The internal conflict of the corporate artist: Balance between artistic - and commercial interests within artistically driven fashion brands.

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Abstract

Title: The internal conflict of the corporate artist; balance between artistic - and commercial interests within artistically driven fashion brands.

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Background: There has been a medial success in Swedish fashion during the last years. If one studies these companies they tend to tell another story financially. Regardless of financial or medial success artistically driven fashion brands have been a big part of the development of Swedish Fashion. For artistically driven fashion companies the Artistic freedom tend to be the main driving force and the very reason for establishing their own brand. There is a need to balance between artistic and commercial interests, which could imply that designers need to design more commercially marketable garments to finance the conceptual department. Financial resources can create artistic freedom but bringing in wrong investors could do the opposite. The financial dilemma of gaining economic resources by designing more marketable garments makes the brand image loose credibility since it tend to rely on the artistic direction.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the relationship between artistic and commercial interests for achieving financial prosperity within artistically driven fashion companies.

Methodology: This study has a qualitative research method with an inductive approach. A descriptive and explanatory knowledge character aims to answer the purpose. The research design is a case study with a primary data collection building on two direct unstructured interviews and supplemented by secondary data.

Conclusion: Through out the study we have identified that there exist an internal conflict inside the artistically driven fashion designer. The corporate artist exists of the creative mind, which represents the intrinsic values that motivate and inspire the artist. To be able to run a fashion brand the artist also needs to have managerial and entrepreneurial skills to be able to develop. These two perspectives often collide and the designer needs to make some difficult choices.

Key words: Wearability, Artistic direction, Avant-gardist, Commercial
# Table of content

**ABSTRACT**  
2

1. INTRODUCTION  
4  
1.1 BACKGROUND  
4  
1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION  
7  
1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION  
9  
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION  
9  
1.5 PURPOSE  
9  
1.6 DELIMITATIONS  
9  
1.7 KEY WORDS  
9  
1.8 DISPOSITION  
11

2.0 METHOD  
12  
2.1 RESEARCH METHOD  
12  
2.2 METHOD APPROACH  
12  
2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN  
13  
2.3.1 PRIMARY DATA  
13  
2.3.1.1 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION  
14  
2.3.2 SECONDARY DATA  
15  
2.4 ANALYSIS PROCEDURE  
15

3. THE CORPORATE ARTIST  
16  
3.1 THE CREATIVE MIND  
17  
3.1.1 MOTIVATION  
18  
3.1.2 INSPIRATION  
19  
3.1.3 ARTISTIC FREEDOM  
19  
3.2 CREATIVE MANAGEMENT  
21  
3.2.1 RAISON D’ÊTRE  
22  
3.2.2 BRAND IMAGE  
23  
3.2.3 FINANCIAL PROSPERITY  
27  
3.2.4 CONTROL  
32  
3.3 THE DIFFICULT CHOICES  
34  
3.3.1 TRADE OFFS  
34  
3.3.2 BALANCE  
36

4. DISCUSSION  
38  
4.1 THE CREATIVE MIND  
38  
4.2 CREATIVE MANAGEMENT  
38  
4.3 THE DIFFICULT CHOICES  
40

5. CONCLUSION  
41

REFERENCES  
42
1. Introduction

Over the past decade Swedish fashion has gained attention and awareness on the international fashion scene. Swedish fashion and its designers have become superstars and Swedish fashion brands such as H&M and ACNE has earned their own places on the international scene both financial and fashion wise. The notion of the Swedish fashion wonder started to be mentioned in Swedish media during the late nineties. Since then the notion has been frequently used in several contexts, in the commercial and industrial world as well as in fashion and design perspectives and it has both been celebrated and questioned. Yet there is not a clear well-recognised definition of what is meant by the notion of the Swedish fashion wonder. If there is such a thing as the Swedish fashion wonder or not is yet to discover, however, it is a fact that the Swedish fashion scene has had an interesting development during the last decade.

There has been a medial success in Swedish fashion during the last years. If one take a look behind the curtain of the success many of these companies tend to tell another story financially. Regardless of financial or medial success artistically driven fashion brands have been a big part of the development of Swedish Fashion. For these artistically driven fashion companies the Artistic freedom tend to be the main driving force and the very reason for establishing their own brand. To be able to continue and develop their artistic freedom a commercial approach is often needed. This research aims to investigate how artistically driven fashion companies tend to balance between artistic and commercial interests.

1.1 Background

Traditionally there has been a line which separates the concepts of art, conceptualism and strive for commercial success. The notion of art has contained completely different elements then the notion of business and the two have often been seen as the complete opposite. Stenström (2008) is referring to art as primarily the traditional scene of painters and sculptors. We believe there are natural connections between the art scene Stenström are referring to and the fashion designers who often start and run artistically driven fashion companies. During the last decade the distance between art and business has grown smaller. In business administration it gets more common to speak in artistic terms, such as creativity and inspiration. On the contrary, in artistic
companies the traditional business leader who is structured, rational and authoritarian is gaining ground. Has it become a virtue to aestheticize what was earlier a classic profit-driven company and to economize what was earlier primarily artistic operations? In the postmodern society, Stenström (2008) states that people have lost faith to the most; we need to re-enchant our contemporaries. When we do not longer believe in mass production, capital, rational solutions and the market we need something more to believe in then something intangible. Creative thinking and conceptualism have moved from the Art-sphere to the business-sphere. The traditional strengths within Art such as independence of mind, sensitivity, creativity and personality are now a virtue within businesses. The opposite, rationality, efficiency and structure are something that foster in art companies. In our time there is a romanticisation of everything that is creative and intuitive, it is associated with success and geniality (Stenström, 2008). The companies that are using Art within its business model may just be cultivating the classic business model but it seems as if the boarders between the commercial and the artistic is getting smaller and smaller.

Within a society contemporary trends come and go. During the last 10 years it has been noted that creative and artistic industries have gained financial importance. The Swedish government has carried out an action plan with ambition to create good conditions for entrepreneurs within cultural and creative industries. There is a need of development of entrepreneurships within the cultural and creative industries and within the intercommunion between culture and the business world. The foundation for the interest in the subject lies within the future growth potential of the sector. “Creative industries” is the definition of the phenomenon in the society, which indicates that expressive values e.g. aesthetic aspects and experiences have increased in significance in the economic sector. The definition includes architecture, design, photography, tourism, media/communication, fashion, music and theatre. There is a desire to communicate an image of Sweden as a creative, open-minded country where creativity and artistry is being utilized to increase trade and investments. By developing intercommunion among culture/creativity and business there is a belief it can create a contribution to regions growth and increased Swedish competitiveness. The phenomenon of the aesthetic in the economy figures increasingly in growth political discussions and this has resulted in that many countries have developed policies for design (ITPS, A2008:007).
In Sweden the fashion scene, which is part of the creative industries, has evolved during the past ten years. There is a tendency that big nation-wide chains characterize the Swedish fashion market. Two other things characterize the evolvement on the Swedish fashion scene; there is fewer fashion shops represented on the Swedish market and the cloth prices has decreased. Swedish designers are negatively affected in the way that the market has evolved. They have to adapt their creations to a market, which are more and more characterized by a low price evolvement and fewer sales channels (Sundberg, 2006). One can ask, will this situation prosper the possibilities for Swedish fashion design to evolve commercially and artistically?

On the Swedish fashion scene there is a strong presence of commercially driven chains such as H&M and Gina Tricot. H&M has been a strong factor of spreading the word of the Swedish fashion on the international fashion map. The company has also contributed to the development of Swedish fashion by functioning as a breeding ground for many of the Swedish designers. The Swedish fashion scene is also characterised by a diversity of small to middle sized independent brands. The bigger companies (H&M, Gina Tricot) are often accused of copying the artistic design and then adopt them to become more commercially marketable. A contemporary trend proves to be that the lines between commercial and artistic driven companies are blotted out. Instead brands tend to integrate these two perspectives (Falk, 2011).

What is interesting with most of the well-known Swedish fashion profiles is that they share a similar background. Many of the Swedish fashion entrepreneurs have studied at Beckmans School of Design and have at some point in their career worked at H&M before setting out on their own brands. Among them are Roland Hjort, Jonas Clason, and Lena Patriksson Keller of Whyred and Stefan Söderberg of Hope and Carin Wester. (www.wornthrough.com). JC has also worked as a great breading ground for many of the prominent people behind Swedish fashion brands e.g. Örjan Andersson from Cheap Monday, Jonny Johansson from Acne and Maria Erixon from Nudie (Falk, 2011). Many of these mentioned designers and brands have a conceptual brand image combined with commercial interests. Their common background at commercially driven companies such as H&M and JC could explain why they all have gained a commercial focus.
Karin Falk (2011) writes about how Swedish fashion has been on people’s lips for over 20 years, it has been constituted by different eras and a lot has changed during this period. The first wave came in the beginning of the 1990’s with fashion brands such as: Johan Lindeberg, Filippa K and the jeans oriented brands Nudie, Tiger, Acne and Whyred. But it was first during the beginning of 2000 the conceptual “Swedish Fashion Wonder” was born. It has been a debated topic both from a business and fashion- and design perspective. Behind this second wave there are brands such as Carin Rodebjer, Carin Wester, Hope and V Avenue Shoe Repair. The second wave isn’t focusing on denim as much as the first but concepts as wearability and function is a resemblance between the two. The combination of creative and conceptual freedom together with an internationally relative low price has filled a gap on the international market and you can today find Swedish Fashion next to brands as Jil Sander, Prada or Miu Miu at Colette in Paris or Corso Como in Milan (Falk, 2011).

An important factor for the creation of the Swedish fashion wonder is the fact that during the second wave an avant-gardist scene was formed by designers such as, Nakkna, Sandra Backlund and Helena Hörstedt. This new scene has driven the Swedish Fashion forward in an artistic and conceptual direction. The conception is also connected with Swedish Fashion’s approach to democratic fashion. It is distinguishing for the Swedish scene that fashion should be available both from an economic and design perspective. A base of wearability and function with a price strategy, which lies between high fashion and the commercial chains, has been common by the most brands that have been active during the last ten years (Falk, 2011).

1.2 Problem discussion

As mentioned earlier the Swedish government has carried out different research projects within the field of “the creative industries” but few studies have been made about what part fashion has in this strive to stimulate this area. What is important for the discussion regarding fashions part in the promotion of the creative industries is to ask whether it among the creative companies, which often tend to have an “under ground” conceptual approach, exist a will to expand and grow financially? Artistic
fashion brands need to, as all businesses, generate income to be able to exist and to continue to develop. Conceptual fashion brands may need to develop an approach to balance both artistic and commercial aspects in some way.

Traditionally there has been a natural conflict among the concepts of art and business. Art tends to be primarily romantic in its nature, associated with uniqueness, originality and innovation. The creative process is done in freedom without any regards to anything else than the inspiration in itself. If the society is built upon structure, rationality and civilisation the art-sphere is a place for the irrational, dreams, fantasies, feelings, senses, humans and the humanity. The basic notion of business is the opposite. Business is often associated with the instrumental and the rational. Business is about profitability, analysing and calculation. Running a business is considered to be something planned and controlled. Where the romantic (artistic) puts the individual and the subjectivity in the first room the rational (business) puts the structures and objectivity first. The romantic view leans towards feelings, magic, faith, intuition and the sensory input while the rational focuses on reasoning, analyse, measurability and argumentation. Within the artistic area there is room for riddles, mystery and abnormalities while in businesses focus lies upon knowledge, arguments and proofs. Within fashion designers, who are both creators and entrepreneurs, there is an internal conflict between artistic driving forces and commercial interests, which needs to be balanced in terms of business survival.

Swedish fashion brands tend to have a medial success that builds up a facade of a big brand. The market is characterised by small companies, which tend to have a relative low turnover and few employees. Artistically driven fashion brands are often founded by a designer who have very little or none business knowledge. There is a need to balance between artistic and commercial interests, which imply that most designers need to design more commercially marketable garments to finance the conceptual department. Running a fashion brand makes it possible for designers to do what they live to do but at the same time, until reaching a certain size of the company, it takes them longer from what they initially signed up for. Financial prosperity is something that can create artistic freedom but something that seems difficult to reach for most companies within this area.
1.3 Problem formulation

Behind the curtain of a successful brand there is often small companies with a low turnover and few employees. Artistically driven fashion brands are often founded by a designer who have very little or none business knowledge. There is a need to balance between artistic and commercial interests, which could imply that designers need to design more commercially marketable garments to finance the conceptual department. The other side of this situation could be that the conceptual design is limited due to commercial interests. Often it is the unlimited artistically design that function as an enforcer for the brand image, which in turn is very important for the medial success.

Financial resources are something that can create artistic freedom but bringing in wrong investors could do the opposite. The financial dilemma of gaining economic resources by designing more marketable garments makes the brand image loose credibility since it tend to rely on the artistic direction.

1.4 Research question

How do artistically driven fashion companies balance between artistic and commercial aspects in order to gain financial progress?

1.5 Purpose

Describe and analyse the relationship between artistic and commercial interests for achieving financial prosperity within artistically driven fashion companies.

1.6 Delimitations

We have limited our research to Swedish small and medium sized artistically driven fashion brands.

1.7 Key words

- Wearability
  The high level of wearability is something that is characterizing Swedish fashion. Wearability is characterised by relatively discrete and simple garments that is easy to wear and mix with other pieces (Falk, 2011).
• **Artistic direction**

With artistic direction we mean a brand that goes in the direction of the fashion designers own world making (Thornquist, 2005).

• **Avant-gardist**

Avant-gardist fashion could be said to be fashion that asks questions regarding beauty ideals, body and identity. It challenges the ide of fashion and asks what cloths can express and what limits can be exceeded (Falk, 2011).

• **Commercial**

When a business is involved in work that is intended for the mass market (thefreedictionary.com).
1.8 Disposition

The following is a presentation of the chosen structure of the study with the intention to guide the reader and provide an understanding of the structure.

**Introduction, Chapter 1.**
In this chapter the Background, problem discussion, problem formulation and purpose are presented. The chapter is rounded off with delimitations and disposition.

**Methodology, Chapter 2.**
This chapter addresses how the study is performed and what approach is used to conduct the study.

**Empirical theoretical analysis, Chapter 3.**
This chapter is divided into three empirical themes. Every theme includes empirics, theory and analysis.

**Discussion & Conclusions, Chapter 4 and 5.**
This chapter contain a discussion and a conclusion made out of all three themes.
2.0 Method

This study has a qualitative research method with an inductive approach. A descriptive and explanatory knowledge character aims to answer the purpose. The research design is a case study with a primary data collection building on two direct unstructured interviews.

2.1 Research method

For this study a qualitative research method is conducted since the purpose of the research is to gain a deep knowledge of the chosen phenomenon within the research area. Our aim is to compare information, identify aspects and opinions our interviewees express from the empirical sources. A qualitative research method is considered to give a more just insight to the research question and a qualitative approach is in line with the problem definition. When conducting a qualitative research the primary material for processing and analysing is the carried through interviews and other authors’ text material in form of articles and literature (Bryman & Bell, 2005).

2.2 Method approach

In the case of creation of knowledge there is, according to Bryman & Bell (2005), generally two different ways of addressing a research area. Deduction and induction is two different procedures to systematic and theoretically examine a situation or phenomenon. The choice of method approach decides how theory and empirics should interplay to draw scientific conclusions. Deduction is based on the supposition of a theory. Deduction imply that from an already existing theory derives new hypothesis which can be tested thru empirical investigations and used to make predictions and try to draw logical conclusions. Induction, which is used for this study, implies that a research subject is studied without being based on a prior known theory. Instead the theory is formulated on the basis of the collected empirical data. When researchers approach a subject without much knowledge about the area it tend to be relatively unconditionally, which can impact the subjectivity. It could be difficult to have an absolute objective approach. Earlier experiences and the frame of references of a researcher can impact the subjectivity of the analysis. The purpose is
to develop conception about the phenomenon and to gain an overall picture of the phenomenon’s all aspects. The authors have avoided specifying the theory in advance since it can lead to premature conclusions of the questions that are being studied.

2.3 Research design

The design of the research determines what way the problem will be explored and what technique is most appropriate to use for the collection of data. This study has a descriptive and explanatory knowledge character since the study aims to describe and analyse the relationship between artistic and commercial interests for achieving financial prosperity within artistically driven fashion companies. To be able to answer the purpose this study builds on two direct unstructured interviews and complementary secondary data, which will help the authors to deepen the knowledge within the area of research to be able to answer the purpose.

2.3.1 Primary data

We have selectively chosen our companies we have interviewed by its ability to give us insight and answer our research question. The companies should be relevant to our research question. We searched primarily for fashion brands with an artistic brand image. At first we got in contact with three brands that we considered representative for our purpose. The first brand we contacted was Claes Berkes of NAKKNA. We were in contact by telephone and email three times. Even though, at first, there was an interest of being interviewed he chose not to participate in our study.

At the end, two deep-going interviews have been carried out and represent the primary empirics for the study. Both interviews were made with the founders for both companies. Using as few as two interviews may give the study low generalizability but the purpose is not to do generalizations but instead create an analytic study. The purpose of the study is to gain an overall picture of the research area and to do so the collected data ought to be as covering as possible.

The first case to be investigated is V Avenue Shoe Repair. The reason why this company has been investigated is because the brand is divided into two lines that unify artistic and commercial aspects in a more explicit way compared to other designers. This results in that V Avenue Shoe Repair products are seen both in
prestigious fashion magazines as well as in the streets. There is a notion from the authors that the fact that the brand represents both artistic and commercial interests it could bring interesting information about the balance between these two areas.

The second case to be investigated is the fashion brand Diana Orving. As a conceptual and artistic driven brand Diana Orving have gained media success over a short period of time. Diana Orving represents the part of Swedish fashion, which often tends to have a big medial success with a big brand but with a very small turnover and a small staff. What has been found interesting is also the fact that Diana has no business or design education.

2.3.1.1 Method of data collection

Before choosing interviews as method for gathering empirical data the procedure should be carefully considered. Whether the research is inductive/deductive or qualitative/quantitative should be the decisive factors for the use of method. (Holm, 2012) Based upon the four-field matrix the interviews with V Avenue Shoe Repair and Diana Orving follows the guidelines of direct unstructured interviews.

Direct unstructured interview

The respondents were aware and informed about the purpose of this study. The interview followed a predetermined schedule and the themes that the study aims to examine so that we were able to compare the different interviews with each other. The respondents formulated her answers without guidance from given alternatives. We find that our respondents have a clear and important affinity with each other; they are all characterized as artistic designers. However, we consider it equally important how they differ. We don’t consider it necessary that the interview material should be completely comparable since they are equally interesting on their own. Having said that were we able to compare the interview materials and found common traits to the extent we wanted, despite an unstructured interview method.

This method can provide information-rich comments but it should be kept in mind that difficulties may arise in interpreting the answers. (Holm, 2012)
2.3.2 Secondary data

The secondary data function as complementary data to the reference frame we have built up. Our ambition with the secondary sources are that it will help gradeate the historical conflict between art and commerce as well as highlight the contemporary situation of artistically driven fashion brands relation to commercial interests. The secondary data is collected through earlier studies, articles and interview material made by others related to artistically driven fashion brands. Most of the data we have been using are not older than ten years and we find them as relevant to our research question. We have also used some older references that we find as relevant. The primary sources of secondary data used for this study is a literature study based upon literature and articles written by Karin Falck that has helped us with an insight in the Swedish fashion scene. Lotta Lundstedt and Lars Hallnäs book Mode: samtal med (2008) with collected material from interviews with Swedish fashion designers (Ann-Sofie Back and Sandra Backlund) has contributed with important and interesting interview material that we were not able to collect on our own. When we are referring to Sandra Backlund and Ann-Sofie Back the material is gathered from this book. The secondary data used has help us answer this study’s purpose as well as the research question.

2.4 Analysis procedure

Granheim and Lundman (2004) represent the basis for the analysis procedure of this study’s interviews and secondary data collection. The following is a schematic process map of how the analysis for this study was conducted to be able to identify and present the themes out of the empiric material. The analysis procedure is done
step by step from the point where the interviews have been conducted and transcribed, with the aim to bring out the latent (themes) in the text, to the final conclusions. The first step is to read and understand the material to get an exact overview of the text and a sense of its meaning. The next step is to find meaningful units, which are parts of the text that lifts, for the purpose, central views of how the phenomenon appears and is expressed. A compression of the meaning units is then conducted and it is of great importance that the compression of the text is done carefully so the risk of misinterpretation is minimised.

At an interview procedure, as this study, the next step is to abstract the meaning units and then name them after its content aka encoding. The codes, which also can be described as relevant topics, we found from our material were: raison d’être, brand image, financial prosperity, external finance, control, motivation, inspiration, artistic freedom, trade offs and balance. These codes are then compared with each other to seek for similarities and differences and out of this divide them into themes. These themes are the manifest content of the analysis. We have found out the themes to be: the creative mind, creative management and the difficult choices.

In the final discussion, the result will be pin pointed with quotes from the analysed text with the purpose to strengthen our analysis and the conclusions made.

3. The corporate artist

“I am ambivalent to the balance of artistic and commercial interests. I am willing to live in a shoebox, but only under the circumstances that I am allowed to let my self go artistically. On the other hand I realized that financial resources could create artistic freedom.” – Astrid Olsson

**Art & Business**

Early research by Adizes (1975) notes that there are differences between arts and business mainly how the goals are different. The goals within art are human and aesthetic development while in business it is economic and material growth. Art is often cited to be product or production-oriented while
business are often market oriented. The concept of success differs in the way that within an artistic organisation it is about creating a new success while in business it is about repeating the old. The difference between art and business is what is put in the first room; form or function. Within art it is often form and in business it is function. The evaluation system in art and business is different, where art builds on inspiration business builds on efficiency. The most positive complement you can give to a person within art is that he/she is spontaneous and passionate. In business it is that someone is effective or productive (Stenström, 2008).

**Artists & Entrepreneurs**

According to Stenström (2008) the two categories differ in goals, means, relationships and self-concept. Artists primarily goals can be expressed in terms of aesthetics, personal needs and preferences while entrepreneurs goals are economic efficiency and the consumers taste and preferences. When artists are looking for new concepts and the absolute, entrepreneurs are looking for balance and compromises. Artists and entrepreneurs differ in terms of relationships. Artists often work alone and have quite few relationships but intense and entrepreneurs work together with others and have many relationships but not so close. An artist’s relationship is characterized by passion and intuition while entrepreneurs put up rules and writes contracts.

### 3.1 The Creative Mind

“Actually I don’t think it is that exciting to run a company. It is more of a necessity to be able to do the things that drives me, which is to create and find out what one can achieve.” – Diana Orving

To identify characteristics of a “creative person” there has been research into the “creative class”.

In *The rise of the creative class* Richard Florida (2004) followed the growth in the creative industries as sources of employability and profitability. Florida detected one consistent quality amongst creative people and that is that they tend to seek opportunities to exercise their creativity.
3.1.1 Motivation

When asking Astrid Olsson about motivation, what makes them get up every morning and spend all the time and effort on their company she answered: “It is different. It has changed during the years and it is something that I have been wondering about. But I would like to put it this way, I am driven by shapes. I am not driven by money, though it may be one of my disadvantages. I am more driven by the willingness to create clothes, a type of vision. That is what I would like to do. I found inspiration illusions, theatre and film. That specific feeling when you is drawn into a film, when one sits in a chair and suddenly the cinema stops to exist. That kind of feelings is what I want to achieve. And so far I haven’t succeeded. In fact I am not even close and that is why I get up in the morning.”

When asking what motivates the other half of the company, her husband Lee, Astrid answers: “He is a born entrepreneur. He has previously worked as a buyer and has a commercial operation. His goal is that he eventually just will design as well. Eventually he wants to take upon the role as the creative person in a big company who has the final word and be the one who seeks for inspiration.”

Another factor of motivation is how Sandra Backlund, in Modedesign: I samtal med (2008), describes the design process: “I work with some kind of self-therapy. It sounds very strange but it is a lot of artists who work like that. There is a need to be able to express oneself or to get things out of you. I need to be able to express myself throughout my art. I am not an artist, but I work as an artist. There must be something about fashion that attracts me. It could be the two sides, business, which is deeply rooted in the reality, simultaneously as there is room to be artistic. I want to find that balance within my company, where these two sides can meet each other and cooperate. So I can work the way I do and still make a living on it, without the ambition to do a top-notch career and earn a serious amount of money.”

Research show that “creative people” are often driven by internal motivations and often feels a need of being autonomous. Artists are intrinsically motivated and oriented towards non-monetary rewards (Abbing, 2002).
Florida has the same approach towards motivation:

Creativity is mostly driven by intrinsic rewards. Florida (2004) states that surely some creative people is driven by money but research show that most creative individuals from artists to designers are driven by internal motivations.

3.1.2 Inspiration

Regarding where the respondents get their inspiration Diana Orving says that: “My creative process is based out of me as an individual. I live in my studio. One can say that my creations are like my diaries. It is very personal, everything I do, people I meet, phases I am going through affects my creative work. And the opposite.”

When asking Astrid about here vision of expanding her Atelier-collection an interesting point on inspiration comes to surface; “Well, I don’t know, I don’t think that is possible. They are not even able to pack in a bag. They are made for special occasions and more suited for celebrities. I use to borrow some pieces to celebrities when they will have a photo session. I have also send some pieces to Madonna but I am not sure that she has used any. We make no money what so ever on these pieces. But it gives inspiration; it is like an experiential workshop where I am allowed to try things. As a designer I walk around with tensions or ideas that has to find a creative outlet.”

3.1.3 Artistic freedom

When discussing the importance of an artistic forum Diana Orving says: “I ensure that I will be able to work with artistic projects aside the commercial collection. Now I am working on a project that is not made for any commercial interests. It is couture and I have been able to work with the materials with my own hands. And I miss that part; in my commercial collection you send your drawings and let someone else produce the collection. I work with a lot of projects within film, dance and art constellations.”

Studies by Björkegren (1992) show that for some artistic oriented business the creation of cultural capital is most important but still, sustained profitability is
the only way to create freedom for one self. As soon as the profitability drops
the freedom of the artist becomes restricted. In the study conducted, the
commercial and cultural demands where not seen as conflicting since higher
profitability meant higher artistic freedom.

Later, Diana Orving makes a statement which indicates the relevance of the studies by
Björkegren (1992); “I don’t have any vision of seeing the brand having stores all over
the world but I guess I want that it to grow so I get the opportunity to do things
better.”

When asking whether financial success would imply more artistic space Diana Orving
answers; “Yes I truly believe so.”

Sandra Backlund’s view of artistic freedom is: “When I finished at Beckmans there
where nobody in Sweden that worked with fashion, as I wanted to work with fashion.
Totally un-commercial and total freedom. I didn’t know how to do it or if it was even
possible. I had to build my own platform and I have been struggling very hard. I have
been talking with several people about having a thick press book but that doesn’t
imply that it works fine financially.”

When asking Diana Orving about the impact of her having no design education and
the impact on the artistic freedom she puts it: “I started to create with no rules to
relate to, I didn’t know what was allowed to do and what was not. And what
motivated me and still does is a curiosity of what I am able to create. I think I am
freer in my mind without any design education. No one has taught me how to design,
I am self-learned and therefore the possibilities are infinitive when you don’t have any
given answers. But at the same time there are some design failures that I wouldn’t
have done if someone had supervised me.”

When getting into the subject of what characterize an artistically driven designer
Astrid Olsson describes it as: “To me it has to do with how strong signature one has.
When one se a garment made of me one can often guess it is one of my creations. The
same goes for both Helena Hörstedt and Sandra Backlund. The signature is so strong
that you know who has made it. I might need to put in some more easy wearable
garments in the collection but I would never tamper so much that they no longer fit
into the collection. They need to melt into the rest of the collection, its not always easy but its necessary. I think that we have something different, our niche. I believe that we have special silhouette and I know that I have a strong signature.”

When asking Diana Orving about her signature she states: “What characterize my theme are movement, improvising and intuition. My design process is open-ended, it is an organic process. I have no pre-plans for colour choice, material and so on. I have no clue how the collection will end up.”

3.2 Creative Management

“I express myself through my work, my creations are like my diary. I believe it would have been great to have someone, besides me, who are more business driven and interested in running a company and building a brand. I would like to have more focus on the business part from the beginning.” – Diana Orving

Stenström highlight problems within artistic management:

Artistic organisations is characterised by a constant state of crisis, high degree of creativeness, innovations and creativity thus high risk. Organisations with a high level of creativity often involve some level of failure, neuroses and stress. To manage this kind of organisations put high demands on the ability to handle this kind of processes.

It is difficult to evaluate artistic management because what is god/bad management within a company without any given overall goals? The management of a for-profit company can always be evaluated against the company’s efficiency (Stenström, 2000).

Clancy and Thornquist describes the relationship between artistic and entrepreneurial perspectives within artistic organisations:
Clancy (1997) means that since artistic organisations need to handle innovations and creativity they need to be entrepreneurial and risk taking by nature.

Thornquist (2005) states there is an intricate relationship between the discursive and the spontaneous. A design manager also need to have faith in his own specific way of letting loose as a designer needs to have faith in his own intuition when entering the world of his own personalized way of working. Just like the designer, a manager need training and coaching. It is vital in work concerning the ability of designing spontaneous acts and keeping the direction when you let yourself go in the intuitive direction.

In the same way as the designer needs to have faith in his/her technique, the manager needs to have faith in the auteurs technique of working. If the manager starts to manage and control there is no faith in the intuitive process of the designer/creator. The process then becomes discursive and deprived of its vital and spontaneous qualities. Faith in the intuitive process is key in art and design management (Thornquist, 2005).

3.2.1 Raison d’être

The discussion regarding why artists start their own businesses is relevant and Diana Orving and Astrid Olsson states: “I have been working with different kinds of creative works during my childhood. And I started do design my own clothes during upper school. During high school I wanted to move to my own flat and I realised that I could pay my rent by selling my garments. So I started contact even more stores and tried to sell my clothes to them. At that time, and a couple of year foreword, I made al the clothes on my own by hand. So I didn’t have any made out plan to work with design, it happened by a coincidence. Initially I had no vision for my company. I am surprised that I am in this situation today, where I am able to work with design and express myself through my work. The process of starting my own company has been uncertain and hard. I am truly happy about it and I have learned a lot.” – Diana Orving
According to Stenström (2008) the reason for entering an area, business or sphere can differ. The reason for entering art is said to be creation and aesthetics while within business it is economy and profitability. Richard Florida (2004) suggests that designers objective for starting a business has rarely to do with making a profit. It has often to do with the creation of an opportunity to be able to express themselves artistically.

“Initially it was all about my ego, I wanted to prove that I could make it. But I have always been clear over that I should do this, design and run my own company. I had no clear vision of what my company would turn out to be, I just had a desire to get started. I started with a dream and a desire of making something that someone actually wanted to wear. I started seven years ago without any money and today I have earned every krona I own. During my studies I work as a designer for Resteröds and I saved every krona to be able to start a limited company. I knitted and sew jumpers at textilhögskolan at Borås, I was really at square one. At that point it is easy to forget to carefully think about decisions, one just work without reconsideration. In one way that period was kind of pleasant, because back then things didn’t matter as much as today.” - Astrid Olsson.

3.2.2 Brand image

Astrid Olsson describes how she thinks V Avenue Shoe Repair is perceived among its customers: “We have reworked our entire brand to be a bit harsher and to be able to stand on its own. We had to make a change. We felt that we were perceived as being difficult and too intellectual. I would also like to describe it as if we had a black draped wall around us. I am absolutely not snobbish; I am an ordinary woman who happens to like art. But I don’t visit art exhibitions and I don’t have any friends who are artists. Still, we felt like there was an unwanted distance between our customers and us. And our aim with the new logotype was to help our customers, especially men, to connect easier to our brand.”

Astrid Olsson continued to describe why the company is divided under two brands with two different lines: “We felt that the two lines couldn’t fit underneath the same roof, and this is something we struggle with every day. My more creative “visions”
are too expensive to sell; those are the pieces that become the Atelier-line. I have tried
to implement pieces from “Atelier” into the ordinary collection; I have done it
differently in terms of shoes, bags and jackets but when you remove the form and just
work with technique a garment becomes very flat and the whole idea malfunction.
That’s why the brand is divided in two lines, Atelier is the consistent stumbling block,
and it is due to that line we sell abroad. It is also the Atelier-line that has created a
media success and that probably attract people to the shows. It was out of these kinds
of creations the brand was born. It is the Atelier-line that makes me tick. These are the
reasons why we have created this sub brand (V Avenue Shoe Repair Atelje) so there
is a forum for this line and so that I can have an outlet for my creativity and be happy.
But financially the company would have been better without the Atelier-line. But, a
lot of ideas are born out of that line, it is like a breeding ground where I am allowed to
work without the pressure of thinking about that the pieces should sell, have high
wearability and be presented in a certain way. To me, this occupation would be very
flat without the Atelier-line.”

Astrid described the different purposes of the two lines: “The Atelier-line makes our
brand pop and make people react. And I have really tried to make the Atelier-
collection more commercial but by doing so it vanish. For many reasons are it not
possible to reach out to a broader target group with this collection, one reason is that
the pieces are too expensive. People are also more interest in simpler design. So I
believe that the Atelier pieces fulfils a purpose to decorate the other collection and it
also fills a purpose for me personally. I guess that the Atelier-collection won’t get as
much space as before. I have worked so hard to get these pieces into the collection but
it is not possible, it’s a money issue.”

Astrid talked about strategies to communicate the brand. That establishing brand
medial success is expensive: “We have done a couple of big runways, relative to
Swedish measures, and after a couple of years a have realised that it isn’t only on the
big runways one can create magic. One can also create magic on a very small arena
where it doesn’t have to cost half a million sek every time one invite for a party. The
companies may not have that kind of economy, especially in times like these.” - Astrid
Olsson
Research show that most designers who have managed to build businesses demonstrates the importance of slow and sustained growth. An example of economic caution in the first phase of a fashion brand is whether doing a catwalk or not. Doing a catwalk is often seen as a necessary launch pad by many young designers while some choose to wait a couple of years to get sufficient sales to fund the business. Often designers who choose to do a catwalk aren’t even able to fund the production if sales are achieved. Four out of nine interviewed companies choose to do a catwalk the first year. The same four was the only ones who didn’t survive more than three years (Malem, 2008).

Astrid Olsson describes the difference between media success and financial success: “It is two completely different things. Helen Hörstedt and Sandra Backlund are good examples of someone with an enormous media success. An example of the opposite is Honkydory that makes millions in profit and has approximately a turnover of 90 million. They have never had a show, and nobody knows who they are still they sell like butter in sunshine. Obviously their target group really likes their products big time. I mean they have been working in “media shadow” for 15 years now. Acne may be the only one who have succeeded with both medial and financial success and that depends on the duo behind the brand, one insanely driven economist and one “crazy” person who is extremely good at presenting their ideas. They also have the ability to motivate their colleagues to work extremely hard day and night. People are ready to do so just for the sake of being a part of Acne, Jonny is extremely engaging. And they really like money. They have managed to do something trendy yet commercial, and it sells. A lot of Swedish fashion brands has media prosperity but that doesn’t say anything about how the company “feels” financially. If you visit allabollag.se one will see another story. Our V Avenue Shoe Repair line finance our atelier-line and that has made me realise that maybe I need to restrict the atelier-line and try to be satisfied with just doing a little fun. The Atelier-line is both expensive and important for us” - Astrid Olsson

Sandra Backlund describes how medial exposure affected people’s interest in her brand: “I found it so annoying; Sweden is so bad in supporting its own talents. My things have looked the same since I finished Beckmans. I have found my niche and
the most people within the branch know what I am doing and how I do things. But still it feels like an abroad approval is necessary before it gets interesting back home in Sweden. It is so strange. Last summer my things were photographed by Bruce Weber and published in the Italian Vogue. Same day as the magazine were released all of the stylists in Sweden rang and wanted to work with us, as if they had never seen my things before.” - Sandra Backlund

Diana Orving described how her brand image affects and is effected by her other art projects: “I believe that everything I do transfer added value to my brand and other projects. I am creating a sort of “idea world” with everything I do, and maybe my collection gains more value through my projects than the other way around. I believe that many of my customers that buy my garments wants to feel that they are also buying a piece of the “idea world”, so that they become a part of the idea world.”

Diana Orving means that her artistic projects inspire the brand both internal and external: “I believe I get a lot of medial attention when I run artistic projects and that the projects create an interest of the brand. There are internal factors involved as well; I get so much stimulation by doing more artistically free things. So by doing more artistic projects it also helps developing the commercial collection. Some of these projects result in no or very little profits. Some projects do even cost me money. It is the commercial line that finances the most of these projects.”

Kort et al defines the complexity of increase sales and maintaining desired brand image:

It is a challenge for designers to maintain brand image in the face of short-term profit opportunities through expanded sales, which can lead to brand dilution in the longer run. Brand dilution implies that the value of the brand decreases with the number of users.

If a price mark-up is not an option the central decision for a fashion brand is sales volume. Selling to few garments forfeits profit opportunities and selling to many can dilutes brand image. To prevent brand dilution a fashion brand can use exclusive channels to restrict the availability of the product.
There are other potentially more appealing alternatives for expanding sales, which can be expanding the number of retail stores allowed to vary the brand.

Profit margins of fashion goods often depend mainly on brand image. Therefore it is important to manage the company’s brand image carefully over time. To do so you need to keep the brand exclusive, hence consumers value the product less when more of them own it. On the other hand, to be able to build a brand the goods need to be visible enough which requires sufficient amount of sales (P.M. Kort et al, 2006).

3.2.3 Financial Prosperity

When these companies tend to be artistically driven and not financially it is interesting to discuss their view of financial prosperity: “Yes, I would like my company to do better financially so I would have the possibility to employ staff that could do more administrative things so that I didn’t have to do everything myself. I am trying to establish my brand on Japanese market. This is a strategy to increase sales quantity. I am not a businessperson, I’m not driven by money. But I would like to get more financial resources so I could hire someone. So that I could be able to get more time for all the exiting things I would like to do.” - Diana Orving

“Yes I would like to do so. I think we are presented in 200 – 250 stores worldwide but a lot of these stores use our brand to spice up their brand portfolio. They buy some of the more difficult pieces so there is never any quantity of sale. I would like to open more of our own stores so we could be able to communicate our brand-concept better and to being able to show the silhouette in its whole. I would like to show what we actually have, what we are able to do and our quality. We have actively worked to reach a certain degree of quality and we work almost exclusively with production in Europe. We still have some small production in China and Turkey. We deliver a high degree of fashion compared to other Swedish fashion brands. With exception for Filippa K and Acne a lot of Swedish fashion brand has lowered their fashion quality. Hope has succeeded financially and we ask our self how they have managed. Maybe because of that they have stopped with fashion shows, medial success cost so much, and because of they sell a lot of striped jumpers produced in Asia. I do like them and
cheer for them and it is fantastic of them to succeed financially because it is almost impossible for a fashion brand to do good profits. But yes, I would like to be bigger so that things can be easier.” - Astrid Olsson

“I would like to do bigger collections; I have just made tiny ones with 5 pieces. I would like to do bigger collections, not out of commercial perspective but more for my sake. I feel a bit limited. I don’t have enough space, ideationally, within that frame. Several times have I felt that I have ideas suitable for bigger collections but because of lack of money or time I haven’t been able to expand. I feel that I am ready for that now. But I still need to find a solution to my time- and money issue.” - Sandra Backlund

“We will expand the Back collection, we will introduce 15 styles that is more advanced and difficult as well as more expensive. But we will also introduce 15 styles that are easier, wearable and cheaper compared to the existing garments in the collection. This is a strategy to be able to offer a wider collection to the stores that finds our main collection too advanced and expensive.” - Ann Sofie Back

Even though there seems to be a quite traditional gap between Art and Business there is, according to Swedberg (2006), different types artists, there are those who take economic realities into account, artists who want to make money and artist who rejects the official economy and so on.

We asked Diana Orving and Astrid Olsson if there exist any limit to how much they want their brand to expand: “My ambition isn’t to become as Gina or H&M. I value my freedom and I don’t want to “sit in the lap” of any external owner who comes with opinions of what choices I should make to increase the margins and so on. I don’t have any vision of having stores all over the world. But I guess I want my brand to grow enough so I get the opportunity to do things better.”- Diana Orving

“It depends. I don’t want to be one of two owners if the company would be too big. I also think that it end being fun if it becomes a “machine”. Now there is a frustration because the financial circumstances, customers are doubtful about their purchasing power. If our business becomes bigger maybe it ends being funny because of you
have to take care of and consider your staff. That was not what you signed up for when you started with design. I guess there is a limit, today our turn over is around 30 million kronor and I don’t think I would like our business to be bigger than a turn over of 100 million kronor. It sounds so crazy, when we started Lee asked me “how much do you think our turn over should be, 1 million kronor?” and I answered “What, 1 million? Are you crazy?”. I had no financially perceptions, but I gathered some and the level we are on now is very hard to handle.”- Astrid Olsson

Sandra Backlund talks about her expansion related problems, which include production and sales: “I need to get in contact with a knitted producer. Even though I want to continue with hand knitted I would like to try tights and accessories. I don’t have the energy to hand knit those kinds of products. And the result gets better when it is done in a machine. I need to do some research, I need a cash cow if I will be able to do this seriously, but I want it to fit with the rest of my design”.

Sandra talks about how she struggles to find proper stores that are interested in selling her products: “It is difficult. My design is difficult to wear. At the moment there isn’t any store in Sweden that feels like a good idea. And there is a big interest in buying my clothes. Then many customers falls away, often because of that I don’t sell through any stores, one cant find the clothes at any store and actually see them physically, and try them.”

There are some theories about how to successfully run artistic organisations. Raymond declare a 4-step strategy:

Success factors for an artistic organisation: (1) A clear and shared, by the entire organisation, purpose of the business; (2) a strong organisational structure with a well defined board role with limited authority for artistic managers; (3) competence in finance and marketing and finally (4) a realistic planning, both short - and long term (Raymond, 1978).
We asked Astrid Olsson if V Avenue shoe Repair have experienced any specific problems with the expansion of their company: “It is many different steps but they all involve money. Basically its just money related. During 2009 half of the world suffered of the financial crisis. Sails went down, we had unpaid invoices, we had to let people go and we are a little company so it had impact on our business. And we were not the only one who lost a lot of money. Today the situation differs in the way that the money is locked. The banks are not helping any entrepreneurs for now. I am not so informed about economics but money is the driving force to everything. And as the situation is now there is a tendency that business is stagnated due to that the money is locked.”

Astrid Olsson also expressed employee issues related to the expansion process: “It involves employees, I would have been clearer on certain points. As a small business owner eventually it is easy to become the “evil boss”. I got easily attached to people and that not always a good thing. I think that is particular to designers, all the time I am working with feelings thereby also emotionally close to your employees. But without the experiences I have gathered along the way I wouldn’t be where I am to day.”

Our respondents is a part of a greater context where many start-ups have problems in their expansion phase:

Timmons (1989) predicted a silent revolution, a triumph of the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of the humankind that would have as big impact on the 21st century as the industrial revolution had on the 19th. As we have discussed previously entrepreneurs have during the last 25 years radically transformed the economy and according to Timmons (1999) the creative industries have since 1980 been representing over 95% of new wealth.

More and more businesses are created every year but many of these start-ups fail. A critical factor in the long-term success of new businesses is the personal leadership ability of the entrepreneur. There is a belief that, as a company grows from a tenuous start-up to an on-going business another professional manager should replace the founding entrepreneurial leader. Due
to this belief, it is not uncommon for investors to demand removal of the founding leader as the firm matures and faces new challenges as the model beneath shows from phase 1 to phase 2 (Swiercz, 2002).

The entrepreneurial leadership model

The model proposes two phases of entrepreneurial leadership: *The formative growth phase* and *the institutional growth phase*. In the first phase free spirit, spontaneity and informal communication characterize the organization. Often the leader is concerned with inventing products, establishing a market niche, attracting new customers, manufacturing and marketing the products. But as the business starts to grow and mature the daily operations become more systematic. In the second phase the business seemingly undisciplined business model must give way. This is a phase in need of efficient operations, formal communication and increased policies and procedures. The leader is forced to focus on questions of long-term stability while keeping the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit (Swiercz, 2002).

It is often in this stage, in the transition between the two phases that is crucial for the long-term success for new business ventures. As the business grows it experiences a strategic inflection point, which represents a time in the life of a business when the fundamental requirements for continued success have profoundly, changed. This requires the leader of the business to acquire new leadership competencies compatible with the changing nature and growing need of the business (Swiercz, 2002).
3.2.4 Control

We asked Diana Orving and Astrid Olsson about how they felt about bringing in external finance: “I haven’t actively search for an investor but I have thought of it at some different occasions. I think it is really difficult because it is crucial that you find the right person who can understand my motivation and the brand. I don’t want any one to try to make it into something that it isn’t. I think that meeting isn’t something that you can force; it just happens if it is right. Someone who wants to go in the same direction as you and can contribute with money without controlling too much.” - Diana Orving

“I think it depends on who you are as a person and whom it is that runs the company. As today it is Lee and me, who are two designers, which run the company. It may have been different if there was an economist who runs the company. However, we are now looking for an investor to be able to take the company to the next level. We have had a lot of meetings but haven’t felt that we have met the right person with the right attitude. We are looking for someone who has financial interests in our company but not under the conditions that we have to be able to do an exit within a three years period. That is not able to do within the fashion industry since it often takes longer time.” - Astrid Olsson

A salient feature of organizations with artistic direction is the high level of uncertainty about how the market will respond to the products. Björkegren (1992) identified two dominating business strategies for managing this market uncertainty. The first is a commercial business strategy that implies art on the market’s term. This strategy focus on controlling supply, whereby a limited amount of art-related products are put on the market supported by marketing with expectation of yielding rapid return on the money invested. The second, a cultural business strategy implies art on the artist’s terms and are developed more on a long-term basis. It reduces the uncertainty by developing the artist.

None of the two brands have used external finance but they both express some kind of regret about that decision.
“But I believe it would have been to our benefit if we should have brought in an investor in 2008. I was so afraid to loose my creative freedom that I didn’t dare. I regret that. But I was so afraid and money isn’t kind, and money and design/shape isn’t the same. Now I have realised that money can generate freedom. Depending on who that sits on them and is has to be someone with they right kind of attitude and perspective. There is two kind of money; quick money that doesn’t care and then there is money that can grow over time. Fashion companies need money during 5 to 10 years. 3 years is way to short period.” - Astrid Olsson

“I think it would have been positive for me to have a mentor who had done something similar before. It would have been great to be able to test ideas and get some counselling on the way. It is really difficult to run all the business parts by yourself.” - Diana Orving

Often as companies grow it is a challenge for the creative individual to become a businessperson. Physical and emotional goals, such as independence and control of your own destiny can conflict with economic goals such as growth and net worth. Founders of companies often express their motivation in terms of controlling their own destiny and once the business is afoot, the job of owning your own company is like any other job. The control of your own destiny is subverted to the demands of customers, suppliers, employees and banks (Wilson and Bates, 2003).

Control could be controlling the finances and managing financial gaps in the cash flow. Another area where control seems imperative for fashion designers is the protection of the individual design philosophy, uniqueness and business control through ownership (Malem, 2008).
3.3 The difficult choices

“I have ensured myself to create an artistic forum where I am allowed to do my thing. In my commercial collection I have to make compromises. We have created a new collection, which will consist of commercial products such as shoes and bags and yet allow me to do one “fucked up” thing, but just one.” – Astrid Olsson

One who has described the complementarity between Art and Business in the modern culture is Pierre Bourdieu.

When Bourdieu describe the artistic field he talks about a kind of mirror image to the business field, “the economic world up-side-down”. Due to the economic capitals dominating position over the cultural, the cultural always need to relate to the economic. Bourdieu describes an “unwritten law” where you are not to confess orientation for economic profit. If an actor becomes financially successful their collaborators suspect him/her. The entire field is constructed as a revulsion against money and profit. The accumulation of the cultural capital is built upon the denial of the economic. The modern culture is built upon the divergence between the cultural and the economic. Between art and money, between everything that is for free and without profit interest and everything material and financial. The reasoning of Bourdieu is concerned with that the dichotomy between art and business not only exist; it is a foundation pillar within our culture (Broady, 1990).

3.3.1 Trade offs

When asking Diana Orving if commercial interests may limit her artistic design she answers: “Yes, but I have ensured myself to create an artistic forum. In my commercial collection I have to make compromises. My agent mediates wishes from stores and resellers about specific models and pieces that sell. They give feedback about the price levels, and sometimes I have to find cheaper materials to satisfy their needs. Some garments have been considered too difficult and not attractive to a broad target group. So, yes I have some pieces in my collection that I don’t consider as
artistically challenging. I might reuse ideas that I know will satisfy a broader target group. But for me personal that kind of design process doesn’t enrich me.”

When asking Astrid Olsson about how she feels regarding having to restrain the creativity she answers: “Well, I both want a company and an atelier. I am willing to live in a shoebox but only under the circumstances that I am allowed to only work with the funny parts (crazy design). I don’t mean that the corporate things are boring but within this business one is limited to run your business in a certain way and that is both time and energy consuming. I often get the question of how much time I spend on design and compared to how much time I have to spend on the “corporate” things it is very little, maybe 15%.”

Successful designers are determined to find a balance between their creative aspirations and their business ones. The challenge is to do what is flattering for people and also be innovative. Being innovative is what the fashion industry is known for (Malem, 2008).

How to solve this dilemma Astrid Olsson continues: “After a long time of considerations I have come up to a new idea. We have started something we call “onlineshoerepair”, which is made for our web and our own stores. We will work with what I call small “Easter eggs”, that will allow me to work with the funny parts. These “Easter eggs” will consist of small collections that will be released randomly, no seasonal patterns. We will not use any middlemen and therefore the collection will be less expensive. The idea is that this collection will consist of commercial products such as shoes and bags and yet allow me to do one “fucked up” thing, but just one. Now we are working with some leather accessories that are punk inspired. This collection is not mend to be presented on an expensive catwalk instead we will use our online shop as a marketing channel for this collection. And that gives me financial room for my “crazy” designs. By doing so we may solve the problem of having a brand divided into two lines, because it is a problem.”

According to Abbing (2002) the value system in the art sphere is two-faced. Even though in general the market is oriented towards money and profit the arts cannot openly show this kind of orientation when they operate in the
market. By showing this approach it would certainly harm artistic careers and therefore long-term income. Publicly the economic aspect of art is denied and the conversation regarding money is held to a minimum and often set neatly apart from the rest of the conversation.

3.3.2 Balance

When talking to Diana Orving and asking what part of her work lies closest to her heart she answers: "I must say that I really like both parts and I think it is really fun to design cloths that you later can see people wearing. Then it becomes interactive, my idea can be shared with someone else physically by them wearing the cloths. This becomes possible only thru a saleable collection. It is fun to work with cloths that many people can relate to. But, it is all the work that surrounds it which is not artistic that is not so much fun. The fact that you need to make all deadlines, be in contact with producers, transportation, packing all the boxes, paying invoices, sending invoices and so on. It is the entire administrative sphere that surrounds the commercial collection I can get tired of. But designing the garments per se is great fun."

Within Fashion there is both commerce and creation, there is a need of finding the proper balance between them both, otherwise you cannot continue. Malem (2008) further discuss how the process from artistic endeavor to a business enterprise can be thought of as a scale. Some designers may engage higher up the scale and more fully with business enterprise, and the position of the scale may be significant in terms of business survival. The research show that the companies with focus on the business perspective is not necessarily more successful as their practical needs may overpower the creative needs. But at the same time the designers who emphasize on the artistic endeavors and don’t mind business strategies do not survive as a business. Those who are highly innovative and also aware of business have a big chance to survive as a business.

When asking Diana about the financial balance and what finances what she answers: "Some of the artistic projects result in no or very little profits. Some projects do even cost me money. And it is the commercial line that finances the most of these
projects.” Whether there is a chance of becoming too big she simply puts it like; “Yes”.

Ann-Sofie Back, in Modedesign: I samtal med (2008), has a quite interesting approach to the question of balance: “For the main collection I don’t think about the target group. Then it is all about doing something that I find interesting, one could say it is my “baby”. For the Back collection we think about how the ideas from the main collection could be transferred into something more wearable and universal, and how to attract a broader target group. And this is kind of new to me; I have only been working actively with this for approximately one year.”

Further Ann-Sofie Back discusses the balance; “When it comes to the main collection I don’t have to care so much, I don’t have any specific restrictions. If I just want to make dresses that is ok, if they are really expensive that is also ok. If they are cheap that is ok so in that collection anything can happen. But when it comes to Back, a lot of different things need to be considered. We usually have a meeting in the beginning, before I start to design, where we talk about garments that sold and what garments that didn’t sell so well last season. And I found that kind of interesting now, as a designer, to be interested in what people actually want to wear.”
4. Discussion

4.1 The Creative Mind

It appears that the designers are driven by intrinsic values and in most cases not by economic motivations. There is an internal force of creation that wants to come out, it seems that our interviewees are using their brands as a creative outlet, a forum of letting go. Design can be, as Sandra Backlund puts it, “some kind of self therapy”. What is worth pointing out is that artistic freedom is a factor, which is of high priority for the designers. To work in an artistic project without commercial motives is something the artist values a lot. A room or a forum with creative freedom where the designer is free to let go and run free seems to be very much needed. This gives the designer motivation and inspiration even to the more commercial line. The way Astrid Olsson states her approach towards her Atelje-collection; that they make no money on the collection but it works as an experiential workshop and a source of inspiration, shows the importance of an artistic outlet for the designer. The existence of a creative outlet is thereby a necessary foundation for both lines. Without artistic freedom there is no motivation or inspiration for the commercial line, which is necessary for financial progress.

What is characteristic for artistically driven designers is the personal way of working, a technique that is seen in the designer’s signature. The signature is how you can see that one certain designer has made a garment. Even in the more commercial line the signature of the designer shines thru. This could also be said to be positive for the brand identity, is enhances the uniqueness and characteristics in the products.

4.2 Creative Management

It is not often because of financial reasons designers chose to start their own businesses. The aspects from The creative mind is often the reason for entering the business in the first place. To be able to do what they love there is a need of running a business, it could be said to be a necessary evil.

As Swiercz (2002) states there is a need of a different set of leadership and management skills when the company becomes bigger. The way Diana Orving express herself about how she would like to have someone besides her with more of a
business focus indicate that she has acknowledged the need of business skills to achieve financial progress. This implies tendencies of that her artistic interests so far has outbalanced her financial interests. This situation seems to be a natural problem for artistically driven fashion brands though their reason for entering into the business world is of artistic character and not of economic reasons.

How V Avenue Shoe Repair have divided the company into two lines is interesting in the discussion of how artistically driven fashion companies could balance between artistic and commercial aspects. The atelier-line fulfils the purpose of both gaining medial success and function as Astrid’s personal creative outlet. The atelier-line makes the brand pop and creates interests in the brand. The commercial line generates income and finances the Atelje-collection and the medial success derived from the atelier-line increase the sales of the commercial line. So when studying both lines separately, no one is sustainable in the long run by it self but together they complete each other. The same tendencies are acknowledge in the case of Diana Orving where her art projects function in the same way as the Atelje-collection.

Our respondents have expressed an urge of increasing sales to get the artistic freedom back due to the fact that when your business reaches a certain size you need to focus on administrative tasks. Due to increased sales one can hire staff to work with the administrative side of the business and the designer can once again focus on the design process. There is a dilemma with increased sales since it can lead to brand dilution. You need to find the right balance between market presence and exclusivity.

Financial resources are something that can create artistic freedom but to gain financial resources the designer often has to restrain their creativity. The financial dilemma of gaining economic resources by designing more marketable garments makes the brand image loose credibility since the brand image tend to rely on the artistic direction.

The fact that these artistically driven fashion brands are often founded by designers who have very little or none business knowledge is evident in their lack of business strategies for expansion. We believe that Swiercz entrepreneurial leadership model describes the actual situation of artistically driven fashion designers. As the company grows bigger they eventually face a strategic inflection point where a different set of management competence is needed for developing the company. In this stage the
designer needs to focus on entrepreneurial tasks and thereby gets further and further away from the initial raison d’être. It is often on this stage the designer starts to evaluate the alternative of bringing in external finance. The external financier often request proper management skills in this face. Our respondents seem to lack these competencies but they are also acknowledging that these kinds of skills are necessary to be able to run a successful company. Our respondents are evaluating to focus on these kinds of competencies to be able to step up their business and gain financial prosperity. As they believe that financial prosperity will get them their artistic freedom back. Another part of this dilemma is the question of control where the designers declare an ambivalent feeling of bringing in an investor without insight in the design process. We interpret the situation to be that they are in need of financial resources and management skills but at the same time they want to keep being in total control of the company.

4.3 The Difficult Choices

The designers need to make compromises and they clearly express that they restrict their design in their commercial lines. That kind of garments needs to be wearable and attract a broader target group. The designers are not too happy about this situation but they are aware of that these compromises are necessary to gain financial prosperity. Some of the designers still enjoy designing the garments in the commercial line but it is all the corporate decisions that surround the design process of the collection that they don’t find stimulating. Astrid Olsson is aware of this balance and has developed a way for here to be able to do both. She concisely limits here artistic interests for the sake of financial reasons. One example of this is her Onlineshoerepair-collection where she combines a commercial collection with one “fucked up” piece. “

It seems like these designers outweigh their creative restrictions by ensuring that they parallel have some kind of artistic projects where they don’t have to think about commercial restrictions and instead are allowed to totally let them selves go.
5. Conclusion

Throughout the study we have identified that there exist an internal conflict inside the artistically driven fashion designer. The corporate artist exists of the creative mind, which represents the intrinsic values that motivate and inspire the artist. To be able to run a fashion brand the artist also needs to have managerial and entrepreneurial skills to be able to develop. These two perspectives often collide and the designer needs to make some difficult choices.

We have illustrated this internal conflict of the corporate artist in the model below.

There is no universal solution how to balance artistic and commercial aspects in order to gain financial prosperity. The intrinsic values of the designer that motivate and inspire him/her is very personal and to be able to gain financial process it is likely that the designers will have to make some sacrifices, whether it means to give up some control or to restrict their creative freedom due to economic reasons. This is a standpoint the designers have to make when considering to gain financial prosperity.
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