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**The Institute for the Blind - From Charity Organisation to Strong
Charity Brand: A Study of the Importance of Branding and Brand
Management in the Non-Profit Sector.**

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Foreword: A Personal Dedication

After a lot of thought, a few long nights in front of the computer, and many cups of coffee accompanied by a bit of soul-searching in deciding where it is that my interest lies, I found the trace of an answer to my quest right under my nose. Growing up in an environment where the disabled (the visually impaired) have always been a part of my everyday life, I inevitably developed a special understanding and extraordinary compassion for the handicapped. The compassion that I felt has never been born out of pity or a sense of shame, but rather as a result of a great deal of respect, empathy, benevolence and admiration. For as long as I can remember, blindness has played a key role in my life. The mere fact that my mother had to miss my first birthday party due to some or other crisis at work with a blind student at the Institute for the Blind, serves as one of the earliest memories I possess of the impact my mother's work has had on my life.

My mother has been changing the lives of not only the visually impaired, but every person who is privileged enough to cross paths with her. She has been an employee of the Institute for the Blind in Worcester as a career developer for over 23 years. In primary school, when the mothers of other children my age were deciding on what to wear to Tuesday's book club, my mother was trying to change the lives of others. She was likely to be taking a 30-year-old blind student to dip his toes in the ocean for the first time in his life, or pleading with a company's Human Resource manager to employ one of her disabled students. I was truly fortunate to hear some of these stories, as they helped me to understand the way in which others experience the world.

With this special interest in, and fondness for, the Institute for the Blind (a non-profit organisation which is completely dependent on the generosity of the community), I stumbled across the idea of making the non-profit sector the focus of my research. This study is intended to explore this complex sector. With my background in post-graduate marketing, and with a special interest in the area of branding, my chief objective was to conduct research combining these two areas, with particular attention being awarded to the Institute for the Blind. The incentive for the research was the realisation that this non-profit organisation can benefit greatly from the creation of a strong, recognisable, and trustworthy brand in a competitive market.

INTRODUCTION

"The new brand was the culmination of three years of extensive research and planning and has resulted in a tremendous rebirth of the organization. In essence, our brand is who we are. It is our most valuable asset and represents the heart and soul of our organization. It unifies and simplifies, emboldens and strengthens, giving momentum and clarity to our cause" - *Pink Ribbon brand ambassador Nancy Brinker, Founding Chair of Susan G. Komen for the Cure® (2012)*

The market of today has become increasingly more competitive with the emergence of vast numbers of products and services. In this situation, when all products and services appear alike, confusion is likely to be created in the minds of consumers regarding which products and services to select. "But in the presence of the brand, this confusion can be eliminated to a great extent by easing the communication between product and consumer" (Grace & O'Cass, 2003: 96). Branding is a broadly debated domain in the profit world, evidenced by the elevated level of attention it is receiving in the non-profit sector marketing literature (Hankinson, 2000). In practice, non-profit organisations, with particular emphasis on charities, can possess strong brands similar to that of commercial organisations. However, it can be argued that many charitable organisations do not consciously control this valuable asset (Voeth & Herbst, 2013). In particular, charity organisations may fail to explore important characteristics such as brand recognition, brand recall, and brand personality as key determinants in the choice process when donors and stakeholders select the beneficiaries of financial support.

Using the for-profit branding concept and 'brand presence', to compete for valuable funds against many other charitable organisations in the non-profit sector, has inevitably become a priority for a humble charity organisation such as the Institute for the Blind in Worcester where the visually impaired has in a sense become an iconic symbol of the town. The blind person has always been a part of mankind, but has not always been a part of society. For centuries, blind and visually impaired people have been marginalised by society. The Institute for the Blind in Worcester is a medium sized non-profit organisation that is over 130 years old. Their foremost mission is "to empower persons who are blind, partially sighted or

deaf-blind, including visually impaired persons with additional disabilities by means of education, training, development and care towards a fulfilled life and complete citizenship” (Institute for the Blind, 2013). Early on it was realised by non-profit managers and practitioners that both profit-directed organisations and charity organisations could make use of the marketing and branding concepts. Non-profit organisations, such as the Institute, can successfully make use of this philosophy in their operations and can benefit greatly from these practices.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is ultimately to assist a non-profit organisation such as the Institute for the Blind to shift away from merely being a charity organisation, to becoming a competitive charity brand in the wider non-profit sector of South Africa. This will be achieved by combining the theoretical concepts, frameworks, secondary literature and practical knowledge related to branding in the non-profit sector. The following study serves as a guideline for the Institute to follow in order to realise its strengths and weaknesses; to utilise its opportunities effectively; and to improve their level of brand orientation and “spontaneous brand recall”. This study intends to outline the tools necessary to assist the Institute with raising the required funds so that it may not only survive, but also so that it has the financial capacity to thrive in an increasingly competitive non-profit sector.

Furthermore, recent exploratory and qualitative research conducted by the researcher explores how this charity organisation is perceived by the public on a brand level. Specific reference is made to those wanting to partake in donating practices, and the manner in which the strength of the Institute’s ‘brand’ influences their donating behaviour. The primary idea of the research was therefore to produce knowledge regarding brand-building in the non-profit sector, so as to assist the managerial decision-making process in their attempts to accomplish this. Equipped with the findings of this study the organisation can gain valuable insight and suggestions so as to formulate the most appropriate strategy to enter into, and succeed in, the non-profit market.

The study serves as a marketing plan developed to conduct in-depth analyses into the internal (micro) and external (macro) environments in which the Institute operates. The second section will comprise of a discussion of brand-awareness strategies. Experiential brand building event strategies will be examined, followed by an examination of the creative concepts, which have been developed to educate the public and create “spontaneous

recognition” of the Institute’s brand. Finally, the rationale for these brand awareness strategies will be explored using the Awareness and Public Education Campaign produced by the Institute for the Blind.

The reader can expect to encounter some of the following findings throughout this paper:

1. The conclusion that the non-profit sector differs drastically from the private or commercial sector in terms of their overall structure, goals, vision and missions, legal aspects, values, resource management, success measurements etc. However, it will become clear throughout this study that, in an increasingly competitive environment, the charity sector is inevitably becoming more and more similar to that of the commercial sector. This is true in the sense that non-profits are forced to professionalise their conduct and invest in strong brand building and effective brand management in order to continue their existence and compete for resources.
2. There is an increasing need for strong charity brands to facilitate the donor choice process. Effective brand recognition and top-of-mind brand recall is now becoming as crucial for non-profits as it has always been for commercial companies in the private sector.
3. In other words this "spontaneous recognition", of a charity organisation at the point of choosing a charity to donate money or time to, is most likely to be related to the strength of the organisation's brand.
4. After qualitative research was conducted by the researcher using the Institute for the Blind in Worcester as an example of a typical non-profit organisation for the purpose of this study, it has become clear that the Institute for the Blind has not yet developed a strong brand-orientation leading towards a strong positioning and brand recognition strategy in their daily operations of the organization. The Institute has not yet realised the importance of developing a brand strong enough to compete for donors’ resources in this increasingly competitive marketplace.
5. The researcher has utilised recent non-profit brand awareness case studies to evidence the success of developing a brand recognition campaign and strong charity brand orientation. The Institute's own brand awareness campaign was then developed in conclusion to improve the charity brand's status.

SECTION A: OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

1. INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: THE ORGANISATION

1.1 History of the Institute for the Blind

Reverend Kobus Conradie, Chairman of the Board of Control of the Institute for the Blind, recently stated the following in the Institute's annual report (2012 – 2013):

Our society is no longer controlled by the largest deemed denominator, the view of the community, but by what you deem correct. And together with that comes the evil of hedonism – take as much as possible out of life to make it pleasant and worthwhile. It is therefore logical that an organization such as the Institute for the Blind that depends on the generosity of people will suffer during these times. And we have indeed observed the decrease in income at the Institute. But on the other hand, we are also surprised by the many people who move in against the stream of this storm – people that still do not live for themselves, but are rather prepared, on all levels, to lighten the burden of those who are less privileged.

Over the last fifty years, the commercial sector world-wide has developed and built brands as a means of differentiation in an increasingly competitive environment. Kooiman (2010: 11) argues that in recent years, “there has been a tremendous growth in the charity sector. This growth is reflected in a huge increase in number and in competition, but also within the charities themselves, through developments in their brand thinking.” Several charity organisations are attempting to attain ‘charity brand’ status; not only in terms of a name, slogan and logo; but primarily in terms of communicating value and meaning to their stakeholders and donors. Charity organisations are gradually realising that they should professionalise their conduct in order to continue their existence. According to Hankinson (2000:207), consumer research suggests a need for strong brands to facilitate the donor

choice process. This concept can be better explained by the fact that the voluntary sector has found that non-profit organisations are constrained in the pursuit of their goals by their dependence on resource providers, and by the rightful choice that these donors or volunteers can exercise over their resources. Thus, it can be argued that a non-profit organisations' entire existence is thus reliant on the donor's choice of contribution choices. Hankinson (2000: 207) argues that in the mid-nineties charities were "under-using one of their most powerful assets: Their brands" and that they needed to clarify their branding to stakeholders as well as the public. More recent research by Kylander & Stone (2012) evidence a similar position. More specifically, in the twentieth century branding in the non-profit sector "appears to be at an inflection point in its development" (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 1). This is apparent as many non-profit organisations are moving away from the narrow approach to brand management, in other words using it merely as a fundraising tool, to exploring the wider and more strategic roles that brands can play in this sector.

In 1877 two ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, Pastor William Murray of Worcester and Pastor Christiaan Rabie of Piketberg, became aware of the special needs of deaf and blind children in their congregations as well as in the greater South Africa (Institute for the Blind, 2013). In 1881 "Het Doofstommen en Blinden Instituut" was established in Worcester (2013). It paved the way for the education of the blind, and facilitated the initiation of the blind into society and the workplace (2013).

The first teacher entrusted with the educational needs of these learners was Mr Jan de la Bat. Lenie du Toit, the first pupil to attend the school, was joined two months later by seven other learners of whom one was blind. "After twenty-five years, it was found that the differences in teaching methods, determined by the diverse needs of the disabled children, necessitated the establishment of two separate schools" (Institute for the Blind, 2013). By the end of the nineteenth century, music training and handwork were established as the primary focus areas. This was largely because of the limited training opportunities at teaching institutes, as well as limited job opportunities in the open labour market that existed for the visually impaired at that time. A need for baskets in the local agricultural sector led to the teaching and further development of cane weaving. An academic programme with special adaptations was devised (Pioneer School, 2013). Shortly thereafter, this specially-designed curriculum was implemented nationally. Blind children at the Pioneer School, as well as other schools for the visually impaired, such as the Athlone School for the Blind and Prinshof School, were

compelled to follow the National Curriculum as offered in mainstream schools in the country. The Pioneer School has developed into a leader in the field of education for blind and partially-sighted learners, and in 1998 the school opened its doors to the specific learning-disabled learner as well (Pioneer School, 2013). Braille printers, such as Pioneer Printers, were also established to produce literature and learning material for visually impaired learners. Over the course of many years, many dedicated men and women were involved in the development of the education for blind learners. The Pioneer school currently caters for learners with special educational needs in 3 focus groups, namely visually impaired learners, learners with learning barriers, and the multiple disabled/deaf-blind learners (Pioneer School, 2013).

The Institute for the Blind (which the Pioneer school forms a big part of), a programme of BADISA, is a jointly ministered undertaking of the Dutch Reformed Church (Western and Southern Cape) and the Uniting Reformed Church of SA (Cape). In 1991 the Institute for the Blind appointed its own Board of Control. The organisation regards its overall vision to be "equal opportunities for visually impaired persons" (Institute for the Blind, 2013). At present, the industries in Worcester provide employment opportunities to over one hundred and sixty visually impaired adults from all over the country, in six different industrial factories. Three of these factories are currently operating on the Institute's premises, with the other three allocated to the industrial area in Worcester. There are also several avenues through which the public may become involved with the Institute. Such opportunities include being volunteers, purchasing their products (including mattresses, cane-furniture, audio-magazines and newspapers), making a bequest, or becoming a supporter of the organisation.

1.2 The Vision and Objectives of the Organisation

Vision:

The vision of this charity organisation is ultimately to provide equal opportunities for visually impaired persons, as well as securing the full participation and inclusion of blind people in all aspects of a diverse and multicultural South African society. The vision of the Institute can in effect be combined with their mission statement as this is to empower persons who are blind, partially sighted or deaf blind, including those with additional disabilities (such as learning disabilities), "by means of education, training, development and care towards a fulfilled life and complete citizenship" (Institute for the Blind, 2013).

The Objectives Are To:

1. Provide accommodation and employment to visually impaired persons, depending on availability and in compliance with specific criteria.
2. Employ and accommodate multi-handicapped, visually impaired persons in a supportive living and working environment, depending on availability and in compliance with certain criteria.
3. Improve the quality of life of frail older persons by providing accommodation.
4. Initiate the training of professional and non-professional staff involved with the visually impaired.
5. Encourage community involvement at all levels, and to provide employment opportunities to the visually impaired. The goal is also to generate funds, through commercial ventures, whilst maintaining non-profit values.
6. Initiate, or participate in, outreach programmes and supportive ventures connected to visual impairments so as to ensure integration into the community.
7. Promote co-operation with national and international associations for the visually impaired.
8. Promote formal education and training, and to provide care for blind, partially sighted, deaf blind and multi-disabled students through financial assistance.
9. Contribute financially towards promoting literacy and investigating career opportunities for visually impaired persons. Emphasis is also placed on providing appropriate training (career development) and to undertake career placement responsibilities. The improvement of the quality of life of persons with visual impairments is fore grounded in the production and distribution of literature in all the media accessible to the visually impaired.
10. Raise awareness throughout society including at the family level, regarding blind, partially sighted and deaf-blind persons. Through this, the aim is to encourage respect for their rights and dignity, and to promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of blind, partially sighted and deaf blind persons.
11. Promote recognition of the skills, merits, abilities and contributions to the workplace of persons with disabilities.

(Institute for the Blind, 2013).

2. INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

2.1 Defining the Non-Profit Sector

It is essential to consider the environment in which the Institute for the Blind operates, so as to optimise research endeavours, and to ensure the successful application of the findings in this field. The Institute for the Blind operates in the non-profit organisation (NPO) or charity sector. Non-profits have been defined by what they are not (profit-making) or by what they give away. These terms, according to Joiner (2008: 1) can conjure up images of soup kitchens run out of church basements, people collecting signatures on street corners, and organisations of "do-gooders" striving to compensate for a lack of funds by working long hours and relying solely on volunteers. This image of the non-profit sector, however, is far from complete. The assumption that a literature can be constructed for the non-profit sector becomes one of seeking common ground. In this sense, Welleford (1998: 4) notes that a form of unified diversity becomes an important consideration in this quest. The practical side of this consideration is to find a common ground upon which to found a literature. The need for a working definition of "nonprofit" becomes vital to this quest for a sector literature.

The origins of the term itself can be used as a cornerstone in the process of defining the literature. Salamon & Anheier (1997: 180) states that the term *organizzazioni di volontariato* (voluntary organizations) or simply *volontariato*, refers to a "vast array of private organisations addressing problems primarily in health and social services. The term thus applies both to philanthropic organisations which assist the general public, and to mutual or self-help groups tending to the problems of their own members. In contrast, Powell and Steinberg (2006: 2) attempt to provide a simpler definition of the non-profit sector. It is defined as "those entities that are organised for public purposes, are self-governed, and do not distribute surplus revenues as profits. Non-profit organisations are largely independent of government and business, although they may be closely related to both" (2006:2).

Therefore, stated in a simplified manner, there exist many key differences between the voluntary sector and the private or commercial sector. The most obvious and important differences are the fact that non-profit organisations are said to provide some or other public service, or have some public purpose that goes beyond serving the personal interests of the members of that NPO. On the other hand, organisations in the private sector mainly operate for the purpose of making profits, where these profits are distributed between its members.

McCauley and Hughes (1993: 156) highlight the uniqueness of the non-profit sector and differentiate it further from the private sector as they mention that, "Because the nonprofit sector has some unique characteristics, we cannot necessarily generalize research results on corporate managers to managers in this sector. Nonprofit organizations' missions, governance structures, funding sources, and reliance on volunteers create differences in their internal dynamic and external relationships."

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, there have been "increasingly formalized attempts to organize the study of these institutions through the development of a language and set of theories that delineate a distinctive sector" (Morris, 2000: 26). In terms of the theoretical definition, NPOs are mostly charities or service organisations. They may be organised as a not-for-profit corporation or as a trust, a cooperative, or they may be purely informal. Sometimes they are also termed "foundations", or "endowments". A non-profit organisation is formed for the purpose of serving a public or mutual benefit other than the pursuit or accumulation of profits for owners or investors. "The nonprofit sector is a collection of entities that are organisations; private as opposed to governmental; non-profit distributing; self-governing; voluntary; and of public benefit" (Salamon, 1999: 10 *in* Luckert, 2011). Luckert (2011) continues to state that the non-profit sector is often referred to as the third sector, independent sector, voluntary sector, philanthropic sector, social sector, tax-exempt sector, or the charitable sector.

It is arguable that capacity building ("capacity" refers to the ability of an organisation to survive, that is, to be self-sustaining,) is an on-going problem experienced by NPOs for a number of reasons. Firstly, most rely on external funding such as government funds, grants from charitable foundations, direct donations etc. to maintain their operations. Changes in these sources of revenue, therefore, may influence the reliability or predictability with which the organisation can hire and retain staff, sustain facilities, create programs, or maintain tax-exempt status (Luckert, 2011).

Resource mismanagement is another difficulty that NPOs encounter. The nature of this type of organisation allows for employees not being held accountable to anybody with a direct stake in the organisation. An employee, for example, may start a new program without disclosing its complete liabilities. Liabilities are promised to employees on the full faith and credit of the organisation but not formally recorded anywhere, leading to accounting fraud.

With regard to the market orientation in the non-profit sector, it is difficult to define the market towards which an organisation might be orientated because of the fact that many non-profit organisations engage in relationships with several markets at once. Understanding organisational success in the non-profit sector is also problematic. Lovelock and Weinberg (1989: 210) argue that the reason for this is that success is often measured using a variety of non-quantitative measures, as opposed to profit sector measures like ROI (Return on Investment) as is the case in the commercial sector. Due to the unique nature of the non-profit sector mentioned earlier, it leads to this sector creating less quantifiable but more intangible social benefits. For example, non-profits provide opportunities for people to invest in; and give back to; their communities, raise awareness of issues, and help foster a sense of community and trust. The non-profit sector can be regarded as being extremely diverse, as non-profit organisations play a variety of social, economic and political roles in society. They provide services and fulfil roles such as to educate, to advocate and to engage people in civic and social life.

Siplon and Brainard (2004) emphasise the fact that although these organisations are not part of the private sector, they are expected to function in a highly competitive environment. They often attempt to deliver services to the most disadvantaged people, and although they are not informal grassroots organisations, they are "expected to serve as vital mediating institutions thereby enhancing and strengthening democracy" (Siplon and Brainard, 2004:435).

After evaluating the concept of what the non-profit organisation sector entails, one can therefore firmly categorise the Institute for the Blind as an organisation in the non-profit /charity sector. As a program of BADISA, the Institute for the Blind is registered as a non-profit organisation (NPO number: 011-891), as well as a Public Benefit organisation (number: 930 006 348).

2.2 The South African Non-Profit (NPO) Industry

At present, South Africa has an extensive non-governmental sector which boasts roughly one hundred thousand registered non-profit organisations (NPOs) and an estimated sixty thousand unregistered associations (Stuart, 2013). South Africa's large non-profit sector is the product of a diverse society. This includes a variety of ethnic groups and a history that has informed the way in which South African society operates as a whole, as well as the way in which the non-profit sector conducts its operations.

Non-profit organisations in South Africa are said to be "vulnerable and susceptible to the winds of change which blow from all sides" (Holtzhausen, 2013: 88). These winds of change may refer to any instability that may arise quickly and without warning within this country. Such examples include political change and instability, a nation-wide economic crises, or even unforeseen natural disasters impacting operations on a major scale. Many of these humble organisations function in a context characterised by hopelessness, poverty, crime, ill-health as well as multiple disaster risk stressors: Inevitably these non-profit organisations experience tremendous frustrations due to the lack of resources and finances. Holtzhausen (2013: 88) continues by arguing that within this context mentioned above NPOs play crucial roles in contributing to disaster risk reduction in South Africa by "examining the nature of communities' vulnerability and, on the basis of that analysis, incorporating appropriate measures".

In her article *The South African Nonprofit Sector: Struggling to Survive, Needing to Thrive*, Stuart (2013: 1) states that the prevalence of NPOs in South Africa can be explained by the postulation that, "nonprofit provision of collective goods will be large in societies with high levels of inequality in individuals' effective demand for collective goods or high degrees of religious or ethnic heterogeneity." South Africa is ethnically diverse, and the inequality of individuals' demand for goods is a common feature of present South African society, brought about, in part, by years of racial segregation and oppression. At present the South African NPO sector is characterised by two types of organisations, the first being service driven, and the second focusing on human rights, advocacy and monitoring. "The former fulfils the role of providing much needed social services to underprivileged communities, and the latter performs the role of social 'watchdog'. It is widely held that a stable and active civil society

aids in poverty alleviation and civil society capacity building, enhancing public debate and participation and the promotion of democracy" (Stuart, 2013: 1). Therefore, the need for a healthy and active civil society in South Africa cannot be overemphasised.

The South African non-profit sector's history and background is as rich and interesting as the country itself. It is important to keep in mind a brief overview of the history of the South African non-profit sector. During the twentieth century, the non-profit sector developed further through a corporatist pact between the British elite and Afrikaner middle class. Large formalised non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dealing with health and social services emerged for the exclusive care of the white community. At the same time, grassroots community-based organisations arose in the black community in order to provide basic services. "These groups were often survivalist and stood in opposition to segregation and later Apartheid. For the most part, the white-run government tolerated these organisations, except during periods of active political repression like the 1960s" (NGO pulse, 2011).

In the early 1980s, anti-Apartheid civil society organisations grew as a result of President P.W. Botha's liberalisation of the political system. Nonetheless, his reform movement retained repressive elements, with a hostile legal and financial environment for NGOs. According to NGO Pulse, (2011), South Africa's history of multiple social formations has profoundly affected the evolution of the diverse group of organisations that are classified as the 'non-profit sector'. To the extent that this is a coherent group, its diversity reflects the complexities of present-day South Africa by incorporating the residues of the past. Although it is argued that the concept of the 'non-profit organisation' is relatively new in South Africa, it is so widely defined that it encapsulates a wide variety of organisations. Included in this broad definition are the racially-exclusive cultural and welfarist¹ organisations that have always been central to the social structure of white society, the entire spectrum of religious organisations, and "the dense networks of community-based NPOs that hold African societies together" (NGO Pulse, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, non-profit organisations play a crucial role in South African society. These organisations, whether large or small, meet a diverse range of social and spiritual needs

¹"Welfarism" is based on the premise that actions, policies, and/or rules should be evaluated on the basis of their consequences.

by caring for the sick, vulnerable or disabled; responding to disasters; developing communities; protecting the environment; or educating youth and adults.

According to Stuart (2013) the 160 000 non-profit organisations operating in South Africa comprises of non-government organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, educational institutions, sports clubs, etc. employ more than one million people. Bown (2010: 1) asserts that a further five million citizens volunteer their talents and energy towards the implementation of good works in communities through these non-profit structures. "Collectively they can stimulate the economy in raising funds and self-generated income by R18 billion per annum. There is no doubt that this is a powerful and important force for the fulfilment of social justice and the safe-keeping of democracy" (Bown, 2010: 1).

Despite all the challenges that the South African non-profit sector confronts, funding is the greatest obstacle as a result of the recent global economic crisis. However, owing to an increasing growth in the number of NPOs in South Africa, these organisations operate in a highly competitive environment where everyone is largely dependent on donors for financial support. It is becoming increasingly expensive and difficult to attract funding. Although obtaining donations is not the only criterion for success in the NPO sector, the importance of donors and donations in the South African non-profit sector is inimitable. "NPOs, to much a greater extent than for-profit organisations, depend on a positive corporate image in order to collect and/or gain funding, since they do not offer a product to sell, but rely on positive perceptions and the trustworthiness of the organisation" (Holtzhausen, 2013: 88)

Consequently applying the brand orientation and brand management processes to the NPO sector in South Africa assists NPOs with overcoming the daily challenges they face (2013: 88). The greatest challenges are having to differentiate themselves and stand out from the masses in order to survive and gain a competitive advantage (2013:88). Holtzhausen (2013: 88) continues to argue that especially in this tough South African non-profit environment where so many organisations need to keep their doors open to make a change in this country, strong relationships with donors, in particular, have to be built as well for the sustainable survival of the organisations.

2.3 NPOs in the International Context

With regard to the international non-profit milieu, it can be argued that the United States of America's non-profit sector specifically continues to grow faster than its business sector or even its government. Sherlock & Gravelle (2009: 1) state that charitable organisations are estimated to employ more than 7% of the U.S. workforce, whilst the broader non-profit sector is estimated to employ 10% of the U.S. workforce, which accounts for more than the finance, insurance and real-estate sectors combined. In 2009, the charities filing Form 990 with the Internal Revenue Service reported approximately \$1.4 billion in revenue and reported holding nearly \$2.6 billion in assets (Sherlock & Gravelle (2009: 1). The non-profit and charitable sector clearly represents a significant, highly diverse component of the U.S. economy. Currently, there are a number of policy issues that could affect, either directly or indirectly, the structure and functioning of nonprofit and charitable organizations. According to Sherlock & Gravelle (2009: 1), "President Barack Obama has turned toward the nonprofit sector while seeking solutions to social problems via the Social Innovation Fund". The recent worldwide economic downturn increased the demand for many of the goods and services provided by charitable organisations globally, while simultaneously placing the same organisations under increased financial constraints. Finally, the tax treatment of non-profits and their contributors raises issues of efficiency, equity, and fairness (Sherlock & Gravelle, 2009: 1).

The National Centre for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) (2014) is a web-based platform designed to develop and disseminate high quality data on non-profit organizations and their activities for use in research on the relationships between the non-profit sector, government, the commercial sector, as well as the broader civil society. According to the NCCS (2014), there are currently more than 2.3 million tax-exempt organisations operating in the United States. Some of the states and their total number of non-profit organisations are listed below to illustrate just how great a role these organisations are playing in the United States of America alone: Alabama (19,319), Alaska (4,967), Arizona (20,983), California (149,175), Colorado (26,257), Florida (71,344), Georgia (38,660), Hawaii (7,162), Indiana (34,377), Kansas (15,999), and Kentucky (17,469) (NCCS, 2014). The major growth that the sector has been experiencing for the past 10 years is evident in the table below.

Table 1.3: Number of Non-Profit Organizations in the United States, 2003 - 2013

	2003		2013		Pct. Change
	Number of Orgs.	Percent of All Orgs.	Number of Orgs.	Percent of All Orgs.	
All Nonprofit Organizations	1,368,332	100.0%	1,404,841	100.0%	2.7%
<u>501(c)(3) Public Charities</u>	783,020	57.2%	943,436	67.2%	20.5%
<u>501(c)(3) Private Foundations</u>	103,387	7.6%	96,765	6.9%	-6.4%
<u>Other 501(c) Nonprofit Organizations</u>	481,925	35.2%	364,640	26.0%	-24.3%
Small community groups and partnerships, etc.	Unknown	NA	Unknown	NA	NA
501(c)(3) Public Charities	783,020	57.2%	943,436	67.2%	20.5%
501(c)(3) Public Charities Registered with the IRS (including registered congregations)	783,020	57.2%	943,436	67.2%	20.5%
<u>Reporting Public Charities</u>	300,824	22.0%	656,323	46.7%	118.2%
Operating Public Charities	260,537	19.0%	583,428	41.5%	123.9%
Supporting Public Charities	40,287	2.9%	72,895	5.2%	80.9%
Non-Reporting, or with less than \$25,000 in Gross Receipts	482,196	35.2%	287,113	20.4%	-40.5%
<i>Congregations (about half are registered with IRS)*</i>	-	0.0%	385,874	27.5%	NA
501(c)(3) Private Foundations	103,387	7.6%	96,765	6.9%	-6.4%
Private Grantmaking (Non-Operating) Foundations	99,107	7.2%	91,560	6.5%	-7.6%
Private Operating Foundations	4,280	0.3%	5,205	0.4%	21.6%
Other 501(c) Nonprofit Organizations	481,925	35.2%	364,640	26.0%	-24.3%
Civic leagues, social welfare orgs, etc.	119,772	8.8%	82,199	5.9%	-31.4%
Fraternal beneficiary societies	99,082	7.2%	62,398	4.4%	-37.0%
Business leagues, chambers of commerce, etc.	71,054	5.2%	61,981	4.4%	-12.8%
Labor, agricultural, horticultural orgs	58,477	4.3%	45,493	3.2%	-22.2%
Social and recreational clubs	56,335	4.1%	45,812	3.3%	-18.7%
Post or organization of war veterans	34,172	2.5%	29,870	2.1%	-12.6%
All Other Nonprofit Organizations	43,033	3.1%	36,887	2.6%	-14.3%

Source: NCCS (2014)

Most people in non-profit organisations across the globe readily recognise that their management practices have improved considerably in recent years. Several international studies from the 1990s emphasise the growth experienced by the non-profit sector. In his book on the challenges that non-profit organisations face internationally, Vernis (2006: 3) states that in a comparative study undertaken by Johns Hopkins University (1997), it is revealed that one out of every 7 new jobs in France during the 1980s belonged to the third sector, whilst in Germany the number was only slightly lower- 1 out of every 8. The results of the study also indicated specifically that French non-profits employed 578 106 people on a full time basis, as well as 431 181 part time workers (Vernis, 2006: 3).

A major role-player on the international charitable front is GuideStar, a website introduced in 1994, which specialises in gathering and publicising valuable information about non-profit organisations worldwide. GuideStar was founded to promote non-profit transparency and to provide a central repository of non-profit information that donors could use as a guide when making decisions regarding the recipients of their charity. The site encourages non-profits to share transparent and accurate information about their organisations. According to the site, the best possible decisions are made when donors, funders, researchers, educators, professional service providers, governing agencies, and the media use the quality information that they provide. "Those decisions affect the world today and will continue to affect it for generations to come" (GuideStar, 2012).

The website also provides valuable information regarding research articles and studies conducted in the international non-profit sector. One of these research studies conducted in 2011 in the United States of America found that approximately 54 million individuals (20% of U.S. population) of all ages, races, ethnicities, socio-economic and educational status live with at least one disability (GuideStar, 2012). This same article reports that due to this fact, non-profits (especially those organisations specialising in aiding the disabled) touch the lives of millions of people in the country on a daily basis.

According to the article (GuideStar, 2012) experts in the charity field were recently asked to recommend non-profits to donors, stakeholders and volunteers that support people with any of the following disabilities: Developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, mental disabilities, blindness and deafness. The non-profits considered in this recommendation by GuideStar (2012) aid people with the aforementioned disabilities, and provide the following services: Transportation, health care, housing, employment, and similar other services. Experts were then asked to select and rank the 11 top non-profits in the United States. Out of all the non-profits that were evaluated, the National Federation for the Blind was ranked 7th in the United States, mostly due to their 'trustworthy and positive' image as well as their passion and commitment towards delivering those services mentioned above. The goal of this organisation, similar to that of the Institute for the Blind, is "to achieve widespread emotional acceptance and intellectual understanding that the real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight but the misconceptions and lack of information which exist. The ultimate purpose of the National Federation of the Blind is the complete integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality" (GuideStar, 2012).

Although the non-profit sector has been experiencing major growth globally, non-profit management practices; and more specifically the general moral of non-profit employees; may demonstrate a much bleaker picture. According to US *Nonprofit Times* journalist Samuel J. Fanburg, more than two-thirds of US non-profit executives say they will leave their jobs within the next five years and only one-fifth think their boards are doing a good job (Fanburg, 2011). The same article states that approximately 7 per cent of non-profit executives have said at some point, that same year they were being interviewed, that they have given notice of their intention to leave their position. A recent survey conducted in the United States shows that 26 percent of non-profit organisations downsized during the previous year, with only 45 percent of non-profit executives expressing happiness in their current position (Fanburg, 2011). Thus, even though the non-profit sector, in the United States specifically, has been experiencing this growth period over the past decade, "negativity is still clearly evident in many of the organizations in this vulnerable but valuable sector, and the general outlook of the sector can still be considered to be a bit bleak from a managerial point of view" (*Nonprofit Times*, 2011).

According to the report by Fanburg (2011), just 17 percent of reporting non-profit organisations have a documented success plan, with just one-third (33%) of executives expressing confidence that the board would hire an appropriate successor. When new leaders were appointed, 52 percent identified themselves as happy during the "honeymoon" period of one year, whilst only 37 percent described themselves as happy from years one through three. Regarding the statistics and conclusions drawn from Fanburg's (2011) report, just 20 percent of leaders described themselves as very satisfied with their board's performance. It is thus evident that even though international non-profits have been experiencing growth and therefore inspiration for future generations. However, the overall outlook of the industry is still one of vulnerability, constant uncertainty and dependence on numerous uncontrollable factors.

3. THE MARKETING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Conceptual framework

It is a fact that marketing activities never take part in isolation. If a company aims to have any success at all in the execution of their marketing attempts, it is necessary to accommodate all the variables in its environment. Such variables include the effect of the ability of the team to develop and maintain successful customer relationships, the ever-changing needs of the community, cultural and economic trends taking place in that community. Should these be ignored, it may be to the detriment of the company and may even result in failure (Van der Westhuyzen & Van der Merwe, 2002:30).

The marketing environment of an organisation is therefore the total of all surrounding variables which can influence the survival, efficient operation, and profitability of the company on the short and long term (Van der Westhuyzen & Van der Merwe, 2002: 31). The company uses the resources of the community to supply products and services to them. The community on the other hand, serves the company by purchasing its products and services. Thus it is quite evident that the company and the community are dependent upon each other. The non-profit community (in the case of the Institute for the Blind) can be a critical component in the development of local systems, as the non-profit community is grounded in a commitment to community service. Many organisations explicitly recognise their role in strengthening individuals, families and communities through their work.

The marketing environment, which includes competitive; economic; political; legal and regulatory; technological; and socio-cultural forces, surrounds the customer and affects the marketing mix of the company. The effects of these mentioned forces on buyers and sellers can be dramatic and difficult to predict. They may create threats to marketers, but also have the potential to generate opportunities for new products and new methods of reaching customers. According to Pride and Ferrell (2001:9) these forces of the marketing environment affect a marketer's ability to facilitate exchanges in three general ways. Firstly, they can influence customers by affecting their lifestyles, standards of living, opinions, attitudes, preferences and needs for products. Because marketing managers try to develop and adjust the marketing mix to satisfy customers, the effects of environmental forces on customers also have an indirect impact on marketing mix components, namely products,

distribution, promotion and price. Secondly, marketing environment forces help determine whether or not, and by what method, a marketing manager should perform certain marketing activities (Pride and Ferrell, 2001: 9). Thirdly, environmental forces may affect the decisions and actions of marketing managers by influencing the reactions of buyers to the marketing mix of the firm.

Marketing environment forces can fluctuate quickly and dramatically, which is one of the reasons why marketing is interesting and challenging. Because these forces are closely interrelated, changes in one marketing environment may cause changes in others. Pride and Ferrell (2001: 10) argue that even though changes in the marketing environment produce uncertainty for marketers, and have the potential to limit marketing efforts, they also create opportunities. Marketers who are alert to these changes in environmental forces are not only able to adjust to these changes and to influence them, but also have the potential to capitalise on the opportunities such changes provide. The creative and innovative response of a company to threatening competitive forces in the marketing environment may potentially provide the company a competitive advantage through the increase in customer loyalty. For example, the elements of the marketing mix, namely products; distribution; promotion and price, are factors over which an organisation has control. The forces of the environment, however, are subject to far less control. It is arguable that marketers continue to modify their marketing strategies and plans in response to dynamic environmental forces. "But even though marketers know they cannot predict changes in the marketing environment with certainty, they must nevertheless plan for them. These environmental forces certainly have a profound effect on marketing activities" (Pride and Ferrell, 2001:10). Consequently, the board of executives and staff members of organisations must become vigilant in gaining an understanding of the environmental conditions and changes that may impact their non-profit organisation. With regards to the marketing environment of the Institute, the following two aspects, namely the current positioning of the organisation, as well as its market segmentation, will be discussed.

4. POSITIONING OF THE INSTITUTE'S BRAND: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

For the modern-day business it is essential to strive towards its objectives by way of 'consumer orientation'. For a profit-seeking business, therefore, this means that the highest

attainable profit should be reached within a particular timeframe. However, with regard to non-profit organisations, this may suggest the development of a *better image* within the community and a *stronger position* in the mind of the consumer. Differentiation therefore is a necessity to compete effectively.

A previous research study on the Institute for the Blind (Du Bois, 2012) in Worcester conducted by the researcher was titled *From Charity Organization to Charity Brand: Qualitative Research into the Importance of Brand Orientation in the Charity Sector* (2012). Through exploratory and qualitative research, the study explored that level of brand orientation and the strength of brand positioning. The Institute for the Blind was used as a case study so as to explore the extent to which the organisation regards *itself* as a 'brand'. Furthermore, the research explored how the charity organisation is perceived by the public (i.e. the position it occupies in consumers' minds), and specifically by those consumers who strive to take part in charitable practices. It also examined the manner in which the strength of the organisation's brand positioning influences their donating behaviour. The purpose of the study, therefore, was to determine whether or not the Institute for the Blind is able to make the shift away from being a simple charity organisation to becoming a competitive charity brand, with a strong brand position in the non-profit sector. The aim of the study was to make the results of the research available as an outline to assist the Institute in formulating a branding strategy, and to assist managerial decision-making with regards to their brand building and brand awareness objectives.

Overall, the study was categorised by three primary objectives. The key objective was to determine the level of brand orientation implemented by the Institute for the Blind. The secondary objective was to discover whether or not donors are influenced by the strength and efficacy of the brand identity of the charity, and consequently its position in the sector relative to competitors. The final objective was to identify whether or not the Institute is using their 'brand' to its full capacity. A non-profit organisation such as the Institute for the Blind is well-defined in terms of their target market or target donor segment. Nevertheless, the over-arching question the study aimed to address was whether or not marketing managers understood the expectations of donors regarding a strong charity brand. Furthermore, the research aimed to identify the influence a lack of a firm brand identity would have on the donating behaviour of potential benefactors in a competitive environment.

Owing to the subjective and qualitative nature of the study, Zikmund's (2003: 109-132) theory regarding business research methods on exploratory research and qualitative analysis served as a methodological guide. The following hypothesis was thus formulated by this researcher: The use of a strong brand-orientated approach –which directly leads to stronger brand positioning – by non-profit organisations directly influences donor behaviour and consequently influences the donor choice process. The dependant variable in this study is donor behaviour while the independent variables are demographical factors such as donor's age, financial resources, religion, culture, access to information concerning charities, time constraints, as well as the position or strength of the charity's 'brand' in the mind of the potential donor.

4.1 Methodology (Rationale)

4.1.1 Overview

When conducting research using one's own resources, two types of information can be gathered, namely exploratory and specific research. The type of marketing research conducted for the purpose of this study was of an exploratory nature. Exploratory research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, as further research needs to be done in order to determine a particular course of action (Zikmund & Babin, 2008). This type of marketing research is thus used to obtain new insights and understanding with regards to non-profit organisations using a brand-orientated marketing approach and its effect on donor behaviour. Before discussing the research design, it is necessary to restate the *purpose* of this study. The primary goal of this exploratory research study is to define brand-orientation as the extent to which an organisation such as the Institute for the Blind in Worcester regards itself as a brand. The study aims to access how, if at all, the Institute for the Blind perceives itself as a brand, and the importance and impact (if any) of a brand-orientated approach in a non-profit organisation on donor behaviour, and ultimately on the donor choice process.

Exploratory research assists in diagnosing the dimensions of problems so that successive research projects will be on target. It helps set priorities for research. Although a research project has not yet been planned, information about an issue is needed before the appropriate diagnosis of the problem can be developed (Zikmund 2003: 111). The sampling of the respondents for this study was of great importance seeing that the researcher wanted to gain a

fair representation of the target population, including both respondents from the donor sector to gain insights according to their perspectives, as well as employees and managers from the non-profit organisation, the Institute for the Blind. The sampling procedure will be discussed in the sections to follow.

4.1.2 Primary and Secondary Research

As defined by Zigmund and Babin (2008) primary research is regarded as research that does not make use of numerical measures, but focuses on discovering true inner meanings and insights.

Published books and journals, such as the Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, Journal of Business Research International Journal of Management Reviews, International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations, Journal of Voluntary Action Research, were consulted to gather additional information. Professionals and experts working in the charity sector (specifically managers and selected employees of the Institute for the Blind) were also consulted for further knowledge of the industry and the organisation itself. Furthermore, internet sources were consulted as a tool to gain information and insights regarding the subject. The primary research (assembled specifically for the project at hand) that was undertaken in this study was of a qualitative nature; thus interpretive, and “leaves much of the measurement process to the discretion of the researcher” (Zikmund 2003:132).

4.1.3 Research Ethics and Informed Consent

Due to the fact that this research study made use of human participants as sources of data in its quest to answer primary research questions, it was important to adhere to rules and regulatory policies concerning research ethics. Pride and Ferrell (2000: 91) defines a typical ethical issue as an “identifiable problem, situation, or opportunity requiring an individual or organization to choose from among several actions that must be evaluated as right or wrong, ethical or unethical.” Thus, to avoid any potential legal and ethical issues regarding research being conducted using human participants in a study, informed consent forms were completed and signed by all participants prior to the study. The researcher also ensured that

those participating in the research were completely informed about the nature of the study, what it entailed, what was expected of them, and most importantly, how their participation could indirectly contribute towards assisting a charitable organisation in generating more desperately needed funds in its quest for survival.

4.2. Objectives of the Study: Defining Qualitative Research

It is arguable that exploratory research provides qualitative data. Usually, exploratory research provides a greater understanding of a concept and idea, or crystallises a problem, rather than providing precise measurement of a problem. Thus, exploratory research does not involve mathematical analysis, and according to Zikmund (2003: 111), "the focus of such qualitative research is not on numbers but on words and observations: stories, visual portrayals, meaningful characterizations, interpretations, and other expressive descriptions. Any source of information may be informally investigated to clarify which qualities or characteristics are associated with an object, situation, or issue."

Even though marketers worldwide are becoming convinced of the fact that qualitative research can contribute significantly to an optimisation of their marketing efforts, however, qualitative research still suffers from an ambivalent image persisting among many practitioners (de Ruyter & Scholl, 1998). On many occasions managers of companies strive towards interpreting the results of qualitative research in a quantitative and mathematical manner, and by doing so they lose the essence and value of this type of research. Qualitative research can be said to offer insightful answers on questions that address the way people think about a certain topic and the reason why they think that. A carefully selected target group and sample are needed in qualitative research to make sure that all possible views and opinions of respondents may be expressed. Representativeness of the results in accordance with the subject of investigation, not the research population, is what counts (de Ruyter & Scholl, 1998).

Le Roux (2005: 2) argues that "Qualitative research has come into its own over the last few decades, and is now recognized as being able to make a significant contribution to the development of knowledge and providing an understanding of and insight into issues under study, whether they be, amongst others, in the marketing, business management, social and behavioural sciences." This statement therefore makes it clear that qualitative research can

be regarded as a valid and fundamental type of research which allows the collection of highly valuable data to be used for interpretation.

Qualitative research, on the most basic level, strives towards developing explanations of social phenomena. This method of research seeks to understand and obtain information on "behaviour, attitudes, perceptions, habits, feelings, opinions, understanding, interpretations, values, experiences and beliefs of people as they themselves live it in a specific, real-life context. It questions the "why", "what", "how" and "in what way" of social phenomena in order to help us understand the world and why things are the way they are" (Hancock, 2002:2 in Le Roux 2005: 3).

In general terms, qualitative research can therefore be described and defined as a manner of obtaining a thorough, in-depth understanding of human experiences and situations. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will act as the "human instrument" in the data collection process and interpretations of this data will ultimately be made to determine the results. Keeping in mind the characteristics of qualitative research, the advantages of this type of research, and most importantly the "holistic perspective" which can be gained through using this method, it was found to be the best option to use with regards to the context of this specific study and its objectives. The biggest attribute in using qualitative research for the purpose of this study lies in the fact that important market insights may result from a small number of interviews. The main purpose of using qualitative research is defined by Le Roux (2005: 7) as being to understand and interpret daily occurrences and social structures and actions, and the meaning people give to phenomena in their life-worlds. Firstly, the usefulness of qualitative research is not determined by how many consumers express their views and opinions on the subject matter, but through the way those views are expressed, and the researcher's interpretations of those expressions. For the purpose of this study, the questions asked would be for example, *how* brand orientation affects donor behaviour, *what* does the Institute for the Blind regard to be their brand personality, and *why* brand orientation is becoming increasingly important in the charity sector.

Secondly, Qualitative research is appropriate because the topic or subject matter needs to be explored. An unexplored topic makes it more difficult for variables to be identified, theories may not be available to explain the phenomenon, or little is yet known about the phenomenon or subject under study. In the secondary research conducted for the purpose of this study, it

has become clear that not much research has been developed around the specific topic of the importance of brand orientation in the charity sector. The main reason for this is that charities have only recently been forced to develop a strategic brand orientation in their management, and need to brand themselves more strongly to survive in an increasingly competitive commercial environment. Michel and Rieunier (2010:5) support this argument in stating that despite the rising importance of non-profit brands in securing donations, "relatively scarce research attention has been given to the topic." The topic is therefore still quite unexplored, and the qualitative research method can be appropriately utilised for this purpose.

Finally, a qualitative study is chosen because of the need to present a detailed and close-up view of the specific topic under discussion, thus providing in-depth and new information. Talking closely to a selected sample of participants through the use of a focus group setting, and following a specific guideline of applicable and pre-determined questions, in-depth information regarding attitudes, feelings, perceptions, views and convictions on this topic is acquired and used for interpretation purposes.

4.3 Research Method

The research methods utilised in this study is focus-group and informal interviews. These types of research techniques are appropriate for the reasons that it is easy to execute, relatively fast, provides multiple perspectives and is regarded as a flexible method. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members, creating synergy and the opportunity for the researcher to probe questions. The reason for selecting a focus group in this study is also supported by Zikmund (2003: 117) for "the focus group interview has become so popular that many research agencies consider it to be the 'only' exploratory research tool." A focus group can also be said to be best managed when there are no more than ten respondents at a time.

The interviews contributed to the existing knowledge of the charity / non-profit industry as a whole as well as the donating experience; and more importantly, new insights have been realised. Respondents were motivated to talk freely about their attitudes, activities and feelings in addition to the topic being discussed. This method was selected so that the interviewer can have more control, but also allow the respondents to comment freely on their feelings and experiences. Informal interviews were conducted over a period of a month, where informal discussions (no formal or pre-determined structure) with employees and

donors of the Institute with regards to charity organisations yielded new insights on issues such as brand-orientation, and the effect of a strong charity brand on donating practices.

4.4 Sampling Technique, Sample Selection and Sample Size

According to Zikmund (2003: 71), there are two basic sampling techniques, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. For the purpose of this study, non-probability sampling was used. The latter sample selection is based on the personal judgement of the researcher or convenience of the sample selection. Thus, the probability of a member in the population being selected for the purpose of this study was unknown. In this specific study judgement sampling was used to make the sample selection. Experts in the non-profit sector were consulted to assist with the judgement selection of the respondents. Due to the nature of this study a sampling frame is not used.

Two focus group sessions were held with a total of 6 and 8 respondents in each group selection. The focus groups were conducted in Worcester, where the organisation is situated, which was therefore convenient for the respondents to attend the discussion in the comfort of the organisation itself. The specific respondents selected for the informal interviews and focus groups, were all affiliated with the Institute, either being donors or employees. De Ruyter and Scholl (1998) stipulated that representativeness of the results in accordance with the subject of investigation, not the research population, is what matters most, therefore a small sample were selected. Initial respondents were phoned or emailed and asked for their participation in the study. As mentioned above, the selection of these respondents for the focus groups was based on judgement sampling. Snowball sampling was also used, where initial respondents (on occasions when the informal interviews were conducted), informed the researcher about additional respondents which fits the target population (Zikmind & Babin, 2008). These respondents included individuals from the Institute for the Blind such as the Funding Manager, Lecturers and co-ordinators from the Department for Career Development, the Marketing manager of Industries, to name a few.

4.5. Findings and Discussion

The focus groups were of an informal and relaxed orientation. The researcher gave a basic explanation of the study and what was expected from the respondents. Difficult or unclear questions were explained, and probing helped the respondents to filter their memory. During the interviews the researcher led the interview and made use of specific pre-determined questions to gather information. It was important not to lead the respondents in the answering of their questions, but rather to stimulate them to expand on their perceptions and their answers. The researcher directed the interviews, but the participants stimulated the dialogues. The researcher did not intervene or stop the dialogue as it went off track at times, but rather listened and probed for further insight in to the topic under discussion. The discussion was then directed back to a new question as soon as the conversation became completely irrelevant to the study. The discussions with the groups were recorded using an audio recorder (with their signed and informed consent), after which the data was transcribed, and then analysed using conventional techniques for qualitative data (mostly thematic analysis). The findings were used as building blocks for concluding arguments concerning the proposition made.

The type of questions asked were broadly classified into two different categories: Broader definition type questions were asked with regards to the concept of branding, brand terminology and how it links with the organisation's positioning in the minds of consumers. The second category questions were more focused on specific applications in terms of the donor or manager's relevant organisation. The first category included questions regarding the respondent's personal definition and experience of a 'brand', their understanding of this phenomenon, their knowledge of brand and branding terminology, their personal view on the importance of a non-profit organisation's brand, to name a few. The second category consisted of more focused, specific and directed questions, such as the extent to which the respondents consider the organisation under discussion (the Institute) to be a charity 'brand', if the organisation has a specific brand personality or brand image, the public's perception of the Institute as a 'charity brand', and whether or not the specific organisation communicates their core values, mission and vision to be in line with what their current brand stands for.

The employees put forward useful insights regarding their personal conceptualisations of 'a brand' and 'branding'. An amalgamated definition of their responses is that 'a brand' is "a

symbol which mainly represents and reflects the *passion* of an organisation." When asked the same question, donors responded in a similar manner. According to donors, the primary characteristic of 'a brand' is that it should "convey some type of message". The employees of the Institute were much more focused on the emotive elements of brand-orientation when questioned on this matter. It was asserted that emotions such as 'passion', 'commitment', 'love' and 'belief' should be reflected through the brand of an organisation. Donors, on the other hand, defined 'branding' in a much more 'commercialised', market-orientated manner. Recurring elements of their concepts include that a brand has many facets, and should convey a message that sets an organisations' products and services apart from that of others. Additionally, a company should have a prominent slogan and a logo, which would allow for distinctive branding and the delivery of a consistent message. The researcher took specific note of this distinction, for it reflects a difference in the conceptualisation of branding between donors and non-profit organisations. It also highlights the manner in which a strong branding position is occupied in the minds of consumers. This realisation is of significance in light of the objectives of this study which is to determine the level of brand orientation implemented by the Institute for the Blind.

A further response from one of the employees lead to another realisation for the researcher regarding the Institute's brand positioning and orientation: Even though the importance of a 'brand' for the Institute is agreed upon, some felt that the Institute's logo (the silhouette of a blind person walking with a cane against a white backdrop) does not clearly communicate the core values and objectives of the Institute. By looking at the logo, people associate the Institute for the Blind with focusing solely on the blind and visually impaired, without being aware of the fact that the Institute's mission is to empower persons who are deaf-blind as well as assisting those with additional disabilities by means of education, training and development. (Please see an example of the Institute's logo as illustrated below)



Source: Institute for the Blind, 2013.

Thus, it became clear through the interviews with employees that the logo which is a contributing characteristic to a strong, recognisable image, (and consequently the entire 'brand' that people associate with the Institute), does not communicate this message and idea of *empowerment* clearly and strongly enough to the public. According to respondents, the only places where this message was thoroughly conveyed was through information letters sent to donors as well as newsletters sent to those who are already supporters of the Institute. It also became clear from the donors' responses that the organisation's brand is regarded as the most important element in setting any organisation apart from others in the same sector. For them, the brand becomes the "reason why people would donate or purchase". This crucial response links directly with the primary objective of this study, as it clearly responds to the question of whether or not the strength of a charity's brand-orientation and position influences donor behaviour. Furthermore, in the second section of the pre-compiled questions asked by the researcher employees and donors were asked to what extent they considered their organisation (the Institute for the Blind) to be a 'charity brand'. In response to this question one of the donors asserted that as a benefactor to other organisations, a charity's brand is of pivotal importance. She evidenced her position by drawing a contrast with Red Cross Children's Hospital. In her opinion, Red Cross provides a credible, trustworthy and reliable image. These characteristics position the brand strongly in her mind and have a significant influence on her decision to donate this organisation. This response offers support to the notion that donors are influenced the credibility of a charity organisation's brand. The perceived credibility of a brand becomes increasingly more important in attracting funding, especially in times where financial resources are scarce.

From the donors' perspectives, the Institute for the Blind is already in possession of a credible, reliable and trustworthy image. The donors insisted that the fact that the organisation is 132 years old contributes greatly to the image of credibility, and puts donors at ease. Other than the issue of credibility, the donors felt that the Institute can do more to strengthen the brand of the charity. Donors also insisted that the Institute is still relying on the benevolence of individuals so as to attract financial support. The response from most of the employees with regard to the extent that they consider the Institute to be a 'charity brand', was relatively positive. The conclusions the researcher could draw from their discussions on this topic were that they thought it is successful in positioning the brand and connecting the donor to the specific disability they will be supporting financially. The respondents considered the brand of the Institute to be successful as it evokes an emotional response in

people. Most individuals will be willing to help when confronted with a blind person, and therefore they consider the logo displaying a typical blind person as a strong brand image focusing on consumer's emotion rather than their rationality or logic at the moment of making their donation.

It is clear that the Institute for the Blind has not yet developed a brand-orientation leading towards a strong positioning strategy in their daily operations of the organisation, and has not yet realised the importance of developing a brand strong enough to compete for consumers resources on a different level than relying on emotions only. The organisational shift from a charity to a competitive space occupied in consumer's minds has clearly not yet been established. Further on into the inquiry, the respondents were asked to discuss the extent to which they would regard the Institute as having a certain 'brand personality or image'. The feedback resulting from that discussion suggested that people (donors/non-donors) associate the brand/logo with the organisation, but a problem may be that the image is considered to be a rather graphic portrayal of blindness in general. The Institute for the Blind must therefore make sure that their logo and their brand image / position is specifically associated with *their* work and not confused with other organisations that offer similar services to the blind in South Africa such as the National Council for the Blind, League of Friends of the Blind, Blind SA, Society for the Blind, etc. It is important that the public and potential donors recognize the fact that the brand image of The Institute differs fundamentally from other similar institutions in that the former becomes an integral part of the blind in a lifelong relationship whereas the above mentioned 'competitors' only provides certain temporary services such as Braille and mobility training, computer courses, etc. The Institute's brand must therefore be associated with this exclusive relationship. It is a concern that although The Institute has 'brand personality' and embodies the qualities of hope, exclusivity, empowerment and selflessness; it appears to lack a fixed, sustainable, distinctive and marketable brand personality which would serve to differentiate the organisation from other charities.

The intention of the researcher was to allow both the employees and the donors to reveal the criteria they would take into account when evaluating the public's perception of the Institute for the Blind as a charity brand, as opposed to the brands of commercial products. The donors' response to this question, specifically, is of great value to this study, for it responds directly to the research question. According to the donors, the Institute for the Blind's brand

is recognisable, identifiable, and can be recalled. However, it does not necessarily reflect brand commitment and merely promotes awareness of the brand, as opposed to occupying a strong position in the minds of consumers.

The employees agreed to the fact that the Institute's name, logo and core values (and therefore their 'brand') is recognisable, but that they do not operate in the organisation with a brand commitment and orientation as basis. The employees agreed that the name, logo and core values of the Institute (i.e. the brand) are recognisable and can be recalled, and that they do not operate in the organisation with brand commitment as a foundation. Other than relying on the Institute's credible image, the respondents in general felt that the Institute can do much more with regards to their entire charity 'brand', and that they are still relying too extensively, as they have been doing for decades, on the 'good heartedness' and loyalty of a fixed number of established donors.

Based on an analysis of the material gathered throughout the course of the study, it is concluded that the Institute for the Blind is currently not making the best strategic use of its brand and its brand positioning. Furthermore, for the organisation to become a stronger competitor in both the charity and even in commercial sector (competing for consumers' resources – money, time and attention), it needs to make strides towards becoming a brand-orientated organisation. Entrenching their brand personality and brand values in the minds of consumers should form the core of the organisation's strategy. The donors who participated in this study asserted that simply being *aware* of a brand is not enough. Hankinson (2010: 214) reiterates this notion as awareness is "not enough anymore to guarantee success in the long run. Donors are aware of many organizations in the sector, but will ultimately choose to donate money and time only to those with a strong, efficient, credible and trustworthy position"(Hankinson, 2010: 214).

The conclusion can be drawn that a lack of understanding, in terms of the concept of branding and of what a brand-orientated organisation looks like, was identified through the focus groups informal interviews and conversations conducted with employees of the Institute. The management and control of the Institute's 'brand' are not as strong and constricted as it should be, thus creating a gap in the entire organisation's desire to operate according to a brand culture. Aaker (1991: 271) suggested that a successful brand should possess name awareness and this is defined as "the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or

recall that a brand is a member of a certain product or service category”. In the context of this study though, it was also determined that a major part of the Institute’s brand, namely its logo, does not convey a clear, distinctive and thorough message regarding the purpose and “service category” of what the Institute stands for as a powerful charity brand. Ultimately, it became clear that donors are aware of many organisations in this sector, but will ultimately choose to donate money, time and resources only to those charities with a strong, efficient, reliable and credible brand image.

From an analysis of the research findings the research objectives stated at the beginning of the research report are substantiated. More specifically, the use of an effective brand-orientated approach and a strong brand positioning in non-profit organisations, such as the Institute for the Blind, influences donor behaviour when selecting which organisations to support.

5. SEGMENTATION

A segment, a part of the entire market, refers to a group of people with similar needs and wants. To operate efficiently with this increasingly competitive environment many non-profits are adopting what have traditionally been considered “commercial” marketing practices. This has been the case with many organisations utilising marketing techniques to attract and retain volunteers more effectively. These techniques have been exclusive to the private sector.

One such technique is market segmentation, commonly used in strategic marketing to identify groups of individuals who are similar to each other in terms of some particular characteristics. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2010: 70) "The market segmentation and targeting process is the identification of distinct *segments* within a given market or population, evaluation of each segment's marketing potential, selection of the segments to be targeted, and the creation of a marketing mix for each target segment selected”. Thus, by dividing the whole market into segments of people, marketers are able to reach consumers integral to the success of their organisation in a more effective manner. Consumers can be segmented according to several factors, such as their demographics, lifestyles (including hobbies), usage behaviour associated with a given product (in terms of the commercial sector) and other factors. In order to be a viable target market, a segment must be identifiable

(in terms of demographics, lifestyles, etc.) sizeable (large enough to be profitable), stable and accessible (it can be reached economically).

Growing competition in the non-profit sector has resulted in non-profit organisations employing more sophisticated versions of traditional marketing techniques (such as segmentation, targeting and positioning) to attract volunteers and donors (Randle & Dolnicar, 2009). Organisations are not only attempting to enlist more volunteers and to encourage donations, but they are also attempting to attract the *right* type of volunteers (i.e. those who will contribute the greatest number of volunteer hours, or who will make the largest financial contribution). A study conducted by Randle and Dolnicar (2009) of the University of Wollongong in Australia, specifically segmented the volunteering market by number of hours contributed over a period of 12 months, and identified significant and interesting differences between the characteristics of so-called high-contribution and low-contribution volunteers.

Having detailed information such as this can be greatly beneficial for any non-profit organisation as (similar to that of commercial marketing techniques), marketing and promotional efforts can be specifically tailored to match these characteristics. If the Institute's marketing managers know in what ways, and exactly how, to attract the attention of the so-called high-contributors, their marketing efforts and awareness campaigns can be much more effective in the long run. "Although not yet commonly used by volunteering organizations, there is growing acknowledgement of the *heterogeneous* nature of the market and the value of segmentation as a way of more effectively targeting individuals likely to volunteer or to donate resources" (Randle & Dolnicar 2009: 272). As a result, there have been some notable applications of segmentation techniques to the volunteering sector. In their study Randle & Dolnicar (2009) asserts that differences in volunteering behaviour can be simply explained by the ethnic background of the individual. However, results are conflicting, as for example, Auslander & Litwin (1988) found that black citizens are more likely to volunteer than white citizens, while Musick, Wilson and Bynum (2000) found that members of the white racial group more likely to volunteer than blacks members of the community. Based on other findings, plus exploratory investigations, it is hypothesised that other socio-demographic factors may represent segmentation criteria for the volunteering market which produce more managerially useful groups for the purposes of target marketing.

Randle & Dolnicar's study (2009) segmented the market using a number of criteria, including socio-demographic characteristics and volunteering behaviour. In each case, results show that the segments displayed distinctive profiles indicating that customised marketing mixes could be designed to attract particular profiles more effectively. Previous studies by Dolnicar and Randle (2009) have found that there are groups of volunteering organisations which compete with each other for the same individuals, and that groups of volunteers have particular combinations of motivations for involvement. In both cases, the value of segmenting the volunteer market was demonstrated and the potential for further applications of the concept for the non-profit sector highlighted.

Increased competition has also resulted in many volunteering organisations considering not only the number of volunteers they attract but the type of volunteers they attract (Dolnicar & Randle 2009: 273). The purpose of their study was to identify whether high-contribution volunteers differ significantly from low-contribution volunteers in their personal characteristics and motivations; and whether or not this information can be used to target high-contribution volunteers more effectively. The data used for this study was collected as part of an online survey which asked detailed questions relating primarily to providing unpaid assistance. To allow for profiling of segments in the study, individuals answered questions relating to their past volunteering behaviour, reasons for volunteering, and personal characteristics. For instance, to enable profiling of segments and testing for significant differences, respondents were asked socio-demographic characteristic questions relating to sex, age, education, income, employment status, relationship status, and family status.

The results of the study concluded that no significant differences were found between the groups in relation to sex or income (Dolnicar & Randle 2009: 275). Education also failed to differentiate between segments. Nevertheless, a number of significant differences were found between the groups. Organisations with high-contribution volunteers had a significantly higher number of part-time employees (27%) and volunteers (17%) than the low-contribution group (14% and 12% respectively). In contrast, organisations with low-contribution volunteers had the highest proportion of full-time employees (60%, compared to 50%). Intuitively "this seems logical because non-working and part-time employees would have more time to devote hours to another cause, while the time restraints placed on full-time employees would be a barrier to frequent involvement" (Dolnicar & Randle 2009: 273). High-contribution volunteers were more likely to be older, with 33% aged 36-45 (compared

to 18% for low-contribution volunteers), and 27% aged 46 or above (compared to 13% for the low-contributors). Dolnicar & Randle (2009: 274) states that conversely, low-contribution volunteers had a high proportion of younger individuals aged 18-25 (31% compared to 16%) and 26-35 (37% compared to 25%). High-contribution volunteers were also more likely to have children (51% compared to 38%) while low-contribution volunteers were likely to be without children (62% compared to 49%). A number of significant socio-demographic differences were found between the high- and low-contribution volunteers is clearly evident from the results obtained through this study.

Dolnicar & Randle (2009: 280) argue that these significant differences that have been found between high- and low-contribution volunteers allow managers of volunteering organisations such as the Institute to design marketing strategies which target these particular types of individuals more effectively. The distinctive social demographic characteristics of high-contribution volunteers provide insight as to who the people are that contribute the most hours to volunteering. According to the study (Dolnicar & Randle 2009), they are likely to be married or living with a partner, not working or in part-time employment, have children, and be over 35 years old. As high-contributors are motivated by a variety of altruistic and egoistic motivations, presenting a message in which they will be assisting both the community and themselves is highly likely to attract such individuals to assist. The fact that they are the group most likely to seek out information on volunteering opportunities themselves means that organisations need to make sure that information on their particular cause is readily available, clear, and concise.

This study provides valuable insight with regards to the effective segmentation of the volunteer/donor market. Demographic segmentation (age, gender, marital status, family life cycle, income, education and occupation) can be regarded as the core of all segmentation. Schiffman & Kanuk (2009: 70) argue that it is the "easiest and most logical way to classify people and can be measured more precisely than other segmentation bases. Demographics enable marketers to identify business opportunities enabled by shifts in populations' age, income or geographic location, and many consumption behaviours, attitudes, and media exposure patterns are directly related to demographics."

6. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS (MACRO ENVIRONMENT)

The macro environment in which an organisation operates consists of variables beyond its control or regulation. Such factors include demographic, economic, technological, political, natural and regulatory forces that marketing efforts cannot control or predict. These uncontrollable outside forces will be discussed below under the concept of the Market Environment.

6.1 THE MARKET ENVIRONMENT

6.1.1 COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

i) Competition in the non-profit sector

Competition is a certainty in the non-profit sector. Similarly, in the business sector increasing competition between non-profits is inescapable. More recently, resources are becoming increasingly more scarce, resulting in the closure of many non-profit organisations, whilst the viability of others is questioned. The non-profits that remain engage in a constant battle for survival with other charitable organisations in the sector. In the economic and social environment in which non-profits operate, there is a shortage of resources of every variety, including financial support, customers, qualified and motivated employees as well as stagnant economies that leave corporations less willing to make charitable contributions.

According to Todd (2008) the competition evident amongst non-profit organisations is greatly owed to reduced financial commitments of the government: Financial, political, and bureaucratic factors have coalesced into a morass that is threatening large and small organisations alike. The extent and manner of competition among not-for-profits have been changing, and the stakes are higher than ever before. Many non-profits are finding themselves in a position where they are expected to do more and more, with less than what is possible. Many organisations are thus forced to cut back their services and some have even ceased to exist.

As in the for-profit arena, new non-profits offer programs and services to the same segments. As duplication increases, so too does the segmentation of services. In both the non-profit and

for-profit arenas, there is the potential for “market” duplication. However, it is inevitable that weaker non-profits will in most cases be unable to compete for funding (Todd, 2008). Todd (2008) acknowledges that, in recognising the above mentioned fact, other scholars support radically different points of view. In their work, *Play to Win: The Nonprofit Guide to Competitive Strategies*, LaPiana & Hayes (2005) explore the need in charity organisations to develop their organisation’s unique competitive advantage, and to use the power of competitive strategies to build their organisation’s capacity "to win". They assert and demonstrate how, by being a more effective competitor; a non-profit can enhance its chances for both programmatic and financial success. In their view, which might be regarded as quite extreme, this will even the playing field so that only the strongest are contenders for donor support. This argument renders the discussion of the ethics of competition on many levels in the non-profit sector.

The toughest ethical dilemmas arise when two seemingly right principles are in conflict with one another. The notion of ethics can be difficult to analyse as many of the ethical problems that arise in the marketing of a social or charity cause are inherent in the marketing profession. Andreasen (2001) makes the important point that "we as marketers know what it takes to convince people to change brands and adopt new products. We apply many of these techniques from the commercial sector to promote socially beneficial behaviour (Andreasen, 2001: 2). These ethical issues that arise when applying commercial marketing techniques and thus promoting competitive practices between similar non-profit organisations has been a subject of major dispute, as many non-profits and the community prefer to focus on non-profits' passion for their mission and the helpful services they provide. Therefore competing and taking part in competitive practices (similar to that of the commercial sector) may appear unethical. Todd (2008), raises many questions in this regard, such as "Can competition be constructive and ethical?", and “Does it sully the motives and missions of the non-profit sector?”

Thoughtful social marketing practitioners are faced all too frequently with ethical dilemmas, and the fact that many of our non-profit and social marketing topics do indeed compete. Organisations promoting campaigns involving the environment may compete with campaigns to promote jobs, homeless issues might compete with tax issues, and so forth. Andreasen (2001), thus raises the question: Is it ethical to attack the competition in this sector? For Pepsi to attack Coca Cola in a marketing campaign is completely different "than for one set of

moral values to attack the other" Andreasen (2001: 10). In some cases, though, the competition represents a compatible value. For example, during the 1980s and early 1990s in the United States it was evident that fear of AIDS drove dollars and support away from other health programs. At present, as Andreasen (2001) states, we see tobacco and drug prevention spending amounts that were unimaginable a few years ago. A marketing campaign focussing on an environmental issue might mean calling attention away from breast cancer awareness for the time being. This notion once again illustrates the ever fluctuating and unpredictable circumstances in which the non-profit sector has to operate and survive.

In the marketing of the non-profit sector and inherently promoting a social cause, the public are not simply choosing between two brands of toothpaste. Andreasen (2001: 12) poses the following question: to what degree does our competitive drive lead to apathy and backlash among an embattled public? Keeping all the ethical issues involving competition in this vulnerable sector in mind, the reality is that charity organisations, knowing or unknowingly, will be competing for scarce resources in order to survive. In order to succeed, to be an effective organisation, non-profits must understand and improve its position in the external environment mainly in creating some sort of competitive advantage by means of brand management and brand building practices.

From a not-for-profit perspective, even with increased collaboration, competition among non-profits will continue to be an undeniable reality and the ones to survive will be those to whom money and resources are directed.

6.2 THE MACRO ENVIRONMENT

6.2.1 Determinants of Donations and Donor Behaviour in the Non-Profit Sector

In a study conducted by Michel and Rieunier (2010), they concluded that there was a spontaneous wave of donations made by individuals from around the world to the populations of the Asian coasts who were affected by the 2004 Tsunami disaster. Most of the donations were made through well-known associations involved in humanitarian aid.

The statistics of the results of the study show that the associations that collected the most donations after the 2004 tsunami disaster closely match those with the highest rates of spontaneous recognition. The researchers argued that while this correlation shows that donors trusted the well-known charities, it also raises the question as to whether a good image, or perceptions of being “typical” of humanitarian aid, can fully explain the high correlation between donating and spontaneous recognition (Michel and Rieunier, 2010: 702).

From this case study, it is evident that the public’s perception of an organisation, more specifically those who wish to make contributions to the organisation, influences their donating behaviour. This "spontaneous recognition" of a charity organisation is most likely to be related to the strength of the organisation's brand. The image communicated to the public is of utmost importance. In agreement with this argument, Michel and Rieunier (2010) found that a major contribution to this "spontaneous recognition" of a charity organisation is the emerging role of brand image in donor intention. The results show that non-profit brand image correlates strongly with intention to allocate time or money to an organisation. "There is a significant link between the four dimensions of brand image and the various facets of donor intention. More specifically, the affect dimension (focussing on an individual's experience of emotion) explains the intention to give time better than the intention to give money. In contrast, the efficiency dimension (referring to competence in performance and thus a level of performance that describes a process that uses the lowest amount of inputs to create the greatest amount of outputs) of the non-profit brand explains the intention to give money better than the intention to give time" (Michel and Rieunier 2010:702).

Although non-profit brand image does not seem to have garnered much research attention, non-profit brand personality has been the subject of much inquiry. Michel and Rieunier's (2010) study continued to examine the link between non-profit brand personality and the level of donations that materialise. Pursuing this idea, these researchers have measured brand personality of non-profit organisations and its influence on donation intentions. Another study developed a parsimonious measure for non-profit brand personality based on the work of Aaker (1991), using 4 dimensions, namely integrity, ruggedness, sophistication and nurturance. "Their results of the study show that these four dimensions of brand personality can explain donation intention" (Michel and Rieunier 2010:703).

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA) (2013), a brand can be defined as a name, term, sign, drawing, or any combination of these features, that serves to identify a firm's goods or services and differentiate them from those of competitors. Given the ever-increasing number of non-profit organisations and the subsequent increase in competition for donations, the non-profit brand, through its identification system (e.g., a name, logo, design, jingle, etc.) is becoming an important element in differentiating charitable organisations from one another. However, with regard to the above-mentioned studies on the impact of a charity brand on consumers, it is clearly due to much more than a sign alone— the brand is also "a signifier associated with content in the consumer's mind" (Michel and Rieunier 2010:704).

Another empirical investigation conducted by Bennett in 2009, regarding the factors which influence donation switching behaviour among charity supporters, found that brand switching (in other words, the process of choosing to switch from the routine use of one product brand or specific charity to the steady usage of a different but similar product or donating to a charity conducting similar work), in the commercial domain has been extensively researched. The comparable question of why donors to charitable organisations often switch their support from one charity to another has not yet been investigated in much depth. According to Bennett (2009: 329), this study examined the influences of a number of variables that the literature suggests will have an influence on a charity supporter's desire to divert their funding to another organisation.

The study concludes that particular criteria exert highly significant levels of influence on a consumer, and would therefore make another brand seem more attractive. These factors are expected to increase the likelihood of the diversion of support to another organisation: An individual's image congruence with a charity; the donor's involvement with the first organisation; boredom and over-familiarity with the communications structure of a charity; and the appeal of the charity's campaign. Bennett's study (2009) also found that an individual's innate need for variation affected the number of switches he or she had concluded, and whether switches were likely to concern a second charity in the same or a different sector; but did not influence the strength of the urge to switch support. Another pertinent conclusion made by the researcher was that the perception that all charities were essentially alike, similarly influenced the number and character (in other words, the motivation for switching,) of switch decisions, but not the desire to switch.

Observers have pointed to several trends in donating behaviour in the South African non-profit community that are expected to continue or develop within the next few years. These range from changes in fundraising targets, to expanded competition between non-profit organisations and regulatory developments. What follows is a list of some concerns that the Institute for the Blind as part of the South African non-profit community will be tracking in the coming years, as asserted in the work of Hartsook (2009: 1):

1. *Increased emphasis on retaining donors:* Non-profit organisations will focus on the renewal of donor support rather than on the acquisition of new ones. It is therefore necessary for non-profits to target their marketing efforts more fervently.
2. *Corporate giving:* Corporate giving to philanthropic causes has emerged as a major marketing tool for corporations in recent years. This source of funding is expected to assume even greater importance.
3. *Increased reliance on volunteerism:* Reduced government expenditures on social programs are also expected to increase the demand for volunteers who can meet the expected growth in non-profit organisations.
4. *Continued emphasis on planned giving:* Non-profit organisations will enjoy a significant increase in the number bequests that materialise. With the evidence of how successful planned giving can be, many institutions will increase their dependence on this methodology.
5. *Growth in self-regulation within the nonprofit community:* The trend of self-regulation within various sectors of non-profit operation is expected to continue to increase with the introduction of new certification systems and codes of ethics.

(Hartsook, 2009: 1)

6.2.2 Demographic Factors

Information such as age, race, ethnicity and location are included in the analysis of demographic factors that influence the environment in which non-profits operate. These characteristics relate to consumer buying behaviour and can be used to deduce how the target market will respond to a specific marketing mix (Lamb *et. al.* 2010). Living Standard Measures refers to the financial status of a person, and ranks households from LSM1 to LSM10 according to their monthly income. The Institute, even though it operates as a non-

profit organisation, should decide on which of these groups are included in their target market in the process of designing marketing and brand building strategies. The following section focuses on the specific demographic features in charitable giving which the Institute should consider and incorporate in designing their marketing activities:

Changing patterns of charitable giving: The pattern of charitable giving, for example, has changed over the last 20 years. Fewer households, approximately 30 per cent, give to charities, although the average size of the donation has remained static. Hankinson (2000: 208) states that "typical donors are from middle-aged households, but younger households in their twenties and thirties have demonstrated a sharp decline in the giving and size of their donation, a generation trend that does not augur well for future voluntary income." On the other hand, studies (Hankinson, 2000: 208) have shown that even though the younger generation is less likely to give money, they are more likely to give their time and effort in special charity events.

Values: Customers have become more demanding, enquiring and discriminating. Products or services that are not functioning properly are not tolerated. An increasingly evident trend in South African customers is that they have become very demanding. "They insist on products of higher value and which can save time, money and energy. Customers will therefore not tolerate poor product quality" (Hankinson, 2000: 208).

Convenience: A social trend that has had significant impact on marketing across the globe is that people want convenience. Donors are more likely to donate if the process of donating is kept simple and is not time-consuming. Electronic means of donating via websites, social media etcetera are rapidly replacing cheques and postal orders sent by mail. Charities benefit profoundly from social media channels – not least because social networks invariably target a younger demographic, but as people that can benefit from their services as well as potential donors (Hankinson, 2000: 208). Hankinson (2000: 209) states that the growing use of iPhones, Blackberries and other smartphones create more opportunities for online offerings because they provide additional ways to interact with the charity organisation via digital platforms.

Age and income: These days there are clear trends in giving by households across age and income, with younger and lower income households tending to give less. Not only are today's younger households less likely to give than middle-aged households; they are also less likely

to give than today's middle-aged households when they were younger. These generational trends in giving do not bode well for levels of voluntary income in the future (Pharoah, 2010).

6.2.3 Technological factors

Technological factors are known to have a pervasive influence on companies. In the for-profit context specifically, it is crucial for companies to analyse these factors and use them as opportunities to gain competitive advantage by creating value for customers. On the other hand, Young (2006: 225) states the following with regards to the influence of increasing technology on non-profit organisations such as the Institute:

The whole area of understanding and dealing with changing technology, especially IT, represents a particular challenge to many nonprofit organizations, especially those with a social service focus...The human social services were extremely suspicious of the concept--agencies that were built and employed staff on the basis of personal contact could be excused for feeling uncomfortable with the concept of "electronic communication" that could potentially exclude face-to-face dealings.

In the long run, technology has caught up with all non-profits. In a competitive marketplace where non-profit organisations are becoming increasingly more competitive, it is crucial to use technology to their advantage instead of seeing it as a hindrance. Non-profit technology comprises information and communication technologies that support the goals of non-profit. Non-profit organisations use computers, the internet and other networking technology for a number of tasks. Some of the tasks include volunteer management and support, donor management, client tracking and support, project management, and human resources (paid staff) management. Non-profit organisations that engage in income-generation activities, such as ticket sales, may also use technology for these functions.

It is thus a matter of engaging and understanding the advantages and benefits technology can offer a non-profit organisation, while at the same time still ensuring that non-profits retain their core values of personal communication and compassion.

6.2.4 Economic factors

According to Börsch, (2013) spending patterns of consumers are determined by economic conditions such as inflation and recession. During times of high inflation, the purchasing power of consumers decreases. One way businesses can survive these times is to increase their efficiency. "When favourable conditions exist in the economy, the consumer usually has more money in his / her pocket. This will have a major influence on non-profits and the amount of donations made which contributes to their survival" (Börsch, 2013). However, when unfavourable economic conditions prevail, the consumer / donor is usually cautious when spending or donating money. Organisations can suffer greatly from these economic factors outside their control.

The recent worldwide recession also left its mark on the finances of the Institute for the Blind. The loyal donor base of the Institute was affected in such a way that a major decrease in donations received during the past few years was severely noticeable in the running of the organisation. Cash flow is stunted to such an extent that the Institute is forced to use its reserve funds on a monthly basis. "Nonprofits must responsibly demonstrate their trustworthiness by applying sound economic principles to their business decision-making in the service of achieving their social missions rather than selfish or self-serving ends. This is a constant that transcends whatever changes take place in the environment of nonprofit organizations over time" (Young, 2006: 227). Young (2006) continues by arguing that the non-profit sector has tended to focus on how it differs from the business or government sectors, rather than confronting areas where decisions are subject to similar influences. Thus the special nature of non-profit organisations, with particular reference to the importance of their mission, the values that underpin their operation, and their genesis "outside" the usual economic sphere, contributes to the fact that the usual economic factors cannot simply be related to non-profits.

7. SWOT ANALYSIS

Research in brand strategy is equally important in both the initial stage and the latter stage of compiling a brand strategy as branding is an on-going process. Thorough knowledge about the market dynamics, the consumer's behaviour, the communication tools, the brand image and the personality provides a clear idea in maintaining an existing brand. "It is widely

acknowledged that successful brands are frequently supported by a sound knowledge base; this explains what makes the brand tick and the strength of the relationship it has with its consumers” (Campbell, 1998: 56 *in* Gautam 2011: 28).

A SWOT Analysis thus forms part of the strategic planning process, or the strategic review, of a business. Primarily it involves scanning the internal environment in the pursuit of identifying and understanding the internal strengths and weaknesses of a business. This is combined with a scan of the external environment. Scanning the external environment enables a business to identify and understand opportunities for, and threats to, its survival. SWOT is thus an acronym used to describe the particular Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that are strategic factors for the specific company or organisation. Conducting a SWOT analysis is a crucial step towards developing any business or in this case, marketing plan. Gautam (2011) explains that a SWOT analysis explores the backup knowledge to create and maintain an effective brand strategy. The motivation for this is that it "gives the organization a clear idea of their strengths and weaknesses. The market environment might change, the consumer behavior is also changeable, and the technology is expanding every day" (Gautam 2011: 28). In this scenario, an organisation should follow these opportunities and threats by collecting knowledge of their nature. Analysing opportunities and threats in the market environment help to adjust the brand strategy.

A SWOT analysis should not only result in the identification of a corporation’s core competencies, but in the identification of opportunities that the firm is not currently able to take advantage of due to a lack of appropriate resources. The following SWOT analysis is a summary of the Institute for the Blind's external and internal environment analysis. **Table 2.1** summarises a SWOT analysis carried out by this researcher (with the assistance of employees and managers) of the Institute for the Blind, Worcester.

Table 2.1: SWOT Analysis of the Institute for the Blind

STRENGTHS:	WEAKNESSES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate and committed management team assisted by employees who are living out their calling in life: A golden thread running through the Institute is the general understanding that the motivation for what is being done, lies in the satisfaction of helping others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production line in the factories controlled by, and relying upon, multiple disabled people is not geared to produce products in their masses to satisfy consumer demand constantly. The production lines in the factories are also not geared to produce and supply for the demand for certain specific products.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich corporate culture is carried across to everyone working at the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealers insist on guarantees for certain amounts of products to be delivered of a certain quality. It is not always possible to answer to these guarantees on products due to the effect of disability on production. Production defects may occur from time to time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich and interesting heritage and history which dates back 132 years. The Institute builds its successes on the firm foundation laid in its history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of environmental focus & Social responsibility strategies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged for its expertise and services offered to the visually impaired by other similar institutions in South Africa and globally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trucks deliver ordered goods only within a 200km radius around the town of Worcester. Owing to this, the Institute may lose a lot of sales from potential buyers as a result of their limited delivery services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town of Worcester is known as the "disability capital" of South Africa. The infrastructure of the town is adapted to the needs of the visually impaired. The Institute is seen as a prominent attribute to the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative operations – the Institute is still working with the same suppliers and manufacturers for over 13 years. Some of these suppliers have started to exploit the situation and the Institute loses out on better deals as a result of this conservative business style. New business opportunities to find new suppliers are not actively explored.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity and support amongst the residents and businesses of Worcester to the needs of the visually impaired. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The front-line staff should be the face of the organisation and portray the brand identity, core values and mission accordingly. Unfortunately, they are not always able to inform, engage and delight donors and volunteers optimally.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings of the Institute are situated in the central business area of Worcester, and are thus easily recognised and identified by the public. This also contributes to a more independent lifestyle for the visually impaired. Mobility training enables the residents to walk independently to banks, churches, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks strong/ differentiating/ memorable slogan / jingle and brand persona.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent relationships with suppliers developed through many years of doing business with the Institute lead to good deals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only focuses on local market
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationwide loyal support exists amongst visually impaired persons for the Pioneer School. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The multiple disabled employees at the Institute's factories weaken at an earlier age which leads to a shorter productive phase and a long period of care. This places an enormous burden on the resources of the Institute.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of rare and highly valuable expert knowledge is available amongst the staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff with extremely valuable and specific expertise, knowledge and experience in their fields gets older, and the transfer of knowledge to new employees becomes critical for continuing the level of service and quality of operations. This rare knowledge as competitive advantage is lost to the Institute as breaks in the chains of transmission occur occasionally.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability (blind and partially sighted) addresses the hearts and minds of people across social, cultural or religious borders. 	

OPPORTUNITIES:	THREATS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create brand awareness and positioning through implementing a brand orientated approach in all operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of products and markets can bring the Institute for the Blind in direct competition with the Society for the Blind in Salt River, Cape Town.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market expansion opportunities for all the products of the Institute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The obvious threat for the Institute is competition, both direct and indirect.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate and committed management carry this corporate culture across to employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrollable consumer behaviour and the willingness of consumersto spend money: More often the public buy according to price rather than quality. The public will buy a lower quality cheaper product from Mr. Price, rather than a more expensive quality cane product from the Institute.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter corporate market with bigger contracts for specialised products (trendy paper baskets / document holders / coat hangers / cane waste bins for law firms, medical practitioners, accounting firms). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible negative publicity, negative word-of-mouth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use power of social media as major awareness, fundraising, brand building tool in the marketing of products as well as in reaching possible donors as new communication patterns continue to evolve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing increase in the amount of street markets owned by immigrants selling similar products for less.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus should be placed on higher LSM groups when expanding to decor boutiques in Cape Town and Stellenbosch area. In entering the Cape Town / city market area, products can be sold at higher prices due to the average higher income and more expensive lifestyles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious, cultural and social restrictions among certain groups could reduce donations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify and expand the mattress / cane/ wooden brands with promotional activities, events, better deals, lower prices etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstable and fluctuating economic conditions: This has a much greater effect on small non-profit organisations than on larger commercial companies with a more stable and predictable income.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts with major chain stores e.g. crates (Mica), Woolworths, @Home, Boardman's, Mr. Price Home, etc. Thus, continuously expanding the market for the products of the Institute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult for the Institute with their available and handicapped manpower and production lines to adapt quickly to changes and trends in the market.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of unique, trendy and stylish products for the focus on popular, expensive and specialised decor / boutique shops in order to enter and develop that market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switching barriers: Consumer loyalty / emotional commitment / shopping convenience to certain competitors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More purchase opportunities of products can be created if delivery service can be expanded further than 200km radius from Worcester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends with regards to donating—cannot be predicted, such as greater consumer scepticism in the worthiness / credibility of a cause.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and expand existing training opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift in consumer taste and preference in furniture, and trends in the decor industry that cannot be produced owing to the disabilities of the members of the Institute's production line.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise the potential of the social media in the marketing of products as well as in reaching and communicating with possible donors and volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New laws and regulations implemented by the government: concerning the structure and legislation of South Africa and NPOs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand services to the broader community, not only focussing on the visually impaired and the institutionalised environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ever increasing costs of accommodation, care, maintenance, training, specialised materials.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and expand existing training opportunities through collaboration with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing competition for funds among non-profit organisations to survive can

SAQA, the local FET College.

have a negative impact on mutually beneficial relationships between these organisations.

8. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

When a company matches a core competency to opportunities it has discovered in the marketplace, it is said to have a competitive advantage. Assessing and optimising competitive advantage is an essential discipline for any organisation that is committed to becoming exceptional at what it is designed to do. This is no less true for non-profit organisations than it is for for-profit companies. Non-profit groups compete with each other just like any other business, therefore the organisation's competitive advantage is the real test of how much impact the non-profit is having and whether it is truly achieving its mission and strategic goals. An organisation's competitive advantage is a combination of its unique skills and resources working to implement strategies that competitors cannot implement or copy as effectively and efficiently, making it sustainable in the long run success of the organisation. According to his book *Successful Marketing Strategies for Nonprofit Organization* (2010: 22) Barry McLeish argues that non-profit groups compete with each other in roughly four areas: The quality of programs or technology, the positioning of programs or products, and the quality of support services and price. Non-profit groups rely heavily on donations as a major source of operating funds, therefore most donors want to be assured that their donations are going to an organisation that is going to use it wisely and most effectively. If a NPO is not as effective or efficient as a competing organization offering similar services, donors will certainly send their donations elsewhere.

What follows is a summary of what the Institute for the Blind's Marketing and Fundraising Manager proposes to be their competitive advantage over other similar non-profit organizations focusing on the visually impaired:

1. It is the only Institution in the country where services are rendered for a visually impaired person from that individual's birth till their death. The Institute prides itself in its ability and expertise to provide life-long assistance and support to the blind and

mentally disabled, in terms of accommodation, education, tertiary education and training, employment, personal development, etc.

2. Unique 'living environment' is created by the Institute on its premises by the supply of specialised accommodation and suitable employment for the multiple disabled.
3. It is the only institution offering a holistic approach towards the care, development and training of the multiple disabled in all facets of their lives.
4. Emphasis is placed on the development of the talents and the hobbies of the disabled. For example horse-riding opportunities, support to blind radio amateurs, the development of creative writing skills, etc.
5. The Institute has a rich history and heritage. It is oldest institution that renders services to the visually impaired in South Africa.
6. The organisation employs passionate members of staff.
7. The donors of the Institute tend to stay extremely loyal to the organisation.
8. It is the only institution that offers, in addition to other services, a specialised training environment (i.e. The Department for Career Development) on a tertiary level. The focus is to prepare blind and partially-sighted persons for careers in the open labour market. Students from South Africa as well as neighbouring countries come to the Institute to be admitted to this department.
9. A holistic support system is provided to each individual at the Institute.
11. A unique experience and information centre for the visually impaired initiated by the Institute for the Blind was recently opened.

Numbers 12, 13, 14 and 15 to follow on the list are all unique experience-related initiatives that has recently been created and designed for the visually impaired as well as the general public. All are situated on the premises of the Institute.

12. The Eddie van Dijk Exhibition Centre is the first tactile exhibition of fossils for persons with visual impairment in Africa. Visually handicapped visitors to this centre are able to handle and touch the exhibits at their own pace and time, where descriptions of each item is provided in Braille for them to read. This type of specialised experience for the blind is unique to The Institute for the Blind in Worcester.
13. The George van Heerden Fossil Trail is the only open air fossil trail exhibition in South Africa that serves as an excellent source of tactile information to blind and deaf-blind people.

14. The Blind Spot is an intimate theatre that provides training to the disabled in a supported environment.
15. Blindiana Museum contains the history of the Institute for the Blind since its inauguration in 1881. This museum has been adapted to the needs of visitors with visual impairments. The development of Braille, braille music, boarding facilities, as well as the development of the industrial department can be experienced by visitors.

SECTION B: THEORY ON BRAND BUILDING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

9. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

According to Kotler and Keller (2009:511), “marketing communications are a firm’s attempt to persuade, inform and remind consumers of their product or service offering using either direct or indirect marketing techniques to build brand equity.” These authors provide a list of common communication platforms used by companies to build their brand equity. For the purpose of this assignment, this list is used to formulate strategies for the entire Institute for the Blind Brand Awareness and Public Education Campaign.

9.1 Theoretical Overview of the Brand Concept

An Overview of the Literature: What is a Brand?

"More than just a colorful logo, a brand is the feel, voice and perception of a product, company or non-profit organization. It consists of both palpable and intangible attributes, and clearly communicates the promise of the organization to you" (*Ovarian Cancer Canada*, 2013).

Today’s market has become more and more competitive and massive numbers of products and services have emerged. In this situation, when all products and services look alike, confusion is likely to be created in the consumers’ mind regarding which products and services to select. But in the presence of the brand, this confusion can be eliminated to a great

extent by easing the communication between product and consumer. Thus, brands play an integral part in the marketing strategy for any company. This is because brands have become a "crucial marketing component to the manufacturer and a rich source of information for the consumer" (Grace & O'Cass, 2003: 96). For the manufacturer, brands provide a means of identification for ease of handling and tracing, a means of legal protection of unique features, and of endowing products with unique associations. To the consumer, a brand identifies "the source of the product, which in turn, assigns responsibility to the product maker, and provides a promise or bond with the maker of the product," (Lassar et al., 1995 in Grace & O'Cass, 2003: 96). The origin of the term brand comes from 'brandr', the Norse word for fire. It means "to burn the mark of the producer onto the product that they made" (Ritson, 2006: 1). Initially, branding was adopted to differentiate one person's cattle from another's by means of a distinctive symbol burned into the animal's skin with a hot iron stamp and was subsequently used in business, marketing, and advertising (Ritson, 2006: 1). This illustrates the fundamental purpose of branding: To serve as a differentiating tool to distinguish one owner's / creator's property from another.

Gautam (2011: 13) proposes that the history of branding traces even further back to that of the Ancient Roman and Greek craftsmen. A common occupation of that time was to make pots out of clay. Some clever craftsmen started to use some signs and symbol to indicate that the product is made by them. This assisted buyers in selecting which pot to buy for the first time, consequently leading them to buy it the next time if they were satisfied with the quality. Today's modern multi-colour brands with visual images and sound effects have thus historically developed from a single mark. It is not something that developed in capitalistic economy or free market economy:

In the earliest days shops, as distinct from individuals, were quick to sell their wares by using pictures. In Rome, for example, a butcher's shop would display a sign depicting a row of hams, a shoemaker one of a boot, a dairy a crude sketch of a cow (Gautam 2011: 13) .

Common to other areas of research in marketing (e.g. "brand loyalty"), there is also an excess of definitions of the "brand". Apart from the lack of an established terminology in marketing research, "so many definitions make it difficult and hazardous to compare, synthesise, and

accumulate findings", (Kollat et al, (1970: 329) in De Chernatony, 2000: 417). Thus, specifying the domain and the boundaries of the construct is the first step towards developing a certain understanding of what exactly it is that the term 'brand' refers to and what it entails. For the purpose of this study, it is therefore critical to understand this construct in full to be able to identify its role and advantages when applied to the nonprofit sector. In their paper *Defining a "Brand": Beyond The Literature With Experts' Interpretations* (2000), de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley analysed over one hundred articles from trade as well as from academic journals, which provided them with a broad and rich perspective of the range of definitions of the construct used. They found that over 80% of the articles reviewed were published in the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting not only the increased interest on brands as valuable assets in that time, but also the debate on the "death of brand" in the mid-1990s (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2000: 417). As a result of the content analysis of the specific literature, they have managed to identify six main themes, which according to them, were an accurate categorisation of the broad range of definitions of the 'brand' in the literature. In summary, these themes described a 'brand' as a:

I) *Legal Instrument*: At its simplest, branding could be defined as "a legal statement of ownership, or as adopting a mark to designate legal ownership" (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2000: 418). Branding thus represents an investment and consequently firms seek legal ownership of title, mainly as protection against imitators.

II) *Logo*: The traditional definition of a brand, proposed by the American Marketing Association (AMA) (2013) in the late 1960s, is based mainly on the logo and consequently its visual features, as it states "A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors". As de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley (2000: 420) noted, many descriptions of the brand strictly adhere to this definition whereas others add variants on the theme of the brand's visual features as differentiating devices.

III) *Company*: Through regarding brand as a company, de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley (2000: 420) argue that due to the growing competition from own-labels and marketing costs, an instantly recognisable corporate identity is vital. Thus, by "borrowing" the equity accrued by the corporate name, product lines become an extension of the corporate personality" (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2000: 418). One major advantage of considering the

company as the brand is the opportunity for achieving a coherent focus across the brand portfolio as well as conveying consistent messages.

IV) Shorthand: This term refers to the fact that a brand can act as a device of functional (the functional attributes of that product; what the product can be used for) and emotional characteristics (how the product made the consumer feel while using it), which in turn leads to quick recognition of the brand followed by a speedier purchase decision by the consumer. Consumers thus use brands as a device for the rapid recall of information and associations with a specific product.

V) Risk Reduction: Consumers perceive risk when they buy products and services. Thus, an understanding of the dimensions of perceived risk enables marketers to present their brands to instil consumer confidence. If a brand is perceived by consumers as a guarantee of consistent quality, it automatically reduces performance risk (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 2000: 418).

VI) Image in Consumers' Minds: In their paper, de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley (2000: 421) refers to the fact that Boulding (1956) was one of the early authors that drew close attention to the "commercial importance" of image, arguing that consumers do not react to reality, but what they perceive as reality.

Gardner and Levy's (1955) mid-1950s definition closely relates to this notion of the brand image and the role it has been playing in the mind of the consumer for decades: "A brand name is more than the label...It is a complex symbol that represents a variety of ideas and attributes. It tells the consumers many things, not only by the way it sounds (and its literal meaning if it has one) but, more important, via the body of associations it has built up and acquired as a public object over a period of time" (Gardner and Levy, 1955: 35). At present, in highly competitive and brand-saturated markets, the brands that are most successful are those portraying specific 'personalities' and identities rather than adhering to the abovementioned mechanical aspects of differentiation. Honkala (2009: 15) states in his study on brand awareness, that when consumers are asked to describe a brand, they will respond not by describing a specific sign, symbol or design, but will instead answer the question using descriptive adjectives regarding the quality, certain personality traits and *identity* of the brand under discussion.

In support of the statement Grace & O'Cass (2003: 97), note that although valuable information can be gained by understanding brands through those who work closely with them (brand managers and consultants), "the true significance of brands can only be seen through the eyes of the beholder, i.e. the consumer." Consequently, the effectiveness of marketing stimuli becomes subservient to consumer brand knowledge residing in the minds of consumers, thus highlighting the importance of understanding the brand knowledge construct. Grace & O'Cass (2003) state in their article titled *Brand Associations: Looking Through the Eye of the Beholder*, that Keller's model (1998) (in an attempt to define the brand construct), proposes that brand knowledge is comprised of brand awareness (brand recognition and recall achieved through marketing stimuli), and brand image. Brand image is detailed to a greater extent within the model because of its more complex nature. Brand image is said to result from the favourability, strength, uniqueness, and types of brand associations held by the consumer. Within the model, Keller (1998) depicts various types of brand associations such as attributes (product-related and non-product related), benefits (functional, experiential and symbolic) and attitudes. In particular, non-product attributes are categorised into price, user/usage imagery, brand personality, as well as feelings and experiences. Therefore, in order to elevate our understanding of the relationship between consumers and brands, we need to examine how the various dimensions, depicted within this model proposed by Keller (1998), influence consumer response.

Brand Identity and Brand Image

Marketing concepts such as "corporate identity", "image", and "branding" are becoming increasingly important to non-profit organisations. In particular, brand personality and brand image have been advocated by practitioners but have not been empirically investigated in the non-profit context (Venable & Rose, 2005: 295). For the purpose of this study, where a donor's psychological associations of a non-profit's brand is at stake, it is crucial to understand the role that brand identity and brand image play in this process of overall brand recognition. Brand identity is the total proposal/promise that an organisation makes to consumers. Brand identity can be argued to stem fundamentally from an organisation. In other words, an organisation is responsible for creating a distinguished product with unique characteristics. According to Chandon (2003), brand identity is the aggregation of what the company or organisation do. It is an organisation's mission, personality and promise to the consumers. It includes the thinking, feelings and expectations of the target market/consumers,

and it is how an organisation "seeks to identify itself and how the organization wants to be represented and perceived in the market and general public" (Chandon, 2003:1). This unique identity the organisation establishes for its brand should be sustainable. It is crucial so that the consumers instantly associate it with a specific product/service. Chandon (2003: 1) continues to define brand identity as "a bundle of mental and functional associations with the brand. These associations are not reasons-to-buy but provide familiarity and differentiation that's not replicable." These associations can include signature tune, trademark colours (for example - blue with Pepsi), logo (for example – Nike), tagline (for example - Apple's tagline is "Think Different").

Brand image is defined as consumer perceptions of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in the consumers' memory. Since its formal introduction in the 1950s, the notion of brand image has become commonplace in consumer behaviour research (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Numerous studies of brand image have been reported this particular use of the phrase. It has been widely used in a variety of technical and casual applications, and practitioners and academics have embraced the concept as the "embodiment of the abstract reality that people buy products or brands for something other than their physical attributes and functions" (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990: 111). Brand image is thus the current view of the consumers about a brand, and can be defined as a "unique bundle of associations within the minds of target consumers. It signifies what the brand presently stands for" (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990: 111). To measure brand image one can either use and adapt an existing list of brands associations (e.g. Aaker's brand personality list) or start from scratch by eliciting brand associations and by then measuring the strength of these associations. Although the term 'brand image' is at once a label that has become somewhat impoverished because of widespread use, it is a concept that has contributed richly to marketing practice – it is both a concrete and an abstract expression, continuously growing and evolving (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990: 111).

Dobni & Zinkhan's (1990) study finally summarises the fundamental aspects of brand image as:

- The concept of a brand that is held by the consumer.
- A subjective and perceptual phenomenon that is formed through consumer interpretation, whether reasoned or emotional.

- Moulded by marketing activities, by context variables, and by the characteristics of the perceiver.
- The point at which the perception of reality is more important than the reality itself.

9.2 The Role of the Brand in the Non-Profit Sector

"Many nonprofits continue to use their brands primarily as a fundraising tool, but a growing number of nonprofits are developing a broader and more strategic approach, managing their brands to create greater social impact and tighter organizational cohesion" (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 1).

In a world of ever-increasing “cereal aisle decisions”, developing a brand still continues to be a fundamental aspect of standing out and ensuring success in any company or organisation. Are brand management issues faced by a powerful for-profit, company such as Toyota, the same as those navigated by an international non-government organisation (NGO) such as the Red Cross? Brands such as Coca-Cola and Nike have one thing in common: They are known and immediately recognised worldwide. These corporate-born brands have become two of the most iconic images in the world, but the role of brand and brand value is just as important in the non-profit sector as it is in the for-profit sector. Global non-profit brands are visible everywhere. Amnesty International, Habitat for Humanity, and World Wildlife Fund are some of the most widely recognised brands in the world, “more *trusted* by the public than the best-known for-profit brands” (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 1). Large non-profits, such as the American Cancer Society and the above mentioned American Red Cross, have detailed policies to manage the use of their names and logos.

The perceived role of brands, and attitudes towards branding in the non-profit sector, appears to be at an inflection point (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 1). While some in the sector are sceptical about brands, believing that the brand is essentially a fundraising tool, many are embracing a more strategic role for their brands in driving long term social goals and building internal cohesion and capacity. Dr. Zia Khan (2012: 1), Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation, states that while brand management is a well-developed discipline in the private sector, "it is still a nascent, and sometimes controversial, undertaking in the nonprofit sector

which requires bold, new thinking beyond the simple application of frameworks developed in the private sector." Kylander & Stone (2012: 3) assert that after consulting leading non-profit practitioners, management scholars, and non-profit brand consultants regarding the definition of a 'brand', the responses were not any different from what those in other sectors might say. "Some described a brand as an intangible asset, and a promise that conveys who you are, what you do, and why that matters. Others felt that a brand captures the persona of an organization and represents its very soul or essence" (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 3).

Some problems that non-profit organisations may face while trying to build, manage or change their brand are caused by the fact that non-profit leaders often look at brands as just a visual trigger from which to develop communication campaigns rather than a strategic tool for focusing the organisation. It is crucial that non-profits understand that brand development and management can directly contribute to the organisation's positive impact. In agreement with Kylander and Stone's (2012) findings stated in the section above, the mission statement in essence should thus drive the development of the brand, and the brand should reflect the values of the organisation. With successful brand communication, the organisation is able to build trust with potential donors and clients. Yet, one of the additional challenges non-profit brands face is that they must appeal to a broader array of stakeholders. Non-profit brands thus have a dual objective: To enhance fundraising, and to ensure the implementation of the organisation's mission (Salls, 2005). Research done by Venable *et al.* (2005: 295) suggest that non-profit branding, specifically *brand personality*, can be used as a strategic marketing tool for charities. The findings of Venable *et al.* (2005) show that developing brand personality can have a positive impact on a non-profit organisation. Since many non-profits offer similar services, it can help differentiate their services from competitors in much the same way that for-profit companies does. Keeping in mind all of the above, Salls (2005) makes the crucial point that "the nonprofit's brand therefore is the glue holding the components of the entire organization together."

In conclusion it can be stated that as is the case for any for-profit company, non-profits build their brand by clearly demonstrating what they do well and promoting what they promise to achieve with the potential donor's buy-in. With every initiative, a non-profit communicates **what they make possible for the cause they represent**. Clarity around brand is thus the cornerstone of effective communications: A clear brand proposition provides the guide for shaping the messages and activities of any organisation.

9.3 The Nonprofit Brand IDEA

Nathalie Kylander, adjunct lecturer in public policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a research fellow at Harvard's Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, along with Hauser Center faculty Director Christopher Stone, conducted a ground-breaking research study in 2012 seeking to develop a deeper understanding of the current and potential role of brand in the non-profit sector. Based on the research findings, a revolutionary framework was proposed to help non-profit organisations and practitioners to leverage their brands more effectively (Khan, 2012). After 18 months of research, including interviews with over 73 stakeholder, practitioners, consultants, donors and academics in 41 organisations, the Hauser Center at Harvard University released a report on the role of branding in the non-profit sector. These interviews were then analysed so as to learn how leaders in the field are thinking about non-profit brands today, and how they see the role of brands in the nonprofit sector evolving. "The Nonprofit Brand IDEA emerged from the distinctive sources of pride that nonprofit leaders expressed in what they do—pride in the social mission, participatory processes, shared values, and key partnerships—and from the distinctive role that they said brand plays to create greater cohesion inside their organizations" (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 37).

The research provides a comprehensive look at the current state of branding in the non-profit sector, and shows that many non-profits are sceptical of branding or see it primarily as a fundraising tool. These 'scepticisms' or reasons of concern when it comes to branding in non-profits can be summarised into a few main categories. Firstly, according to Kylander and Stone (2012), non-profit leaders still widely associate branding with the commercial pursuit of monetary gain. In other words, they are concerned that the names of their organisations will be inflated beyond what the quality of their work alone would support, as "the pursuit of revenue becomes a goal in its own right". Secondly, brand management is "sometimes seen as a top-down shortcut to avoid a participatory strategic planning process" (Kylander & Stone 2012: 3). Thus, when an organisation goes through a rebranding process, the new brand can feel imposed from above. Another point of scepticism involves the notion of power, the imbalances of power, and the influence of brands among partners. As Keller & Stone (2012) argue, this can become a concern particularly in collaborations where one organisation's powerful brand can overshadow a weaker brand. However, the strands of scepticism revealed

a corresponding "source of pride in the nonprofit industry: pride in the mission of an organization, pride in participatory planning, pride in the values that define their culture, and pride in supportive partnerships" (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 4).

The Nonprofit Brand IDEA builds on these sources of pride, as well as the on the specific role that branding plays in the non-profit industry. Based on the findings of the study, the Hauser Center devised this brand IDEA framework to help non-profits conceive and manage their brands. The "Brand IDEA" is an acronym which is formed as follows: the letter "I" stands for brand integrity, D stands for Democracy, E stands for Ethics and A for brand Affinity" (Khan, 2012:1). Khan (2012) effectively summarises the essence of the study as he states that the role of brand in the non-profit sector is seen as "cyclical" and nested within the mission and strategy of an organisation. Thus, an alignment between the internal cohesion and external trust, resulting in increased organisational capacity and impact. "This, in turn, influences the organization's identity and image, thereby closing the cycle." (Khan, 2012: 1).

In an interview regarding her research and discussing the insights born from it, Kylander explains to the interviewer in simpler terms what the IDEA framework entails. According to Kylander, it was found that the role that brand played internally was a critical to many of the organisations they interviewed, as the external role of the brand. Internally, a strong brand drives cohesion to implement its social mission, whereas externally, a strong brand results in trust among its many donors, partners or beneficiaries. The key to a strong non-profit brand comes down to brand integrity. Brand integrity considers the link between the mission of the organisation and brand image (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 4). On the question of whether or not the role of brand in the non-profit space differ between sectors or between organisational size and capacity, Kylander, had the following to say: "The role of brand in both cases is very similar. A brand is a psychological construct held in the minds of all brand audiences, a promise, a short-cut for decision making if you will. Strong brands in both sectors enable organizations to build trust, gain resources and establish partnerships" (Kylander & Stone, 2012: 5).

It becomes even more clear that even though The Institute for the Blind is not a global non-profit giant such as the World Wildlife Fund or the Red Cross, the IDEA framework is still an applicable and very helpful model as 'the brand' is equally important to both small and large organizations. Thus, Kylander and Stone's (2012) brand IDEA framework, including its

research, theory and outcomes that led to their insights, was specifically utilised by the researcher in designing the Institute for the Blind 's brand building events and marketing strategies. These will be discussed in depth later on in the study.

10. "SPONTANEOUS RECOGNITION" OF BRAND IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: Understanding the Theory and the Importance of Non-Profit Brand Awareness and Brand Recall

Without a doubt, one of the most widely recognised non-profit symbols in the world is the pink ribbon. On a global scale, the symbol alone carries a feeling best expressed with emotive words like ‘hope’ and ‘research’, and represents “the bond between women globally” (Brinker, 2012). Adopted by many breast cancer organisations across the globe, in Canada the pink ribbon is now synonymous with the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation. "This successful level of brand recognition has been achieved by continuously linking the pink ribbon with the promise of affecting change for breast cancer and communicating this message through strategic campaigns, events, and through well-publicized partnerships with corporations, as evidenced in the availability of pale pink merchandise for sale every October" (Ovarian Cancer Canada, 2013). This kind of visibility has been successful in activating a larger demographic than those directly affected by breast cancer and has continuously garnered advocates for the cause. Another organisation that benefits from the globally recognised pink ribbon is the Susan G. Komen for the Cure organisation. Ambassador Nancy G. Brinker, Founding Chair of this organization, recently stated that "the more people who know Komen for the Cure and our ribbon, the greater our ability to attract volunteers, partners and donors. And the more people we engage, the more services and research we can fund that will ultimately help move us closer to our vision of a world without breast cancer" (2012).

Thus, it is an undeniable fact that the brand awareness of breast cancer has led to increasing donations, event participation and corporate partnerships. By the year-end of 2011, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation received over \$50M dollars in donations and partnerships. This led to major advances in research, symptom awareness, and improved treatments – and most importantly to increasing survival rates (Ovarian Cancer Canada, 2013).

Brand awareness on a theoretical level measures the accessibility of the brand in memory. Brand awareness can thus be measured through brand recall or brand recognition. Brand recall reflects the ability of consumers to retrieve the brand from memory when given a specific product category or some other type of probe as a cue. As defined by Chandon (2004: 2), "Brand recognition reflects the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to the brand". In his study on measuring brand awareness, brand image, brand equity and brand value, Chandon's purpose was to provide an overview on the various methods that can be used to measure brand knowledge (brand awareness and brand image). He states that "it is important to measure not only the depth of recall (the percentage of people who know the brand) but also the width of recall (the cues that lead to brand recall)" (Chandon, 2004: 3).

Such a brand awareness study provides insight into the level of brand awareness of an organisation or its brand(s). Generally, two types of brand awareness are often measured: Spontaneous (unaided) brand recall and aided recall. 'Spontaneous recall' (also known as unaided recall) means that respondents are able to name brands spontaneously, during which their top-of-mind level of recall can also be analysed. 'Aided recall' means that respondents are provided with a list of brand names, and are asked to point out which brands they know (Chandon, 2004: 3). However, the fact is that a major advertisement campaign alone is not enough to create brand loyalty and brand preference. Advertising is necessary to create *recognition* and make it easier for the consumer (or in this case, donor) to recall the product, but this 'top of mind level' is known as brand preference or brand loyalty which is gained only through brand *experience*. Simply spreading information of the brand name is not enough anymore, neither does the symbol or logo alone represent the organisation's core values, mission and vision.

As has been emphasised in the previous few pages, achieving a high level of brand awareness is as crucial in the non-profit sector as it is for profit-orientated companies. Brand awareness and recall can lead to donors opting for a specific organisation sooner and more effectively. This involves respondents' senses, feelings and attitudes that reading, hearing or seeing the brand name evokes.

10.1 Global Case Studies as Examples of Successful Non-Profit Brand Building Through Experiential Events and Social Media Strategies

Three recent global case studies in the non-profit branding literature identified by the researcher highlights and evidences that "spontaneous recall" or top-of-mind recall, and public awareness of a non-profit brand can be improved greatly through simple re-branding or brand awareness campaigns. These case studies prove that through simply clarifying a non-profit's brand, informing and educating the public as to what it is the charity does, directly involving the community by means of brand building and social events, and utilising digital and social media, the Institute will definitely benefit from nurturing and building a strong recognisable brand.

Case study 1: Ovarian Cancer Canada

By recognising the importance of creating a visibly unique brand, Ovarian Cancer Canada is moving into the forefront of non-profits and ensuring that attention is received for this important women's health issue. The Ovarian Cancer Canada's goal was to build a brand that attracts more awareness and attention for the cause, and to show stakeholders the consequences of the disease. According to the organisation's website, in 2011 they discovered that Ovarian Cancer Canada was a relatively unknown brand with only 7% brand awareness among their demographic (Ovarian Cancer Canada, 2013). Due to this realisation, they set out to create a brand that would be distinctive and resonate with their target stakeholder group. 'LOVE HER', a glamorous fundraising event featuring an exciting auction, spectacular entertainment, direct involvement of employees and participation of volunteers and donors, with the organisation's logo featuring at all times, was the latest brand-building initiative by Ovarian Cancer Canada. Karen CinqMars, marketing and business innovator at Ovarian Cancer Canada, states the following:

When the marketing and communications team at Ovarian Cancer Canada set out to create a vibrant experience to attract attention and people to the cause, we listed all of the attributes we felt were compelling for a successful event and kept our audience top-of-mind. Through an intense planning process, 'LOVE HER' was born. We

felt it fully encapsulated Ovarian Cancer Canada's dedication to all women and the importance they carry in our lives"

(Ovarian Cancer Canada, 2013).

By creating a clear, distinct and refined voice, the 'LOVE HER' brand has been attracting like-minded corporate partners ever since its launch. CingMars (2013) adds that by "continuing to develop the Ovarian Cancer Canada brand and securing a strong voice in the saturated nonprofit industry will increase brand awareness and dollars raised, making it possible to fund more programs, research, and ensure that those affected by ovarian cancer are supported. Its success to date stands as an example of building a unique voice to attract visibility and carve out a space in the competitive market" (Ovarian Cancer Canada, 2013).

Case study 2: The Leonard Cheshire Disability

For many years, the name 'Leonard Cheshire' did not have an immense amount of recognition with the British public, despite being one of the UK's largest charities. According to one of its executives, Stephen Elsdon, "People didn't remember who Leonard Cheshire was, and if they did, they thought we were something to do with war veterans. Our fundraising team were saying that our low public awareness was stopping us from achieving our strategy." (MediaTrust, 2012). This statement once again brings to the front the fundamental concepts and essence of this study by highlighting the importance of a clear, identifiable brand image that represents the mission of a charity organisation and what it stands for. By not portraying this goal and mission clearly enough, and by not making the public aware of this mission, inevitably leads to potential donors donating their resources to another organisation with a much more identifiable and less confusing brand image. The consequences of having a bland or ill-defined identity can thus be far reaching.

According to MediaTrust (2012), the organisation is now known as Leonard Cheshire Disability, leaving no doubt as to its mission and purpose. Its logo was also redesigned, removing the somewhat out-dated 'feather' and creating a simpler, bolder look. Having laid a strong foundation, the organisation launched a major brand awareness campaign through a series of TV and online ads called "Creature Discomforts" - a new twist on the Creature Comfort ads. The charity's head Bryan Dutton stated, "We were able to take the everyday experiences of disabled people and present them in a non-controversial way with some

humour and irony...yet, at the same time get across the very serious message that we need to change our attitudes to disability (MediaTrust, 2012).

The result of this simple brand awareness campaign was the fact that it did not only increase awareness of the plight of disabled people, but also greatly added equity to the new Leonard Cheshire Disability brand and its purpose. According to MediaTrust (2012), "the response from the public was outstanding – enabling the charity to screen a second series of advertisements. This follow-up campaign took the brand message and brand idea a step further by relating specific stories of the disabled and how they overcame their challenges. "For Leonard Cheshire Disability and the people it serves, a strong brand has dispelled misguided ideas about them; informed the public and driven donations; but perhaps most importantly, galvanised not just disabled folk but everyone involved with the charity including the staff to be united in a common purpose (MediaTrust, 2012).

Case study 3: AVIVA (2012)

Aviva's Street to School programme recognises that every child living or working on the street should have the right to fulfil their potential. Their aim by 2015 is to help 500,000 children living or working on the street get back into everyday life and achieve their hidden potential. "Through the Street to School programme in the UK, Aviva has partnered with the charity Railway Children which fights to assist these young people." (Marketing Society, 2012). Railway Children is a UK charity organisation that fights for vulnerable children who live alone and who are at risk on the streets, where they suffer abuse and exploitation. Since launching the UK partnership in 2010, both organisations have already seen the value of creating this integrated programme. The core objectives are to raise awareness of the issue and charity (making a long-term sustainable difference) and to drive positive brand differentiation and brand awareness (Marketing Society, 2012). An initial survey demonstrated 0% spontaneous awareness and 5% prompted awareness of Railway Children's brand; so in a climate where their counterparts such as Save the Children are reaching 42% spontaneous recognition, it was clear that they also needed to raise awareness of the charity itself (Marketing Society, 2012).

A few of their brand building and brand awareness initiatives for the programme included the following: The organisation partnered with The Big Issue to produce a once-off edition of

the magazine called "The Little Issue?" With 50,000 copies distributed free inside The Big Issue across the UK, the magazine drew attention to the plight of young runaways. They also held two schools-based events, supported by the highly-acclaimed sports stars Dame Kelly Holmes and Darren Campbell MBE, "allowing them to take the message directly to the age group most likely to be affected by the issues associated with running away" (Marketing Society, 2012). They also held a 'sleepout' event in 2011, where employees were sponsored to spend a night on the streets and almost 300 employees took part in the 'Back to School' challenge, encouraging people to raise as much as much money as they could from a £10 note that arrived in a pencil case with stationery. Employee engagement with the programme is also vital for interaction with their customers. "To build on the awareness we had started to create with our customers, we also wanted to take the message to a wider audience. To do this, we knew we would need to create something that would stand out from the more traditional Aviva marketing and so we developed Street Dance for Change, a digital campaign that encouraged young people to help other young people" (Marketing Society, 2012). By sharing a dance video created by dance group Diversity10, they called upon young people to assist in changing their society. The video contained messages about young runaways and asked people to upload their own freestyle moves. Aviva donated £2 to Railway Children for every view of a competition entry and within three days of the media launch, £100 000 had been reached. The campaign videos were viewed over 350 000 times on You Tube, and 100 000 Facebook polls were answered on the issue of young runaways.

"We paired this activity with some hard-hitting awareness ads aimed at an adult audience and as a result of this campaign, we saw a shift in Railway Children prompted awareness from 5% to 6%; a great step for a relatively unknown charity" (Marketing Society, 2012). Thus, by developing a joint-branded marketing toolkit, their first step was to encourage integration of Street to School messaging across their existing marketing propositions, including inserts in policy mailings, banners on their websites, full-page ads in their sports sponsorship programmes, and content on their customer letters (Marketing Society 2012).

The statistics clearly reflect the success of this re-branding campaign, as:

- 1,493 children at risk have been helped through the UK programme and a further 32,114 children and young people have been reached through runaway awareness and prevention education.

- £1,125,370 has been given to Railway Children (cash and benefits in kind).
- Over £500,000 has been invested by Aviva in addition to this, for marketing and activation of the UK programme.
- Over 6 million UK consumers have been reached through direct marketing, with a further 38.2 million reached through campaign activity. Prompted public awareness of Railway Children's brand has reached 6% and 15% of UK employees are actively involved through volunteering, fundraising or donating, raising over £200,000 in donations.

(Marketing Society, 2012).

Bringing together the size and scale of Aviva's reach in the UK, with Railway Children's expertise, they have indeed succeeded in starting to secure the attention of customers, employees as well as the wider public.

11. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND BRAND BUILDING EVENT STRATEGIES OUTLINE AND EXAMPLES FOR 2014: RATIONALE

Keeping in mind the overview of the research, insights, case studies and theory regarding spontaneous brand recall and the role of brand and branding in the non-profit sector that has been provided up to this point in the study, the next section will focus on the creative and practical component where the preceding theoretical concepts will be considered in relation to the Institute's brand building strategies for the year ahead. These strategies (which merely serve as an outline and recommendation for the Institute to implement) was assembled based on the brand building theory and research conducted up to this point. The researcher recently arranged a session with the Institute's marketing and fundraising team where these brand building strategies and the rationale supporting them were discussed. As mentioned above, the strategies function as a recommendation based on the research conducted. This includes experiential brand building events (where the public interacts with the brand and employees of the Institute on a personal level), informational and educational branding (creating public awareness through education and making them aware of the issue of blindness), experiential branding combined with souvenirs which serve as a symbol of the organisation and 'tangible evidence' of a brand experience, as well as brand building through co-branding.

The *Nonprofit Times* (2013) recently advocated creating "a more experiential interaction during nonprofit fundraising and brand building initiatives, which allows donors and participants to become fully involved in the mission of the organization." As made evident by the case study examples provided earlier, through involving the community and potential donors directly in brand building strategies and thus exposing them to the organisation's brand and what it stands for throughout the event, can directly lead to higher brand recognition and brand recall in the future. Directly involving the community may ostensibly appear common knowledge in the fundraising community, yet at the moment the Institute for the Blind is not providing enough brand experience that directly correlates and raises awareness about their mission.

B. Joseph Pine, author of *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (2000: 10) states that the economy has shifted all focus on service, meaning for individuals to become engaged with the enterprise, there must be an "interactive element." This "interactive element" thus becomes the essence of experiential branding. Pine explained this is the basis that allows a company such as REI, which allows customers to experience all manner of outdoor sport within its retail locations (such as indoor rock climbing, a mini-golf course as a feature in the store, for example), to maintain a loyal consumer base. He draws a parallel with non-profit organisations. "Organizations such as the American Cancer Society have invested in its Relay for Life campaign which allows donors to become a part of a health-driven initiative while raising awareness and support for cancer research. The event builds the narrative around the way in which individuals deal with the disease" (Pine, 2000: 10). Meanwhile, Pine (2000) also emphasized the effectiveness of Habitat for Humanity's fundraising project that gave participants the opportunity to experience the feeling of living in impoverished conditions. He indicated this "increases the likelihood that participants will become donors, and current donors may be prompted to increase their level of giving" (Pine, 2000: 11).

However, developing brand building events or community activities (such as the ones discussed below) that appeal to potential donors cannot occur without sufficient planning. Creating a strong information campaign lets the public understand and plan to attend the event (Pine, 2000: 11). Finally, making sure the event aligns with the non-profit's central premise is the key to engaging the local community of Worcester and the neighbouring towns. To follow are a few practical brand building event strategies the Institute could use as

a means of creating a stronger, clearer, more recognisable and identifiable charity brand in the minds of current and potential donors.

A) Dialogue in the Dark Exhibition: Experiential brand building event

The reasoning behind this brand building event stems directly from B. Joseph Pine's mentioning of Habitat for Humanity's fundraising project that gave participants the opportunity to "experience the feeling of living in impoverished conditions" (Pine, 2000: 11). As this "increases the likelihood that participants will become donors" (Pine, 2000: 11), a similar experiential event could be presented by the Institute for the public to *experience* the world of a blind person for a few hours for the duration of the event.

The origin of this event lies in the idea that experiencing extraordinary and powerful emotions that are challenging mentally, not just have a long lasting effect on people, but also improve the quality of their human interactions. This idea gave rise to the concept of "Dialogue in the Dark", the underlying paradigm which stems from the German-Jewish philosopher Martin Buber's work, *The Principles of Dialogue*, which states: The only way to learn is through encounter (Dialogue in the Dark, 2010). The "Dialogue in the Dark" concept takes as its starting point the ideas and non-visual perceptions of blind people, in order to discover the unseen. It certainly is not an ordinary exhibition or a business workshop, but rather a platform for communication and a close exchange between different cultures and physical worlds, provoking a "change in perspectives" (Dialogue in the Dark, 2010).

The "Dialogue in the Dark" evening can be hosted by the Institute by the end of 2014, taking the form of an exhibition. Sighted people will be guided in complete darkness through every day settings by blind and visually impaired guides. This exhibition will aim to challenge the way people perceive blindness. The Institute would then invite guests (including, for example, important local businessmen and entrepreneurs, the mayor, families and friends of the disabled participants, local government representatives and some of the high-contribution donors) to experience the specially constructed and totally darkened exhibition. It will take as its starting point the ideas and non-visual perceptions of blind people, in order to discover the unseen within, and all around, us. Using sounds, wind, temperatures and textures the "Dialogue in the Dark" will aim to convey the characteristics of a series of daily environments in which a blind person finds him or herself, such as a park or café. In a

complete reversal of roles, visitors are provided with a sense of security and orientation by their blind or partially sighted guides. As this event will form part of fundraising opportunities, an entrance fee could be charged in the forms of selling tickets to the public. Sponsorship opportunities will be available as the event will be greatly advertised, both locally and in surrounding towns such as Robertson, Bonnievale, Montugue, Ceres, Paarl and Wellington.

"The Dialogue in the Dark" exhibition has been presented in more than 30 countries and over 160 sites throughout Europe, Asia and America receiving tremendous feedback from visitors including those who participated in the summits organised by the prestigious World Economic Forum. More than seven million visitors have experienced Dialogue in the Dark worldwide, and over 6 000 blind people have been provided with employment afterwards" (Dialogue in the Dark, 2010). This quote clearly illustrates the impact that such an unusual and unique experience can have on millions of individuals taking part in such an exhibition. Thus, creating volunteer experiences that give donors first-hand exposure to issues in the community can greatly benefit the specific organisation's brand. The Institute can increase investment in this area to build public support for their cause and to expand their individual donor base. As this strategy in non-profit brand building continues to grow, "the science behind this best practice will become better understood and lead to greater professionalization of the function" (Pine, 2000: 11).

B) Eye Care Awareness Week Initiated by the Institute for the Blind: Informational and Educational Brand Building Strategy

A different kind of brand building strategy that can be implemented by The Institute is of a more informational and educational nature, as by informing and enlightening the public with regards to their cause, automatically makes them *aware* of the brand relating to this specific cause. The fact that a non-profit brand represents not only its organisation, but also its cause, is supported by the following statement: "Brands, by their nature, convey a powerful image of organizations and the values for which they stand. In the case of nonprofits, a brand may accordingly come to represent not just the organization, but the social causes it seeks to promote"(Ritchie & Swami, 1998: 26). Thus, for the purpose of educating the public and creating awareness on the subject of eyesight and visual problems, the Institute for the Blind can implement an annual Eye Care Awareness Week, starting in 2014. On the other hand,

tailoring a health message is one strategy for persuasive health communication and awareness. Noar & Harris (2007: 673) argues that for messages of health communication to reach selected audiences accurately and quickly, "health communication professionals must assemble a collection of superior and audience appropriate information that target population segments." Thus understanding the audience and target market for the specific information is critical to effective delivery.

Quinn & Freimuth (2004: 2053) states that people in general are likely to pay attention when it comes to the awareness marketing of serious and major health issues such as cancer, Alzheimer's, heart diseases, diabetes etc. which can be life threatening. People mostly take eyesight and the ability to see for granted, and do not pay as much attention to potential visual problems as they generally would with more serious illnesses even though the slightest eye problem or defect can have just as great of an impact on their everyday lives. The Institute for the Blind, with its expert and specialised knowledge in the field, can host this awareness week for accomplish several objectives. The primary focus could be to educate the public on potential eye problems, and encourage them to go for regular check-ups with an optometrist to correct refractive errors. The Institute could also provide information on eye problems for the early detection of age-related macular degeneration glaucoma, cataracts, Macular Degeneration, refractive error, and contact details of optometrists qualified to assist with these problems. The information provided on eyesight problems, the causes of blindness and the detailed medical lectures creates awareness of the visual disability phenomenon, and brings all of the above mentioned back to this being an effective brand building and brand awareness strategy, as it makes blindness (The Institute's cause) relevant.

Noar & Harris (2007) highlights the fact that effective health communication usually relies on strong interpersonal communications in order to influence health decisions and behaviours of the public. "The most important of these relationships are the connection and interaction between an individual and their medical provider" (Noar & Harris, 2007: 674). The Institute will therefore aim to make use of the personal interaction with the public during this awareness week as the main brand building goal. The Awareness Week promotions can, for example, take the form of a stall operated in the local Mountain Mill Mall (in Worcester) by well-informed staff of the Institute as well as a visually impaired person, where informational posters, pamphlets, FAQ's, personal interviews with the staff, visual images of eye problems, etc. can be offered to mall-goers walking by. The stall will be open every day for the

duration of the Awareness Week, preferably at one of the Mall's entrances in front of a major retailer such as Pick 'n Pay where it would have the greatest visibility. The Institute's logo and brand would be displayed on the stall, on the outfits of the staff, on all posters and pamphlets, thus using the opportunity to create "spontaneous brand awareness and brand recognition" as well as trust in the Institute's brand with the Awareness Week. Additional information provided by the Institute through these promotional stalls can also include the following: The history of Braille, the fundamental services the Institute offers, the production of Braille, how to live with blindness, and how a visually impaired person lives with a guide dog, to name a few.

C) 2014 White Cane Safety Day Fun Walk: Experiential Branding with the Inclusion of Souvenirs

The inclusion of souvenirs as a symbol and reminder of the organisation can have a strong impact on brand building and brand awareness. Including these 'free symbols' of the organisation at an experiential branding event, creates a communal brand atmosphere, and serves as a constant reminder of the brand and positive spreading of the word. Banners, flyers and printed advertisements are good ways of to create positive word of mouth, but promotional items and souvenirs can launch a message in a much more effective manner. Wilkens (2009: 3) argues that "the gathering of souvenirs makes an experience tangible, either for consumption by others or as a means of prolonging the experience for one's own consumption". Wilkens (2009: 3) has coined the term 'strategic memory protection' to describe actions designed to encourage memory of important life events, with souvenirs being an example of a physical object intended to protect the memory of these special occasions. The role of memory in a brand building strategy is important as it leads to top of mind brand recall.

International White Cane Safety Day has been held in October every year since 1964 to celebrate the achievements of visually impaired persons. It also celebrates the white cane as a *symbol* for blindness and a tool of independence. International World Sight Day (a day implemented to raise public awareness of blindness and vision impairment as major international public health issue) falls on the 11th October 2014 (The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, 2013). The Institute for the Blind can therefore decide to host a fun walk where white canes can be handed out as souvenirs for all who register for the event.

This marks both abovementioned occasions and the Institute can use the opportunity to create awareness not only as a manner of establishing the Institute's brand (as their logo typically illustrates the silhouette of a blind person walking with a white cane), but to create an experience for fellow South Africans with regards to the world of a visually impaired person. The Institute can invite all organisations for visually impaired persons in the Western Cape, as well as schools for visually impaired learners and other interested businesses to join the Institute's board members, staff and students for a fun walk down Worcester High Street (which will be closed off for public use for the duration of the occasion).

The Institute will encourage visually impaired people to walk with their guide dogs or mobility canes, as well as daring willing sighted people to wear blindfolds for the entire funwalk. They can utilise their white cane souvenirs for this purpose, physically experiencing the world of the visually impaired as well as bringing additional publicity to the Institute's cause by highlighting the symbol of the brand (the white cane) and therefore the organisation's fundamental message. Again entrance fees will be charged when participants register, and can be seen as a great tool in generating extra funds. After the event is done (and most other similar campaigns long forgotten,) participants will have their white canes as tangible evidence to re-live the experience, serving as a constant reminder of the Institute's brand.

D) Blind People Give Life: Co-Branding as Brand Building Strategy

“Brand becomes critical when you're seeking to create partnerships, when you're seeking other funders, and when you're looking to associate yourself with people in the field...A strong brand helps bring greater credibility and *trust* to a project quicker, and acts as a catalyst for people to want to come to the table” (Kylander & Stone, 2012). There is no universally accepted definition of co-branding. In the marketing literature the term has been used interchangeably with labels such as ‘brand alliance’ and ‘composite branding’. Defined broadly, co-branding has been described as “any pairing of two brands in a marketing context such as advertisements, products, product placements and distribution outlets” (Leuthesser *et al.*, 2003: 36). More narrowly defined, co-branding refers to the combination of two brands to create a single, unique product or experience. Few non-profit organisations have the brand power of larger charities such as the Red Cross or World Wide Fund (WWF) for example, which is recognised globally in terms of the work it does. Co-branding with another

organisation which is aligned to the cause of the non-profit can assist the organisation in raising its *public profile* and gain confidence in its financial stability. Co-branding and being associated with a trusted, credible brand such as the South African National Blood Service (acknowledged “nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence in the discipline of blood transfusion”, (SANBS, 2013), indirectly leads to greater credibility to the Institute’s brand and this initiative.

As a Co-branding initiative, the Institute for the Blind can implement and host a Blood Drive in association with the South African National Blood Service at the Institute in Worcester. The Institute can conduct this Blood Drive as a symbolic way of 'giving back' to the community and as a way of thanking donors locally and across the country for their support and donations. This Blood Drive would therefore be seen and marketed as the Blind giving 'life' back and 'donating' a part of themselves to the community who daily contributes towards the improvement of the lives of the visually impaired, thus providing *them* with 'life' symbolically. The Blood Drive can be held on a specific day on the 2014 calendar of the Institute, where it can become an annual event. The Institute's nurses as well as nurses provided by the South African National Blood Service will assist in the Blood Drive.

The Drive will be marketed and promoted widely in the local community preceding the event, inviting and encouraging the community to be a part of this rare occasion, inviting them to give of themselves and to share in the experience. The amount of units of blood donated through the Institute's Blood Drive can be recorded and used in marketing activities afterwards, where the local paper, the *Worcester Standard*, can feature the event. In support of the initiative of co-branding as a brand building strategy for the Institute by aligning with a bigger and well-known charity brand, Leuthesser *et al.*(2003: 39) argue that the pairing of ‘high-quality’ or ‘high-image’ brands with brands of lesser status is an area that has received much attention in the co-branding literature. High-quality brands can confer quality perceptions to partner brands, thus leading to low-equity brands gaining more in a co-branding situation than high-equity brands although this does not damage the high-equity brands they partner with. “Therefore, it seems that well-respected, powerful brands have relatively little to lose in co-branding ventures, even when the partner brand is a weak one” (Leuthesser *et al.*, 2003: 39).

12. CONCLUSION

It has become evident throughout this study that a clear, strong and consistent brand image holds the promise of real value for non-profits, and has in a sense become an undeniable practice to ensure a nonprofit's existence. To this point, the paper has illustrated how branding and brand management is certainly not limited to the commercial and private sector. The study has elaborated on some of the major internal and external environmental changes that suggest branding and brand management will become increasingly important to nonprofits in the years to come. Internally, it can assist in sharpening the focus of employees and volunteers by providing them with a complex, yet easily retained, symbol of their role and mission (Ritchie, & Swami: 1998: 27). Externally, it can reassure donors and stakeholders that the organisation is credible and trustworthy. Clearly, strong brands provide a number of advantages that can make them a powerful tool for the non-profit sector. A strong and clearly identified charity brand assists organisations with acquiring financial, human, and social resources, and can also help build key partnerships. Most importantly, they make it possible for organisations "to convey a consistent overall positioning while tailoring offerings for multiple publics"; a defined and consistent charity brand is a sign of reliability and efficiency (Ritchie, & Swami: 1998: 26). A strong brand also facilitates the development of trust between the non-profit and its constituencies; provides insulation from competitive pressures; and raises the organisation's profile. The trust that strong brands elicit thus provides organisations with the authority and credibility to apply those resources more efficiently and flexibly than organisations with weaker brands.

This study also highlighted the one conceptual difficulty in referring to the term "non-profit" itself. Nevertheless, it aimed to define the sector in relation to what it is not and in terms of its economic purpose, even when those funding, working in, and being served by, the sector see the organisation in terms of what it is: The services it provides, the values that underpin these activities, and the "underlying values of the organization itself" (Young, 2006: 2). In spite of the focus in terminology on "for profit" versus "not for profit," it is issues of values, mission and vision that often hold the overriding significance. In retrospect, one can argue that the essential difference between the sectors lies in the *mission* of a non-profit organisation and the *values* that underpin all its operations.

Brand management and brand building activities for a non-profit organisation such as the Institute, should thus fundamentally be built on and practiced according to these values that define the organisation.

This study, through extensive and in-depth research of the literature of the non-profit sector and the important role that brand management plays, thus illustrated that not only profit-directed organisations could make use of the marketing and branding concept, but that non-profit organisations which are in no way directed at profit-seeking, such as the Institute, could also successfully utilise it. The research illustrated that they should indeed accept branding philosophies to differentiate themselves in an over-saturated non-profit market. On a more practical level, it also became clear through that the Institute for the Blind is operating in a complex, competitive and extremely challenging environment. Furthermore, the research explored the level of brand orientation in the Institute for the Blind as a charity organisation case study, where brand orientation was defined as the extent to which an organisation regarded itself as a brand with branding forming the basis of all operational activities.

Against this background of an increasingly competitive environment in which non-profit organisations such as the Institute must survive these days, the research conducted demonstrates a clear and fundamental need for stronger brand development and orientation in the charity sector than ever before. The primary objective of the study conducted on the Institute was to determine the level of brand orientation implemented by the organisation. The secondary objective was to verify whether or not donors are influenced by the strength and efficiency of the organisation's brand identity. It was concluded that the Institute for the Blind is currently not making the best strategic use of its brand. Responses provided by donors of the Institute illustrated that only being 'aware' of a charity brand is no longer enough to guarantee success in the long run. Donors are aware of many organisations in the sector, but will ultimately choose to donate time and money only to those with a strong, efficient, identifiable and credible brand image. The organisation thus has to become a stronger competitor in both the charity and the commercial sectors (competing for consumers' resources – money, time and attention). It needs to start taking the steps towards becoming a brand-orientated charity organisation, with a clear and credible brand forming the core of the organisation's activities.

Finally, utilising the overview of all practical and literature research conducted, as well as the theory underlining the role of brand and branding in the non-profit sector, the study

concluded with a simple outline of brand building strategies the Institute for the Blind could use in order to initiate a stronger, more competitive, charity brand. These strategies (which merely serve as an outline and recommendation for the Institute to implement) included experiential brand building events (where the public interacts with the brand and employees of the Institute on a personal level); informational and educational branding (creating public awareness through education and making them aware of the issue of blindness); experiential branding combined with souvenirs which serve as a symbol of the organization and 'tangible evidence' of a brand experience; as well as brand building through co-branding. These practical strategies serve as examples of how the Institute can simultaneously build their brand and effectively differentiate itself by staying true to their mission, vision and core values. Undeniably, in an ever-changing, unpredictable, fast-paced and extremely competitive environment, third sector organisations such as the Institute for the Blind need to possess the required branding and brand management capabilities to face new challenges, providing quality in the work they do and represent, and ultimately using their brand to contribute to improving the lives of people and their communities.

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