Building an emotional brand via digital channels. A case study of the not-for-profit landscape in Ireland.

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Abstract

Title: Building an emotional brand via digital channels. A case study of the not-for-profit landscape in Ireland.

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This paper considered the theories of emotional branding in the context of the not-for-profit landscape in Ireland. This research sought to explore current emotional branding practises, consumer-brand relations and digital brand building.

A qualitative approach was used to conduct this case study research. Interviews with industry professionals who engaged in emotional branding practises in the not-for-profit sector were conducted and rich data was gathered. A desire among interviewees to continue developing emotional branding strategies was identified. Contrasting opinions of consumer-brand relationships were discussed and best practises for emotional branding were identified.

In light of the findings, this research suggested key actions for marketers to undertake before engaging in emotional branding strategies. This paper highlights the gaps in current academic literature in the areas of emotional branding and brand-consumer relationship building and emphasizes the need for further research in these areas.
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1. Introduction

Branding is a complex phenomenon with many different definitions. Kotler (2010) defines a brand as being a name, symbol, term, sign or design that’ intended to identify the good and services of one company and differentiate them from competitors (2010). Kapferer (2004) offers an alternative definition stating that a brand is a shared desirable idea that is embodied in places, services, products or experiences. He argues that the more the idea is shared by people, the stronger the brand is. Others prefer to define branding in financial terms arguing that an organisations brand can be one of most valuable assets (Dacin et al., 1994).

Emotional branding is one aspect of branding that has become highly influential branding paradigm over the past decade (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). It is driven by consumer insights and involves forming relationships with consumers (Gobe, 2013; Robert, 2004). The power behind emotional branding lies in the fact that 'human beings are powered by emotion not reasoning' and by touching emotions in the context of advertising, you get the most loyal customers (Roberts, 2004). When emotional branding is done correctly a brand should engage consumers on the level of senses and emotions (Gobe, 2013).

Fournier (1998) conducted pioneering research on consumer brand relationships to prove that consumers can form relationships with products and services as they can view brands as humans. However, despite the vast amount of academic literature on consumer-brand relationships, there is a huge gap in literature surrounding the reason why consumers seek brand relationships.

The rapidly evolving digital landscape offers limitless potential for brand building however, these new technologies also represent numerous challenges and issues for marketers (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Social media was viewed by consumers as a tool for them to interact with one another and they often resent the intrusion of brand messages. Consumers began to avoid branded videos leaving brand managers with little control over their message reach (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Marketers lost control of their content because consumers voluntarily ranked and rated it, shared it amongst their network of followers and in some instances shared the brand generated content on external websites (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

This paper aims to explore how emotional brands can be built in digital landscapes, how consumers form brand relationships and how not-for-profit organisations can build emotional brands. First, the author will explore the relevant literature. Research gaps will be identified.
at this point. The research question and objectives will then be identified. Next, the research methodology will be discussed and a rationale for selecting the methodology will be presented. The findings of the study will be presented followed by recommendations for marketers and future research.
2. Literature Review

The idea that branding results in increased financial returns for corporate organisations has received an increasing amount of attention since Aaker and Jacobson’s (1994) work on the power of branding (Fehle, Fournier, Madden, & Shrider, 2008). Aaker and Jacobson (1994) conducted research on product quality measures and whether they provide information about the stock prices of a firm beyond the information outlined in the return on investment figures. They used EquiTrend's 11-point perceived product quality measure as an indicator of brand equity and stock prices as an indicator of firm value. They created a panel of firms, which included 34 publicly trading organisations in 1991 and 1993, and regressed annual stock prices on brand equity and unanticipated Return On Investment (ROI). They assumed investors were aware of trends in the independent variable so only the unanticipated deviations or surprises from the trends affect stock prices. The academics concluded that "the explanatory power of the product quality measure compares to that of ROI which should be encouraging to those attempting to justify investments in product quality when tough questions are raised about the bottom line" (Aaker & Jacobson, 1994, p. 201). Their study attained worldwide recognition as many academics and practitioners alike felt it proved that branding has the ability to create shareholder value (Madden, Fehle & Fournier, 2006).

Dacin et al. (1994) stated that an organisation’s brand is among their most valuable assets. Keller (2003) agreed with the theory developed by Dacin et al., (1994) and justified it by listing the financial benefits of having a strong brand. When stronger brands exist consumers are less vulnerable to switching to a competitor’s brand, they have greater loyalty, are more inelastic responses to price increases, marketing initiatives are more effective and there is an increased opportunity for licensing opportunities and brand extensions. Kerin and Sethuraman (1998) further strengthened this research by studying organisations and the interbrand “Most Valued Brands List”. They concluded that a positive relationship existed between powerful brands and stock returns and prices. Simon and Sullivan (1993) conducted research that demonstrated brand equity makes up more that 115% of the replacement value, which is the cost of replacing company assets or property of the same or equal value, for many firms. Conchar, Crask and Zinkhan’s (2005) conducted research that proved a positive relationship existed between the advertising spend of a firm and its market value. All of the research mentioned above supports the theory that branding and financial performance are
positively correlated and that investing in building a strong brand can lead to financial returns.

Despite the increasing findings that branding increases financial returns, marketing practitioners report being regularly challenged to affirm the value of branding in clear financial terms (Madden, Fehle & Fournier, 2006). A lack of financial accountability has resulted in marketing credibility being undermined, marketing as a profession has been threatened in organisations and the existence of marketing has been threatened as a distinct capability within organisations (Madden et al., 2006; Rust, Ambler, Carpenter, Kumar, & Srivastava, 2004). Some academics argue that one benefit of having a strong brand is that they have the capability to attract better employees (Del Vecchio, Jarvis, Klink, and Dineen, 2007). However, there is a lack of research in this area resulting in this theory not being universally accepted (Madden et al., 2006).

2.1 Branding Appeals
Consumers are motivated to form brand-self connections for a number of reasons including social integration, self-construction, self-presentation and self-differentiation (MacInnis, Whan Park & Priester, 2014). Cosmetic companies often adopt the ‘ideal self’ advertising messaging and try to convince consumers that using their products will make them more beautiful which in turn will bring them closer to achieving an ideal version of themselves (Malär et al., 2011). Many consumers find brands appealing that represent an aspirational version of themselves, due to a desire to engage in self-improvement (Sirgy, 1982).

Consumers value brands whose symbolic meaning play a key role in their self-concepts (Fournier, 1998; Thompson et al., 2006). Unilever, owner of the cosmetics brand Dove, demonstrated this when they adopted a new, risky branding approach. They used models in advertising messages that correspond more closely to how the vast majority of their customers actually see themselves, known as their ‘actual self’. The approach was hugely successful and resulted in a large number of consumers forming strong emotional connections with the brand. This indicates that creating marketing messages that focus on the ‘actual self’ may result in higher emotional connections, are growing in importance from a consumer’s perspective and may indicate that authentic marketing messages result in increased emotional brand connections (MacInnis, Whan Park & Priester, 2014).
Malär et al., (2011) conducted research to ascertain whether appealing to a consumer’s ideal self or appealing to their actual self is better in terms of strengthening emotional brand attachment. They investigated whether emphasizing a brand personality that related to aspirations (ideal self) or create marketing messages that reflected the real consumer (actual self) would increase emotional brand attachment. Self-congruence was a key concept that was explored in order to investigate which approach is better. Self-congruence is the fit between the consumer’s self and the brand image or personality and it has been suggested that it can result in favourable brand attitudes being developed (Sirgy, 1982). Malär et al., (2011) uncovered that brands with actual self-congruence generated higher levels of emotional brand attachment. When consumers had a high level of self-esteem, public self-consciousness or were involved with the brands product, the effect was even stronger. They discovered that brands with ideal self-congruence who engaged in aspirational branding were less successful in increasing brand attachment. They noted that appealing to a consumer’s ideal self can work in some instances. When a product or service is categorised by low-involvement or self-esteem, aspirational branding can still work.

2.1.1 Brand Personalities
Fournier (1998) conducted research to prove that consumers show no difficulty in viewing brands as humans. Consumers can assign personality characteristics to inanimate objects and brands and, in some instances, assume the brand perspective in order to communicate their own relationship views. Brand are often perceived by consumers as being animistic resulting in them being viewed as human-like entities.

Countless successful advertising campaigns have been created on the back of this research. Marketers often employ a spokesperson which is normally a celebrity to promote the brand in adverts. When this association is repeated over time the brand may become the person in a sense. This works well when the personality and image of the spokesperson is a great fit for the brand. McCracken (1998) argued that using a spokesperson from a branding perspective is effective because the spirit of the endorser is infused with the brand. He stated that when a marketer engages in animism, consumer goods have the ability to do more than deliver commercial value as they can communicate and carry messages that are culturally significant.

Another form of animism exists and it involves transferring human qualities to a brand by using identifiable characters such as Charlie the Tuna. These characters have the ability to convey emotions such as laughter and sadness (Fournier, 1998). Fournier (1998)
acknowledged that despite the fact that brands can adopt some animistic traits, it’s important to remember that brands only exist in the minds of consumers in the form of perceptions.

2.2 Emotional branding
The concept of emotional branding has become a highly influential branding paradigm over the past decade (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). It is driven by consumer insights and involves forming relationships with consumers by using a storytelling approach to marketing. The result is that deep, meaningful bonds are formed between consumers and emotional brands (Robert, 2004) and brands are motivated by the fact that such connections can result in increased financial gain and higher levels of loyalty (Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich & Iacobucci, 2010). The power behind emotional branding lies in the fact that ‘human beings are powered by emotion not reasoning’ and by touching emotions in the context of advertising, you get the most loyal customers (Roberts, 2004). When emotional branding is done correctly a brand should engage consumers on the level of senses and emotions (Gobe, 2013).

Three major populations of consumers inhabit the retail landscape in the 21st century: The Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964), Generation X (born 1965 - 1976) and Generation Y (born 1977 – 1994). These three segments respond differently to advertising messages and different emotional branding appeals are necessary. Baby boomers respond to messages that centre around performance, status and achievement. Emotional branding is about reassurance, comfort and solutions for Baby Boomers. Members of Generation X value creativity, imagination and stories about relationships. Marketing campaigns, particularly emotional branding campaigns, should strongly consider adopting a non-traditional approach if they want to succeed in this market. Generation Y respond to marketing that focuses on fun, is experiential and they value interactivity. The biggest challenge that marketers need to overcome when targeting this group is that they need to keep up with the evolving tastes and fast-moving lifestyles of this segment (Gobe, 2013). When creating emotional branding campaigns, it’s important to consider the three different populations in order to be successful.

2.2.1 Brand Relationships
Consumers are increasingly looking for brands that strive to provide emotional value for them which can result in an emotional attachment being formed (So et al., 2013). Emotional brand attachment, in psychological terms, is an emotional connection between a person and a
tangible object (Malär, Krophmer, Hoyer & Nyffenegger, 2011). Bowlby (1980) conducted pioneering research on attachment theory and defined attachment as being an 'emotion-laden target-specific bond between a person and a specific object'. The desire to have strong emotional attachments serves a basic human need and attachments can vary in strength (Thompson et al., 2005). Emotional brand attachments can result in a consumer engaging in emotionally rooted repurchasing and brand switching avoidance (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011).

Proponents of the emotional brand attachment claim that consumer’s evangelical loyalty and enthusiasm can only be attained if marketers clearly demonstrate an understanding or their target markets ambitions, dreams and lifestyles. They need to be able to convince consumer's that their brand will enrich their lives (So et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2005). Consumers can form, build and maintain emotionally charged relationships with brands and customer emotional attachment is the central premise that underlies this (Malär et al., 2011; So et al., 2013).

Understanding the emotional components of a consumer-brand relationship is highly relevant for academics and marketing practitioners (Fournier, 1998). Branding can result in huge performance and consumer perception disparities between competitors in an industry. The main difference between Wal-Mart and its closer rival Kmart is the emotional connection and vision that Wal-Mart have been able to communicate with the world (Gobe, 2013). They have demonstrated that brands can generate feelings for consumers which can result in strong differentiation between the products and services provided by different companies. Understanding the components of a consumer-brand relationship is extremely important because consumers typically only emotionally attach to a limited number of brands (Fournier, 1998).

Modern consumers have a new expectation that is closely related to emotional branding. People want to deal with organisations that are sensitive and responsive to their needs. Consumers continuously strive to form relationships with brands that they feel understand them. Smart consumers will discriminate between brands that understand them and reflect their values and brands that don’t. Despite the vast amount of marketing literature that recommends effective brand consumer communication, a lack of awareness and major communication gaps still exist (Gobe, 2013). Also, despite the vast amount of academic literature on brand loyalty and consumer-brand relationships, there is a huge gap in literature surrounding the reason why consumers seek brand relationships (Fournier, 1988).
2.2.2 The Benefits of Emotional Branding

The first stage of a consumer-brand relationship is known as brand satisfaction and it occurs after a consumer has a positive interaction with a brand (Busacca & Castaldo, 2003). As a consumer has more interactions with the brand, the satisfaction they initially felt may turn into a stronger emotional connection and brand loyalty may occur (Fournier, Breazeale & Fetscherin, 2012). Marketers and brands are motivated to engage in emotional branding for a number of reasons. The first motivation is a desire to acquire consumers that will make exclusive brand repurchases as these purchases are viewed as being less vulnerable to disruption. In order for this to occur, brand loyalty must exist (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011).

Loyalty theorists argue that “truly loyal” repurchase is distinctly different from other forms of repurchasing as it emerges from strong affective brand ties as opposed to other causes such as high switching costs (Dick & Basu 1994; Oliver, 1999). While this theory is generally accepted by academics in this field, Oliver (1999) noted that there is a distinct lack of detail regarding the affective basis of repurchase. He proposed that the easiest and clearest way to create loyalty is to create deep psychological commitment. He described the strongest form of this commitment as involving devotion and affection, and states that it was intrinsically emotional. When the bond between a consumer and a brand is strong, ultimate loyalty can evolve resulting in the consumer adopting an “against all odds and all costs” attitude to repurchase regardless of sales enticements and incentives offered by rival brands (Oliver, 1999). Some academics argue that despite emotional attachment being a strong determinant of brand loyalty more research is needed in order to be definitely state marketers can drive attachment-based repurchase through emotional-branding techniques (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011).

Grisaffe et al. (2011) conducted research on emotional branding and uncovered that marketing practitioners can stimulate consistent repurchase by influencing antecedents of emotional brand attachment. One way to do this is to exceed consumer expectations as opposed to minimally meeting them. This can result in attachment-inducing satisfaction. Another possibility involves raising brand and service quality perceptions intentionally. This can be achieved by increasing the number of consumer interactions, leveraging CRM tools to create more brand touchpoints across a variety of communication channels including electronic channels. The authors warn marketers not to design isolated marketing initiatives because user-derived benefits also help in forming brand attachments. The first step in this
process requires detailed knowledge surrounding consumer responses to brands. It is critical for a marketer to distinguish between benefits that are simply desired and benefits which result in brand attachments being formed. When an attachment producing benefit is identified, it can be highlighted and included in all marketing communications.

Emotional brand attachments can form as a result of sentimental memories being evoked. By understanding the consumer experience, marketers could reinforce these sentimental themes and memories by reminding consumers of the brands nostalgic connections. If marketers prefer to take a more proactive approach they could design brand experiences or brand events that create attachment inducing memories (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). This idea is consistent with other academic literature that stresses the importance of brand experiences as opposed to practical aspects of brand consumption (Schmitt, 2003). Oliver (1999) was a proponent of the theory that deep emotional brand attachments were created from a combination of brand related and personal characteristics. Creating a combined strategy involving marketing characteristics that create attachment producing benefits for consumers and detailed knowledge surrounding consumer responses to brands may dramatically help brands trying to build strong brand attachments (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011).

Gobe (2013) offered another motivator stating that emotional brands are the most successful brands when they extend their product offering. He believes this is because brands engage in product offering extension in response to changes in their customer aspirations. When a consumer can identify with a brand on an emotional level they are more likely to buy varied products from that brand even if the emotional connection was formed due to one specific product line.

Emotional branding advocates encourage marketers to ensure the emotional brand is constantly evolving in order to stay connected to their target markets aspirations. Brands have many facets to their personality and must move forward in order to retain these emotional connections (Gobe, 2013). Thompson et al. (2006) stated that emotional branding advocates claim a high degree of consumer passion is seldom attained through communicating tangible benefits. Strong relationships with consumers are formed when a branding strategy is employed that uses tactics that demonstrate the brand has a deep understanding of their consumer bases aspirations, life circumstances, inspirations. All communications by emotional brands should generate warm feelings of community among brand users (Thompson et al., 2006; Fournier, 1998).
2.2.3 Potential Pitfalls - Emotional Branding

When discussing emotion branding, it is important to highlight the potential pitfalls. One issue is that they expose brands to a form of cultural backlash known as 'doppelgänger brand image'. This occurs when a group of derogatory brand stories and images are circulated in popular culture by a loosely organised group of antibrand activists, bloggers, entertainment media, consumers and opinion leaders (Thompson et al., 2006). Marketers have used humour as a way to grab consumer’s attention for decades however, in the 21st century it is not uncommon for creative consumers to use humour to poke fun at adverts and brands to make a statement. Consumers seeking digital entertainment have started to engage in spoofing and brands have begun producing content that will feed this activity. Adobe Photoshop has enabled users to create high quality images and content cheaply, resulting in adverts becoming the targets of parodies (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Today's screenagers, younger age groups who have a substantial amount of technical knowledge and a strong willingness to engage in online activity, are motivated to create parodies (Kaplan et al., 2010). Creating brand parodies for some consumers have become a darker sport and hyper-critical consumers can leverage technology to humiliate brands. Some consumers engage in brand damaging behaviour by using parodies to mock core brand values. Parodies are extremely popular when companies misbehave, as consumers create them to express their displeasure (Fournier & Avery, 2011). The danger is that these criticisms can be interpreted by the public as being logical and cause substantial damage to the brand image (Thompson et al., 2006). A doppelgänger brand image that is created by brand opponents essentially competes with the emotional branding messages and stories that are firm generated. It is of paramount importance for a firm to analyse whether social criticisms and parodies generated by consumers about their damage their brand and whether action is necessary to combat this (Earle, 2002). Some firms pursue legal action against the creators however, although that stance is understandable, it is recommended that instead of pursuing legal action, the firm should see action as an opportunity to glean strategically valuable cultural insights (Thompson et al., 2006).

One way to mitigate the negative cultural backlash as a result of a 'doppelgänger brand image' being created is to closely monitor cultural cues. Brand managers should play close attention to popular culture for signs that their brand may become the focus of a parody or anti-brand activist (Thompson et al., 2006). Managers should not play close attention to the number of
people that embrace the negative brand messages being created. Instead they should focus on catching any potential 'doppelgänger brand images' being created during their underground phase (Gladwell, 2000). Brand managers should focus on the aspects of the emotional branding strategy execution that are being sabotaged and the alternative brand meanings that are being created (Thompson et al., 2006). The internet is the medium that facilitates the rapid viral backlash that some brands encounter when a doppelgänger brand image is created. Brand managers should engage in cultural monitoring via this medium by observing chat rooms, blogs and web based media to gauge the cultural buzz surrounding any new and existing marketing campaigns (Thompson et al., 2006).

Thompson et al., (2006) recommends adopting a proactive approach to effectively manage the challenges posed by the emergence of a doppelganger brand image by making adoptions to any stories or dialogues that are created for emotional branding purposes. By following this recommendation, brand managers could anticipate that a story could be going stale and adapt it before a full blown branding crisis ensues. This orientation is proactive in native and recommends managers modify emotional-branding strategies before they are executed, while still accomplishing all marketing objectives. The current marketing environment is dynamic and rapidly changing and adopting this strategy would help firms stay ahead of the curve instead of trying to catch up with competitors who have created a more relevant and relatable story driven approach to emotional branding (Thompson et al., 2006).

Another potential pitfall of emotional branding is that if consumers view emotional-branding promises as being unauthentic, brand avoidance becomes an issue. Some brands don't strive to gain a competitive advantage by using emotional-branding strategies, so the issue regarding lack of perceived authenticity doesn't apply. Market challengers, market followers and brands that lack iconic status may remain undetected by antibrand activists resulting in reduced susceptibility to authenticity attacks (Thompson et al., 2006).

2.3 Digital Brand Building
Marketers have long since recognised the power and potential of marketing in a digital landscape. However, despite desires to leverage these digital opportunities, Web 2.0 technologies were created to link people in a collective manner not for branding or selling purposes. This has resulted in numerous challenges and issues from a marketing perspective.
One of the issues for brands is that they aren't always welcome on social media and are perceived as being inauthentic in many instances (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Social media offered limitless branding potential and benefits for brands. The benefits include two-way interaction with consumers, unique consumer insights about lifestyles and preferences and customised one-to-one messaging. However, as more branding activity shifted to digital formats, consumers resented the intrusion and resisted the advertising messages. A digital paradox soon emerged whereby on social media platforms everyone but no one was the audience. Consumers avoided branded videos preferring to watch user generated content leaving brand managers with little control over their message reach (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Marketers lost control of their content because consumers voluntarily ranked and rated it, shared it amongst their network of followers and in some instances shared the brand generated content on external websites. Brands could no longer fully control the timing of the distribution of their messaging or the reach of their content (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Brands were finding it increasingly difficult to break through the clutter in the digital landscape. Other issues emerged when consumers learned to leverage brand pages and content for their own purposes. They began using social media pages built by brands to complain, look for product and service discounts and expose brand weaknesses. Some consumers hijacked branded content like videos and turned them into parodies which they later displaying on their own social media channels (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

The emergent digital landscape has resulted in the development of open source branding. Fournier et al. (2011) defined open source branding as a phenomenon that occurs when a brand is entrenched in a cultural exchange whereby consumers gain equal or greater say that marketers about how the brand behaves and how it looks. Open source branding occurs in a collaborative environment whereby behaviour is participatory and consumers are the creators. Web 2.0 technologies like blogging, social networking and video sharing encourage and empower consumers to create their own personal content and give them an avenue where they can share the content with like-minded individuals. The digital landscape has enabled open source branding and created a complex environment which isn't as inviting as critics suggest.
Technological advances always affect brands and how organisations manage them. Television allowed marketers to build brands via a visual channel. Personal computers allowed organisations to communicate with consumers on a one-to-one basis. Web 2.0 developments are similarly modernising branding. The business world has moved from being an arena where brands set the agenda to a world where consumers are the key decision makers, deciding whether brands are invited or not. Brand building via digital channels has given way to a great focus on risk management for defence purposes (Fournier et al., 2011). Fournier et al. (2011) questions whether we can claim to be practicing brand management anymore when the landscape and discipline is changing so rapidly.

Traditional marketing is a controlled, structured practise that’s guided by plans, advanced communication and media. Digital brand strategies are less constructed, governed by serendipity as opposed to pre-planning and are reactive in nature. Brands are often controlled by consumers outside the organisation and campaigns in some instances reach a wider network because of loyal followers as opposed to tight strategic planning. Brands who have a presence on social media tend to excel during execution as opposed to clear planning. The key to successful brand building on a digital landscape is creating engaging content. Achieving executional excellence is of paramount importance when building a brand digitally and the process is driven as much by public relations principles as it is by traditional marketing principles (Fournier et al., 2011).

2.3.1 Digital Relationships
The success of the internet can be traced back to one of the most basic human motivations – a desire to fit in, belong and feel accepted. The digital landscape fosters a sense of community by allowing users to form virtual friendships and connections with likeminded people. Microblogging, status updates and check-ins allow people to connect with one another through casual, low energy participation. Online communities facilitate deep discussions of shared interest which, in turn, strengthen group bonds. Buttons which allow people to share content with one another easily and quickly unite people in mutual camaraderie. Social media platforms provide consumers with simple ways to connect with their favourite brands. They give them the ability to 'follow' or 'friend' them, identify brand communities for them that they may find interesting and facilitate peer-to-peer relationships where they can share brand information. Brand consumption acts as a form of social glue that joins consumers to each other and social media networks facilitate these connections. Successful brands generally
earn the right to participate in consumer’s social spaces like social media networks (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

One way in which a company can successfully build a brand in a digital landscape is by engaging in active listening however, it's important to note that the consequences of engaging in this practise can also be detrimental to a brand (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Jericho, a low viewership television, was scheduled to be cancelled by CBS, however fans of the show expressed their anger by sending 40,000 pounds of nuts to headquarters. The producers made seven more episodes however, a year later the show was cancelled again due to the fact it was unprofitable and unpopular (Wyatt, 2007). Submitting to the collective can have short and long-term repercussions for a brand. In some instances, consumer desires can be in direct conflict with the brand mission, veering the brand off track (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Digital consumers often act as mediators and commentators, providing judgement and critique of brands and organisations. Consumers indicate support for a brand by liking, re-tweeting and sharing content resulting in the brand source no longer providing claims to authority. Cultural populism determines how content is interpreted in a digital landscape and brand culture is now authenticated by a large audience (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

2.3.2 The Digital Landscape
A challenging, complex landscape has developed in light of Web 2.0 technology developments. Brands have adopted a number of different strategies in order to cope with new cultural dynamics (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Fournier et al. (2011) conducted research that suggests three different approaches have been adopted; ‘The Path of Least Resistance, Playing Their Game and Leveraging Web 2.0 Interconnectedness’. The first approach, the path of least resistance involves surrendering power of the brand to consumers. Many people view this as an inevitable strategy due to the collective nature of Web 2.0. If this strategy is executed well, the benefits for the brand can include gaining much desired citizenship credentials and positive attention. The second strategy, playing their game, occurs when a brand attempts to gain cultural resonance by seamlessly fitting in on social media platforms. In order to achieve this a brand would have to master the styles, mechanisms and nuanced principles governing social media platforms in an effort to enable it to dilute its obvious intrusion on platforms that are deemed to be consumer property. The third approach, leveraging Web 2.0 interconnectedness, aims to give the power of marketing back to the
brand and get consumers to work on behalf of the brand. It involves taking consumers, feeding their evolving habits before enticing them to play the brands game.

The digital landscape has shifted the power from brands to consumers and a variety of strategies have been adopted to manage this change effectively. Some brands have built entirely new business models based on the principle of collective power (Pitt, Berthon, Watson & Zinkhan, 2002). Groupon, an online coupon company, have based their value proposition on the digital interconnectedness of consumers and the power that social networking websites can afford them. The organisation offers coupon that are only valid if enough people purchase them which in turn motivates consumers to use their social networks to grant the offers needed scope and scale. Other strategies adopted by brands include designing targeted programs that focus on the power of collective brand objectives and using microsites to capture consumer feedback and ideas for future brand developments (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

One of biggest strengths of the digital revolution is that information is readily available and convenient to access. Sometimes this can be detrimental for brands as consumers can, in some instances, unearth information that can spread like wildfire. The effect of a viral backlash on brand equity can be devastating and have a long lasting impact. The damage can, in some instances, have serious legal ramifications. Young, digitally savvy consumers appear to be comfortable exchanging their privacy for digital benefits. However, organisations typically find this exchange unnerving (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

2.3.3 The Implications of Negative Critiques Online
Consumers are increasingly critical of organisations and their brands. Digital technology such as blogging has made criticising brands much easier. When social networking profiles are linked to these blogs, the content can travel faster and further (Pitt et al., 2002). Negative critiques can spread rapidly due to the fact that they are inherently interesting resulting in cases whereby brands find themselves at the centre of a vortex where they must respond (Fournier & Avery, 2011). United Airlines encountered a viral backlash when they damaged a guitar belonging to an American singer. The customer produced a series of videos entitled “United Break Guitars” which generated over 10 million views on YouTube (Tran, 2009).
In industries with a low customer satisfaction level, keeping up with online critique can become a full time job. Organisations are increasingly being regulated to the side-lines, forced to act as observers, and are in many cases not given the chance to alter public comments about their brand that have been created by their customers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Creating a digital marketing strategy that includes targeting sources of disgruntlement can help firms become proactive and effective in dealing with these issues (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Asset cultivation is a focus of traditional, offline brand management and involves building and leveraging marketing programs to build shareholder value for the firm. Strong brands have higher market shares than weaker brands, they dominate competition and generally own their product category. The digital landscape has changed the nature of brand equity and forced brands to work harder. As brands like McDonald's and Pfizer have grown and become category leaders, they have attracted adoration from their loyal customers and from the general public. Big brands have become magnetic targets however their size acts as a liability on the internet. The bigger the brand, the more they have to lose. The digital landscape is governed by hyper-criticism and social empowerment. Consumers demand instant transparency. These issues have resulted in brands needing to be constantly prepared to defend themselves in case of attack. Branding has drastically evolved and changed in the new digital era and it no longer solely focuses on revenue generation and returns. Branding a brand via digital channels involves a large amount of risk management (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Brand differentiation has been superseded and replaced by cultural resonance. In traditional branding, in order to create a strong brand, an organisation must claim meanings that consumers want. By doing this a brand can create a unique selling point as competitors don't deliver (Reeves, 1961). The best way for a brand to gain cultural resonance is to seamlessly integrate themselves in conversations that happen on digital platforms. By naturally embedding themselves in digital conversations, a brand can insert brand messages into web based 'ebbs and flows' (Fournier et al., 2011).

One issue that occurs when brands attempt to guide and steer cultural conversations is the creation of short-term brands. Short-term brands are defined as being brands that are culturally relevant today but culturally irrelevant tomorrow. Organisations set long-term brand building goals for marketers that are reinforced repeatedly over time (Aaker, 1996).
The current systems don't accommodate the transient branding mind-set. Acquiring brand equity is a difficult task and is viewed as being a corporate asset. Once a strong brand has been developed, marketer’s fights hard to protect it. If we acknowledged that the brand portfolio was constantly evolving, what would the practise of brand marketing look like? (Fournier et al., 2011).

2.4 Marketing in The Not-For-Profit Sector
Not-For-Profit organisations are increasingly trying to emulate the money generating practises adopted by private corporations. This trend is driven by a decrease in public sector donations, increasing competition owing to the growth in the number of not-for-profit bodies and the increasing pressure from donors for organisations to act in a business-like manner (Maude, 1997). However, the charity sector faces unique marketing challenges in that they have a limited amount of resources when compared with private enterprises. In order to maximise returns, charities are encouraged to engage in branding exercises that will help them develop a sound image to enhance the number of financial donations from the public that they generate, increase the ability of the charity to influence consumer preferences and elicit action from external audiences (Sargent, 1999; Michaelidou et al., 2015).

There are a variety of marketing activities that a not-for-profit organisation can engage in. Cause-related marketing connects charitable partners with private enterprises to enhance the corporates brand identity and generate sales. Charitable organisations benefit from cause-related marketing by experiencing an increase in brand awareness. Charities also receive a monetary donation by allowing a corporation to use their brand (Maude, 1997). This practise is increasingly popular because charity brands act as symbols of certainty for consumers and offer ‘peace of mind’ (Stride & Lee, 2007; Michaelidou, Micevski & Siamagka, 2015).

Charitable organisations often hold special events to generate funds and increase awareness. At these events, an exchange occurs between attendees and the organisers of the event, which in some cases are volunteers. However, typically these events don't create long-term donors and don't increase the donor base. This is because only a small number of people who attend the event are truly engaged with the organisation and its mission. Most attendees are pursuing their own interest, like getting fit, and have little concern with the organisations objectives (Maude, 1997).
In the past few years, another marketing activity has been identified as being increasingly important for charitable organisations. Branding in the not-for-profit sector plays an increasingly important role in terms of charity differentiation, stimulating awareness and generating excitement about a particular charitable cause (Michaelidou et al., 2015). Branding helps not-for-profit organisations communicate their purpose to the public, increase awareness about the services they provide and reduce the risk of any negative impact which may be associated with their offerings (Stride & Lee, 2007; Michaelidou, Micevski & Siamagka, 2015). Michaelidou et al., (2015) suggested that despite the fact that there is vast amounts of research proving the importance of engaging in branding in the charity sector, the 'charity brand' is underutilised. When charities fail to appreciate the benefits of branding and neglect brand investment, the result can negatively affect their success (Davis, 2000; Bennett & Sargeant, 2005).

Telemarketing has been identified by academics and practitioners as being an effective tool for not-for-profit organisations. This tool achieves good results with lapsed and current donors and with other individuals and groups that have had experiences with the organisation, like former patients and university alumni. A phone call is more personal than receiving a letter and gives not-for-profit organisations an opportunity to develop stronger donor relationships and initiate new relationships. This practise works well when a perspective donor is alerted that they will be receiving a call (Maude, 1997).

### 2.4.1 Make-A-Wish Ireland

Make-A-Wish Ireland is a charity that grants the wishes of children aged 3 to 17 years living with life-threatening medical conditions. The charity was established in 1992 and has granted 1800 wishes in Ireland since inception. A wish provides respite from their normal routines which includes countless hospital and doctor visits. The aim of the organisation is to grant a wish to every eligible child in Ireland. A wish can have a lasting impact on a child’s life, involves the whole family and can create memories that last a life-time regardless of what the future holds (Make-A-Wish, 2016).

Make-A-Wish Ireland has a high level of brand awareness. The organisation is the fourth ranking children’s charity to be recalled among Irish charities. Spontaneous recall is 11% and total awareness in 2012 was 58% (Behaviours and Attitudes, 2012). Irish donors also show a stronger preference for supporting Irish based charities over International ones. Causes aimed
at supporting children get the most support from Irish donors, with 92% of those who donate to charity saying that they donate to charities aimed at helping children. The aim of Make-A-Wish is to increase the market share of income in an attempt to decrease the number of children battling life-threatening illnesses on their waiting list (Behaviours and Attitudes, 2012).

Economides (2016) argued that the world’s strongest brands stand out from the rest because they represent categories. Whilst brands like Nike represent the aspirational goal achievement, no such brand exists in the children’s charity sector. He argued that the generic space is currently unoccupied and this represents an opportunity for Make-A-Wish. The aim is to create a single global brand and the challenge is to establish a truly global expression which transcends cultures and geographies.

Maslow’s Extended Hierarchy of Needs is an important tool for understanding what motivates individuals and is based on the premise that consumers possess a set of motivational systems unrelated to unconscious desires or rewards (Maslow, 1943). Maslow (1943) argued that people are motivated to fulfil certain needs and once one need is satisfied, they move onto the next one. In the context of Make-A-Wish, similarly to Nike, the wish is at the self-actualisation level. The wish child is at biological and physiological level but through the wish granting process they are brought to the self-actualisation level (Economides, 2016). Outlined in Figure 1 is Maslow’s Extended Hierarchy of Needs.

![Figure 1. Maslow’s Extended Hierarchy of Needs. Source: Economides, P., (2016).](image-url)
In order to create a strong brand a powerful brand strategy must be built. This strategy is based on three components - Brand Ambition, Brand DNA and Consumer Insight. The ‘Strategic Sweet Spot’ is the desired state and it is at the intersection of these components (Economides, 2016). Outlined in Figure 2 is the components of Brand Strategy for Make-A-Wish.

![Figure 2. Components of Brand Strategy for Make-A-Wish. Source: Economides, P., (2016).](image)

Brand Ambition is what Make-A-Wish wants to achieve as brand. This point goes beyond what the organisation does and how it does it. It focuses on why we do what we do and is the fundamental reason behind the foundations existence. Brand DNA is the values that the brand is capable of embracing; the values are relatively stable but are changeable. Brand DNA provides the basic building blocks for a brand strategy and is composed of numerous components which Make-A-Wish will aim to maintain, build and possibly eliminate over time (Economides, 2016).

In order to establish Make-A-Wish as the global benchmark children’s charity, storytelling must be fully maximised. The transformative power of a wish must be communicated while maintaining vision consistency across the globe. Make-A-Wish is the ultimate storytelling brand, “our work is our content and our wishes are our narrative” (Economides, 2016). Capturing the before and after part of a wish being granted is of paramount importance from an emotional brand building perspective. If Make-A-Wish is to become the global benchmark children’s charity, the global brand strategy must be integrated in everything we do
(Economides, 2016). Outlined in Figure 4 is the brand essence for Make-A-Wish and it describes how wishes transform lives and how creativity, innovation and inspirational storytelling is essential in order for us to become the benchmark children's charity brand.

Figure 4. Brand Essence for Make-A-Wish. Source: Economides, P., (2016).
3. Research Aims and Objectives

This research aims to investigate how emotional brands can be built via digital channels. The study focuses solely on the not-for-profit landscape in Ireland. The objectives are listed below.

1. **Identify the key factors in building a strong digital emotional brand**
   The concept of emotional branding has become a highly influential branding paradigm over the past decade (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). It is driven by consumer insights and results in deep, meaningful bonds being formed between consumers and emotional brands (Robert, 2004). The purpose of this objective is to explore how emotional brands can be built digitally. There is a significant gap in the academic literature relating to branding in the digital landscape.

2. **To study emotional branding and best practises in not-for-profit organisations**
   Not-For-Profit organisations are increasingly trying to emulate the money generating practises adopted by private corporations (Maude, 1997). However, the charity sector faces unique marketing challenges in that they have a limited amount of resources when compared with private enterprises. In order to maximise returns, charities are encouraged to engage in branding exercises that will help them develop a sound image (Sargent, 1999; Michaelidou et al., 2015). The purpose of this objective is to extract a list of best practises for emotional brand building. There is a lack of academic literature relating to current branding practises in not-for-profit landscape in Ireland. By understanding the current landscape, this research will be able to provide recommendations for by not-for-profit organisations in Ireland.

3. **Explore why consumers seek brand relationships with not-for-profit organisations**
   Fournier (1988) acknowledges that despite the fact that there is a large body of academic literature on brand loyalty and consumer-brand relationships there is a huge gap in academic literature relating to the question of why consumers seek brand relationships. This objective
aims to explore why consumers engage in brand relationship building and how organisations can foster these relationships.
4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction
Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) defined methodology as the theory behind how research is undertaken. Blaikie (2000) argued that it's of paramount importance that the methodology element of research includes a critical evaluation of all available methods and research strategies. He stated that it is important to make a clear distinction between the methodology part of research and other areas that often fall under this umbrella term. He argued that research design is the planning aspect of a thesis, research strategy is the logic of enquiry and methods is the project execution.

Saunders et al., (2009) developed ‘the research onion’ to describe the stages a researcher passes through when formulating a methodology. The first stage involves defining the research philosophy. This is the starting point for selecting an appropriate research approach. In the latter stages, the data collection methodology is identified and justified. The research onion describes a series of stages under which the different methods of data collection can be understood. Outlined in Figure 5 below is the research onion.

![Diagram of the research onion](source)

Figure 5. The research. Source: Saunders et al., (2009, p108).

The methodology section of this research outlines the motivating paradigm and philosophy decisions that the author made. The quantitative versus qualitative options available to the
researcher is discussed and the research approach is justified. A case study approach was adopted for this research and the author explains the rationale behind this decision. An overview of data collection methods is provided and the sampling technique is justified. The analysis technique is then discussed before the limitations and ethical considerations are discussed.

4.2 Research Philosophy
Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p124) defined research philosophy as 'the system and beliefs about the development of knowledge'. The stated that whether you are consciously aware of it or not, at every stage in the research a number of assumptions will be made. The assumptions will include epistemological assumptions, which are assumptions about human knowledge, ontological assumptions about the realities you encounter in your research and axiological assumptions, which are concerned with the extent your own values influence your research. The author has been guided by the theory developed by Saunders et al., (2012) and created a table below to depict the philosophical grounding for this dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Outline of Research Philosophy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
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<td>Research Objective</td>
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| Sub-Objectives | Objective 1. Identify the key factors in building a strong digital emotional brand  
Objective 2. To study emotional branding and best practises in a not for profit organisation  
Objective 3. Explore why consumers seek brand relationships with not-for-profit organisations |
| Estimology | Johnson & Duberley (2000, p3) define epistemology as 'the study of the criteria by which we can know what does and does not |
constitute warranted, or scientific, knowledge'. It is concerned with assumptions about knowledge and due to the multidisciplinary context of business, a range of different types of knowledge including visual data and interpretations, can all be considered legitimate (Saunders et al., 2012). The knowledge studied for this research paper was the opinions of marketing professionals who use or have used emotional branding techniques during their career to date. All of the knowledge studied was based on opinions these individuals held about emotional branding. They have all worked with not-for-profit brands in Ireland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Ontology has been defined by Baikie (1993) as the science or study of being. Saunders et al., (2009) noted that ‘ontology is concerned with the nature of reality’. It’s a system of belief that reflects an interpretation of an individual about what constitutes a fact and it raises questions about the assumptions researchers have about the world and their views (Saunders et al., 2009; Baikie, 1993). In understanding the ontology of the emotional branding efforts of marketing practitioners who work for not-for-profit brands, this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of why practitioners engage in emotional branding and identify best practises for building a strong emotional brand.</th>
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</table>
Axiology refers to the role of ethics and values within the research process. It considers the values held by the researcher and the values held by the research participants (Saunders et al., 2012). The author conducted a study on data that was collected by interviewing specific industry specialists. The author values personal interaction with respondents as this allowed her to gather a detailed understanding of perspectives as opposed to collecting data via anonymous questionnaires. The author believes that if emotional branding is done correctly it can have a powerful impact on not-for-profit organisations therefore the topic is worthy of being explored.

4.2.1 Research Paradigm
Burns & Burns (2008) define a paradigm as being a framework of assumptions that reflect a set of philosophical beliefs about the world and depict a particular way of viewing the world. Paradigms placed strict principles on how research should be carried out. The two major paradigms are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism entails working with an observable reality that can result in generating extremely accurate knowledge and involves adopting a scientific method and a value-free approach to research (Saunders et al., 2012). The author rejected this approach because this would require the researcher to maintain an objective stance and generate law-like generalisations. Instead, the author adopted an interpretivist approach. Interpretivism argues that humans are different from physical phenomenon because they have the ability to create meaning and interpretivists study these meanings (Saunders et al., 2012). One axiological implication of this approach is that the values and beliefs held by the author play an important role as all data collected required interpretation. The difference between the two is that positivists are concerned primarily with determining patterns in social life as opposed to interpretivists who feel that correlations cannot be understood on their own without understand the motives behind the behaviour (Blaikie, 2000, p.115).
This research aims to understand emotional branding. In order to do this the author had to focus on perceptions and interpret data collected from industry experts in order to ascertain why consumers were drawn to emotional brands, how a business could help them form connections with brands and best practises for building strong emotional brands. An interpretivist approach was chosen instead of a positivistic approach because the author of the nature of the research. By adopting an interpretivist approach, the researcher was able to adopt a more personal and flexible structure which is much more suitable than a structured approach when opinions and perceptions need to be interpreted. One benefit was that the author could remain open to new knowledge throughout the study and was able to let it develop with the help of the study participants.

4.3 Research Strategy
4.3.1 Research Approach
Saunders et al., (2009) stated that the most misused and misunderstood term in education is theory. Textbook material is classed as theory however things that are happening in the real world is classed as practise. They state that in reality, theory is simply an observation of the cause and effect among two variables. There are two main approaches to understanding theory, deduction which involves the testing of pre-existing theories, and induction which involves building new theories. If a deductive approach was undertaken quantitative data would be the primary source of data, samples would need to be large in order for the researcher to be able to generalise research conclusions, the researcher would be independent from the process and the approach would be highly structured. This research aimed to gain a deeper understanding of emotional branding and offer recommendations on how it could be implemented. It would be inappropriate to begin this research with a hypothesis which is required when using a deductive approach. An inductive approach was adopted. Data was collected and then the themes and topics identified in the data was explored further (Saunders et al., 2012).

4.3.2 Case Study
Hill & Robson (2002) defined case study research as a strategy that involves doing an empirical investigation of a specific phenomenon within its real life context while using multiple different sources of evidence. When using this strategy, the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context within which it is being studied can become blurred as they
aren't always clearly evident (Saunders et al., 2012). The case study strategy was used because the research was exploratory and explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009).

The objective of this research was to explore the use of emotional branding techniques in a digital landscape (Saunders et al., 2009). A case study approach helps uncover the answers to the why, how and what questions in the research objectives (Yin, 2003). This author choose to use a case study strategy because it helped uncover:

- Why consumers seek relationships with not-for-profit brands.
- How emotional brands are built in a digital landscape.
- Why consumers are drawn to emotional brands.

Yin (2003) distinguished between two different types of case studies, single case, multiple case, holistic case and embedded case. The author decided to adopt a single case approach to this research because it provided the researcher with an opportunity to analyse a phenomenon that wasn't widely researched or understood. At the time of publishing this research, there was a minimal amount of credible information on the phenomenon that is emotional branding. The topic is niche in nature resulting in the population and sample size being very small. There were only a small number of individuals available that had sufficient knowledge about the phenomenon to contribute to this body of work. In-depth interviews were chosen as the best source of evidence for this single case study research. Multiple case research was rejected as the general public and individuals outside the sample set were deemed to not have enough familiarity with the topic to contribute significantly to this research.

4.3.3 Qualitative Versus Quantitative

This research is interpretivistic in approach which lends itself to qualitative data collection. A qualitative approach can provide a research study with data that is rich and descriptive in nature, allowing a researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the topic (Wahyuni, 2012). Qualitative data allows researchers to see which events lead to specific consequences and helps them derive conducive explanations for certain behaviours (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Adopting this approach is particularly useful in specific situations including traditional preliminary exploration, screening and organising ideas, exploring complex situations and behaviour and developing explanatory behaviour models (Baker, 2001).
A positivist position is more closely linked to quantitative data collection. Quantitative data refers to all numerical data that a business or researcher obtains and can range from being simple data about frequency of occurrences to complex data based on student test scores. A quantitative approach to data collection means that the findings and recommendations from a study will be based on numbers and the analysis will be conducted by using statistics and diagrams (Saunders et al., 2009). A quantitative approach to research is beneficial in instances where the researcher has limited time and resources. That was the case in this study, however, this approach wasn't suitable because the approach is very restrictive when a deep, thorough understanding of opinions and behaviours are sought (Baker, 2001).

One of the reasons that the author undertook this research was because there was a lack of literature published on the specific area of emotional branding. Saunders et al., (2007) noted that qualitative methods can produce a large amount of rich, nonnumeric descriptive data (Saunders et al., 2007). When there is a distinct lack of pre-existing research on a certain research topic, a qualitative approach creates the level of detail required to provide deep, meaningful insights about the topic that was previously overlooked by other researchers (Kashif & Ting, 2014). Also, a qualitative approach provides a more realistic understanding of real-world situations and beliefs that can’t be experienced with numerical, quantitative data (Boodhoo & Purmessur, 2009).

The author acknowledges that are some pervasive issues with qualitative data that have existed for a long-time. There are a number of limitations associated with qualitative data analysis that are outlined below:

- Labour intensive data collection, data overload, timing demands associated with organising and coding data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to overcome this issue, the author allocated a month to data collection and transcribed each interview during this time. The data was coded using qualitative software, QSR Nvivo 10 which dramatically cut down the amount of time spent analysing the data.
- Using qualitative methods requires the researcher to have a certain set of skills (Saunders et al., 2007). The researcher had little experience conducting interviews but found the pre-planning required for this interview form to be extremely beneficial for improving skills.
- When a researcher adopts a qualitative approach they often have to ask participants in the sample why they behave in the manner in which they do. It's difficult to get an honest answer because of the well-known human tendency of wanting to please others. This can
result in the participants telling the researcher the answer they think he/she wants as opposed to telling the truth (Baker, 2001). To overcome this issue, researchers have developed a wide range of techniques that encourage a respondent to speculate how someone else would behave in a specific situation. The rationale behind this is that the only real basis for speculation is our own experience and knowledge therefore the projected behaviour is very similar to how we would behave in a given situation (Baker, 2001). Gordon and Langmaid (1998) call these techniques ‘Projective and Enabling Techniques’.

- Quantitative methods are often viewed as being conventional and objective. On the other hand, qualitative methods are seen as less reliable due to the subjectivity involved. By using reflexivity, the researcher can generate valid and reliable research (Boodhoo & Purmessur, 2009). The researcher recognised that the interviews were interactive and that interpreting the data involved reflecting on the entire research. The researcher understood that pre-conceptions and situational dynamics existed.

- Qualitative data analysis usually requires a smaller number of participants than quantitative analysis which means that there’s a chance it will be taken less seriously by practitioners and academics. The credibility of results are questioned when only a few are samples available (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Due to the specific nature of this research and the fact that only a small number of people have sufficient experience to contribute to this research, this could be an issue. In order to overcome this issue, the researcher interviewed people that are senior figures and have a large amount of experience in the sector.

4.4 Data Collection Method

Saunders et al., (2009) stated that choosing a research method involved deciding whether to use a single data collection technique (mono method) or using more than one data collection technique (multiple methods). Both methods require the researcher to use corresponding analysis procedures to answer the research question effectively. A single research study may use a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques in combination with primary and secondary data. Outlined in Figure 6 below is the research choice that a researcher must make.
Bryman (2007) stated that when the researcher is deciding between adopting a mono approach or a multiple method approach they are likely to be influenced by a number of elements including commitment to a particular method, the audience expectations and the methods that the researcher feels comfortable with. The author of this research adopted a mono method and combined a single quantitative data collection technique, in-depth interviews, with a quantitative data analysis technique (Saunders et al., 2009). The rationale for using a mono method was based on resource restrictions. The author had considerable timing constraints, owing to the fact that this research was carried out in conjunction with a full-time job, and issues relating to the population. The population from which the sample was selected was very restrictive in size due to the phenomenon being studied and the fact that the researcher had to recruit industry professionals that engaged in emotional branding practices in the not-for-profit landscape.

The author had a variety of options available for data collection purposes. Focus groups are used by researchers who are studying a topic that is clearly defined and when interactive discussion between the participants is seen as being beneficial (Saunders et al., 2009). The author rejected focus groups as a means of collecting data because she didn’t want participants to influence each other’s answers. The researcher wanted rich data that detailed personal experiences in the workplace and interviewees may not have been very forthcoming with information if there were other people in the room that worked for competitors. The author also had the option to use questionnaires. Questionnaires are often used to measure opinions, facts, attitudes or behaviours (Saunders et al., 2009). The author rejected this method of data collection because the data collected through this means may not be as descriptive as interview answers.
4.5 Interviews

Interviews can be highly structured where standardised questions are used for each participant or they can take the form of an unstructured, informal conversation (Saunders et al., 2009). Qualitative research interviews can be divided into three different styles: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews or in-depth interviews (Saunders et al., 2009; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The author decided to use interviews as opposed to questionnaires as it's very difficult to convey emotion in a questionnaire and the phenomenon being analysed is emotional branding.

It's possible to differentiate between the different types of interviews based on the nature of interaction between the researcher and interviewees. They can be carried out on a one-to-one basis by conducting face to face interviews or via electronic means. Interviews can take many forms and these are summarised in figure 7 below (Saunders et al., 2009).

![Figure 7. Forms of Interviews. Source: Saunders et al., (2000, p321).](image)

Structured interviews use identical questions for each interview and are known as interviewer-administered questionnaires. They are used to collect quantifiable data and are therefore only suitable for quantitative research (Saunders et al., 2009). This research is qualitative so the author only considered semi-structured and unstructured interviews for this study.

Semi-structured and in-depth interviews are classed as non-standardised and are known as 'qualitative research interviews' (King, 2004). When these approaches are being used the
interviewer often has a list of themes and objectives that need to be covered in an interview as opposed to having a list of set questions. This enables the interviewer to omit some questions in particular interviews and change the order of questions depending on the flow of questions. Additional questions can also be added if a researcher needs to explore the research objectives further (Saunders et al., 2009). This aspect of data collection is important when the aim of the research piece is to understand the opinions and attitude of individuals in an organisation or industry (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). Using an unstructured interview technique requires a researcher to have strong interview skills. The author had little experience conducting interviews and found the pre-planning required for this interview form to be extremely beneficial in improving her interview skills. For these reasons, the author decided to conduct one to one, face-to-face interviews, semi-structured interviews with industry professionals in order to gain a deep understanding of current emotional branding techniques in the not-for-profit industry.

4.6 Research Design
4.6.1 Interview Questions
The theory surrounding emotional branding was discussed at length in chapter 2 of this research and this theory guided the development of interview questions. A purposive sampling technique was selected for the unstructured interviews that the author carried out. When this sampling technique is selected key themes need to be identified before carrying out the primary data collection (Saunders et al., 2009). For the purpose of this study, the author identified the following themes:

- The digital landscape
- Best practise - Emotional branding
- Consumer brand relationships

Saunders et al., (2009) noted that the most important thing to do in the literature review stage is to critique existing literature so research gaps can be identified. These gaps can then act as a guide. The author identified a number of gaps during the literature review stage and used these gaps to guide interview question development. The gaps identified were:

- Gap 1: No existing research on emotional branding in a digital landscape
- Gap 2: Lack of literature on digital brand building in charity sector
Gap 3: A huge gap in academic literature relating to the question of why consumers seek brand relationships.

The author created interview questions that acted as a guide during the interview process. These questions were edited occasionally during the process due to the conversation flow between the interviewer and interviewee. A purposive sampling technique was adopted therefore the objectives need to be covered during the interview process (Saunders et al., 2009). The objectives were the primary guide for the development of the questions and are outlined below:

- Identify the key factors in building a strong digital emotional brand
- To study emotional branding and best practises in a not-for-profit organisation
- Explore why consumers seek brand relationships with not-for-profit organisations

Each question was designed so that it directly linked to an objective.

The primary research objective of this study was to explore how marketing practitioners build emotional brands via digital channels in the not-for-profit industry. In order to conduct this research, interview questions (Appendix A) were created to closely examine the factors that affect emotional branding.

4.5.2 Industry Leader Interviews

The author developed a schedule of questions, however due to the nature of the interviews, the order was not always sequential. The initial questions aimed to establish rapport, often directly referring to the interviewee’s job, and helped to make the interviewees feel at ease. The questions called for descriptive answers and the interviewer avoided using leading questions. The interviewer adopted active listening techniques and used a recording device to record the interview process. The interviews were transcribed at a later date and no names were recorded to protect the anonymity of the interviewees. Due to this, the author was left with a large body of rich information for analysis.
The purpose of analysing emotional branding within not-for-profit organisations is to allow organisations who fall into this category to improve their marketing communications by utilising emotional branding. The research design has been outlined and the data collection methods have been fully explained so the author will move onto discussing sampling.

4.6 Sample

The opinions of marketing practitioners who work or have worked in the not-for-profit sector in Ireland are extremely relevant for this research. The appropriate participants for this research consist of a specific group of people who are industry professionals that have used emotional branding techniques at some point in their careers.

Data collection for this research study took the form of unstructured interviews. These interviews were used to gain meaningful insights into emotional branding practices currently being used by industry professionals in the not-for-profit sector. The sample was quite small however, this gave the author adequate time to conduct in-depth interviews with each respondent. The result of this was that the primary data, once transcribed, became a rich source of data. In this section the author will discuss the sampling techniques used and the sample size.

4.6.1 Sampling Technique

Sampling techniques offer a range of methods to help reduce the amount of data that needs to be collected. This is done through the use of sub-group of the population as opposed to using all possible elements. There are two types of sampling, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability or representative sampling means that the probability of a case being selected from the population is equal for all cases and is known. The opposite is true for non-probability sampling because the probability of a case being selected from the population is not known (Saunders et. al., 2009). Figure 8 below illustrates the various sampling techniques available to researchers:
This study is exploring emotional brand building in a digital landscape with an emphasis on the not-for-profit sector. Gathering opinions from industry experts and marketing professionals on this topic was of paramount importance. Non-probability sampling is more straightforward than probability sampling and is less time consuming (Baker, 2001). The author choose non-probability sampling due to these reasons.

Out of the non-probability techniques Saunders et al., (2009) outlined above in Figure 8 the author thought that purposive sampling was the most suitable for this research. Purposive sampling allows researchers to use their judgement to select cases that best answers the research questions and meets the objectives. Purposive sampling was selected due to the fact that the researcher was working with very small samples (Saunders et. al., 2009).

### 4.6.2 Determining the sample size

Saunders et al., (2009) stated that when a researcher adopts a non-probability sampling approach to research, the issue of sample size is ambiguous and open to interpretation. Unlike probability sampling there are no set rules and the sample size is dependent on the research question and objectives (Patton, 2002).

Saunders et al., (2009) argues that in some instances it may be possible to collect and analyse data from every possible group member by using a census however, he noted that this is rarely the case. Census data was not suitable for this research because of the sub-objectives.
and research question. The author used small samples and conducted in-depth interviews because of the interpretivist nature of the research.

The aim of this research was to identify key factors for successful emotional brand building, elicit best practises for brand building in the not-for profit landscape, explore consumer brand relationships and investigate why consumers were drawn to emotional brands. Expert opinions and ideas about a specific aspect of branding were required resulting in the population size becoming small in size. The author has worked in marketing for over four years and has built up a substantial number of contacts in the industry. The author approach over 20 different potential participants however, when the topic of the study was disclosed, a very small number of them were knowledgeable in the area of emotional branding. A sample size of five was selected and participants were strategically selected so those sampled understood and had industry knowledge of the research questions being posed. In order to ascertain whether they would have sufficient knowledge, a pre-interview over the phone was conducted. Participants were selected based on the quality of these discussions. Henry (1990) stated that one of the benefits of having a smaller sample size is that it allows researchers to collect information that is more detailed and in some instances can increase the overall accuracy of results.

4.7 Data Analysis

The interviews were audio-transcribed using a phone and later transcribed by the author so the data could be analysed. All interviews were treated as a separate, single entity and were then crossed-analysed against other interview transcriptions. In order to ensure confidentiality, the participant details including their name and job title were removed from the transcripts and they were allocated a number. Table 2 provides a brief overview of the interview participants.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Overview of Interview Participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Years in the industry</td>
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<td>Participant One</td>
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<td>Participant Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Three</td>
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Data collection and analysis is interactive in nature which allows researchers to identify important themes, relationships and patterns as you collect data (Saunders et al., 2009). The data analysis was conducted after the data had been collected.

The data was managed by the qualitative data analysis software QSR Nvivo 10. Qualitative data is non-standardised and complex in nature. Due to this the data needed to be condensed (summarised) and grouped (categorised) to allow meaningful analysis to be carried out (Saunders et al., 2009). Coded categories were identified by reviewing interviews and breaking them down into recurring themes. Coding was used to condense the data into manageable sections. There was a high level of compatibility between the research objectives and the themes that emerged from the data indicating that the key research questions had been adequately addressed.

4.8 Limitations
The methodology chosen by the author for this research has a number of limitations associated with it. These limitations include:

- There is a potential for researcher bias as the subjective feeling of the author may have influenced this research.

- The results can't be generalised to a wider population because they apply to only one group, marketers in the not-for-profit sector in Ireland.

- Case study research has no systematic procedures and therefore has no methodological guidelines (Yin, 2009).

- The author had limited experience with data collection and interviewing training was not readily available.
• The sampling process lacked randomisation.

• The sample size of the group selected for interview may be considered to be too small. The author experienced difficulty when recruiting participants for interview because of the small number of not-for-profit industry professionals in Ireland who worked in marketing as opposed to fundraising. Often industry professionals who work in fundraising have marketing knowledge, however, they didn't have the specific branding experience necessary for this research. This issue vastly reduced the size of the population.

• Resource issues including significant time restrictions were an issue with this research. The author undertook this research alongside working full-time therefore timing issues were a major constraint.

• A significant lack of literature exists on the area of emotional branding. When exploring the objective of best practices in emotional branding, this became a barrier.

Efforts have been made by the researcher to mitigate the limitations outlined above while retaining the study's integrity. One example of this is that the author interviewed one industry professional that worked in a leading advertising agency. He had worked with private clients and not-for-profit organisations. His input was invaluable despite the fact that he indirectly worked with not-for-profit organisations.

4.9 Ethical Considerations
The author acknowledges that ethical considerations apply to this research. Ethics are defined as the 'norms and standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others’ (Cooper & Schindler, 2008, p34). When conducting research, ethics specifically refers to the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of the research participants and those who affected by the research (Saunders et al., 2009).

Saunders et al., (2009) identified a number of key ethical issues. These issues are outlined and discussed with reference to this specific study:
Privacy of participants: All participants were granted anonymity. The interviews were recorded using a phone and later transcribed. No names were used in the files and they were titled Interview One, Interview Two etc.

Participation is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw from the research process at any stage.

Consent of participants and the possibility of deception. Consent isn't a straightforward matter. For example if someone agrees to take part in a set data collection method, this doesn’t imply consent about the way data is provided and is subsequently used. Confidentiality assurance will help develop a deeper understanding about the nature of consent the participant is entering into. The author sought the informed consent of all participants prior to commencing data collection. Figure 9 below illustrates the nature of participant consent (Saunders et al., 2009).

![Figure 9. The nature of participant consent. Source: Saunders et al., (2009, p190)](image)

Confidentiality of data and protection of participant’s anonymity: Confidentiality with regards to participants was agreed prior to commencing the data collection. The paper will be embargoed on all public platforms.

Participant’s reaction to data collection: Interviews have the potential to be particularly intrusive and this can invoke a stressful feeling for participants. The author ensured the location of the interviews and the content being discussed wouldn't cause undue stress for any of the interviewees. The venue was picked by the individual being interviewed and
all questions were sent to the participants before conducting the interview. Participants were made aware that they could stop the interview at any stage.

- The effect that data usage, analysis and reporting has on participants: The participants in this study were fully informed about the nature of this research and how the information that they provided would be used.

- The objectivity and behaviour of the researcher: The author ensured to the best of her ability that all participants were comfortable with the data collection process. When conducting interviews the researcher informed participants that they could rescind the data they provided at any stage and ensured that all communication was confidential. No deception was carried out as the author fully disclosed all information relating to this research.
5. Findings

This chapter will provide a summary of the primary research and it will be divided between the four objectives of this study. A qualitative method was used to analyse the data and themes for each objective are identified and discussed. A discussion of the implications of this research and recommendations for further research will be discussed in chapter 7.

5.1 Objective 1

“Identify the key factors in building a strong digital emotional brand.”

In order to identify the key factors necessary to build a strong digital emotional brand participants were questioned on their experiences with emotional brand building. Key factors for successful digital emotional brand building emerged. In the methodology section of this research the author noted that the data was analysed and grouped according to dominant themes that emerged in the interviewees responses. The table below outlines the relevant themes, which are the factors that affect emotional brand building.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Interview Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding the customer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistent Messaging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Frequency</td>
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5.1.1 Theme: Engagement
Throughout each interview, participants noted that the digital landscape allowed them to engage with consumers in a way that traditional media didn't allow. Participant four stated: ' [The digital landscape] allows you to build an emotional connection with consumers. That emotion will allow you to have dialogue with them. Dialogue can be two-way; it doesn't have to be “will you take a survey like traditional media?”. It could be we are having a conversation”. Participant two echoed this statement and highlighted the importance of having two-way communication. Participant two stated: “Engage people. Particularly in digital, I think it has to be a two-way communication process built up over time rather than having the traditional push strategy where you just kind of spew stuff out and hope there’s an emotional connection”. Participant five added: “Digital in particular has allowed [marketing] to become an exchange because digital means that it's always nearly a one-on-one, two-way conversation”.

Participant one noted that by building brand communities, brands can deepen engagement. Participant one advised that he has “built a very active community [of] 3.5million Facebook fans across different countries, languages and channels. If you put up any post on our pages you are pretty much guaranteed up to 10,000 likes, comments and shares. That's a significant community. You get a whole stream of comments underneath a post so if someone posts a comment saying “where is this?” you have a whole community answering aspect and an engagement aspect. To me, there's a lot in that in terms of building platforms where people can have engagement over time”. Participant three agreed with this theory and added that “one of the biggest benefits with digital brand building is the fact that you can engage with your customers on a regular basis and build brand awareness”.

All of the participants interviewed agreed that engaging consumers was much easier to do on digital media than traditional media. They noted that two-way conversations were much more engaging and that brand communities were a great way to connect with consumers. In the literature, the ideas and views presented by the interviewees were mirrored. Traditional media resulted in a one-way communication flow and new media facilitated two-way communication. The changing landscape encourage collaboration, allow ideas and information to be shared in real time and deepen consumer relationships (Kaufman & Horton,
The next theme addresses interviewees opinion about how creativity affects digital brand building.

**5.1.2 Theme: Creativity**

One factor that strengthened emotional brand building for interviewees was how creative they could be in their campaign execution. Participant one described how one brand, Tourism Ireland, leveraged the work done by other brands to inject creativity into Tourism Ireland and strengthen their brand digitally. Participant one stated: “Game of Thrones and Star Wars are big multibillion investments. [The creators produce] emotionally engaging film and they happen to film bits of them in Ireland. We can now leverage their emotions that they're building up with their audiences using digital techniques. Our campaign for Game of Thrones uses the tagline 'Jump into Northern Ireland Game of Thrones territory'. That's an example where we are injecting creativity into social media at the end of the shows every week”.

Participant three also gave a description about how creativity positively impacts the brand experience for the services user: “Memorable brand experiences simply cannot happen without creativity. In Make-A-Wish we see every day when the wish of a child is granted. It’s the little things that they remember, the hamper with their favourite coloured nail polish in it, the limo which only has their favourite drink in it. Everything is personalised in a creative manner to make sure the child has a unique, memorable experience”.

Creativity in digital brand building can result in financial success for organisations. Participant two provided an example of a company who created a programme specifically targeting their key market: “There was a very good example of a brand called Julep that create Nail Varnish for women in the USA. They had a marketing maven programme which was designed like a community. They invited their most rabbit consumers to engage with the company in terms of design. They got them to contribute to the design process, branding process and it was massively successful. When they launched their nail varnish, they had solved the problems these women had highlighted and they had natural customers. They sold out straight away”.

Participant two spoke about a not-for-profit brand that thought outside the box to develop a creative fundraising initiative: ‘They gave out the Trócaire boxes, you were encouraged to throw a few quid in. It was very contemporary and relevant back that but I’m not sure it would work as well today’.

All of the participants interviewed agreed that creating content, that is visually impactful, is a great way to create a strong emotional brand. Participant three stated: “A visual story is a great way to connect with the audience. Donors are busy and don’t have time to read a story. Videos give them all the content they need immediately. An organisation can capture consumer’s attention in an instant with a great, engaging photo”. Participant five said: “when you look at Concern or Save the Children the emotional brand works particularly well for them purely because they are one single image, one single piece of content or blog. One quote from someone has the ability to create emotions in the consumer that a bottle of water would never do”.

Creativity in marketing results in the production of original content. On an analytical level, creativity creates strong content that generates higher rankings for brands. From a consumer perspective, it inspires authenticity and faith in a brand. Creativity is greatly valued by generation X as it can transform a piece of content into engaging stories that can result in increased sales (Gobe, 2013).

5.1.3 Theme: Understanding the consumer
The interviewees expressed a strong organisation need to conduct research on their target market prior to engaging in emotional branding. When interviewees were asked about best practises for emotional brand building digitally, almost all of them expressed that understanding the consumer was of paramount importance. Participant one stated that the first step was “to understand your audience. You need to consider the emotion that you want them to go through. Again you're right back to your brand identity and your brand values”. Participant four echoed this statement: “I think [the most important thing is to] understand the person that you’re talking to. That's your start point. The consumer is still at the heart of your business and at the heart of what you do. You have to understand that person, even in the digital world”.
Participant three commented that “[understanding the customer] is one of the most important aspects of digital brand building. Often, marketers define their target customers by demographic information but to really understand your customer you need to really understand the things that matter to your customers”. Then interviewee continued by offering ideas about how a marketer could do this: “[one way to do this is] to use social media as a research tool. Social media allows marketers to observe commentary consumers make about their daily lives. Platforms like Facebook should be used for more than just promoting your brand. Another way is to conduct an online survey. This allows you to can create customized multiple-choice questionnaires and learn how your customers think and feel about your brand and their experience as a customer. We did this for our national fundraising day, Wish Day, to get feedback and advice for next year and it worked really well”.

Participant five went on to offer a different perspective and inferred that by listening to your consumers and understanding their needs, product faults can be eliminated: “There was a very good example of a brand called Julep that create Nail Varnish for women in the USA. They invited their most rabbit consumers to engage with the company in terms of design. They got them to contribute to the design process, branding process so when they launched, they had solved the problems these women had highlighted and they had natural customers”.

Two interviewees stated that consumers are more complex in today’s society which can make them more difficult to understand. Participant four said that “You have a much more sophisticated consumer [nowadays]. They understand an awful lot more about what’s going on”. Participant five added to this stating: “I think consumers are much more cynical now than before. People now can spot a copy strategy or a brand strategy at one hundred meters. They’re much more cynical, they’re much more informed and they know where to go”.

In order to create an emotional brand attachment, marketers need to clearly demonstrate an understanding or their target markets ambitions, dreams and lifestyles. This is the only way to convince a consumer that their brand will enrich their lives (So et al., 2013; Tompson et al., 2005). People want to purchase goods from organisations that are responsive to their needs and they strive to form relationships with brands that they feel understand them. Smart
consumers will discriminate between brands that understand them and reflect their values and brands that don’t (Gobe, 2013).

5.1.4 Theme: Consistent Messaging
Establishing consistency throughout all of your brand's marketing communications can result in increased brand recognition. Brand inconsistency can confuse consumers and have a lasting impact on brand awareness (Gobe, 2013). Participant five discussed the importance of consistency on digital platforms stating: “When you're thinking about digital platforms, YouTube and Facebook and Twitter and Instagram, to make them successful you have to be consistent. You need to make sure that what you're doing is you're going right back to your brand identity and you're going right back to your brand values. For example, when we used Leah, our little girl from the Early Learning Initiative, we created a YouTube video and then out of that we tool stills from the video for Instagram. We would have taken quotes out of that for Facebook or Twitter so everything is consistent along the line. Everything leads back to the same message and story all the time”.

Participant one also mentioned the importance of consistency and stated that “being consistent over time pays off. Consistency in communication – what you're trying to convey over time is an important bit of branding full stop. But of course it doesn't have to take long”. Participant three echoed this sentiment: “You need to be consistent in your messaging at all times. The benefits of this is that you will become more recognisable, your brand will feel more dependable and your customers will feel like they know you. Consistent branding is reassuring. Marketers should apply their brand guidelines at all times. Communications should have a ‘one look, one voice’ feel”.

5.1.5 Theme: Communication Frequency
When trying to build a strong emotional brand digitally, almost all of the interviewees stated that the frequency of communication was key. Participant one stated that one of the benefits of digital marketing was that “there is a frequency of engagement that's way more accessible than traditional media”. Participant two added to this statement saying “digital media can be a great way to engage in emotional branding because it really allows you to hyper target who you’re connecting with and instantaneously communicate on a regular basis”.
Participant four warned people about the dangers of excessive communication: “The problem might be that someone take emotional branding and say yes fine, we have access to all of these customers, let's write to them every single day and give them today's deal. Let's pepper them with communication. I don't think something like that would work unless you are Groupon”.

Participant one stated: “The biggest challenge in trying to build any emotional brand is your frequency of communication which is tied to your budget. We've had a 40% budget cut over the last 7 years. We're not on tv in Britain or the U.S, our two biggest markets. We should be but we can't afford to be. That's part of the reason we're only seven. We haven't been able to afford to do enough communications frequently enough to establish an emotional connection with consumers”.

In the next section the findings in relation to the second objective of this paper are outlined.

5.2 Objective 2
“To study emotional branding and best practises in a not for profit organisation”.

Not-For-Profit organisations are increasingly trying to emulate the money generating practises adopted by private corporations (Maude, 1997). In order to maximise returns, charities are encouraged to engage in branding exercises that will help them develop a sound image to enhance the number of financial donations from the public that they generate, increase the ability of the charity to influence consumer preferences and elicit action from external audiences (Sargent, 1999; Michaelidou et al., 2015). This section will explore emotional brand building for not-for-profit organisations.

Interview participants were asked questions about how they built an emotional brand in the marketplace and what advice would they give you other not-for-profit organisations who want to engage in the practise. Their answers were analysed and grouped according to the themes that emerged. The table below outlines these themes.
5.2.1 Theme: Storytelling

The literature says that emotional branding is driven by consumer insights and involves forming relationships with consumers by using a storytelling approach to marketing. By adopting this approach, meaningful bonds can be formed with consumers (Robert, 2004). All of the interview respondents expressed that storytelling was a necessary part of building a strong emotional brand.

Participant five stated that “storytelling is a really good way of ensuring that you're telling the story of your brand effectively. Storytelling is a huge part of emotional branding and it's a huge way to connect with consumer’s emotions. [Brands need to] develop consistent storytelling, and each touch point must convey a strong consumer emotion”. Participant three provided an example of the impact that adopting a storytelling approach has on consumers: “The wishes that we grant to children with life-threatening illness sell themselves essentially. The stories are so powerful and personal. This tends to prompt individuals to give funds to Make-A-Wish in the hope they’ll never need our services”.

Participant three provided an example of how storytelling, when done correctly, can be extremely emotive for consumers: “People relate to life stories, much more so than content that promotes a product. A great example of this is the Dogs Trust advert, ‘Special Someone’. The ad shows a dog befriend a little woollen teddy (man) who he spends all his time with. After imagining what it would be like to have a real owner to play with and look after him, the dog’s dream comes true. The dolls real-life human counterpart arrives to take him home. The video ends showing another dog waiting hopefully next to their own woollen doll. It got a lot of attention and it’s fantastic. Are people necessarily going to go out and adopt dogs? No, however everyone knows the brand and the reach and awareness effects were amazing”.

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<th>Table 4: Objective Two Interview Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Story-telling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define The Emotion</td>
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However, one participant one highlighted how the digital landscape has made storytelling more challenging: “These days, video and Facebook timelines give you three seconds to absorb something before you scroll up the page and brands are trying to use those three seconds to build communications. You don’t have time to tell a story always. At least, not in a single piece of communication”. Participant one went onto say that storytelling isn’t a necessity for emotional brand building: “branding can be supported through such communication activity that’s not storytelling”.

Storytelling is particularly useful when an organisation is going through a rebranding process. Participant four provided details of her experience with one charity: “When we were rebranding ELI, a charity that’s run out of the National College of Ireland, we felt that the brand needed to be repositioned within the industry. What we done was we went right back to the very start and we reinvestigated the entire brand message, mission, vision and values. When we were creating the emotional brand everything that we done was grounded back into this brand identity and these brand values. We also had to ensure that we had a different sort of emotional values that set us apart from others within the area. We created the new brand identity and we created the emotional brand in the storytelling that we felt was appropriate for the consumers. Everything related back to how we had helped Leah [an ELI service user] and how [donors] had helped Leah because of the donations that we received. They were also being reminded of this child-like sort of approach through the colours that we used, the fonts that we used, the tone of voice that we had. These were all triggers in the mind of the consumer. And through our storytelling again it was case studies, videos, digital was used a lot”.

Participant one stated that public relations was a great tool for charities and not-for-profit organisations to tell brand stories when funding was an issue: “Charities like tourism brands have a very broad target audience. Most of the benefit we generated from Star Wars was because of the publicity surrounding the fact that it was filmed in Ireland. The international media covered this. We did lots to try and encourage this story, including sending press kits and press releases to them”.
One of the participants mentioned the concept of animism whereby human qualities are transferred to a brand by using identifiable characters. The characters have the ability to convey emotions (Fournier, 1998). Participant two stated that Marlboro, a tobacco brand, told their brand story through the use of a character, the Marlboro cowboy: ‘They took this notion of an icon, a Marlboro cowboy, and developed an emotional brand around that. It was less about the brand and more about the cowboy and what the cowboy represented’.

5.2.2 Theme: Define the emotion
In order to build a successful emotional brand, you must decide which emotion you want to use. Defining your target markets core emotional need and communicating this consistently are key aspects of emotional branding (Gobe, 2013).

All interview participants agreed that defining the emotion was important. Participant one stated: “Thinking about what the message is, and before this being clear on the emotion we want to illicit is very important. Coca Cola are a very strong brand and are quite clear on their emotion, happiness. When you are clear on what you want and where the emotion sits on the brand proposition you can invest in communications that can convey those emotions”. Participant three had a similar perspective: “Deciding on the emotion is key and then defining your audience’s emotional need, what do they need to hear, is important. Then emotional attachments can be formed”. Participant four stated: “I think a charity in 2016 has to be absolutely clear on what it stands for. It has also got to be very, very clear on what it offers consumers”.

Participant added to the discussion by stating that it’s important that your “customers have a positive experience with your brand. I think when you’re picking an emotion it should be a positive one. Marketing is changing in that consumers are now making consumption decisions based on how they feel about a company and its products or services. It’s really important that you do research on your target market before picking your emotion to ensure you pick the correct one”.

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Participant five warned marketers to be careful when picking an emotion and to make sure they do their research right before selecting one: “It can't be rushed because if you rush it you're going to get it wrong. The likelihood is that if you're going to get them to trigger an action, you must first trigger some sort of emotion with it. You can't rush that because if you rush getting them to trigger an emotion you probably had the wrong emotion”.

Participant one gave an example of how his brand, Tourism Ireland, used humour in advertising to create an emotional branding campaign: “It was the last Olympics in London and we couldn’t do anything that mentioned the word Olympics because it was banned. All the newspapers were predicting chaos and saying the tubes will be full and it’s going to be a disaster. We came up with this ‘escape the madness campaign’. We filmed two guys, it was a three-minute piece. One was challenging the other to say he could get to Ireland and have a pint quicker than the other guy could get into the city centre through the chaos, get his latte and get to the office. It intrigued people in terms of trying to relate to something they had seen in newspapers at the time. There’s plenty of humour throughout it. At the end, people had the chance to escape or embrace the madness. I feel it nailed the joy and the fun aspect, relating to something that people could relate to which is always important in term of triggering emotion for them”.

In the next section the findings in relation to the third objective of this paper are outlined.

5.3 Objective 3

“Explore why consumers seek brand relationships with not-for-profit organisations”.

Consumers are increasingly looking for brands that provide emotional value for them (So et al., 2013). Consumers have the ability to form, build and maintain emotionally charged relationships with brands (Malär et al., 2011; So et al., 2013). Understanding the components of these relationships is important because consumers typically only emotionally attach to a limited number of brands (Fournier, 1998). Interviewees were questioned on why brands try and build relationships and what draws consumers to brands. The table below describes the themes that emerged as a result of the interview questions.
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<th>Table 5: Objective Three Interview Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
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<td>Relatability</td>
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<td>Responsive to their needs</td>
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5.3.1 Theme: Sense of Community
Brand relationships help to foster a sense of community among consumers. They facilitate deep discussions of shared interest and unite people in mutual camaraderie. (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Participant two discusses a well-known brand that has a strong legion of dedicated followers: “Harley Davidson is a very, very strong iconic heritage and there’s huge emotion attached to it that has been developed over time. I think communicates can work when there are a group of people that are heavily, emotionally invested in your brand in the first place. The brand has a large number of loyal customers and the online forums builds unity and a sense of community”. Participant four recounted a personal experience with a brand that fosters a sense of community: “I spoke to somebody at a funeral a short time ago. This was a gentleman who after his wife died had joined Alone. Alone is a very, very interesting charity in that it was founded by a fireman that came across a lot of people that had no company. He sought to get them that additional level of company. He did that very, very clearly throughout his short life. So much so that even one of the carers, ‘friends’, of the persons whose funeral I went to was there just to keep him company”.

Participant three agreed that consumers try to build relationships with brands so they can feel part of a community: “I think online communities are fantastic as they allow people to feel part of a group. My Starbucks Idea is a fantastic example of this. It’s basically a suggestion box where customers put forward ideas for the brand. In the past 6 years, the microsite has led to the implementation of nearly 300 ideas from digital tipping to free Wi-Fi”.
One of the benefits of the digital revolution is that the landscape fosters a sense of community. Digital platforms allow users to form virtual friendships and connections with likeminded people (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Participant one said they heavily invest in “building social communities where people can engage with the brand. We have built a very active, significant community. You get a whole stream of comments underneath a post so if someone posts a comment saying “where is this?” You have a whole community answering aspect and an engagement aspect. This builds up the relationship.

5.3.2 Theme: Relatability
The existing literature on emotional branding argues that consumers aim to form relationships with brands that they feel understand them. Smart consumers will discriminate between brands that understand them and reflect their values and brands that don’t (Gobe, 2013). Participant five expanded on this theory and said that consumers experience brands “through their own sort of life experiences”. They connect with brands that are relatable and remind them of certain times in their lives. She stated that if “they're thinking back to their own childhood; they are going to become a lifelong advocate of your brand”. Participant two echoed this and used an example of a children charity to demonstrate this: “If you’re a parent and see a young child going through a horrendous situation like with Make-A-Wish you can develop emotional connect that way, or appeal to a parent’s sense of self-preservation for their own children. There has to be relevance”.

Participant four discussed one of the world’s biggest brands stating that “everybody believes that they have a direct relationship with Apple even though outside of a retail store when do you really get to talk to Apple”. Participant two alluded to the fact that some brands hijack a certain emotion for consumer's: “Guinness has a very strong emotional attachment for Irish people. The Irish diaspora have a very strong connection with the brand as it represents ‘Irish-ness’ abroad”. When a brand becomes relatable from a consumer perspective, they increase the likelihood that consumers will form relationships with them.

One issues that emerged in the interviews is that consumers are more likely to listen to each other than take advice from a brand. Participant four highlighted this issue and stated: “Consumers are now telling other consumers what to do. You’re a lot more likely to read what somebody who is visiting Sicily writes about holidaying in Sicily and what worked for
them and what didn’t and what hotels were nice and what weren't, than necessarily going to Fionn Davenport in the Irish Times”.

5.3.3 Theme: Responsive to their needs
Almost all of the interviewees stated that the strongest brands in the world right now are responsive to the needs of their target market. Participant five stated that “you need to meet a consumer’s needs. With a charity it's more than likely the feel-good factor. You want them to feel that they're making a difference”. Participant two stated that “brands have to be offering a genuine solution to a genuine problem”. He went on to warn business owners not to build something that “they think is really cool” and “spend the rest of their careers trying to convince consumers why they need it”. Products and services need to be developed based on a genuine gap in the market.

Participant four gave an example of an Irish not-for-profit organisation, Classical Arts Ireland, excelling in terms of responsiveness to the needs of their consumers. “The primary objective is to deliver live relays of opera and cultural events to audiences in Ireland. They don’t email their consumers every five minutes but what they then find that when they do email them that people read those. An example of this is last October when they gave a piece of wrong information on the starting time of an opera. They effectively had to write to people and say that it’s not starting at 6 o’clock it’s starting at 5. They wrote to everybody. There were about 1200 people that attended the various screenings, and there were only one or two complaints”.

Participant offered a personal perspective on why brands should be responsive to the needs of their consumers: “I think one of the main reasons a consumer tries to form a relationship with a brand is that they think they will be more responsive to their needs if they connect with them. For example, if I have an issue with my IPhone, I would reach out to Apple via social media channels but I would expect them to solve the problem quickly. If they didn’t, I would consider moving to a competitor. I also think company offerings need to evolve with my needs. For example, five years ago I didn’t care about having a camera on my phone but now I wouldn’t even consider buying a phone that doesn’t have a camera”.
Participant five spoke about how to build a successful emotional brand and said that it’s paramount that a charity “meets the consumer’s needs. With a charity it's more than likely the feel-good factor. You want them to feel that they're making a difference. This then has to be put back into your brand values and your brand promise”.

Interviewees gave examples of brands that they think are excelling in the emotional branding space. One company, Apple, emerged as the leading organisation in a number of the interviews. Participant four speculated that this was due to the fact that they were extremely sensitive to the needs of their target market: “People want to work with Apple, people like working with apple, they are very proud of it. The level of help that they will give you whether it’s a banal question on how to set your eye watch or a very, very detailed question, they tend to be very good. Apple has understood that sophistication and level of knowledge required by consumers and they haven’t really cut corners on it at all”.

In order to be responsive to the needs of consumers, organisations need to keep on top of emerging trends. Participant four described how one organisation he worked with, Kellogg’s did this effectively: “I did a lot of work over a lot of years with Kellogg’s, the cereal people. They were actually very, very good at picking which tool in the toolbox would well with a particular piece. During the 90's they saw that they had to build nutritional credentials with people. They worked very, very closely with the INDI, The Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute and they also chose very, very carefully which brands they chose for them. They chose high fibre brands like All Bran and All Bran was always the brand that was used in talking to nutritionists and the like. They would have pulled all of the academic groups together and brought the sameplace nice. They would have the chance to listen to people talking about best nutrition practices. There was no prompting or anything like that of Kellogg’s or Kellogg’s brands. It was purely that Kellogg’s were facilitating the exchange of ideas of scholars and participants in the area. That worked very well for them”.

Through these themes it is apparent that marketers need to engage in emotional branding practises to build strong brands.
5.4 Summary
In this chapter, the author explored the findings from the data collection process in relation to the research objectives. The themes were identified and discussed. The author will discuss the implications of the research findings in the next chapter and offer appropriate recommendations.
6. Discussion

Objective two of this study aimed to explore emotional branding and best practices in the not-for-profit landscape. Emotional branding helps brands create deep, intrinsic relationships with their consumers, helps them differentiate themselves from their competitors and reduces the risk of a consumer purchasing competitor brands. Evoking emotional responses from consumers requires marketing practitioners to develop insight based marketing approaches and engaging in social media networking is one way in which a brand can do this (Smart Insights, 2012).

The interviewees for this research endorsed the definition above but they also expressed a feeling that emotional branding wasn’t suitable for all products and services. Participant one stated that for some brands, like travel brands, emotional branding is easier to do because of the emotions associated with places you go on holiday. All products and services do not elicit emotions. The example of toothpaste was used to illustrate this point. Participant two echoed this view and argued that engaging in emotional branding for established brands that are well known can be beneficial however, it wouldn't benefit all brands. Appealing to a consumer’s self-interest is deemed more beneficial for some brands than emotional branding.

Despite carrying out extensive research on the topic of emotional branding, the author didn’t uncover any similar arguments in current academic literature. However, due to the strength of the arguments presented by the interviewees, the author agrees that emotional branding isn't suitable for all products and services especially brands that don't elicit any emotion when used.

Many of the participants interviewed for this research provided examples of strong emotional branding campaigns in an effort to identify best practices. Participant one discussed a hugely successful campaign called 'The Gathering'. The campaign targeted the Irish diaspora and pulled on their heartstrings which gave them an emotional advantage over their competitors. The campaign heavily focused on digital interactions with the public and a Facebook page was created with over 350,000 followers. The results of the campaign were astounding with over 5,000 events organised by communities, families and other groups across Ireland and over €170 million being generated as a direct result of the campaign (Miley, 2013). This campaign shows marketing practitioners how clearly defining your target market, defining
the emotional response you want to elicit and using digital media cleverly can dramatically increase the success of your campaign.

Objective three explores why consumers seek brand relationships with not-for-profit organisations. Gobe (2013) argued that emotional branding is more than a process or technique. It involves creating a strong, affectionate relationship between the brand and the consumer. Fournier (1998) conducted groundbreaking research on consumer brand relationships and argued that these relationships are formed on the basis of perceived goal compatibility as opposed to congruence between product attributes and personality trait images. The similarities between brand loyalty and brand relationship quality are identified, both constructs infer that the strength of the connection will predict the stability of the relationship over time. Fournier (1998) also created a new theoretical concept stating that brands have personality characteristics which are a set of personality trait inferences constructed by a consumer who repeatedly observes brand behaviour at the hand of the brand manager. This theory forces marketers to look at how marketing decisions shape the brand personality over time.

The majority of the interviewees agreed that consumer-brand relationships exist and that they can extremely beneficial or a brand in terms of loyalty and the development of 'brand advocates'. Participant five argued that if you connect with consumers on an emotional level and form relationships with them they can become 'lifelong advocates of your brand'. An opposing view was presented by another interviewee. Participant one argued that brands cannot truly have relationships with consumers unless they are a regular service provider. Fournier (1998) stated that relationships with brands are very similar to human relationships. However, participant one disagreed with this and stated that although a relationship can exist in one sense 'it's a contractual relationship'. He felt that 'brands can't really form relationships with customers'. What can be gauged from these results is that not all marketing practitioners are in agreement that relationships can be formed and fostered however, the vast majority feel that this is a possibility.

One of the biggest changes in the marketing landscape over the last few years is that consumers are now being advised by other consumers. This shift has been facilitated by the digital revolution, resulting in consumers having access to content that is generated by other consumers as opposed to organisations. Interviewees endorsed the findings of Sigala (2008)
who stated that the rapid growth of digital technologies, which facilitates two-way information communications, has generated an enormous number of online user generated content (UGC) particularly in the tourism industry (Sigala, 2008).

Objective one aims to identify the key factors in building a strong digital emotional brand. In order to have a strong brand online, quality written and visual content must be used. The content includes everything from graphics to website content and copy (Thirst Creative, 2015). The marketing practitioners who were interviewed for this study endorsed this opinion and agreed that investing in content was extremely important when trying to build a strong digital emotional brand.

Consistency on digital platforms is key and this point was reiterated by nearly all of the interview respondents. Participant three argued that all communications should have a ‘one look, one voice’ feel and that consistency increases recognition for consumers. Participant five added to this discussion by stating that although the digital platforms are all very different, all content must fit in with your brand identity and reinforce your brand values.

The main objective of this research was to explore emotional branding practises in the not-for-profit landscape in Ireland. It is clear from the findings of this paper that emotional branding has distinct advantages for not-for-profit organisations in Ireland.

6.1 Limitations and Successes

The author has tried to mitigate the limitations of this research however some still exist. The first limitation is the sample. The findings in this research are based on the views of a sample of relevant marketing practitioners as opposed to the views of all marketing practitioners in Ireland. This research was conducted by a part-time masters student who works full-time meaning that collecting data from the entire population wasn't feasible.

The second limitation involves the lack of credible literature on the topic of emotional branding. This hindered the author's ability to compare the results of the in-depth interviews to other relevant studies.

The author of this research is confident that all of the objectives of this study have been met. As previously mentioned, there is a considerable lack of theory on emotional branding but the
author feels that the existing theory has been developed in this study. By using a case study approach to research, the author can offer recommendations to industry professionals who would like to engage in emotional branding practices. Practical recommendations will be outlined in the next chapter.
7. Recommendations
The aim of emotional branding is to create brand attachment. In order to do this, marketers need to demonstrate that they understand their target market. Understanding the lifestyles, dreams and ambitions of consumers is the only way to convince consumers that the brand will enrich their lives. Before engaging in any form of branding, it is recommended that marketers conduct extensive research on their target market. This can be done in a variety of ways including observing consumers on social media and conducting surveys. Consumers purchase goods from organisations that are responsive to their needs and they will only form relationships with brands that they feel understand them. The author recommends that a new charity should carry out extensive research to identify their key donor base before spending funds on targeting consumers.

Marketers need to understand the importance of creating content that is creative. Creating content that is visually impactful is a great way to create a strong emotional brand and differentiate one brand from another. The author recommends investing in content that is high quality to help marketers build strong brands which will result in higher financial returns in the long term.

Emotional branding, when done correctly, is driven by consumer insights and involves forming relationships with consumers by using a storytelling approach to marketing. Marketing practitioners need to become excellent story-tellers if they want to build strong emotional brands. When narrating stories, it's recommended that the stories consistent and each touch point conveys a strong consumer emotion. Identifiable characters can be used to make stories more emotive.

It's recommended that before a campaign is executed, it's important to define the emotion that you want to elicit. Some brands, like Coca Cola are quite clear on their emotion, happiness and this helps them become more consistent. You can do this by analysing what your target markets emotional need is. For not-for-profit organisations, being clear on what consumers want to hear and see is vitally important. This process can't be rushed, because this increases the likelihood that the wrong emotion will be selected.

The marketing landscape is constantly evolving and consumers needs are also changing at a rapid pace. It is recommended that marketers consistently conduct research on their target
market to ascertain if they are meeting or exceeding their target markets needs. Within charitable organisations, you need to remind donors that they are making a difference in the lives of others and communicate this visually.

It's expected that these recommendations can help marketing practitioners build stronger emotional brands.

7.2 Recommendations for Further Research
There is a very small amount of research on emotional branding in the not-for-profit landscape. This paper identified that marketing practitioners see the benefit of engaging in this practise however, the author feels that the lack of academic literature hinders their knowledge. To complement the findings of this qualitative research, a wide range of areas could be explored in an effort to thinking and theory particularly around digital branding in the not-for-profit landscape. The author recommends that further research should be conducted on brands that are and aren't suitable for emotional branding campaigns. Also, the research on the not-for-profit landscape in Ireland is quite outdated. There have been a number of controversies in the industry so updating this research is of paramount importance.
8. Conclusion
This study set out to explore current emotional branding practises on digital channels with a specific focus on the not-for-profit environment in Ireland. Stemming from this, this research sought to uncover best practises in not-for-profit organisations and explore why consumers wanted to build brand relationships. Emotional branding literature was analysed and the importance of the practise was demonstrated.

To conduct this research, qualitative analysis was used and in-depth interviews were conducted to gather data from industry professionals who engaged in emotional branding. The results from the study support the need for more research to be conducted on emotional branding to fill the current gap in academic literature.

The study highlights the need for marketers to:
- Carry out extensive research on the needs of their target market before engaging in emotional branding.
- Invest in high-quality, creative content to help build a strong emotional brand and differentiate themselves from other brands.
- Become excellent story-tellers in order to build strong emotional brands.
- Define the emotion that you want to elicit.
- Consistently conduct research on their target market to ascertain if they are meeting or exceeding the needs of their evolving target market.
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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Themes
The digital landscape
Best practise - Emotional branding
Customer relationships

1. Emotional branding
The literature says emotional branding is driven by consumer insights and involves forming relationships with consumers through the means of storytelling (Robert, 2004). When emotional branding is done correctly a brand should engage consumers on the level of senses and emotions (Gobe, 2013).
Q. Do you agree with the definition above?
Q. What is your definition of emotional branding?

2. Consumer relationships
Q. How do you connect with customers and ensure they are connecting to your brand?
Q. How do you motivate consumers to connect with emotional brands?

3. Best Practise - Emotional branding
Do you feel you have built an image of an emotional brand in the marketplace?
If yes:
Q. How do you build an emotional brand based on what you have just told me?
Q. Does it take long?
Q. Is it difficult?
Q. How would you recommend a brand new charity could build an emotional brand from scratch?

4. Digital
Marketers have long since recognised the power and potential of marketing in a digital landscape. Social Media offers limitless branding potential and has overtaken a lot of the traditional marketing methods. The benefits include two-way interaction with consumers, unique consumer insights about lifestyles and preferences and customised one-to-one messaging. Not-For-Profit organisations heavily utilise digital channels because they're cheaper, accessible and all one-to-one communication.

Q. Do you think the digital landscape helps marketers build emotional brands or not?
Q. Does it make emotional branding more difficult/challenging?
Q. How do you think you can portray an emotional brand on digital platforms?