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Monarchies as Corporate Brands

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NOTES TO READERS

The phrase "managing the brand" and related terms are ours alone, and not those of Royal Court officials or Royal Family members.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores monarchies through a corporate branding lens. It is based on extensive field interviewing of individuals with knowledge and experience in what we (not they) term "managing the Crown as a brand," including senior members of the Swedish Royal Court and the Swedish Royal Family. It also draws from literature regarding monarchies across a range of disciplines beyond management; we found no previous brand-related literature on the topic.

The principal questions we examined were:

- What makes the Crown (monarchy) a brand (especially one similar to a corporate brand)?
- How has the positioning of the monarch and monarchy (the Crown) evolved over time in terms of relationships with the nation and the people?
- What are the essential attributes of the Crown as a brand-what we term the "royal 5R's"?
- What are the core values and the brand promise of a monarchy, its covenant with its people?
- What roles can communications play in supporting/defending the Crown?
- How are concepts from branding employed to build and protect the Crown?
- How does and should a monarchy judge "How are we doing?"

- What can threaten a monarchy as a brand?
- What conclusions emerge from the above regarding understanding and managing monarchies as brands?

Our conclusion is that the monarchy, as a institution, is very much like a corporate brand, including amenability to being managed in a manner analogous to that for a corporate brand, especially one with a heritage. Among the twelve other key conclusions are:

- A monarchy's strength rests significantly in its symbolic nature and its use of symbols.
- The monarchy as an entity transcends the reigning monarch as a "brand-rooted institution."
- A constitutional monarchy depends upon its people's and parliament's approval and willingness to support it. These are the primary criteria for assessing the performance of individual monarchies.
- The Crown can be threatened by reputational trouble leading to erosion of public approval and support for the institution, as is the case for corporate and nonprofit brands.
- Managing a modern monarchy's "brand image" requires balancing responsiveness to high media interest and the need to maintain respect and relevance in a time when the public seeks a less remote monarchy.
- "Managed visibility" on behalf of the Crown is done without traditional corporate advertising and public relations; however, proactive management of its identity and image can reduce the risk of reputational erosion.
- There is a key difference between branding on behalf of monarchies compared to companies. Companies try to employ branding concepts to leverage their brands in order to improve their financial balance sheets and shareholder value. In contrast, we think a monarchy typically can be seen as trying to employ them to enhance the country's social balance sheet and core values.

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INTRODUCTION

In an age when brands have seized the imagination of so many, the corporate landscape has become a brandscape. Recently, corporate branding has emerged as an important agenda item for many senior executives. Brands are viewed as a significant corporate asset. The corporate brand is viewed as an important profile builder for corporations. It is seen as an invaluable tool for attracting key constituencies such as customers, investors, and employees. It can imbue a corporation with a distinctiveness that is not readily matched by competitors. Financially, it can be one of an organization's most coveted and cherished assets. For customers, it serves as a guarantee of expectations, much like an informal contract. In short, a corporate brand often is invested with the Midas touch and this explains why corporate brands enthrall companies and customers alike. In a world saturated with products and messages, brands represent an important navigational tool for stakeholders. This is particularly the case in crowded categories where the cacophony of communication means that corporate (and product/service) messages are often unheard. As such, corporate brands give voice to an organization's key values and enable the organization behind the brand to cut through the communications hubbub that characterizes much of today's corporate world (Balmer 2001).

Longevity is sometimes cited as a key attribute of corporate brands. Consider global brands such as Coca Cola, Ford, Reuters, and Nokia. These are corporate brands that have held strong positions in their markets for decades. Some corporate brands have older pedigrees, of course, such as the Wells Fargo and Hudson Bay companies in North America. In Europe, Rothschild's (bankers), Stora Kopparberg (mining), and Cadbury (chocolates) provide other examples.

However, these corporate brands are relative adolescents in another realm of brands, when one considers an institutional group that appears to have strong corporate brand characteristics—namely monarchies. Some monarchies have existed for over one thousand years, such as the Japanese and Swedish crowns. They are not corporations, but in our view they are brand-like institutions in many ways.

As a case in point, the Swedish Crown has, by any branding measure, impeccable credentials. An opinion poll conducted in the early years of the

reign of the current sovereign showed that the King at the time enjoyed more public confidence than any elected politician (Van De Kiste 1998 p. 147). Its brand loyalty (favorability from its citizens) is approximately 70%, and has been at a high level for some considerable time.¹ It has avoided many of the vicissitudes that have beset other monarchies in recent years. It is a brand that was not engulfed in the wave of "institutional regicide" that swept away most European monarchies in the aftermath of World War I. It is a brand that has accommodated and embraced change. It is a brand that still adds value and gives meaning to its key constituencies - an element that is for us a core tenet of branding. And it is a brand with considerable financial value in terms of benefits to the country's businesses, tourism, and general public.

The Study

Our study of the Crown as a brand began in 2000 when one of us (Mats Urde) participated in a televised discussion in Sweden on the economic value of monarchy. Following this discussion we, as an international trio of researchers with intellectual interests in corporate branding, took the initiative to pursue the topic of the Crown as a brand. We decided to focus upon (but not restrict ourselves to) the Western European constitutional monarchies. We were granted access to the Swedish Royal Court and interviewed senior members of the Court and the Royal Family. We also conducted interviews with others whose knowledge and experience informed our perspectives on monarchies and how they are managed. We also undertook considerable research in the literature regarding monarchies from a range of disciplines beyond management. It soon became apparent to us that examining the Crown through the lens of corporate branding had the potential to offer meaningful insights for comprehending the institution of the monarchy and the associated area of its management. Our primary motivation was in the intellectual challenge of applying corporate branding scholarship to an examination of the ancient, enduring institution of monarchy—an institution we consider analogous to corporate brands.

As such this study represents a watershed in that we believe it to be:

- (a) the first study of monarchy undertaken through a corporate branding lens;
- (b) the first branding and communications study

¹ Gothenburg University, SOM research.

where the researchers were given unprecedented access not only to senior Court officials but also to members of a royal family Their Majesties the King and Queen of Sweden, and Their Royal Highnesses Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Carl-Philip and Princess Madeleine);

- (c) the first study which has assembled an international team of independent scholars, each with his own background in branding and management, and with the shared aim of producing publications that explore the monarchy as a brand.

We view our initiative as one with prospective benefits for monarchies themselves and also for the corporate branding field. We think that ideas derived from our research, consulting, and teaching experiences in the corporate branding field can provide perspectives to those who engage in activities akin to managing brands in the service of monarchies. These particularly pertain to understanding the nature, management, and maintenance of corporate brands. (We recognize monarchies differ from one another, institutionally and operationally, even as do companies.) By the same token, we believe some of the distinctive aspects of the Crown when considered as a brand show promise for expanding our business-based perspectives on corporate branding itself. This pertains notably to what we call "corporate heritage brands".

The Crown in Context

Monarchy is an important and widespread phenomenon. Albeit with "different faces in different places," the Crown and its crowned heads engender substantial public interest and curiosity, often well beyond the national borders of their origin. For example, although the United States has never been a monarchy, many Americans are fascinated by monarchs and monarchy, and the U.S. is the target market for many products with royal endorsement (i.e., "by appointment to His Majesty, King ____"). Laura Bush, speaking about the monarchy on the eve of the State Visit to the U.K. by the U.S. President in November, 2003 observed: *"I think it's [the British monarchy] a fairytale to the United States. Americans have always been fascinated by the monarchy and certainly the British monarchy."*²

It is our view, and it is the premise of this paper, that *the Crown is indeed a brand*-with many characteristics of a corporate brand, including

amenability to being managed in a manner analogous to that for a corporate brand.

Consider the following:

- In the U.K, members of the Royal Family have referred to it as "the firm." In Sweden, HM King Carl Gustaf XVI told us: *"My role is to represent Sweden and to be a symbol for my country; some people would use the modern word 'trademark'"* (May 15, 2003). Typically there is massive (albeit not unanimous) affinity of its home populace to the Crown: adherents far outnumber opponents. (By analogy, this parallels to some degree studies among brand users regarding "brand support.")
- The Crown serves as a symbol of stability, impacting domestic society and helping to provide a positive environment for foreign investments.
- The Crown engenders meaningful, sometimes significant, economic value derived from tourism (e.g., palace visits, past and present royal venues, etc.).
- The Crown generates revenue for its broad range of endorsed products/services ("By appointment of ..."), and through the visibility and status of "royal" designated entities.

The monarchy has been studied in terms of its historical evolution, its legal and constitutional aspects, its political dimensions, and even the status of its members as public figures or celebrities. However, it has rarely been explored in terms of management, and to our knowledge never explored as a brand. In popular media, what we would characterize as branding seems to have been applied to the persona and style of individual monarchs and some royal family members, but not to the Crown as an institution (except as to the existence of an heir).

In this paper, we shall address a number of key dimensions of the monarchy as a brand:

- What makes the Crown (monarchy) a brand (especially one similar to a corporate brand)?
- How has the positioning of the monarch and monarchy (the Crown) evolved over time in terms of relationships with the nation and the people?
- What are the essential attributes of the Crown as a brand-what we term the "royal 5R's"?

² Coman J, Brown C, and Walker, T (2003) It was a good idea at the time, Sunday Telegraph, November 16, p. 22; she repeated this idea in several U.S. interviews, including the widely viewed "Larry King Live" CNN television program.

- What are the core values and the brand promise of a monarchy, its covenant with its people?
- What roles can communications play in supporting/defending the Crown?
- How are concepts from branding employed to build and protect the Crown?
- How does and should a monarchy judge “How are we doing?”
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THE CROWN AS A CORPORATE BRAND

To us, there are a number of reasons why the Crown may be viewed as a corporate brand.

First, it is a trademark (brand) because the Crown is a powerful visual symbol, and has been so for centuries. Originally a mark of power, it is increasingly used as a mark of sovereignty and of quality. It is one of the most easily and widely recognized symbols, and has even been marshaled (albeit with different visual treatment) as a quality sign for products and services including hotels (Crowne Plaza), beer (Kronenburg), and three Swedish bicycle brands (Rex, King, and Monark). As with many brands, it is the verbal signifier that is also important, and this equally applies to the Crown. “A Crown for every achievement” is phrase used by the Swiss watch maker Rolex to characterize the prestige they associate with their product line, underscored by a crown as a part of its logo.

The Crown is a corporate brand in that although an individual monarch personifies the Crown, in reality there are likely to be numerous individuals who are involved in the management, and support, of the Crown. Indeed, typically several close family members work to fulfill the Crown’s tasks. Moreover, the Crown does not fall into abeyance when an individual monarch dies: the institution of the monarchy continues. In this regard, it is not dissimilar to a company. Another similarity to a corporate entity is that the Crown has to meet the demands of multiple stakeholder groups.

While individual monarchs may be “personality” brands in their own right (HM Queen Elizabeth II and HH Pope John Paul II are without doubt global celebrity brands), the monarchy is an institutional (i.e., like a corporate) brand. Further, it would appear that many people are able to articulate what is expected of different

monarchies, e.g., the Spanish Crown as compared to the British Crown. In short, the historical and cultural contexts of different monarchies generate different sets of public expectations about them.

Just as most corporate (and many product/service) brands have a strap line (tag line) which articulates the core of its branding covenant (e.g., BP: “beyond petroleum;” GE: “imagination at work;” Nokia: “connecting people”), monarchs have mottos which often articulate the “promise” inherent in the royal brand. Pope John Paul II’s motto is *Totus Tuus* (All Yours), while King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden’s motto is “For Sweden - With the times”.

The Crown, as with so many other brands, de facto “rents” some of its prestige in the form of visual and verbal endorsements to individuals as well as to organizations. Prominent among these is the granting of a Royal Warrant—the use of the Royal Coat of Arms with the phrase “by appointment”. As well as the visual endorsements, there is also the verbal form with the use of the prefix Royal, e.g., the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals, KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines, Royal Danish Yacht Club, and the granting of Royal Charters to organizations such as the BBC and to Universities. In an individual capacity a person may be admitted as a Knight or Dame to a Royal Order of Chivalry, might hold the office of Astronomer Royal, or for a British academic be appointed as Regius Professor at one of the ancient seats of learning. Some events are given the royal imprimatur (endorsement) such as Royal Ascot or Henley Royal Regatta.

The Crown also has a clear, although sometimes indirect, financial value to lay organizations. For instance, the use of royalty as front-cover news stories for some magazines increases circulation. The implied “endorsement” of the Swedish internal railway by the Royal Family’s intentional use of it on an official trip helped to strengthen its viability.

One significant difference between the Crown and corporate brands is that the monarch is typically an incumbent for life (usually with a clearly identified successor), whereas corporate CEOs change from time to time. Barring war, revolution, and recognized mental incompetence, a monarch can be on the throne for decades. This fact in turn is a reminder that despite length of service, “a monarch is not the monarchy.” The latter may endure for centuries as an institution in a given country. The institutional character of the

Crown is a central element of its parallel to corporate brands.

For well-known multi-generational family-owned firms whose CEO still bears the family name, the analogy is stronger. We consider these to be heritage brands. When Fisk Johnson of S.C Johnson (whose tag line is "A Family Company"), William Clay Ford of Ford Motor Company, or August Busch IV of Anheuser-Busch speaks (and/or represents the company in advertisements) there is the added authority of "his name is on the door" of their companies. ("Having one's name on the door," and the stock certificate, can also be a problem for eponymous companies, e.g., Martha Stewart.)

In short, the Crown has many brand-like characteristics. It may be "a firm", but it is not a corporation. At its best, it has the unique capacity to harness the positive public emotions that surround the monarchy and the "brand heritage" of the monarchy. Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee (50th anniversary) year as Queen is illustrative. Conversely, the Crown can unleash broad public concern - even opposition - in the wake of perceived inappropriate or unacceptable behavior. Edward VIII's ultimate abdication (1936) over "the woman I love" is illustrative.

CONCEPTUAL EVOLUTION OF THE CROWN

Before considering the essential elements of the Crown as a brand it is important to recognize the existence of different monarchical types. Some monarchs have been absolute rulers, others symbolic Heads of State, and some have an important religious function and aura. Within the western tradition of monarchy, three evolutionary stages can be delineated. These characterize the

changing relationships among the Crown, the individual monarch, the nation, and the people.

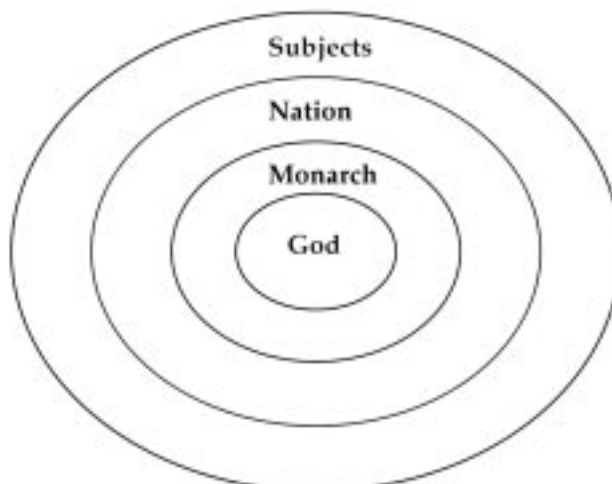
The three circles that follow in Figures A (i) (ii) and (iii) depict the three stages. We characterize them as *Divine* (where the monarch exercised spiritually-rooted power), *Dynastic* (where the power was temporal), and *Symbolic* (where the power, such as it is, is constitutionally derived).

Overall, they chronicle a metamorphosis from an institution where monarchs derived their legitimacy from God (and the Church) to one where the monarch's powers are typically defined by the constitution through the people's elected Parliaments. The tradition of the highest Church official placing the actual crown on the head of the monarch is no longer followed in most European monarchies. However it remains a key component of the British coronation ceremony and is worn at the annual State Opening of Parliament. In this way, the Church is lending its own legitimacy and prestige to the monarch and the monarchy. The wearing of the crown itself is no longer practiced by most European monarchs, although the symbol of the Crown is widely used. Today, one would see the image of the Crown on a royal carriage, for example, but not the actual Crown on the head of the monarch.

Let us describe each stage:

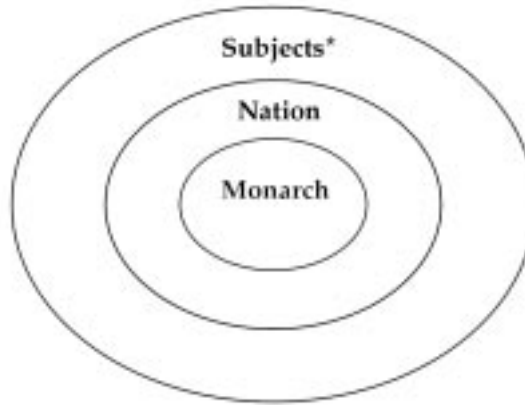
(i) Divine. In the Western tradition, dynastic monarchies were legitimized by the Catholic Church, as symbolized by the cross on the apex of the crown. Individual monarchs regarded themselves as having absolute power.³

FIGURE A: (I) DIVINE – SPIRITUAL POWER



³ Absolute power still pertains in some monarchies. For example, in 2004 the King of Swaziland was reported to be building a very expensive palace for each of his many wives, in a country with widespread abject poverty.

FIGURE A: (II) DYNASTIC – TEMPORAL POWER



* Parliaments gradually emerged as representatives of the subjects.

Reflecting the religious basis of royal rule, the high point of the coronation service was the consecration of the monarch to God's service and the anointment with Holy Oil (chrism). The motto of British Monarchs, "Dieu et Mon Droit" ("God and My Right"), encapsulates the spirit of the above.

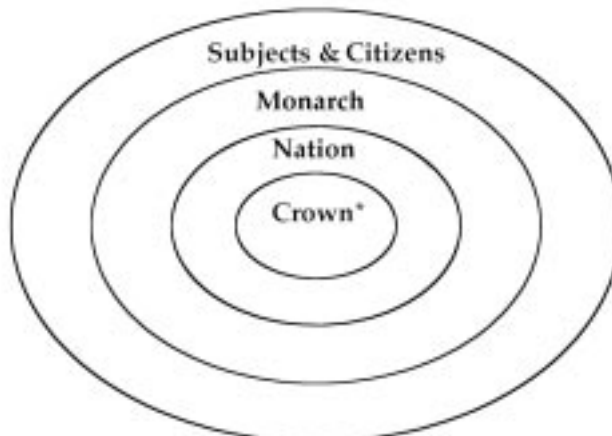
(ii) Dynastic. With the passage of time the temporal rather than the spiritual rights of the monarch began to be asserted by the 15th century. As such, the individual power of the monarch (and of the dynasty) became important, power that was now temporal beyond (or instead of) spiritual. The motto of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire epitomizes this perspective: "Austria Est Imperare Orbe Universo" ("All the earth is subject to Austria" - Motto of Emperor Frederick III).⁴ During succeeding centuries, Parliaments gradually emerged as representatives of the subjects.

(iii) Symbolic. After the First World War, most surviving western monarchies gradually gave up many of their powers, within defined

constitutional rights. As such, monarchies became symbols of state and nation (and culture). Just as the theocratic crown had been replaced with the dynastic crown, the latter gave way to the symbolic crown. This development accommodated the idea that sovereignty resided with the people; as such, this heralded a new evolutionary stage for monarchy, "the constitutional monarchy". Thus, in this stage the Crown remains in the center by permission of the people through their elected parliament and usually reflected directly in a constitution.

These constitutions are democratic and recognize the sovereignty of the people. As such, the monarch reigns but does not rule (Bogdanor 1995 pp. 1-42). By this means such nations not only define the monarchy but, more significantly, define the nations themselves as Nations. This explains why the Crown is at the center: it is the existence of the Crown that enables a country to call itself a Kingdom/ monarchy and to have a status that republics do not have, and can never have - being Royal. (Of course, republics have chosen not to have it.)

FIGURE A: (III) SYMBOLIC – CONSTITUTIONAL POWER



* The Crown is in the center, by the permission of the people through their elected Parliaments and usually reflected in a Constitution.

⁴ Fox-Davis, A.C. (1996) A Complete Guide to Heraldry, Wordsworth, Ware p 452, and Ehrlich, E. (1988) Nil Desperandum, Guild p. 55.

Across the three stages the relative importance of different institutions has changed. Particularly strengthened has been the power of the people, represented by the parliaments. With respect to the monarchy, the people have decided to have a constitutional model. Modern constitutional monarchies have evolved from "a King with a people" ... to "a people with a King".

In light of the evolution, our view is that the emphasis has shifted to the institution of the monarchy (the Crown as a brand) from one on the individual/dynasty or on the Church. The present position (to us) is that the *institution*, i.e. "the Crown", is (or should be) a focal point for constitutional monarchies.

As such, the core thesis of this paper is that the *institution* of the Crown should be treated as a corporate brand. In our view much of the attention in the literature and popular media has been focused on individual monarchs, royal families, and dynasties, with the institution of the monarchy diminished or excluded.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CROWN AS A BRAND

From our research and reflections on the Crown as a brand, we have identified five elements that we believe need to be present when the Crown is viewed through a branding lens. We think it is the task of all those who have responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Crown to ensure that attention is given to each of these elements. It is also their task to orchestrate these elements so that they result in a meaningful whole in a manner that makes one monarchy distinct from another within its own tradition and for its own people. Of course, the mix of these elements needs to reflect national mores and precepts. For instance, in the British monarchical tradition royal ceremony and protocol is more elaborate and formal than in most other monarchies. In contrast, openness and informality are key characteristics of many European monarchies. In Denmark, a singular feature of monarchy is the fortnightly audience held at the Christian Borg Palace where, by longstanding custom, any Danish subject can have informal talks with the Monarch (Kroll and Lindsey 1979 p. 28). The Norwegian and Swedish Crowns are also characterized by their relative informality, very different from the British model. As characterized by the Swedish Royal Court senior information and press officer: *"In England, the Scandinavian and Dutch monarchies are sometimes described as*

bicycle monarchies, meaning it is possible to see a monarch on a bicycle as well as in a Rolls Royce..." (Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg, February 2004).

Relative informality and the ability to "connect" with the people were widely cited as major characteristics of the late Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. She was frequently pictured riding her bicycle in public, as seen in photos in world newspapers when she died in March 2004. She sometimes bought clothes "off the peg", and shopped in supermarkets. One of her first acts as monarch was to abolish the requirement for ladies to curtsy at Court.⁵

The five elements, which we call the "royal five R's", are described below. The first-royal-is an inherent element of all monarchies. The other four - regal, relevant, responsive, and respected - we believe are amenable to being "managed" via a combination of the monarchy's national heritage, the incumbent monarch and royal family, and the public's reactions.

ROYAL: Any monarch is per se, "royal". The head of a monarchy (literally, the rule by one) is set apart from his or her fellow countrymen as is the immediate family (the Royal Family). Being Royal is a state of being: of someone set apart. Traditionally, as noted above, this unique status was made manifest by the anointing of the monarch with holy oil during the coronation service (as is still the case with British monarchs). More typically this distinct status is now accorded via a country's written constitution, which gives the monarch, and, to a lesser degree, the immediate royal family a distinct status. The right to use titles such as Your Majesty and Your Royal Highness are clear indicators that the monarch and the immediate family are "set apart". Royal coats of arms, royal standards, and the use of crown jewels are other manifestations of this characteristic.

Sometimes people's expectations of what comes with "royal" can be fanciful, but nonetheless significant. For example, an often-told story about Queen Elizabeth II is that of a little girl waiting with flowers, who starts crying when the Queen comes to visit her school. The Queen asks the girl why she is crying. The little girl responds with the question: "How can you be the Queen when you are not wearing a crown?" When we shared this story with HM Queen Silvia of Sweden (May 2003), she immediately smiled and said that she

⁵ The Times, March 22, 2004.

had encountered, and been touched by, the same experience on more than one occasion.

One does not have to be born royal to be royal. Consider Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, a high-ranking officer within Napoleon's army who was identified as a potentially suitable Swedish monarch to succeed the childless King Carl XIII. He changed overnight from a commoner to a royal personage and a few years later, in 1818, he established what became known as the Bernadotte dynasty, which still occupies the Swedish throne.

REGAL: In essence, this attribute may be explained as "acting in a royal manner". As such, it is quite possible for a President to be regal. Indeed, in some ways the French President owes more to a monarchy than to a presidency: his official residence is the Elysée Palace, and during state occasions he is accompanied by armor-clad cavalry. (This explains why the aforementioned distinctive designation of royal is so important.) For a monarch, the implication is not so much that every action and activity needs to be regal (indeed we argue the opposite) but rather that a monarch's behavior should not be *un-regal*. At the same time, it is almost a prerequisite of the Crown that there should be a greater emphasis on ceremony than is the case in many non-monarchical countries.

In our view, to be regal differs from monarchy to monarchy, based on its history ("what we have done"), traditions ("what we do, and how"), and culture ("what the people expect and accept"). In Norway, the late King Haakon decided that the Norwegian monarchy should be characterized by a small Royal Court, and should observe a simple lifestyle. To some commentators the simplicity of the Norwegian monarchy sometimes startles foreigners (Van Der Kiste 1998 p. 144).

What constitutes acting regal "is based upon experience" according to Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg. She continues: "*Acting regal is about what to do and not to do. It is about drawing the line, even about what invitations should be recommended for the Royal Family to accept and not to accept.*" (February, 2004).

RELEVANT: This dimension highlights the fact that the Crown also needs to have an affinity with a variety of stakeholder groups in a variety of settings. Consider Queen Victoria's establishment of the notion of the model family based on Christian principles and the collapse of this notion four generations later with the divorces of Queen

Elizabeth II's sister and of three of her four children. Of course, the British as well as many European monarchs work to stay in touch with their changing populations, in part through planned programs that involve engaging with the wave(s) of immigrants that have settled in their countries over recent years.

RESPONSIVE: This component accommodates the notion that the changing political, economic, social, ethical, economic, and technological environment requires evolutionary change. This element emphasizes the idea that evolutionary change is important to the Crown and its institutional continuity. In the U.K., the Queen now pays taxes, and has reduced the cost of the Royal Household, including the withdrawal of the Royal Yacht. Separately, the granting of the Prince of Wales Warrant to a firm is now made only after a check has been made of a company's ethical and environmental policies. Also, many monarchies have incorporated web sites as an additional communications conduit.

Sometimes, a break or non-break in all-important protocol can have unexpected consequences. The failure to fly the Union Flag at half-mast over Buckingham Palace in the aftermath of the death of Princess Diana resulted in a strongly negative public reaction outside Buckingham Palace. It was seen by many as a snub, whereas in fact tradition dictated that only the Royal Standard (not the national flag) flies over the Royal Palaces and that the Royal Standard is never flown at half-mast since succession to the Crown is immediate. Contrast this to the break with British protocol by the playing of the U.S. national anthem at the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace as a mark of solidarity after the September 11th catastrophe; Americans viewed this as a most meaningful gesture to the United States.

Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg commented on the importance of responsiveness: "*Responsive implies flexibility, in terms of doing what the people want their head of state to do. It is not about being an opportunist, but it means having priorities. But one's responsiveness must be authentic.*" (February 17, 2004).

RESPECTED: The importance of this characteristic cannot be overstated. In an age when the existence of the Crown in many countries is no longer seen to be "God given" but is given by the consent of the people (where, de facto, real sovereignty resides), it is a necessity

that the Crown be respected. Consider Queen Elizabeth II, who is sometimes characterized as a somewhat staid, or “traditional,” monarch. However, her keen sense of duty over many years to both Britain and the Commonwealth and her busy schedule even after the age of 75 has earned her the respect of people from all walks of life. Under her reign the institution of the monarchy has been secure. However, much media and public commentary indicate that the same degree of respect is not accorded to her children; this in turn could potentially have a deleterious effect on the institution for her successor.

During World War II, King Christian of Denmark became as much a national symbol for the Danes as Churchill was for Britain and the Commonwealth. He took great care to remain a visible symbol for the Danes during the German occupation. At one point, he wore the symbolic yellow star that Jews were forced to wear. He also continued the tradition of his morning ride, unescorted, through Copenhagen. “Who guards him?” asked one incredulous German soldier. “We all do” was the reply. By his daily ride he “became the symbol of resistance by the Danish people to a fate which they had been powerless to prevent but to which they were determined not to be resigned.” (Van Der Kiste 1998 p 113 and p 144).

To us, there is no doubt that substantial change has taken place in recent generations in the public’s views of royal behavior that it considers appropriate for each of the other four R’s. The view of monarchy has changed and so has the role for royals. Whereas in earlier times “The people were for the King”, now “The King is for the people”. The balance has shifted in obligations for service: who serves whom.

In a modern constitutional monarchy a royal must still be set apart but at the same time there is an opportunity to do good for and among the people. It is an effort to balance regal and relevant. If in an earlier era important advice to young royals was “remember who you are”, today that advice might be “remember who you are, and also what you can do.”

A CROWN'S CORE VALUES AND BRAND PROMISE

Here we examine some key characteristics of brands, especially corporate brands, and “translate” them for the context of the Crown as a brand, particularly the Swedish Crown.

A brand has both form and substance⁶. Form focuses on the graphics portraying the brand. Substance focuses on what the brand stands for. In the case of the monarchy as a brand, the form used is primarily the coat of arms and various royal insignias. The substance would primarily be reflected in the monarch’s motto - either institutional (such as the British ‘Dieu et Mon Droit’) or individual. The motto is one key element reflecting the particular monarchy’s (and monarch’s) core values.

Corporate Brand Values

Organizations typically have three kinds of values (Urde; 1997; 1999; 2003). As a group, these form the *value foundation* of a corporate brand. These are shown in Figure B, and encompass internal values that are related to the organization (organizational values); values that summarize the brand (core values), and values as they are experienced by relevant target groups (added values).

More specifically, the *organizational values* answer in principle the question of what the organization stands for and “what makes us who we are?” These internal values are an important point of departure for the *core values*, which summarize the essence of the brand’s identity. The most important task of the core values is to serve as the guiding light of a brand-building and brand-sustaining process. (For example, for Volvo cars, the core values are safety, quality, and environmental friendliness.) *Added values* represent the advantages associated with a brand as perceived by the target group(s). There is continuous interaction among all three levels regarding values and identity. Organizational values are translated into core values that guide the organization’s efforts. The core values are translated into added values for various target groups.

⁶ For an overview of corporate branding and strategic brand management see for example Aaker D & Joachimthaler E A (2000), Balmer J M T (1995), Balmer J M T (2001), Balmer J M T & Gray E R (2003), Balmer J M T & Greyser S A (2003), DeChernatony L & Schultz M (2002), Gregory J R (1997), Ind N (1996), Kapferer J-N (1997) Keller K L (2000), King S (1991), Knox S D (1999), Olns W (2000), Urde M (1999; 2003).

FIGURE B DEPICTS THE THREE KINDS OF VALUES



To illustrate how the Crown's brand promise (as we would characterize it) is rooted in its core values, we have examined in some detail the Swedish monarchy. The Swedish Crown's organizational values at present, as we understand the situation, are shaped by the King and the Royal Family, with input from members of the Royal Court. The values are significantly affected by a millennium of heritage. As already explained, we see the Royal R's (beyond "royal" itself) as key elements to be interpreted and expressed appropriately for the Swedish Royal context, as they are for other monarchies.

The Swedish constitution spells out the Monarch's roles and tasks as Head of State. In the words of Ingemar Eliasson, Marshal of the Realm (the Court's chief of staff):

"The government and the head of state (the monarch) must understand the content of each other's tasks and roles. The roles are defined in the Constitution, but they must play the roles in a way that wins the people's approval. In a democracy the play is written by and put on stage by the Parliament." (February 2004).

According to the Swedish Constitution Act of 1974, the Monarch has primarily ceremonial and representative duties without any formal power.⁷ The Act stated that "the Monarch serves as a unifying representative and symbol for the country". This can be seen as an overarching mission or purpose for the Crown.

Every Swedish monarch chooses his own motto. King Carl XVI Gustaf's motto is: "For Sweden - With the times". This can also be understood as a vision statement.

"'For Sweden - With the times.' To me it means being a monarch in a modern society - that is, to adapt the role by meeting the demands of a changing world. Not being ahead of the times, not being behind the times. But rather being in our time. It's about sensing feelings and what is right at the time - what the Swedish people wish and expect from a modern monarch." (King Carl XVI Gustaf, February 17, 2004)

The opportunity to choose one's own motto makes it possible for each monarch to put a personal imprint on the reign and to project the monarch's sense of relationship with the people. The motto is a statement of a principal element of brand promise - in this case, the covenant between the King and the people.

The motto also serves as a guiding light for the Court. As interpreted by the Marshal of the Realm:

"'For Sweden - With the times.' It is a guide for both the monarch and the Court, including the daily activities. An institution with a 1000-year long history can and should work, even in a modern democracy!" (February 2004).

⁷ However, some constitutional monarchs retain certain reserve powers. In the Netherlands the monarch can play a key role in the formation of a new Cabinet and can help to resolve certain kinds of disputes.

Inevitably, virtually all monarchies in current times are dependent on public support. (See below for an expanded view of this point.) However, there are always some opponents to the institution. In Sweden, for example, the institution of the monarchy rests on a long-term view from the people that there is value for the nation in having a monarchy.

The purpose of defining core values is to establish a unifying common thread in the brand-building process. And the reason for talking about three core values is to ensure that the functional, emotional, and symbolic dimensions of the brand are all included. To state the point in other terms: the three core values stand for the logos (logical arguments), ethos (character and personality), and pathos (feelings) of the Crown as a corporate brand (Urde, 2003).

In considering the Crown as a brand, the model can be applied to show the values of the ruling monarch (organizational values), of the particular monarchy institutionally (core values), and of the constituencies for whom the particular monarchy is pertinent (added values).

In the case of monarchies, we see core values as the essence of the Crown's identity, reflecting the institutional longevity of the Crown. The core values are interpreted by individual monarchs (and their advisors) as organizational values. What we termed above the Royal 5 R's constitute important dimensions for that interpretation, as well as for expressing the core values by the monarch.

Swedish Crown's Core Values

Symbol of Sweden, togetherness, and identity in our view are the relevant core values that seem over time to be tightly interwoven with the Swedish Crown. Figure C depicts the foundations of these values (from the King, Royal Family, and Court) and their meanings for the nation and people beyond.

Symbol of Sweden (logos) summarizes the Crown's role and function. In earlier centuries, the Crown played an important (in some instances, central) role in governing the country, and serving as the military and economic center of power. More recently, the King's powers have evolved in a symbolic direction without formal ruling powers. The most important duties for the King as formal Head of State are to represent the country and act as a unifying symbol. Internationally, the most visible occasion when the King acts as a representative of the Swedish nation is the annual Nobel Prize award ceremonies. The King commented on this role:

"From the very beginning the King presented the Nobel prizes. At the time the Nobel Prize was one of the very few distinctions of its kind. In a sense it was from the nation, even though it of course was from the Nobel Foundation. When I say 'in the name of the Nobel Foundation', it is still in a sense also from the nation." (King Carl XVI Gustaf, February 17, 2004).

Another example is the fact that as Head of State, the King (not the Prime Minister) welcomes and

FIGURE C THE SWEDISH CROWN - CORE VALUES, ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES, AND ADDED VALUES



accredits new foreign ambassadors to Sweden in a formal ceremony at the Palace. He opens Parliament and by tradition chairs the Parliament's foreign policy committee (advisory body). However, constitutionally he cannot express personal political views. The King made the latter point very clear: *"Regarding the apolitical role of modern monarchs, we do not engage in party politics nor belong to a party."* (February, 2004).

He continued: *"As Sweden's Head of State I represent with loyalty and my own inner conviction the high values on which our country's constitution rests."* (February, 2004).

Togetherness (ethos) reflects the relationship between the Crown and the citizens of Sweden. It is affected by the initiatives and activities of the King and the Royal Family. It is the public's emotional relationship with the monarch and the monarchy. That relationship carries with it expectations for royal behavior. Illustratively, in 1999, after a tragic disco theatre fire, King Carl XVI Gustaf was able to interrupt an overseas trip in order to participate in the mourning for the victims. Some media commentators criticized him for not returning home sooner. This example can be interpreted as showing that at a time of perceived national crisis, the public expects the monarch to fulfill a role as a symbol of national togetherness. In 2003, when Foreign Minister Anna Lindh was assassinated, the King played an important role in helping to bring the nation together. This example can also be related to several of the royal 5 R's, notably responsiveness, relevance, and respect. Regal is less germane to this specific situation.

Identity (pathos) captures the public's sense of belonging to the nation, with its shared history, culture, and traditions. Midsummer, the love of nature, Lucia (a traditional Swedish December festival), and simplicity (perhaps elegant simplicity and design) are feelings that many associate with Swedish identity. The current King expresses his own personality and identity through his interest in hunting and fishing combined with his interest in the environment. The Crown has become part of the people's self-image and the image of Sweden as seen from an outside perspective. The fact that the country has a King is seen as an element shaping Sweden's identity as a country. Our interviews suggest that added values the Crown provides include tradition, historical roots, continuity, and stability. The Crown's place in the Swedish national identity is illustrated in this

recollection of Gunnar Brodin, former Marshal of the Realm:

"We are going into a world that is global and globalized. People need roots. I remember when an older gentleman walked up to me and said: 'Wasa rye crisps is now Italian, Volvo Car is American. The only thing we have left is the King'." (May 16, 2003)

This feeling of identity between a people and the Crown is also important in the United Kingdom, according to former US ambassador Seitz (1998 p 95). He says:

"The Crown seems to be deeply embedded in the identity of the English people, if not all the British people. The monarchy reinforces the sense of English uniqueness ... My sense is that removing the British Crown would be akin to psychological amputation."

COMMUNICATING THE CROWN AS A BRAND

The Crown is dependent upon communication (of many types) to retain and enhance its public support. To fulfill its role the Crown must win and retain the hearts and minds of the people. Communicating and interacting play key roles for the Crown, as they do for many corporate brands. Not even brand awareness can be taken for granted: On one occasion, as told to us, when King Carl XVI Gustaf informally visited a department store he was asked by the cashier to show a piece of identification. With a smile, the King showed a coin with his own image.

In the modern age of mass media, the image of the Crown, the King, and the Royal Family to a large extent is shaped by media. There is great interest in "royals" in many countries - including in republics such as Germany, Italy, and the United States. The clothes, the romances, and the parties of royals fascinate many readers. Interest on the part of the tabloid press, women's magazines, and other media in the lives of royals is important for the Crown as brand. It is a sign of curiosity (at least) and it builds awareness. However, at the same time the paparazzi photographers, the alleged scandals, and the rumors put forward in some media and on the Internet constitute serious problems for any monarchy trying to communicate its identity and values coherently and consistently. Illustrative of intense media attention is the focus on highly visible royals, such as the late Princess Diana. However, media interest can be broad-gauged as well. For example, in the Danish tabloid *B.T.*

(August 12, 2003), there were four (!) short articles about royals:

- Swedish Crown Princess Victoria with a boyfriend
- British Prince hunts antelope with natives in South Africa-he is criticized by "friends of animals" in England after killing antelope with a spear
- Danish Queen and Prince Consort asked by readers to speak out when it comes to the question of whether or not a royal should marry a non-royal person
- A comment from a journalist that there are too few royals to go around, which limits the likelihood of finding a blue-blooded partner.

Typical media interest in royals is focused on the individuals. As Sweden's Queen Silvia told us: *"I wish that media would report more about what is in my head rather than what is **on** my head,"* referring to keen interest in her hats (May 15, 2003).

Media attention is a fact of life for the Crown and individual royals. Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg commented:

"Celebrity individuals sometimes seek media attention for their own sake. They are dependent upon media in a different way from the Royal Families, which attract attention." (February 17, 2004).

However, media attention also serves the modern monarchy.

"Of course, the Royal Family is dependent on media. How long would the modern monarchy survive without media interest? How could some modern media exist without personalities such as Royals? The commercial media is like a battlefield. Battles can be fought and lost. It has become more difficult for the Crown to retain its allure and glimmer." (Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg, December 1, 2003).

Much as in the corporate world media attention can be a two-edged sword for the Crown. Coverage is almost a certainty, but we believe there is a need to try to manage one's media presence (visibility) and presentation (content). To us, what defines the difference between a typical corporate situation and that of the Crown is the omnipresent media interest in the Crown, as well as the inappropriateness of the Crown using certain corporate tools.

Corporate Brand-Building Without Advertising

Communications are a key element in managing the Crown as a brand, but typically in a more subtle way than for corporate brands. Unlike for corporate brands, communicating on behalf of the Crown cannot be done through the principal vehicles of corporate advertising and public relations activities as we normally think of them in the commercial marketplace. Even the use of market research and working with communications and/or business strategy consultants may be difficult for the Crown. The reasons are that such initiatives are likely to be seen by critics and even many non-critics as too transparently self-promotional.

Building and safeguarding the Crown as a brand also face a number of other challenges. For example, one recurring argument against the Monarchy and having a King rests on the perceived high cost. According to Gunnar Brodin, former Marshal of the [Swedish] Realm, in these debates there is no real discussion about the revenue side, only about the cost side.

This is a particular problem for those monarchies where the budget for the Crown is an annual issue for Parliamentary debate, and questions may arise regarding the "value for the nation." For example, the Swedish Crown in recent years has been awarded a yearly representative budget (appanage) of 45 million SEK (approximately 11 million £ Sterling). Since the Crown adds value primarily by standing as a symbol for the country, the media cost equivalent of coverage is one way to estimate the economic value. This approach is employed often for corporate public relations programs. A variation of this approach would be to ask what the 45 million SEK could buy in media terms and the resulting impacts. As a point of comparison the money could be spent hypothetically on an additional international advertising campaign ("Invest in Sweden" or "Come visit Sweden") addressed to business development or tourism.

Major royal events offer the opportunity for a monarchy to gain significant international media attention. Recent illustrations include the May 2004 weddings of the Danish Crown Prince Fredrik to Mary Donaldson of Australia, and of the Spanish Crown Prince Felipe to Letizia Ortiz, the 2001 wedding of Crown Prince Haakon of Norway to Mette-Marit as well as the Swedish Crown Princess's visit to Japan in 2001. The reported cost of the Danish royal wedding was 143 million DKR (approx. 36 million £ Sterling)

for the week-long series of events. According to the organization Wonderful Copenhagen, the tourism revenues for the week were 60 million DKR (approx. 15 million £ Sterling), separate from the value of the media coverage, especially overseas. With the overseas audiences, the long term benefit for Denmark and Copenhagen rests in stronger international positioning for tourism and business. In an analogous way the Swedish Crown Princess's visit to Japan was covered there on prime-time TV and attracted high print media attention.

In our view, compared to an advertising campaign overseas, the communications effects of the (unpaid) media coverage of the Crown overseas are likely to be worth a considerable multiple of the cost of an advertising campaign. The alternative cost to obtain this kind of attention and interest overseas for a small Scandinavian country would have been very high - if at all possible to achieve via advertising.

Yet another challenge of managing a Crown as brand is to maintain the allure and magic and at the same time be seen as relevant. The Crown must strike the right balance between openness and transparency on the one hand, and being a unique, exclusive symbol for a country on the other. Managing the evolution of a prestigious brand like the Crown is difficult. By analogy, even though most people would like to "know the magician's secrets", we may well lose interest when the secrets are revealed to us. The dilemma is to be open but at the same time set apart. HRH Crown Princess Victoria commented: *"We are sometimes criticized that we are too common in a sense. Young people, for example, often want us to be like them - but at the same time there are expectations that we should be role models and 'behave like a royal.' I feel that dealing with this paradox is sometimes very hard."* (December 1, 2003).

A further challenge for the Crown is to be neutral and to stand for the whole country, but still to be able to communicate in an interesting and relevant way. As noted, in a constitutional monarchy the Monarch and the Royal Family are not expected to take any political stance.

What to say and not to say are clearly delicate decisions to be made every single day. How difficult this can be and how easily misunderstandings may arise is illustrated by an event in the context of the 2003 Swedish referendum on adopting the Euro. Crown Princess Victoria attended a conference where one of the

other speakers argued in favor of the Euro. In some news media the Crown Princess was criticized as though she supported the campaign in favor of the Euro just by attending the conference. Another example was when the (Swedish) King commented on Norwegian seal hunting. This caused a bitter debate between the people of the two countries. This may of course seem like "a storm in a teacup" unless we consider history and the symbolism.

Casting a shadow over the entire debate is the "ultimate argument" as to the appropriateness of having hereditary monarchy at all in an age of democracy. This argument typically focuses on the fact that monarchs are "born to the job." In a discussion with Queen Silvia, she repeated the often-asked question and gave her short but clear answer to it: *"What gives you the right to the title? ... [is that] the title serves the nation"* (May 15, 2003).

For the monarch and the managers at the Court, setting the agenda is a key issue. The planning of any Royal Family's very busy schedule of activities demands careful attention because it affects directly and indirectly the image of the Crown. The monarch and the Royal Family receive many invitations and there is always a risk of being caught up in simply a series of daily routines. One core matter is how the monarch and the Royal Family can best make use of their time as the symbol of the country, and simultaneously communicate the values the Crown stands for. We believe the proactive selection of events, ceremonies, and speech venues constitutes a desirable way to address the issues. At the same time, these choices constitute difficult challenges for planning and for avoiding offending entities and groups which consider themselves entitled to a spot on the schedule. As confirmed by Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg: *"It's a constant balancing act."* (December, 2003).

Overall, looking at communications for the monarchy from a branding perspective, we see the task as one of pursuing an agenda of "managed visibility." By this we mean visibility at the "big picture" level, with emphasis on particular initiatives leading to the desired identity and image with the desired target audiences, along with implementation by a portfolio of selected individual visible activities ("small pictures") to support the initiatives. In essence, the communications goals are both presence (visibility) and presentation (content). Separately, as is true for many corporate communications

programs, there are multiple meaningful constituencies for monarchies covering the entire nation. These typically include a broad range of geographic, social class, and ethnic audiences.

Multiple zones of initiative also characterize our view of a well-developed Crown communications program. Illustratively, these might include initiatives in the philanthropic, environmental, health, and business development (home and foreign) areas, as well as programs to honor citizen achievement. We think the undertaking of such programs is at least as complex on behalf of monarchies as it is for corporate brands.

Communicating the Crown as a brand is much about expressing values and attitudes through symbolic actions. We think the aforementioned limitations for the Crown in using traditional advertising and overt public relations can be compensated for by careful planning of programs, including the use of symbols.

CORPORATE BRAND CUSTODIANSHIP FOR THE CROWN

The Court's role might be compared with a key dimension of corporate brand management, namely the accountability and responsibility for safeguarding, developing, and communicating core values in order to create and maintain brand equity.⁸

"Being the Marshal of the Realm calls for being a leader and manager, and for using our resources in the best ways possible. This is not unique among executives. However, at the Royal Court it has to be done in accordance with the Constitution and the monarch's motto." (Ingemar Eliasson, Marshal of the Realm, February 2004).

The monarch's key role viewed through the branding lens could be described as safeguarding the continuity of the Crown, i.e. "the corporate brand". Continuity is a key word in brand-building, as described by a senior marketing manager for one of the world's leading branded consumer product companies:

"When you are assigned to the responsibility for an established brand - which may have been in the hands of; many brand managers before you and which probably will be in the hands of many

more brand managers after you - you have become a part of a long process. You treat what has been done before with respect and you want to leave an even stronger brand to the person who comes after you." (Luic Tassel, Marketing Manager Procter & Gamble Sweden, Stockholm, 1997).

The mindset that the brand most likely will outlast the present brand manager is clear for any intelligent brand manager at P&G or other leading firms. For a monarch this insight is no doubt even more evident. In our view, the branding concept of the "brand custodian" or "brand steward" is pertinent here, particularly for heritage brands. Carrying the Crown is done with the knowledge that there will be someone else who will eventually take on the responsibility. Crown Princess Victoria spoke to us about the sense of responsibility she feels to the country, the people, and the Crown: *"One is dedicated. No matter the situation in the country, you know, and the people know, that you will be there."* (December 1, 2003).

To us, the Crown Princess's statement echoes the pledge of the then Princess Elizabeth (of Great Britain), who marked her 21st birthday (in 1947) by offering "A Solemn Act of Dedication" in these words to the British Commonwealth⁹: *"I declare before you that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great Imperial Commonwealth to which we all belong."* (Shawcross, 2002 pp. 41-42)

Three decades later, on the 25th anniversary of her accession to the throne, she reaffirmed her pledge. *"When I was 21, I pledged my life to the service of our people, and I ask for God's help to make good my vow. Although that vow was made in my salad days when I was green in judgment, I do not regret or retract one word of it."* (Shawcross, 2002 p. 19)

In a branding context, the monarch and the Royal Family can be considered as human expressions of the Crown. Their personalities, interests, and skills give an opportunity for an informal division of duties. In Sweden, King Carl XVI Gustaf typically takes the lead role within the areas of business, military, and foreign contact, as well as the environment. Queen Silvia is much engaged in

⁸ C.f. definition of brand management, Urde (1999)

⁹ Historically, a few monarchs have represented more than one nation. Even today HM Queen Elizabeth is actually monarch of numerous Commonwealth countries (in addition to the U.K.). At ceremonies in France commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Normandy invasion by the Allies in World War II, her role was also that of Queen of Canada. This was done "as a sign of respect for her other realm", according to The Daily Telegraph, June 7, 2004.

social issues and charity on both the national and international level. Crown Princess Victoria has special interests in culture and design, and also in health issues and conflict resolutions internationally. In a discussion she described her role as "... *showing the positive sides of Sweden*" (May 15, 2003). Within their areas, the King and the Royal Family express the personality of the Crown as a brand.

The royal palaces, the royal gardens, and the royal museums are all examples of important manifestations of the Crown. The rich symbolism with rituals, protocol, and traditions sets the Crown apart as a unique brand. Managing the Crown also involves orchestrating the symbolism. A key question in the communication of the Crown is the meaning and interpretation of all these symbols and rituals. The symbols are like a language of its own to be used to express the values of the Crown. However many of these symbols were created in a time when the Crown had formal power. In line with the King's motto "For Sweden - With the times," some royal rituals in Sweden have been abolished while others have been introduced, or revived.

Managing symbols that constitute the key parts of a brand identity is also a matter of not wearing them out so they lose their attraction and distinctiveness - and in the case of the Crown, exclusiveness.

For the Swedish Crown, the King's firm view is that a ceremony must serve a purpose: "*The symbols must be used with the utmost care.*" (King Carl XVI Gustaf, February 2004). One specific example was cited by the Royal Equerry, responsible for transportation both functional and ceremonial:

"Bringing out the Royal coaches and horses is the King's decision. When we [the Royal Equerry with coaches and horses] come it is a total experience of sounds, sight, smell of horses, vibrations - it involves all senses and gives a short glimpse of glamor and allure. The King says that it should be a rare thing." (Mertil Melin, Royal Equerry and former three-star general, November 28, 2003).

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENDORSEMENT BRANDING

Two additional areas where the Crown can add value for the country are business development and endorsement via royal warrants. The former is reflected by a comment from Michael Treschow, Chairman of LM Ericsson:

"Over time the Crown has supported Swedish industry and trade. The King gives attention on the highest level. Traveling with a royal delegation creates a good atmosphere and doors that normally would have been shut are opened..." (Stockholm, May 13, 2003).

Granting royal warrants has a long tradition in most monarchies. It is a way of helping trade and industry but it may also be viewed as a part of a brand-building process. The warrant "By appointment to His Majesty the King" is awarded to some 130 companies in Sweden. For some brands, this kind of association with the Crown may be of considerable value through Crown recognition of domestic product/service excellence that the public will consider "fit for a King."

"The pursuit of quality is an important characteristic of Swedish trade and industry, something of which I often have reason to be proud, especially on my overseas visits. The royal warrant has come to be seen as a sign of quality ..." (King Carl XVI Gustaf, in *By Appointment to His Majesty the King of Sweden*, 2000, p. 7)

Skrufs Glasbruk (glass and crystal), ABU (fishing reels), Fällkniven AB (folding knives), Wasabröd (ryecrisp), and Hogia AB (computer programs) are examples of Swedish companies with a royal warrant. They cover the spectrum from small, one-person businesses to large, well-known industrial companies with operations throughout the country and beyond.

The head of one manufacturer with a royal warrant commented on the effects:

"We are proud of what we are doing [exclusive handmade beds]. This pride we try to show for our retailers so they in turn can show it to the customers. Our Royal warrant is one of the proofs of our quality. It is about meeting the highest quality standards. Maybe this accounts for up to 5% - as a rough estimate - of our total branding efforts." (Jan Ryde, CEO Hästens Sängar, December 10, 2003).

However, the Court's management of the warrants sometimes calls for resolving delicate questions. Many companies, organizations, and clubs would like to have a link to the Crown. A Golf Club in Stockholm asked for permission to have "royal" as part of its name, but the Court denied this. In the corporate world, extending ("stretching") the brand too widely may in the long term weaken it. To us, this is true also for the Crown as a brand.

Another form of “brand association” involving royal families is with the Olympics. Several princes and princesses have participated in Olympic sports, have served on their national or international sports federations, or have been board members of the International Olympic Committee. These include the U.K.’s Princess Anne (equestrian), Monaco’s Prince Albert (bobsled), and Norway’s Prince Harald (sailing). Such linkages with sports to us constitute a two-way brand association that results in benefits for both parties. More specifically, the Olympics are generally considered to have the highest cachet of any sports endeavor. They embody the positive values of athletic competition at the highest level, of international solidarity among the youth of the world, of athletes representing their countries, and a symbolic battle among nations culminating in flag-raising and playing the National anthem of the winner’s country.

These members of royal families, and their monarchies, benefit from their involvement as representatives of their countries on a non-political sport-based international stage. The sports organizations obviously benefit from royal family member involvement. In short, for participating royal family members the Olympics is an arena where symbols matter. When a royal represents his or her country in such venues, bringing together a national symbol with an international one, both parties gain in strength.

We see the monarchy as often participating in symbolic settings, and also using corporate branding approaches. In our view this can be part of an explicit strategy of helping the country, supporting social and philanthropical services for its people, and promoting business. Among these approaches are *co-branding* (e.g., via endorsements of products, services, and causes), *sub-branding* (e.g., a palace or art collection labeled “royal” as an independent visitor attraction), and *lending brand equity* (e.g., for business development and foreign investment).

There is a key difference, however, compared to the corporate world. Companies try to employ these approaches to leverage their brands in order to improve their own financial balance sheets and shareholder value. A monarchy tries to employ them to enhance the country’s social balance sheet and core values.

In short, brand custodianship for monarchies involves what we consider both leveraging and protecting their brands. They try to leverage their brands for positive purposes. At the same time, custodianship also calls for protecting the equity of the symbols and the brand from exploitation via perceived inappropriate applications or negative associations.

ASSESSING THE CROWN’S PERFORMANCE

When senior executives in corporations ask themselves “How are we doing?” they typically turn primarily to financial measures, such as earnings and share price. However, there are today no widely-accepted financial measures for the performance of monarchies. While it is true that there are some publicly-generated revenues associated with the institutional monarchy (such as visitor fees to palaces), in our view, it is the Crown’s symbolic dimensions that are central to assessing its performance. Although quantifiable to a considerable degree, these do not readily lend themselves to economic “translation”.

Here again the analogy to a corporate brand becomes salient. A major component of assessing corporate brands rests in corporate image and reputation. For the Crown, the parallel is public approval and support, i.e., winning and retaining the hearts and minds of the people.

Typical measures of corporate reputation¹⁰ encompass:

- Awareness and familiarity
- Favorability/unfavorability
- Specific corporate attributes, such as ‘an innovative company’, ‘a good company to work for’, ‘their products are good value for the money’, etc.

Some sophisticated corporate assessment systems also include measures of ‘willingness to support’ the company in competitive contexts, on social/regulatory issues, and as an investment.

Regarding these measures in the setting of monarchies, awareness and familiarity are typically a given, although the inflow of immigrant populations in some monarchies makes awareness a relevant measure for some segments of the public. Favorability - i.e., public approval and support - is to us the most meaningful

¹⁰ For an example, see Stephen A Greyser, “Advancing and Enhancing Corporate Reputation”, in J.M.T Balmer and S.A. Greyser, *Revealing the Corporation: Perspectives on Identity, Image, Reputation, Corporate Branding, and Corporate-Brand Marketing*, Routledge, 2003, pp. 234-242.

criterion for assessing the ongoing performance of the Crown as an institution and the reigning monarch (and Royal Family) as individuals. At the institutional level, this would translate as a totality into support for the continued existence of the monarchy. While this inevitably is linked to the individual personal popularity of the monarch, it can have many other facets that are analogous to specific attributes in a corporate setting, such as public recognition of the Crown's role for the nation and contributions to it.

Many specific components of the Crown's perceived value and contributions may enter into the public's rating of favorability/support for the Crown. Illustratively, appreciation of the symbolic and/or unifying role of the Crown in a national emergency or national celebration would increase favorability and support. By the same token, institutional and/or individual behavior considered inappropriate (see separate treatment in "Threats" below) might lead to erosion of public support.

Queen Elizabeth II recognized the importance of public support in a statement made in 1997 at the time of her 50th wedding anniversary. As quoted by Hames and Leonard (1988), she said:

"Despite the huge constitutional difference between a hereditary monarchy and an elected government, in reality the gulf is not so wide. They are complementary institutions, each with its own role to play. Each, in its different way, exists only with the support and consent of the people. That consent, or the lack of it, is expressed for you, Prime Minister, through the ballot box. It is a tough, even brutal, system but at least the message is clear for all to read. For us, a royal family, however, the message is often harder to read, obscured as it can be by deference, rhetoric or the conflicting attitudes of public opinion. But read it we must."

In some countries with monarchies, regular studies of public attitudes toward the monarchy and the King/Queen are undertaken under the aegis of universities or media. For example, for over 26 years Gothenburg University has conducted studies of Swedish attitudes on a range of public issues, in recent years also including support for the Crown. In the U.K., the respected opinion research firm MORI has

undertaken studies of the public's view of the monarchy. Levels of support in both countries vary over time, and often are 70%-plus. MORI's Robert Worcester reports that the level of anti-monarchy sentiment in the U.K. has been stable at about 20% for over thirty years.¹¹ Further, in response to research commissioned by the British Crown for the British Royal Family, according to MORI's thirtieth anniversary video, the public wanted less bowing and curtseying and fewer dancing attendants - in short, a more open, a more modern, monarchy. In addition to these studies, popular media have frequently done polls (often unscientific) on royal popularity and issues affecting support for the Crown.

THREATS TO THE CROWN AS A BRAND

In the corporate world, threats to the business viability of a firm typically come from an inability to keep pace with competition and/or changing markets. The recent experiences of Polaroid are illustrative, as the former innovator in instant photography slid into bankruptcy as others came to dominate with new technology. Sometimes the threats result from changes in cultural and social values. The decline of the hat industry in the U.S. over several decades is one example. Another is the view in Victorian times that being thin was socially inappropriate, reversed a century later.

Aside from competitiveness in the marketplace and changes in social values, the principal threats to a corporate or nonprofit brand today come from *reputational trouble*. We believe this also applies to the Crown as a brand.

The relatively recent reputational travails of Enron and Arthur Andersen (corporate misbehavior) and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (personal misbehavior) have led to the operational demise of the former two and considerable business impairment to the latter. In the nonprofit world, widely-known organizations affected recently by reputation-rooted troubles include the Catholic Church in the U.S. (widespread priest sex abuse), the International Olympic Committee and Salt Lake City Organizing Committee (scandals in conjunction with city bids as Olympic venues), the U.S. Red Cross (diversion of funds raised after 9/11 into other charitable areas), and the BBC (inaccurate/unfair reporting).

Because public support for the Crown is so important, reputational problems-real and perceived-can represent threats to the Crown.

¹¹ Kennedy, C. (2004) Ahead in the Polls, The Director, Institute of Directors, London, May, p. 66.

Such problems may lead to a decline in favorability from a nation's public for individual monarchs or Royal Family members, and/or for the Monarchy institutionally. They may also become a focal point for attention, particularly from media, with effect in and for other monarchies. In short an reputational issue in one monarchy may raise questions in others much like a reputation issue in one company can affect and infect an industry (such as recently occurred in the U.S. mutual fund industry).

Here are several different illustrative kinds of situations, some fictional and some not, that in our view would potentially erode public support and threaten the Crown as a brand. Obviously, each country would apply its own standards.

- a) Illegal or inappropriate individual royal behavior. Examples: perceived close association with a widely hated dictator; embezzlement of state funds; flagrant "high living;" perceived insufficient sympathy in the face of public tragedy.
- b) The Crown is seen as playing an inappropriate role on public issues. Examples: Overt favoritism from the monarch in a political leadership contest; taking a strong public position on a divisive issue affecting the State Church and elected political leaders.
- c) Challenges of perceived "foreign-ness." Example: The British royal family's German roots led to a dynastic name change (a "corporate re-branding") during World War I (1917) from Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to Windsor.
- d) Negative "ruboffs" from matters reflecting the core of national identity. Examples: Royal "appointment" firms found to be poorly managed and/or selling low-quality products; in Sweden, a scandal regarding the Nobel Prize voting.
- e) Generational change in values. Examples: Younger people lose interest in the monarchy; the monarchy is no longer seen as standing for core values.

The ultimate expression of lack of public support occurs when the monarch, or even the monarchy itself, is overthrown by the people or their representatives. Severe illustrations of both are the beheading of England's Charles I (1649) and France's Louis XVI (1793), and the termination (for a time) of those monarchies.

Again, each nation's public would apply its own cultural values and traditions to its views of any of the above scenarios and the consequences. Nevertheless, in our view, monarchies and the Royal Court must be sensitive in order to avoid those situations that could markedly reduce public support for the institution (brand) and for individual royals.

CONCLUSIONS

When one examines the Crown through a branding lens, what principal ideas emerge? Here are the conclusions derived from our exploration and analysis.

1. The monarchy, as an institution, is very much like a corporate brand.
2. Managing the Crown as a brand is similar in many ways to managing a corporate brand with a heritage. Managing a Crown is about being relevant, respected, responsive, regal and - of course - royal (the "Royal 5 R's"). These key characteristics (except royal) can also help in understanding institutions and organizations with a heritage.
3. Managing a Crown takes a long-term perspective. A monarchy's strength rests significantly in its symbolic nature and its use of symbols.
4. A monarch has a lifetime term and the successor is known well in advance. However, the monarchy as an entity transcends the reigning monarch as a "brand-rooted institution." This is analogous to some longstanding "family-controlled" corporations and their CEO'S.
5. A monarchy helps to define a nation, and helps the people to define themselves.
6. The Crown stands for and generates value and meaning much like a brand-oriented corporation. Brand-orientation encompasses both a mindset and a process of creating, developing, and protecting brand identity in an ongoing interaction with target groups.
7. A constitutional monarchy depends upon its people's and parliament's approval and willingness to support it. These are the primary criteria for assessing the performance of individual monarchies.
8. Modern constitutional monarchies have evolved from "a King with a people" ... to "a people with a King". The task and role of a royal has changed from "Remember who you are" ... to "Remember who you are and also what you can do".

9. "Managed visibility" on behalf of the Crown is done without traditional corporate advertising and public relations. It calls for management and balance in term of the Crown's initiatives and activities. We believe this should start from a program-based "big picture" set of initiatives strategically focused on a desired identity and image. The program should be supported by a list of proactive visible activities ("small pictures").
10. Managing a modern monarchy's "brand image" and reputation requires a constant and delicate balancing act. On the one hand is the need for responsiveness to inherently high media interest in the monarch and the royal family. On the other is the need to maintain respect and relevance for the institution in a time when the public seeks more transparency and less remoteness from the monarchy.
11. If the Crown's identity and image are not managed proactively (albeit often discreetly), the Crown may well find itself defined externally - as critics or (even) the media fill the vacuum. This is analogous to corporate and non-profit brands.
12. Further, if the Crown's identity and image are not thoughtfully managed, the potential is higher for brand reputational erosion and threats to the institution itself.
13. The Crown can be threatened by reputational trouble leading to erosion of public approval and support for the institution, as is the case for corporate and nonprofit brands. Such trouble might derive from perceived illegal or inappropriate behavior by the monarch, a perceived inappropriate role on public issues, and others. Each nation's public would use its own values and traditions in judging a given situation. The consequences of such erosion in the past occasionally have been severe.
14. There is a key difference in motive for branding on behalf of monarchies compared to branding in the corporate world. Companies try to employ branding concepts and approaches to leverage their brands in order to improve their financial balance sheets and shareholder value. In contrast, we think a monarchy typically can be seen as trying to employ them to enhance the country's social balance sheet and core values.

REFLECTION

In this article we have focused upon the Crown as a brand. We have tried to expand thinking about some of the oldest and strongest symbols of our time by linking and comparing them with corporate branding. One might well argue that this endeavor is curious. But as Sidney J. Levy stated in his classic 1959 "Symbols for Sale" in *Harvard Business Review* (p 117): "As behavior in the market place is increasingly elaborated, it also becomes more symbolic." If we look around we find a number of what may be seen as curiously symbolic brands. Consider the Nobel Prize. The idea of competing in science (and other fields) and electing the most important contributions is seen by many as a curious activity. Nevertheless the Nobel Prize supports science by attracting interest and attention. A monarchy and having a monarch as head of state is also curious and could even be said to be anachronistic. Nevertheless a Crown can help support a country as a symbol and be a part of its identity. The emotional and symbolic values reach people's hearts, unlike the functional values that primarily appeal to our rational side. This is well known in the worlds of art, culture, rhetoric, and branding. Levy applied this idea even more broadly, when he wrote (1959): "The consumer is not as functionally oriented as he used to be - if he ever really was."

Looking at monarchies through a branding lens offers insights and provides us a different or even a new perspective on the challenges of managing brands with a heritage. This would apply to both corporations and nonprofit institutions (e.g., universities, museums, charitable organizations) which have a heritage of considerable age, distinction, and distinctiveness. Some of the latter traditionally may not have considered themselves to be brands. For heritage corporations as well as nonprofits, we think the most applicable ideas in this paper are those that relate to not wearing out the brand symbols, building on and/or refreshing the brand's emotional content, and balancing the brand's core values with relevance to the present. All heritage institutions, including monarchies, should recognize that effective management of their brands calls for them to be not only of the past and the present, but also of the future. Heritage institutions serve as stable reference points in a changing world. As Vaclav Havel pointed out, we can be both mature and modern - and still have icons (Shawcross 2002 p. 235).

In our view, corporate brand-building in all settings is a matter of mindset. To be a brand the

organization must start by thinking of itself as a brand. It must communicate as a brand; it must live up to its core values and promises as a brand; it must have culturally-rooted values as a brand; it must find a positioning as a brand; and it must be managed as a brand. In sum, it must "live" the brand by behaving in ways that fulfill its brand promise to its stakeholders. We think the same may be said for monarchies.

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He has given seminars at leading business schools including those at Harvard, Oxford, Rotterdam and Copenhagen. He has also taught in Australia, China, Dubai, France, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore and the US.

Since 1994 he has organized eight corporate identity conferences under the auspices of the International Corporate Identity Group, which he founded and which was formally launched at the House of Lords in 1995. These have been held at the Universities of Oxford, Strathclyde, and Bradford as well as in London. Keynote speakers have included Lords King and Marshall (British Airways) Lord Browne (CEO BP Group), and a UK Minister of State.

Professor Balmer has served as a special advisor on corporate identity issues for the BBC, Mercedes Benz, WPP Group, and other organizations. He has initiated and developed courses on corporate identity and corporate branding at executive, postgraduate and undergraduate levels. Currently he leads executive level corporate identity courses on identity for the BBC and for Emirates Airways. Before his academic career, he was Assistant Administrator of Lord Menuhin's concert agency and

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He is responsible for fifteen books and monographs; is a frequent contributor to journals on marketing, advertising, and business/consumer attitudes, and has published some 300 Harvard case studies. His marketing and advertising books include *Advertising in America: The Consumer View* (with Raymond A. Bauer), a study of the public's attitudes toward advertising, and three editions of *Cases in Advertising and Communications Management*. With John Balmer, he co-authored the *California Management Review* article (2002), "The Multiple Identities of the Corporation," and the book *Revealing the Corporation* (2003) on corporate identity, image, reputation, and branding. In 1996, he delivered an invited address on corporate reputation at the House of Lords.

In 1993 he was elected Fellow of the American Academy of Advertising, honoring his career-long contributions to advertising and advertising education. His public service in the advertising field includes two terms as a public member of the National Advertising Review Board, the industry's self-regulatory vehicle. He has also been a member of the board of judges for ARF's Ogilvy Award for excellence in advertising research, and the Advertising Hall of Fame. He was the first academic on the board of the Advertising Research Foundation and of the Advertising Educational Foundation.

At HBS, he conceived and developed the HBS MBA elective on the "new" Corporate Communications, exploring business efforts to

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He has served on numerous corporate and nonprofit boards, including Opinion Research Corporation. He is past national vice-chairman (1991-3) and a director of the Public Broadcasting Service (the U.S. non-commercial television system). He is also alumni association past president of the Boston Latin School, the nation's oldest (1635) public school. He is a frequent speaker, television panelist, and commentator on advertising, consumer marketing, sports management, crisis communications, and consumer issues both in the U.S. and abroad.

In almost 40 years of teaching, he has never missed a class.

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Mats Urde is Assistant Professor at Lund University, Sweden, where he specializes in strategic brand management. His undergraduate, MBA, and Ph.D. degrees are from Lund. His doctoral thesis *Märkesorientering (Brand orientation)*, published in 1997 by the Lund University Press, was the first thesis in Swedish that specifically treated strategic brand management.

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