice.

Q3. Which are three main factors that influence your decision about choosing a University?

Good education plan Students placement

Reputation of school Tuition (cost)

Quality of Professors Classes in English

Others _____

Q4. Who are the other people that might have an impact on choosing the University (Tick from those mentioned)

Family Friends Colleagues at work School teachers Others (Write in)

Q5. What are some of the sources that you will use to get information about different universities? (Tick from those mentioned)

Media Family/friends Current students Past students

School teachers Others_(Write in)_____

Ideal University

Q5. How would you describe an ideal university for you? Tick all relevant options.

Good curriculum Good professors Low costs/tuition

Good Jobs for students Good Process Easy to get admission

Others_(Write in)_____

Q6. Which University would you think is an ideal university in the Kosovo region? (Write down name below)

None Ideal (name) _____; _____

Awareness and Rating of UBT (Ask these questions based on their response to Q1 earlier)

Q7. What, if anything, have you heard about UBT? (Write down their response below)

Q8. What is your opinion about the quality level of education that is delivered in UBT? (Read out the scale below and let them choose their response. Tick the response below)

Very Low Low Medium High Very High

Q8. What is your opinion about the quality of UBT professors? (Read out the scale below and let them choose their response)

Very Low Low Medium High Very High

Q9. What is the language used for lectures in UBT? (Tick the response below)

English Albanian Both English and Albanian Don't know

UBT Image

Q9. When you think about UBT what are the first three things that come to your mind? (Write down below)

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____

Demographics of Respondents

Gender Male Female

Age (in years) _____

Appendix 3

Focus Group Interview Schedule

1. What do you consider are UBT's strengths?
2. Are these strengths sufficient for a university to be considered as the best university in the region? If no, which are things that need improvement to enable UBT to become the best university?
3. If you were in the President's position what are the things that you would change?
4. When you think about UBT, what are the first thoughts that come to your mind?
5. What are the main promises delivered by UBT?
6. What do you think about the Albanian faculty that was opened by UBT?

Appendix 4

Ensuring Academic Integrity

1. When students take an examination, they should not be able to see the other students' answers. This can be done by making sure that there is at least one desk per student and space between the desks.
2. Students should be allowed to take only permitted materials into the test.
3. Proper procedures for the examinations should be observed. No student should be allowed to talk, pass notes and information to other students taking the examination. If this is seen to occur, the invigilator should warn the students and then take corrective action. This may include changing the seats and in extreme cases expelling the student from the examination room.
4. Both the student receiving help and those helping are equally guilty of academic misconduct. With sufficient evidence, both types of students should be expelled from the examination room. (This contradicts Point 3 where a system of initial warning is suggested)
5. If any student is expelled during the examination, the student should:
 - a. Get a fail grade on the whole course
 - b. Not be allowed to take any other classes for a minimum of one year

Appendix 5

Improving Academic Feedback and Reporting

1. When the professor are finished with lectures 10 days should be the period for returning (administering?) the test to UBT staff,
2. 15 days after receiving the tests should be the period for returning the exam results together with tests.
3. After students receive the results three days should be given to discuss uncertainties regarding tests.

Appendix 6

Questionnaire for Companies

Introduction: My name is Metihe Kastrati. I am completing my research and would like your time to answers some questions about your company's hiring practices for new employees, specifically in the business areas.. There are no right and wrong answers. All information you provide will be kept confidential. Please think of the last time when you were recruiting new employees when answering these questions.

Skills Needed when hiring Business Students:

Q1. What are some of the most important skills you look for when you hire business students? Why? (Write down the answers below)

Q2. How do you judge if an applicant has these skills (explore the most important skills)?

Q3. What are some of the most important qualities you look for when you hire business students? Why? (Write down the answers below)

Q4. How do you judge if an applicant has these qualities (explore the most important qualities)?

Needs from Computer Science Employees?

Q5. What are some of the most important skills you look for when you hire computer science students? Why? (Write down the answers below)

Q6. How do you judge if an applicant has these skills (explore the most important skills)?

Q7. What are some of the most important qualities you look for when you hire computer science students? Why? (Write down the answers below)

Q8. How do you judge if an applicant has these qualities (explore the most important skills)?

Company's Experience

Q9. During the year, last six months) have you hired any students to work in your company? (If yes please answer Q10 to Q13).

YES

NO

Q10. Approximately how many student have you hired? (Write the number here) _____

Q11. Were these students hired for (tick all those below)

Internship Part time job Full time job

Q12. From which university were these students recruited ?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Did not target any specific university

Q13. Could you please describe how your latest recruiting experience has been?

Companies Experience with UBT students

Q14. Have you hired any UBT students?

YES NO DO NOT REMEMBER

Q15. Based on whatever you know, how would you rate the quality of those students?

Very Low Low Medium High Very High Do not know

Q16. What are your expectations from UBT students?

COMPANY DETAILS

Company Name _____

Location _____

Main line of business _____

Number of Employees _____

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