ENTERTAINMENT BRAND EQUITY ELEMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS:
STAR WARS AND HARRY POTTER AS A MODEL FOR, AND THE SURVIVAL OF
GAME OF THRONES

JENNIFER C. MAHON

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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Jennifer Chang Coupland
Clinical Associate Professor of Marketing
Thesis Supervisor and Honors Adviser

Franklin Carter
William A. Donan Clinical Professor of Marketing
Thesis Reader

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.
Why were *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* so successful and why have their brands spanned decades of success? To answer this question, an empirical study of iconic entertainment brand elements and brand lives is conducted by applying Kevin Keller’s Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Pyramid and Susan Fournier’s brand relationship model to entertainment brands including movies, books, television shows or a combination of these brands. Based on Fournier’s brand relationship forms and the analysis of them in regards to entertainment brands, a new theoretical relationship form, “Long Distance Best Friendship,” was developed for iconic brands. Keller’s CBBE Pyramid and this new relationship form were then applied to the *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* brands. This analysis yielded key marketing implications about the longevity and success of iconic entertainment brands. In turn, these implications were then utilized to examine how *Game of Thrones*, the newest pop culture phenomenon, could potentially increase the longevity of its brand’s life.
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Finally, I dedicate my thesis to the fans of the great entertainment brands discussed in my paper, and I hope you enjoy it.
Chapter 1

Introduction: Entertainment Brands, Brand Equity and Brand Relationships

The term “entertainment brand” could imply a multitude of connotations across various industries, franchises and organizations. This chapter defines an entertainment brand for the purpose of this paper as well as establishes the market leaders within this particular brand industry. Furthermore, this chapter will introduce the concepts of a strong brand and brand relationships, before discussing and applying them to entertainments brands.

Defining An Entertainment Brand: Books, Movies Television Shows or a Combination of these Brands

Current research utilizing the terms “entertainment” and “brand” are mainly focused on the concept of “brand entertainment.” Multiple studies link brand entertainment to brand strategies, such as product placement, which integrate products into a movie or television series (Lehu, 2007). Other studies define “brand entertainment” as brands entertaining consumers with contests, games, social media posts, videos and different experiences, in order to generate awareness and form relationships with their consumers (“Brand Entertainment: Brands play the world's stage,” 2003). In order to prevent confusion, it is imperative to understand that an “entertainment brand” is not synonymous with “brand entertainment.”

The definition of an entertainment brand, in the simplest terms, refers to brands or franchises within the entertainment industry. Multiple disciplines encompass the entertainment industry, including elements such as radio, publishing, merchandising, television, movies, music, sports, and amusement parks (Carson & Bonk, 1999). With so many elements of the
entertainment brand industry, brands range from large TV networks, such as ABC, to amusement parks, such as Disney World, to TV providers such as Comcast to individual shows such as, *Game of Thrones*. No research has been conducted to redefine an entertainment brand or attempted to look at the industry as a whole in regards to branding.

At the crux of the entertainment industry is Hollywood with books, movies and television shows. This billion-dollar movie and entertainment industry has seen some market decline, but this is attributed to the high degree of competition among a few smaller players as well as major players, such as the Walt Disney Company, Sony, and Time Warner Inc. (“Movies & Entertainment Industry Profile: the United States,” 2012). Because of the size of the industry as well as the different companies, products and services within the industry, marketers could benefit by segmenting the industry and looking at the different marketing strategies and implications. As a result, in regards to this particular paper, entertainment brands are movies, television shows, book franchises or a combination of these brands.

**Successful Entertainment Brands: *Harry Potter, Star Wars* and the Potential for *Game of Thrones***

If one searches for the most valuable movie franchises, *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* are always at the top of the list. Statista has *Harry Potter* ranked first as the most valuable, in terms of revenue and *Star Wars* ranked third (Statista, 2014). However, *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* are more than just high grossing movies; they are arguably the two most successful entertainment brands with large fan bases and strong brand names that have lasted decades.

George Lucas introduced *Star Wars* in 1977. Since then, the filmography includes six films and another installment set to start filming in May (Truitt, 2014). Thirty-four years later, the *Star Wars* brand is still everywhere with a television cartoon, merchandise (clothing costumes,
toys etc.), product tie-ins, books, and amusement park rides. Even scholars have conducted research on Star Wars’ historical, mythical and gender parallels, as well as its impact on religion, childhood and adult play, and pop culture. The cult fan following has created their “expanded Star Wars universe” with conventions, games, fan fiction and other personal and social connections (Lawrence, 2006). Some fans even consider themselves a “Jedi.” A “Jedi” is like a knight in the fictional Star Wars universe that guards peace and justice. They train and study the mystical power called “the Force” with a code of ethics, a governing council and life virtues. The Jedi represent the “good,” in this story of good and evil. According to various scholars, the lessons, council and ethics resemble many religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism. For this reason, many fans look to Star Wars and the “Jedi” for religious and spiritual guidance (Bowen & Wagner, 2006). In 2001, over 53 thousand New Zealanders as well as more than four hundred thousand others in the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada listed themselves as a “Jedi.” Most of these people selected this religion as a joke for a political protest, but research estimated that a small percentage were serious (Porter, 2006). As one professor, John Shelton Lawrence wrote, Star Wars is “film history’s greatest commercial and cultural success” (Lawrence, 2006).

Some may agree with Lawrence’s statement about Star Wars, while others would argue the Harry Potter franchise is the best film series of all time, which began in 1997 with the release of J.K. Rowling’s first book of seven in the series. After seventeen years, over 400 million copies of the seven books sold worldwide and eight films grossed over $4 billion in worldwide box offices (Gunelius, 2008). Like Star Wars, Harry Potter took pop culture by storm with merchandise, toys, conventions, fan fiction, vacation destinations, and cultural integrations. In addition, hundreds of journal articles as well as full books dissect Harry Potter in regards to politics, history, gender roles, religion, ethics and literary character development (Patterson (Ed.), 2009 and Nexon & Neumann, 2006). Even though the last movie ended three years ago, the Harry Potter brand continues to thrive.
This paper will investigate the success of the *Harry Potter and Star Wars* brands, in order to understand how they became long-term and sustainable entertainment brands. The goal of this analysis is to provide marketing implications for similar entertainment brands, such as an emerging cultural phenomenon *Game of Thrones*.

*Game of Thrones* (see Appendix A for a detailed description of *Game of Thrones*) is a hit HBO television show and an adaptation of *A Song of Fire and Ice* fantasy series by George R.R. Martin. Martin published the first book in 1996, and although a New York Times bestseller, the brand name did not flood society until the television series began in 2011. In a few short seasons, *Game of Thrones* has already gathered a large loyal fan base. Fans attend the *Game of Thrones* exhibits, actively participate on one of the many fan websites, and create their own action figures. They even drink the Iron Throne beer (a beer inspired by the television show) and cook recipes from the brand’s companion cookbook (see Appendix B images of the beer and cookbook). The brand is also popular on social media, and the topic fuels fans daily conversations. Pinterest has *Game of Thrones* inspired wedding ideas, home décor, tattoos, costumes, quotes, and other personal creations by fans (see Appendix C for screenshot of *Game of Thrones* on Pinterest). This success of the brand is comparable to that of *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, in the short term. However, will this success continue in the long-term? Through a case analysis on *Game of Thrones*, recommendations will be made on how HBO can continue this success, in the long term.

### Brand Equity and Customer-Based Brand Equity

What makes *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* so successful? Has *Game of Thrones* achieved that success? To answer these questions, we must first understand the elements of a strong brand name by discussing the strategic aspects of brand equity.
Brand equity, in the most general terms, is the positive marketing responses that result from the brand name when compared to a generic name (Keller, 1993). For example, my mom will spend extra money on Rao’s Mariana Sauce, as opposed to cheaper, generic sauces, because of the Rao’s brand name. While this is an anecdotal example, researchers strive to redefine, analyze and understand brand equity, so organizations can improve their marketing strategy (Keller, 1993; Armstrong & Kotler, 2012).

David A. Aaker (1991) outlines a brand equity model, so organizations can better manage their brand (Aaker, 1991). Aaker’s brand equity model includes five dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other propriety assets (i.e. patents, intellectual proper). Each dimension leads to financial and strategic benefits for the overall branding strategy. For example, Aaker (1991) states that loyal customers result in four benefits:

1. They reduce marketing costs because they are easier to retain.
2. They provide trade advantages by providing consistent revenue.
3. They attract new consumers by not only creating brand awareness, but also by providing new consumers with assurance about brand quality.
4. They give the organization time to respond to competitive threats because loyal customers are not quick to switch to a different brand.

The model also discusses the additional value to a consumer’s overall experience “by enhancing interpretation/processing of information, confidence in the purchase decision and use satisfaction” (Aaker 1991). Although the model describes this value from a consumer’s standpoint, the marketing implications and recommendations are still more focused from an organizational viewpoint of brand equity.

Kevin Lane Keller’s Customer-Based Brand Equity focuses on the perspective of the individual consumers (Keller, 1993). Keller (1993) outlined the definition of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE). CBBE is essentially a consumer’s reaction to the marketing of the brand
based upon personal associations. Positive CBBE occurs “when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favorable, strong or unique associations in memory” (Keller, 1993, p. 1). Marketers must understand the various components of brand knowledge, in order influence those personal associations. Keller (1993) states that to manage brand knowledge, they should enhance consumer’s current knowledge structures to recall and reinforce unique and favorable associations, and capitalize on potential knowledge structures to link to their brand (Keller, 1993). For example, Volvo commercials reinforce the link between Volvo and safety; where as Ford at one point wanted to created a potential knowledge structure, so they created a campaign to establish an association between Ford and innovative.

Aaker (1991) and Keller’s (1993) models both provide the necessary ingredients to achieving high brand equity and Customer-Based Brand Equity; however, Keller’s follow up journal article (2001) further defined brand equity by providing an organized outline with six brand building blocks and the four steps necessary to accomplish building a strong brand (Keller, 2001). This model provides a different organized view of many of the concepts that are discussed within Aaker’s (1991) model and Keller’s (1993) previous model.

The four steps as defined by Keller (2001) are: consumers identifying the brand, establishing brand associations or meaning, responding to brand identity and meaning, and creating an intense, active and loyal relationship with brand. Keller continues by stating that in order to achieve these four steps a brand must establish six brand building blocks: brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, brand judgments, brand feelings and brand resonance. Keller accompanied his model with a figure shown below. Each brand building block corresponds with the four steps as summarized Figure 1-1 (p. 7).
The CBBE pyramid provides marketers with a map for building a strong brand. Keller utilizes a few examples, such as Southwest and Levi’s, to help explain each step, the building blocks and the marketing strategy implications of the pyramid. However, his examples are limited to only a few industries and brand types. More unique brands or industries that are often overlooked as a brand were not applied to the framework.

As a result, studies often cite or apply Keller’s research to these unique industries, products or services. For example, a tourist destination, such as Las Vegas, is not normally considered a brand. Marketers could benefit from understanding the consumer associations, feelings and other brand elements of tourist destinations, in order to enhance their marketing strategies. Two research articles conducted studies using a few theoretical equity models, including Keller’s framework of CBBE, to create Customer-Based Brand Equity models for the tourism industry that highlight the different dimensions important in a tourist destination brand relationship (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007 and Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009).

Another unique branding relationship that is not often studied is the business-to-business (B2B) brand relationship. Kerri-Ann Kuhn, Frank Aplert and Nigel Pope (2008) applied Keller’s Costumer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid to a B2B relationship. According to the study, B2B brand relationships cannot be directly applied to the CBBE Pyramid. Keller’s brand building blocks
“appear useful in an organizational context, although differences in sub dimensions are required” (Kuhn, Alpert & Pope, 2008). Kuhn, Alpert and Pope summarized their findings in a figure, which is shown below in Figure 1-2, which illustrates the building block changes (Kuhn, Alpert & Pope, 2008).

**Figure 1-2. Revised Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid**

![Revised Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid](image)

*Source: Keller (2003) and the current study*

Books, movies television shows or combination of these brands are unique in that they are not officially thought of as a brand. Consequently, no brand framework addresses entertainment brands. This paper applies Keller’s CBBE model to entertainment brands. However, each building block can be better defined utilizing general entertainment brand examples. This general entertainment Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid can provide valuable implications for entertainment brand marketing strategies.
Brand Relationships and Life Cycles

CBBE helps measure the strength of a brand; however, a major problem with entertainment brands is maintaining that strong brand name. Most people will become obsessed or attached to a certain entertainment brand for a period of time. A book or television show or movie can consume every moment of a person’s life until the series or movie ends or the book is complete. For example, girls swooned over Edward Cullen or Jacob, in the Twilight series; they would have arguments over whether Bella should end up with Edward or Jacob and would plan trips to Forks, Washington, where the book takes place. However, these relationships seem to be finite because the life of the show, movie or book is fleeting, and the market place is extremely competitive with new shows, movies and books being released every day. Only a few entertainment brands have prolonged their brand life. In order to analyze these entertainment brand lives, we must first understand brand relationships and life cycles.

Susan Fournier (1998) verified that consumers buy brands because of the psychological and sociocultural meanings that the brand adds to their lives, and in turn, affects one self, thereby establishing a relationship with the brand (Fournier, 1998). Different brands provide different meanings to consumer’s lives causing varied brand relationships. Based upon seven dimensions1, Fournier created a typology of 15 consumer brand relationship forms: arranged marriages, casual friends/buddies, marriages of convenience, committed partnerships, best friendships, compartmentalized friendships, kinships, rebounds/avoidance-driven relationships, childhood friends, courtships, dependencies, flings, enmities, secret affairs and enslavements. For example, a secret affair, as defined by Fournier (1998), is an extremely private intense relationship with a brand and considered risky if exposed to others, such as a woman sneaking chocolate at work (Fournier, 1998).

1 The seven dimensions are: positive vs. negative, intense vs. superficial, long-term vs. short-term, public vs. private, formal vs. informal, and symmetric vs. asymmetric.
The life or length of time that these brand relationships depend on various factors. Brand relationships, whether casual (short-term) or committed (long-term), can deteriorate or collapse for a few reasons. Fournier (1998) discussed two dissolution models for brand relationships: the stress model and the entropy model. The stress model includes various stresses that cause a brand relationship to decline, which are: environmental stress (situationally imposed or intrusion of alternatives), partner-oriented stresses (personally induced or managerially imposed) and dyadic/relational stress. For example, my cousins moved to Florida from Philadelphia and although they enjoyed Tastykake, the brand was not sold in Florida (an example of an environmental stress). An entropy model simply refers to a decline in the brand relationship due to a “failure to maintain the relationship” (Fournier, 1998).

The growth and decline of these life cycles can be illustrated through brand trajectories. The life cycles utilized in this paper “are a continuous process of relationship development” that is often broken into segments that generally go through five phases: introduction, initiation, growth, maintenance and deterioration (Levinger 1983, as cited in Fournier 1998). However, each stage can evolve at different times depending on the relationship form. The classic version of a brand trajectory follows the biological life cycle shown in Figure 1-3 with the x-axis representing time and the y-axis representing a consumer’s closeness to the product. While many marketers refer to this classic trajectory, brand relationships can vary based upon the type of relationship as well as any factors that could cause the relationship to deteriorate, and as result, their brand trajectories will diverge from the classic cycle. Fournier’s study provided examples of some trajectories that correspond to her consumer-brand relationship forms (Fournier 1998).
This paper will apply Fournier’s concept of brand relationship forms and trajectories to entertainment brands. This application will supply marketing managers with insights on how to tailor their marketing strategy to certain consumer relationship forms that are often overlooked in this subsection of the entertainment industry. However, a new relationship is formed that better suits iconic entertainment brands. This new model provides marketers with valuable branding implications about how these specific brands have succeeded in maintaining a long life, which is rare for the majority of movies, books or television shows.
Chapter 2

Applying the Elements of a Strong Brand to Entertainment Brands

The concept of Customer-Based Brand Equity applies to entertainment brands, such as movies, television shows, books or a combination of the three because many fans create their own personal associations and actively seek to consume the entertainment brand outside of just watching the movie or show, or reading the book. Some of this consumption is more intense than others. For example, many Harry Potter fans may just buy a poster or wand for their room. Other fans have created their own unique literature; some of this literature coined as the “Potter Studies,” is “insightful” articles and journals depicting historical comparisons and ethics studies (Patterson, 2009).

Marketers can capitalize on bolstering the movie and television show name by taking advantage of this popularity that cause fans to make certain purchase decisions and interact with the brand beyond just watching the movie or reading the book. Some of the most general ways to expand the brand is through merchandise, such as posters, t-shirts and hats. However, the bigger and most popular entertainment brands have many more opportunities ranging from video games to amusement park rides.

Although we can say an entertainment brand is particularly popular because of a large number of people that watch it or read the book, what truly makes an entertainment brand a “strong” brand”? To help answer this question, Keller’s (2001) four fundamental steps in building a brand and the six building blocks, which were discussed earlier (refer to his figure 1-1 on page 6), are explained below with entertainment brand examples.
Brand Identity: Brand Salience

Brand salience corresponds with the brand identity and is the foundation for a strong brand. Brand salience is defined as a customer’s ability to recall and recognize the brand, and creates associations such as the name, logo and symbol (Keller, 2001). For example, a customer or fan recognizing that *Star Wars* is a major motion picture that takes place in space is brand salience.

Brand salience is highly important because it affects people that have high or low involvement with the brand. Consumers, who have a high level of brand salience, meaning they recall and recognize the brand as well as have many associations with the brand, will strongly consider the brand when having to make a purchase or consumption decision (Keller, 2001). My high school teacher could be considered a high involvement consumer when it came to *Harry Potter*. He heard many people praise *Harry Potter*; however, as an English teacher, he was extremely skeptical of the story and the quality of the writing because it was about wizards and appealed to children as well as adults. He decided to read it because of the book’s popularity and the long family and friend discussions. He ended up loving the book and now actively recommends it people. Conversely, consumers with low involvement either lack purchase motivation or purchase ability (lack expertise in the subject) (Keller, 2001). My business advisor could be considered someone who had low involvement when it came to the *Game of Thrones* brand. She knew that it was a television show and book but did not really know much about it. She stated, “I know the television show is super popular; maybe I will give the books or show a whirl.” Brand salience is imperative because consumers may make decisions on whether or not to consume the brand based on brand salience alone, such as my business advisor did when deciding whether or not to start watching *Game of Thrones*. 
Brand salience for entertainment brands can be defined utilizing three questions. The first question is: Can consumers name the show, movie or book when given the characters, plot or some other characteristic? For successful entertainment brands, a number of associations cause consumers to recognize or recall the show, movie or book; while for average entertainment brands, consumers may only be able guess the show based on the plot. The second question is: Can the consumer name characteristics of the show book or movie, such as the plot, when given the name? The more successful entertainment brands cause consumers to name many elements of the book, movie or show. The third question determines if the brand is a long-term extremely successful entertainment brand. The third question is: When asked what is a popular book, movie or TV show, what brand comes to mind first?

**Brand Meaning: Brand Performance and Brand Imagery**

Brand meaning is how a brand is perceived in a consumer’s mind and involves two major subcategories: brand performance and imagery. Brand performance is the ability for the brand to meet a consumer’s functional needs of the brand, such as brand features, the style and design, and other extrinsic properties. Brand imagery has to do with the brand’s intrinsic properties and the ability for the brand to satisfy a consumer’s psychological and social needs. Although there is wide array of category needs that both performance and image include, the most important dimensions are strength, favorability and uniqueness (Keller, 2001).

Brand performance for an entertainment brand would include specific elements: measure of the quality of the attributes (acting, plot, characters etc.) of the brand and measure of uniqueness of the attributes (acting, plot, characters etc.) of the brand. Higher quality entertainment brands will have high quality writing, acting, sets, and unique characteristics. Brand imagery for an entertainment brand would include certain elements as well: measure of
popularity of the brand (this is a factor of whether not brand is socially stimulating), attributes associated to show (i.e. show is funny, intelligent etc.) and personal associations (i.e. consumers relate to the main character).

Entertainment brands not only are popular with positive unique associations, but they also elicit a high quantity of associations and deeper personal and social connections exist. Strong entertainment brands usually engross viewers in the plot, story or characters, all of which are unique. Susan Gunelius (2008) described how *Harry Potter* fans can relate to the story, “yet as Harry Potter goes through the same experiences we all went through, he does so in a detailed world filled with magic and suspense. The combination is undeniable tantalizing and fans clamor for more” (Gunelius, 2008, p. 11). Although not every book, movie or TV may be as relatable, successful brands all provide some unique and likable content that has the ability to enthrall fans and viewers. As Gunelius (2008) stated about why *Harry Potter* was successful, “Content is key and a good product is the fundamental requirement for success” (Gunelius, 2008, p. 11).

**Brand Responses: Consumer Judgments and Consumer Feelings**

Brand responses are simply how consumers think or feel about the brand. The two distinguishing factors of the brand responses are consumer judgments (response from the head) and consumer feelings (response from the heart). Consumer judgments involve judgments such as the quality of the brand, likability of the brand and superiority of the brand. Consumer feelings include various responses, such as warmth, fun, excitement, and social approval (Keller, 2001). Marketers must ensure that these types of brand responses are positive and come to consumers mind easily.

For entertainment brands, consumer judgments include fan and critic opinions over the quality of acting, writing and other elements. The more popular brands will cause fans to rank the
show, book or movie as one of their favorites. For example, many people believe that that *Game of Thrones* is the best show on television and describe it as being superior to all other television shows. One reporter, Andrew Romano (2014) stated, “But of all my favorite series, none has made as happy-week after week, episode after episode- as *Game of Throne*. It is, simply put the most pleasurable television show I’ve ever seen” (Romano, 2014). This just one example, but the awards as well as fan and critic acclaim of the show will be discussed in chapter four.

Consumer feelings, in regards to entertainment brands are defined exactly the same as other brands, and are measured by looking at the intensity of excitement, love, social approval and other feelings. However, strong entertainments must yield intense, active feelings in order for the consumer to want to consume the brand more often in multifaceted ways. Based upon my observations discussed later in three case studies, strong entertainment brands will usually provoke specific feelings of excitement, joy, and deeper feelings of obsession and comfort. In turn, this will cause fans to want to constantly interact with the brand beyond just watching or reading it. Fans will join fan communities in order to fulfill some social approval, and they are excited about the new seasons, and find it fun to discuss the show with other people, which will be illustrated with the three case studies.

**Brand Relationships: Consumer Brand Resonance**

Brand resonance refers to intensity of the brand relationships and the active engagement between the consumer and the brand. Brand resonance has four main criteria that all apply to entertainment brands: behavioral loyalty (how often to watch the show/movie or read the book as well as what supporting activities do they do with brand), attitudinal attachment (going beyond just positive attitude towards, but more of something “special”), sense of brand community, and activity engagement (Keller, 2001).
Strong entertainment brands result in consumers, buying clothing attire (i.e. TV show t-shirt), posters, and other paraphernalia that demonstrate brand commitment. They will also often discuss it with friends and repeatedly consume the brand by buying products associated with the movie, book or television show or buy re-watching or rereading the book.

As Keller discussed, consumers cannot “experience an intense, active loyalty with all brands” (Keller, 2001). People normally are fans of various entertainment brands and are not limited to one. For example, I enjoy Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, Sons of Anarchy, Hunger Games, and Batman; however, I only have “deeper” aspects of brand resonance or active engagement with Game of Thrones currently. Consumers with this deep and active engagement will often have a deeper connection and will join online fan communities (sense of community), create their own literature or artwork, and have wedding themes, tattoos and rooms in their home all inspired by the brand. These deep connections define the consumer, and in turn become apart of their identity (attitudinal attachment).

**Consumer Entertainment Brand Equity Pyramid**

The Consumer-Brand Equity Pyramid can be applied to entertainment brands. Figure 2-1 summarizes the discussion on the dimensions of each brand building block in regards to entertainment brands.
This framework will be applied later on in this thesis through two case studies on *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars*. These case studies will analyze the characteristics of the building of an iconic, long-lasting entertainment brand. In turn, these examples will be utilized to help analyze the future brand life of the *Game of Thrones* brand. Entertainment brands can utilize this framework and these case studies to better connect with their consumers and enhance their branding strategy.
Chapter 3

Consumer Entertainment Brand Relationship

As discussed in the chapter one, when thinking of a brand life cycle, marketers often look at the classic biological life cycle. This classic model life cycle applies to entertainment brands. Generally, fans have a voluntary intense relationship with a show, movie or book until they finish the book, movie, or show, and then it declines. However, as Fournier (1998) discovered, brand relationship life cycles often vary based upon different people or products, which also applies to fans or consumers of entertainment brands. Fournier’s other relationship forms that apply to entertainment brands are: flings, committed partnerships, casual friends/buddies, enmities, childhood friendships, and kinships. By understanding these consumer-brand relationships and their trajectories as applied to entertainment brands, marketers can better understand their fans and as a result better manage their brand.

In addition, to expand on Fournier ideas on brand relationships and relational trajectories, a theoretical relationship, “Long Distance Best Friendship,” and a trajectory was developed and applied to iconic brands. This goal of this new relationship form is to assist successful entertainments brands, similar to Harry Potter and Stars Wars, with managing and increasing the longevity of their brand.

Flings

Many entertainment brands do not experience a long-term customer relationship. Fournier (1998) defines this fleeting relationship, a fling, as a “short term, time bounded engagement of high emotional reward, but devoid of commitment and reciprocity demands”
(Fournier, 1998). For example, the *Twilight* book and movie series was extremely popular to the point where fans would visit where the story took place in Forks, Washington, and girls would buy any product or article of clothing that reminded them of their favorite vampire. The *Twilight* fans seemed to have faded quickly with teens moving on to the next captivating story. In fact a Utah newspaper article (2012), took on two different sides of the ending of the *Twilight* saga, but the bottom line was clear that whether you enjoyed the saga or not, it was disappearing (Kindall & Damschen, 2012).

Most entertainment brands, specifically movies, television shows and books, often have a fleeting life because the stories end and the next best story is already being talked about before the current fad is even over. For example, before the *Twilight* series ended, I had already moved onto the *Hunger Games*. Although the book will continue to be read and the movies to be watched, fans may not continue to have the strong relationships they once had after finishing the book, movie or television show. Figure 3-1 is an image from Fournier’s model that shows the trajectory of flings (Fournier, 1998).

![Figure 3-1. Fling Trajectory](image)

It is difficult for marketers to prevent flings in the entertainment industry because of intrusion of alternatives (i.e. *Hunger Games* before *Twilight* was over) and partner-oriented stressors (often consumers grow out of many entertainment brands as they age or as their interests change). After the show, movie or book ends, it is extremely difficult for a brand to maintain its life because there is no more content left to consume.

Flings were more common among movies and books especially with the emergence of a Netflix, HBOgo and other similar websites and apps that promote the practice of binge television viewing. With the ability to watch a show in its entirety in a week and then move on to the next
show, flings have become commonplace among television audiences. Although marketers may view flings with negative connotations, there are some positive benefits because it almost could be viewed as an easy entrance back into the market with new fans deciding to watch the show or a movie or read the book well after its ended, even if its only for a few short weeks. As a result, brands could benefit from providing fans the ability to consume the show beyond its natural life. This can be accomplished in various ways such as Netflix, syndicated television (selling the rights to the show for another network to air), and eBooks. For example, various popular television shows have been able to extend their life such as *Friends* and *King of Queens* with syndicated television. Nevertheless, these tactics only create superficial and casual relationships, which often naturally deteriorate, according to Fournier’s (1998) model (Fournier, 1998). Only a few brands have been able to maintain strong long-lasting relationships.

**Committed Partnerships**

Some consumers or fans have a long-term committed partnership with entertainment brands. These relationships are voluntary and filled with strong emotions, such as love and intimacy (Fournier, 1998). Fans in a committed relationship constantly consume and/or interact with the brand on a somewhat regular basis. They join fan websites, buy apparel, and attend conventions. Many fans have this committed partnership with the *Star Wars* brand, and as result, the brand has expanded beyond movies to television, literature, games, conventions, fan sites, and other brand extensions and fan adaptations. *Star Wars* continues to thrive as brand despite the last movie release occurring about nine years ago, which will be discussed more in depth in chapter four.

Fans in committed relationships will also continue to love the brand despite “adverse” circumstances (Fournier, 1998). Even though the new *Star Wars* movies are different from the
older movies, fans with committed partnerships still love the brand. In fact, Lucas geared the last three films towards a new younger generation, and, in turn, older fan loyalists of the original movies generally disliked them, some more critical than others. A subset of these fans, despite feeling let down, would still return to the movies to “seek something else to make them believe in the [Star Wars] message again” (McDermott, 2006). Even those fans that were more critical of where George Lucas took the Star Wars series chose to “take back” Star Wars rather than stop following the brand. When the new movies came out, fans created various parodies as well as their own edited version of the new movies that they disliked. Kevin Smith, an affirmed Star Wars fan and film editor, created a popular edit of the film, Phantom Edit: Episode I.II, with a commentary track that explained his thought process or reasoning behind his edits to the film (McDermott, 2006). This demonstrates that despite this adverse circumstance of dissatisfaction with the new movies, fans were still committed to the brand to the point where they would remake the movie to their own satisfaction or attempt to interpret the new films in a different way.

Figure 3-2 is an image from Fournier’s model that shows the trajectory a stable maturity (Fournier, 1998). Despite some disappointment with the brand, fans were able to adapt the brand to fit them, and will continue to remain loyal to it and mature with brand even as the brand changes. This type of stable relationship is not common among the majority of entertainment brands, and the faction of these types of brand loyalists is usually quite small. However, more popular brands, such as Star Wars and Harry Potter, have more loyalists, who help keep the brand alive.

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Although Fournier states that committed partnerships require constant relationship work, marketers do not need to invest a ton into their marketing strategies unless new or extended content is being released, especially if there is only a small faction of fans who fit into this category. These loyal fans often have their own personal communities and relationships with the brand, and they will remain true to the brand even in adverse circumstances.

**Childhood Friendships**

Childhood brand friendship is a voluntary relationship that is occasionally engaged (normally when one is reminiscing about the past). When I was younger, I was fond of movies such as *The Sandlot* and *The Goonies*. I remember watching them with my brother and my two cousins at our beach house. We would quote them for days. Today, I rarely interact with either of these brands, but when I occasionally stumble upon the movies on television or rediscover the DVDs, I always enjoy watching them and recalling fond memories. Many fans have various childhood relationships with entertainment brands and become nostalgic when thinking of their favorite childhood shows, movies or books.

Although Fournier did not correspond this long-term relationship with a trajectory, the trajectory is a bell curve that has occasional slight cyclical resurgences from time to time, after the brand has decline as illustrated in Figure 3-4. I was fond of *Sandlot* when it came out, but as more movies were released and I grew older, the brand naturally faded away. Today, if it comes on I will have a rush of fond memories and definitely watch the movie, but these times are infrequent and short lived.
By understanding this type of relationship, marketers of stronger or popular brands can capitalize on this idea of “nostalgia” to trigger brand memories and cause an interaction. My childhood interactions with some of my favorite movies are rare, which is true for most childhood relationships. In addition, most of the time when it comes to entertainment brands, consumers simply re-watch the show or movie or reread the book. Conversely, popular brands that are still prevalent throughout society have the ability to result in interactions that are more frequent and elevate the relationship into a deeper bond that is beyond simply watching your favorite childhood movie once every three years. In a study on childhood play, John Patton (2006) interviewed various adults about their attachment to Star Wars and “nostalgia” was the key ingredient of their current bond. One man described his current love for building Star Wars Lego toys as “reliving his childhood” and many guests who visit his home are actually interested in the models he builds (Panton, 2006). This man’s relationship is more of a steady maturity with more frequent interaction. The links to his childhood have allowed his relationship to blossom beyond just a childhood friendship. A more recent example is, Girl Meets World, which Disney is debuting in 2014. The show is a sequel of the 90s-hit show, Boy Meets World. Girl Meets World has had a ton of excitement with 21 episodes for season one already confirmed before the show has even aired. Many parents and original Boy Meets World fans have fueled this excitement, and plan to watch it and relate to their favorite couple all grown up (Hughes, 2014). This example demonstrate how marketers can capitalize on these childhood relationships to fuel brand extensions.

**Casual Friends/Buddies**

Casual friends/buddies is a voluntarily, infrequent relationship that is low in intimacy (Fournier, 1998). Viewers who turn on the television and watch a certain show/movie or pick up a certain book when they are bored are casual friends or buddies. For example, my roommate
will turn on Friends on when she is bored because she may get a laugh or she may have already saw it, but either way she did not have many expectations. This type of relationship is quite popular, especially with syndicated television, as discussed earlier. In addition, Kindles, iPads, and iPhones provide access to books, movies, and TV shows anywhere; as a result, entertainment brands that are casual friends are prefect in various instances such as waiting at the doctors office or traveling on a plane, train or bus. Marketers can fuel these relationships simply by making their entertainment product easy to access.

**Enmities**

Enmities are intense relationships that cause negative affects, causing consumers to avoid that particular brand (Fournier, 1998). For examples, viewers might refuse to watch a show because they hate the actor in it. Another example is readers who will not read Nicholas Sparks books or see the adapted films because they have a strong dislike for “sappy” love novels. All brands have a faction of consumers who for one reason or another dislikes the product. Marketers should not focus on these fans or consumers because of their intense negative feelings that are mainly out of their control.

**Kinships**

A kinship brand relationship is one that a consumer inherits (Fournier, 1998). Children may get their love for a movie, book or television show from their parents who are or were huge fans of the brand. In the same study discussed previously on childhood relationships by Panton (2006), one father encouraged his children to play with Star Wars action figures and toys even though they are too young to watch any of the films. He was a fan of the series when he was a
child, and as result he inspires his children to play with Star Wars toys and even plays make believe with them by adding different ideas to their make believe storylines (Panton, 2006). These kinship relationships could take a number of different paths. They could become a stable maturity relationship, or a childhood friendships, or just taper off.

Kinships can occur in various situations when it comes to entertainment brands, but this is especially true for the more iconic brands, such as Star Wars and Harry Potter, because their brands are still popular. Star Wars movies spread across generations, and the brand is constantly being updated with new toys and additional brand extensions. In addition, the Harry Potter theme park in Orlando, Florida is also a great family destination, which is another way to help cultivate these brand relationships. Marketers must recognize if kinship relationships are common for their particular brand and create brand imagery that involves nostalgia, tradition or family bonding, in order to capitalize on this relationship.

**Long Distance Best Friend**

As with any successful brand, the number of consumers with different levels of loyalty tends to vary, especially with the life of an entertainment brand. Entertainment brands always have a diminutive number of people who are extreme loyalists that are in love with the brand and have a committed partnership with the brand. In addition, a small number of people may have a special relationship with the brand such as a kinship or childhood friendship. However, the majority of entertainment brands have fans that go through the general biological life cycle or fling. For example, One Tree Hill was a hit show that ran from 2003-2012. Many fans were invested in the show while it aired, and eventually, towards the end of the show and after the final season the relationship declined (classical brand relationship). Some new fans watch the show on Netflix (fling), while some girls will occasionally re-watch their beloved teenage drama on a
rainy day (childhood relationship). Finally, a small faction of fans are extreme loyalists, who despite the series ending, will continue to create Instagram or other social media posts as well as visit popular fan websites, such as onetreehillweb.net. With only a small number of loyalists, entertainment brands have a difficult time prolonging their brand.

Few entertainment brands have accomplished the feat of increasing the longevity of their brand across decades. Two brands that have successfully prolonged their brand life are *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*. These brands have established cult like followings as well as have the ability to attract new fans. These entertainment brands have slightly larger number of extreme loyalists with committed partnerships as well as other slightly more prevalent long-term relationships such as kinships, childhood friendships and casual friends/buddies. Although these long-term relationships seem to draw a slightly higher fan base, the pivotal success to the longevity of the brand is the unique and dominant brand relationship that is fueled by fan communities, personal interpretations of the brand, brand adaptations as well as innovative marketing strategies.

Based upon investigative research, a general theoretical brand relationship can be implied for iconic brands, such as *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, as opposed to most entertainment genres where brand life is finite with an occasional resurgence for the majority of fans. *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* fans have a unique “long distance best friendship” relationship, which is an adaption of one of Fournier’s best friend relationship. Long distance best friendship is a voluntary, intimate relationship with the longevity of the relationship “ensured by continued positive rewards,” whenever the brand and customer interact (Fournier, 1998). In addition, even with new brands entering the market, the strength of the relationship does not deviate. A consumer may watch other shows or consumes other brands, while still maintaining this relationship with these iconic brands. The “long distance” is a particular word choice that represents the idea that this brand does not meet frequently, but when it does interactions are intense, personal, nostalgic and with great affection towards the brand. As long as each time the brand and viewer meet, the brand does
its job of providing an entertaining and emotional experience, then the best friendship will continue. The relationship is just as if you had a best friend who moved to a different city. He or she helped shape who you are as a person. You talk and see them occasionally, and every time you get together, it’s like you never been away from each other and the relationship is still strong.

The brand relationship trajectory (illustrated in Figure 3-4.) for this type of relationship is a growth with slight decline with cyclical resurgences that are fueled by personal experiences, fan community events, as well as marketer created other marketer created content and events.

The next section will include examples of this long distance best friend relationship for two iconic entertainment brands, Star Wars and Harry Potter. In addition, the examples will analyze their branding strategies, in order to gain marketing insights for similar future iconic brands such as Game of Thrones.
Chapter 4

Case Analysis: Brand Relationship of Iconic Entertainment Brands

This is section is a case analysis on two of the most iconic brands: Star Wars and Harry Potter. The study will apply the Consumer-Based Entertainment Brand Equity Pyramid and the brand relationship form, “long distant best friend,” to discover the unique attributes of both the brand and the marketing strategy that allowed these brands to sustain a long life.

Star Wars

Customer-Based Brand Building Blocks Analysis

The following analysis will demonstrate the elements of this brand. (A summary of the Star Wars Consumer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid is located in Appendix D for reference.)

*Brand Salience.* Star Wars is one of the most recognizable brands of all time. The brand both targeted adults and children with merchandise ranging from collectors’ items to toys. As of 2005, “Amazon.com listed 3,980 Star Wars book titles, 84 music CDS, and 1,116 toys and games” (Lawrence, 2006). Furthermore, Geraghty (2006) examined the Star Wars toy collecting industry and concluded, “Star Wars toys have not only been ‘played with’ but have been ‘played up’ in the day-to-day lives of people growing older (Geraghy, 2006). Whether you are a fan or not, most consumers can recall and recognize the brand due to these many brand extensions.

Unlike almost any other entertainment brand, the brand salience of Star Wars has evolved beyond a movie or book. Due to the long life of the brand and the different target markets, the content offered to consumers has varied and as a result people may associate the brand with different product categories. For example, some fans, specifically younger fans, would most
likely put Star Wars in the Lego, game or cartoon category, while older adults would discuss the actual movies.

*Brand performance.* Star Wars is considered a quality brand with likable characters, and it’s an aesthetically pleasing film series utilizing innovative technology. The Star Wars films in total won 103 awards and 187 nominations in various award ceremonies honoring achievements in the film and music industries. Most notably, the series won academy awards for sound, costume design, visual effects, music direction and art direction. *Star Wars: Episode IV- A New Hope* was nominated for best picture, best actor and best director. In addition, online fan ratings on the Internet Movie Database rate Star Wars films positively (all of them received a rating of above a 6 on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of overall favorability) (www.imbd.com).

However, some fans and many critics assert that the quality of the movie declined with the second trilogy, although new generations welcomed these changes. Various news outlets actually bashed the movies in regards to plot, content and other film aspects. For example, David Ansen (2002) of *Newsweek*, in “Attack of the Groans,” described the new series as “mythic undertones” and “just for the kids” (Ansen, 2002 as cited in Issacs, 2006). Despite these negative reviews, the majority of the critics would follow up their harsh remarks by stating that the brand has still done an excellent job of being a commercial and cultural success that majority of fans still enjoy. Ansen (2006) concluded his article by stating that Lucas’s “vision has changed the cultural landscape irrevocably” (Ansen, 2002 as cited in Issacs, 2006).

Although the view of brand performance may vary, Star Wars is a huge success and survived these adverse circumstances. As the film attempted to adapt to a changing society and generation, fans and consumers adapted to the change in the movies, which will be discussed later with fan adaptions.

*Brand Imagery.* Part of the reason why the brand survived is because of the ability of the brand to satisfy fans psychological and social needs. Fans and consumers of *Star Wars* often
associate the films with fun and thrilling fantasy. Bruce Issacs (2006) surveyed U.S. critical reception of the movies and many assessments reflected, “thrill from the sights and sounds that came packaged with traditional values of faith and loyalty committed to name and to destroy evil” (Lawrence, 2006). Fans enjoy this universal theme of good vs. evil with the heroes persevering to save the universe. As discussed earlier, in chapter one, fans admired, related and aspired to be like the “Jedi.” In addition, destiny is another strong theme as well as adventurous. One fan described his childhood love for Star Wars: “I wanted to be Luke Skywalker. Like Luke, I was a blonde-haired farm boy living in the middle of nowhere” (Horsley, 2006). This example exemplifies the appeal of adventure and destiny to be hero. For kids, their imagination soars with the idea of space adventures and saving the world, while parents become nostalgic towards Star Wars, which has helped them keep the brand alive. For this reason, Star Wars still floods the toy market and the adult collectors market, and in turn, is still considered in a consumer purchase decision set (Geraghty, 2006).

Consumer Judgments and Consumer Feelings. As discussed earlier with brand performance many critics, as well as fans, were disappointed in the new trilogy. However, despite this problem, consumers as well as critics still believe that Star Wars has transformed culture, and is superior among other entertainment franchises because of its unique characters and plot that promote feelings such as excitement, fun and adventure.

Although these positive associations are imperative, the reason that the Star Wars brand has so many fans is because of its unique ability to allow people to have their own personal and cultural interpretations. Research on Star Wars illustrates how each reader or film goer or video gamer creates personal connections with the brand and “enters an interpretive universe-becoming not only the passive receptor of the their media, but a part of the story encounter” (Kapell, 2006). This connection is possible because Star Wars has “one-dimensional characters” and openings in the plot of that “allows the audience to project into the film whatever they might be looking for”
These connections evoke strong personal feelings, and are why the brand is beloved by fans of all generations.

*Brand Resonance.* The personal interpretations and connection consumers have with *Star Wars* allows the brand to overcome many external stressors allowing the brand to survive. These personal relationships have evoked active, loyal relationships among consumers. In turn, brand communities have thrived with conventions, and various fan webpages. In addition to the *Star Wars* Lego craze and online gaming adaptations for children, *Star Wars* fan websites such as the theforce.net (news, reviews and more), 501st legion (world renowned imperial costuming organization), Rebelscum (latest *Star Wars* collecting news) and many others still have large followings and daily updates. Conventions are still popular as well with yearly celebrations in Anaheim, CA, Europe and other locations ("Connect," 2014).

**The Long Distance Best Friend Analysis**

Because *Star Wars* can connect with fans on personal levels, many consumers have long-term relationships with the brand. The relationships brand trajectories can vary based on the consumer. However, the long distance best friend relationship form and trajectory is one that could apply average fans of an iconic entertainment brand life cycle—fans that are not necessarily the extreme loyalist who interact with *Star Wars* on a frequent basis.

In my analysis, I drew a sample brand trajectory (refer to Appendix E) for the long distance best friend form for the *Star Wars* brand. This trajectory includes a somewhat steady maturity with a slight dip after the first trilogy is watched. These dips are common among entertainment brand series between movies, seasons or books. Once the announcement of a second trilogy was made, the brand grows again. The growth of the brand can be accelerated by merchandise, joining fan communities, attending fan events and other personal interactions with
the brand. After the second Star Wars trilogy is watched, the brand relationship slowly declines, not completely, but rather stabilizes.

Fans may still discuss Star Wars and although the consumer does not indulge in the brand frequently, the feelings of love and warmth and that personal relationship is still subconsciously present and can be easily triggered with some event, experience or thought. The triggers can be caused by marketers or by some other external or internal factor. Some examples of these triggers include a trip to Disney World where the Star Wars amusement rides are located or simply by a younger child asking for help with their Star Wars Legos or a child’s Star Wars themed birthday party, which may bring back some nostalgia. The new installment of the film or another brand extension could also increase levels of excitement, and thereby once again sparking a more active relationship.

This model demonstrates that a successful brand that establishes a deep personal connection with a consumer can resonate with them and reminders or triggers could elicit strong brand responses. For Star Wars, the brand adapted to fit different generations as result nostalgia is a key trigger for the Long Distance Best Friend relationship form. Other triggers include excitement with potential events such as Star Wars themed party that some neighbors are throwing or an online contest. Marketers can utilize this model to spark a deep, closer connection.

Harry Potter

Customer-Based Brand Building Blocks Analysis

Like Star Wars, Harry Potter is often described as a cultural and marketing spectacle. The Consumer-Based Entertainment Brand Equity Pyramid reveals that Harry Potter has a strong brand name with unique and favorable associations (refer to Appendix F to view the pyramid).
**Brand Salience.** *Harry Potter* is a well-known brand, as discussed in the literature review, and as result consumers can easily identify the brand as a movie and book. Fans recognize the *Harry Potter* brand simply with images of a scar or by character names and even terminology from the book, such as the term “Muggle;” in fact, “Muggle” has actually been added to some dictionaries, such as the Oxford Dictionary. In addition, if someone asks about *Harry Potter* they could probably go into detail about the plot, characters and aspects of the story.

**Brand Performance.** The book is a best seller and critically acclaimed winning multiple literary awards (Gunelius, 2008). The movies also won multiple awards and nominations, including academy award nominations in art direction, visual effects, costume design and original score (www.imbd.com). Also according to the popular movie fan and critic review cite, Rotten Tomatoes, an average 85% of reviews were positive for all of the *Harry Potter* films with two of the films above 90% (www.rottentomatoes.com).

In addition, the characters are relatable, as discussed earlier in the Customer-Based Entertainment Brand Pyramid. Rowling was able to create personality characters that are “believable, full, and complex” (Morris, 2009).

**Brand Imagery.** *Harry Potter* also elicits an image of fantasy, love, excitement, adventure, and suspense. Silvia Lafontaine’s (2009) study revealed that consumers were drawn to the suspense and emotional appeal of the book (Lafontaine, 2009). In addition, Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott (2011) in a review of the movie and book series described how the *Harry Potter* franchise allowed fans’ imaginations to run wild. Fans found a number of “ways to express their love,” such as fake the online newspaper, The Daily Prophet, similar to the one in the story, and a number of other fan websites. In fact, Warner Bros tried to shut down many fan websites initially, but fans fought back in the “Potterwars” by not purchasing official *Harry Potter* merchandise until Warner Brothers allowed them to express their love for the brand in their own way.
Furthermore, Scott ended the article with a quote that expresses fan reactions to the series:

The adults in the audience have slid back into the breathless, compulsive readerly absorption (and cinematic enthrallment) of childhood, while our children have, with equal breathlessness, leaned forward into the complexity and exhilaration of growing up. We can all feel, under the spell of these stories, as if we were in full possession of our powers (Dargis & Scott, 2011).

This quote exemplifies the thrilling and personal reactions among children and adults to *Harry Potter* that allowed fans to immerse themselves in the story and the movies.

*Consumer Judgments.* Throughout all seven books and all eight movies, fans were never disappointed and almost assured that the every book or movie would be of high quality, as illustrated by the various awards. Many consumers often cite *Harry Potter* as their favorite book or movie, as illustrated by various online rankings, such as two by Forbes and the richest.com.

*Consumer Feelings.* *Harry Potter* provides fans with something to believe in and connect with on a deep emotional level (Gunelius, 2008). Like *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter* elicited strong themes of good triumphing over evil. Other strong themes are the importance of friendship and coming of age. The three main characters are best friends that conquer and support each other through the everyday life tribulations of growing up, such as dealing with a mean bully or not having as much money as all of your fellow classmates. In addition, they also help each other with the magical and exciting obstacles that the trio faces in the wizard world, such as the killing of the evil villain of the story and saving their school.

*Brand Resonance.* *Harry Potter* has strong, loyal brand relationships with fans. Fans consume the brand beyond watching the movie or reading the books in various ways, including buying merchandise, attending conventions, joining online fan websites, such as muggles.net, and taking vacations to Universal Studios or London to visit the Harry Potter Worlds. Fans that are
more loyal have even gotten *Harry Potter* themed tattoos and participated in Quidditch Matches, an adapted sport created by fans.

Furthermore, *Harry Potter* has become apart of people and is a brand that can be used to define them. As Petra Rehling (2009) described:

Today’s global culture has passed beyond mere consumption; young Harry Potter has involuntarily become a spokesperson for a number of subcultures, groups, religions, disciplines. Weirdoes. All of whom love or hate Harry while they read the books through the lenses of other very personal or professional experiences (Rehling, 2009, p. 249).

For example, a group of fans started the *Harry Potter Alliance* in which they fight the “Dark Arts,” including genocide, poverty and more, in Darfur (Rehling, 2009). This quote exemplifies the deep level of emotional connection and loyalty that fans have to *Harry Potter*, and directly correlates with Susan Fournier’s (1998) definition of a brand relationship.

The Long Distance Best Friend Relationship Analysis

Like *Star Wars*, the *Harry Potter* brand’s strong connections result in many long-term brand relationships, and the Long Distance Best Friend Relationship form is prevalent among *Harry Potter* fans, especially due to *Harry Potter*’s marketing strategy.

For my analysis, I sketched another example of the Long Distance Best friendship trajectory as it applies to a *Harry Potter* fan (see Appendix G). As the brand grows and maintains its relationship, it is cyclical in nature. This cyclicality is due to the perpetual and tease marketing practices utilized by Warner Brothers. Susan Gunelius (2008) describes how Warner Brothers utilized tease and perpetual marketing tactics such as releasing online trailers at different time periods that would leave consumers wanting more. They established promotional deals and invested in merchandising to maintain the ongoing buzz. These efforts included television ads,
press interests, billboard, and website freebies that electrified consumers’ excitement for the first movie, which broke records in the box office (Gunelius, 2008, p. 63-64).

Furthermore, Gunelius (2008) then established that based on this marketing strategy, “Harry Potter product life cycle followed a unique path” that displayed “a series of peaks and valleys where valleys would never dip very low (Gunelius, 2008, 68). (This cyclical life cycle is illustrated in the Long Distance Best Friend Model for the Harry Potter brand in Appendix G).

Since the last movie has already been completed, the brand cycle has declined, but like Star Wars, the brand can be resurged easily through different sparks or triggers, which can either be induced by oneself or by a marketer. Warner Brother’s continue to do an excellent job of tease marketing involving brand extensions. For example, they are constantly promoting the Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando, Florida with commercials and social media campaigns.

In addition to marketing efforts, there are also various personal events and experiences that cause a spike in the consumer relationship, such as themed parties, Harry Potter bar tours, and more. In fact, a few fans have made sure that they are invested in the brand at least once year. For example, fans will attend annual Harry Potter conventions or festivals, and annually read the books or annually go on a Harry Potter themed bar tour.

This model implicates many useful tactics for marketers. Annual events as well as vacation destinations represent a good trigger to solidify sustainability of the brand relationship. However, these events should be coupled with other random events, in order sustain a more active relationship. Marketers can utilize perpetual and tease marketing to promote different events or extensions related to the brand, in order to induce excitement from consumers, as Warner Brother’s does with the Harry Potter brand.
Marketing Implications of *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*

To summarize, the case analyses of *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* provided many useful marketing implications in order for a brand to maintain long-term brand relationships. Successful brands that provide deep connections with the consumer can resonate within them. The brand as a result becomes apart of oneself and can be utilized to define oneself, as Fournier described in the definition of the brand relationship. These deep connections are imperative especially, if any there are adverse circumstances, such the bad reviews as there were with *Star Wars*. As illustrated with the Long Distance Best Friend brand relationship model, even if the relationship has declined in intensity, deep feelings will always be prevalent in the consumers mind. Marketers as well as individuals can easily trigger these feelings, and intensify the relationship once again. Some common feelings that worked with these long-term brand relationships included nostalgia as well as excitement. Marketers can utilize tease and perpetual marketing tactics to tap into that feeling of excitement. Finally, annual events are good way to sustain the brand relationship over a long period.
Chapter 5

Case Analysis: Will the Game of Thrones brand survive through decades?

The marketing implications and analyses of Star Wars and Harry Potter will be utilized to evaluate a new entertainment brand, Game of Thrones. The goal of this section is to provide insight into how Game of Thrones can better manage their brand and increase the longevity of the brand.

Branding Building Blocks Analysis: Game of Thrones Resemblance to Star Wars and Harry Potter

An analysis of the Game of Thrones Consumer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid (refer to Appendix F to view Pyramid) illustrates that the brand resembles that of a strong iconic brand, but must be managed appropriately to achieve longevity. I will first discuss the brand building blocks for Game of Thrones and then analyze and describe ways to achieve longevity of the brand. (There are many references and terms utilized from the show, in this section, refer and review Appendix A to help with the understanding of these different terms as well as the plot.)

Brand Salience. Game of Thrones has a strong brand name that consumers can recall and recognize. Many consumers can recognize the brand name based upon various characters, quotes, and symbols, such as crows, dragons, the iron throne, house sigils and many more. For example, in Appendix C, the screenshot of Pinterest, there is a bathroom toilet with a fixture of what looks like medal rods coming out of top of it. A Game of Thrones fan, such as myself, would able to recognize that as the iron throne in the show. The Pinterest screenshot also shows a tattoo of a dire wolf and the phrase “Winter is Coming,” which is another example of popular quote and
symbol that many fans recognize. Furthermore, my brother saw a dog on the street that reminded
him of the dire wolves as well as trees that reminded him of part of the show’s setting (refer
Appendix L for images of these tweets and text messages of personal interactions with the brand).

In addition, when given the brand name many are able to recall some general elements
about the plot or show; however, due to the complexity of the story these elements may be
limited. If someone asked my brother or close friends about *Game of Thrones*, they could go into
detail about the characters and the plot. In addition, my business advisor example utilized in
chapter one illustrated that consumers recognize the name even they do not know the all of the
elements.

*Brand Performance.* The brand has a unique and intricate plot with characters you love to
love, and other characters you love to hate. For example, many fans hate King Joffrey. A series of
fan quotes from Facebook images can be found in Appendix I that illustrate this hatred. These
quotes were some examples from a social media campaign utilizing the hash tag “roast of
Joffrey,” in which fans would tweet about their dislike for Joffrey. Conversely, many fans love
Khaleesi (also know as Daenerys Taragaryan) because she is beautiful and as one new reporter
described she is a “strong female [lead] that continues to steal the show” (Kaplan, 2014). A series
of tweets from Twitter can be found in Appendix J that illustrates fans love for Khaleesi.

In addition to the book being a best seller, the show won 54 awards and received 105
nominations, in the television show industry. The show won Emmy’s in regards to visual effects,
set design, as well as two best performances actor awards, and many other award shows called the
show “a top drama.” (www.imbd.com).

*Brand Imagery.* In *The Hollywood Reporter*, Tim Goodman (2014) described the show:

*Game of Thrones* proves yet again why it's one of the rare genre series to not only be
taken seriously but to prove its worth season after season. It's well-written, well-acted and
has created so many wonderful characters -- who, of course, will probably die. This is a
show with no rules -- and that's partly why tension and expectation are both always running high (Goodman, 2014).

In addition, in Time, James Poniewozik (2014) described the show as “stirring in action, as rich in characters” (Poniewozik, 2014). In New York Daily News, Don Kaplan (2014) described the show as an “epic fantasy series” (Kaplan 2014). These quotes about Game of Thrones encompass perfectly the feelings of excitement and high esteem that fans and critics have in regards to the show.

The show and books are also violent with many deaths, and normally, these are deaths of characters whom you don’t want to die, as described in the quote above by Goodman. For example, in season one/book one the protagonist who seemed to play the role of the hero and represented justice and peace was killed at the end of a season one/book one. A celebrity, Ed Sheeran, tweeted after one of the shows where a major character died, “I don’t know what just happened in Game of Thrones. I’m in shock.” As result, viewers are always guessing and on the edge of their seat.

Consumer Judgments. As discussed earlier, George R.R. Martin’s book series is a New York Times Best Seller, and the Game of Thrones television show has won multiple Emmys and other creative art awards. The brand is also associated with HBO, which is reputable name for producing award-winning shows. In fact, Game of Thrones is the second most watched show in history of HBO behind another hit series, The Sopranos. Game of Thrones has only completed three seasons, but the number of viewers watching is increasing exponentially (O’Connell, 2013).

Consumer Feelings. Game of Thrones elicits strong feelings of excitement, social approval, self-respect and fun. Game of Thrones fans countdown the days until the next season occurs and when the season finally gets here, they countdown the days between shows. Consumers also often get excited to talk about the brand or refer to the brand (See Appendix K for tweets from fans expressing their excitement and love for Game of Thrones). In fact, some
people get frustrated when they cannot get into the show because everyone seems to be discussing it. For example, my friend, Susanne, tweeted about “two frustrating things about [her] life” and one of them was she “can’t get into Game of Thrones.”

Furthermore, fans are constantly relating themselves to characters and expressing opinions on characters. For example, I associate myself with House Stark because I like how they are a good, loyal family; however, I also like the character Tyrion because he is such an intelligent and interesting character. Another example is my friend Mark Banes’s twitter name is “Jon Snow,” another popular character. In fact, Buzzfeed, a popular social content website, created a quiz that fans could take to figure which Game of Thrones character they are in the fictional story. The quiz had just under two million views (www.buzzfeed.com). This example demonstrates how consumers like relating to the show and the characters. By viewers relating to the characters, they are defining themselves and relating to the book on a more emotional level.

*Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* are stories of good conquering evil with happily ever after, while *Game of Thrones* has complex themes of a power struggle in which the good guys don’t always win and revenge motivates the good. This is illustrated through the death of the characters that represent the good, as discussed earlier. Poniewozik (2014) described the plot as “cruelty and its consequences (or lack there of)” and that the show always represented issues of “power and morality, arguing that goodness does no one any good if it’s hamstrung and ineffectual” (Poniewozik, 2014). Goodman (2014) described that the violent and cruel lessons create “unease for viewers” and “the battle for power is every ongoing,” which keeps the readers/viewers on their feet (Goodman, 2014).

*Brand Resonance.* These strong brand feelings have resulted in active, loyal fans. On a daily basis, many fans are interacting with the brand by discussing it with their friends or on social media. For example, when my brother, cousins and I see something that reminds us of the brand we immediately text one another, such as the time when I sent a picture of a ton of crows
that were flying above me to my brother with a reference from the show (see Appendix L for Crows example and text message examples).

The brand also has more recently been integrated into other brand commercials, newspaper headlines and product-tie-ins. For example, a local State College tutoring business had a social media advertisement with the lion sitting on the Iron Throne, and the caption read, “Finals are Coming,” which was a play on Game of Thrones (See Appendix M for image of advertisement and other news paper headline integrations). Fans are also buying merchandise as well as creating their own, such as the fans that created their own Khalesesi Halloween costume (See Appendix N for images of fans in Game of Thrones inspired costumes from Pinterest). Fan websites, such as winteriscoming.net, and other communities are popular for discussions, news, and other brand related activities. Fans may also attend the Game of Thrones exhibit that is currently traveling to different cities.

More intense brand relationships include fans having Game of Thrones wedding themes and Game of Thrones tattoos, as well as creating their own actions figures based upon the characters. Fans utilize the Game of Thrones name to define themselves, and in turn, the brand becomes apart of them. They are willing to get permanent tattoos on their body to reflect this love for a character, the brand or a quote. In addition, they want the brand to be apart of a memorable and shared event, such as marriage. Even less extreme examples of simply integrating the Game of Thrones brand into friendly conversations or being reminded of the brand easily illustrates how fans create their own personal individual relationship with Game of Thrones. Like Star Wars and Harry Potter, this deep relationship that fans have with Game of Thrones will allow the brand to survive and resonate within individuals.
Brand Relationship Analysis and Recommendations: Establishing Longevity for

*Game of Thrones*

With the brand’s resemblance to both *Star Wars* as well as *Harry Potter*, *Game of Thrones* has the potential to sustain a long life. This analysis will evaluate the brand’s current marketing strategies and goals relative to cultivating relationships. Based upon this evaluation, I will make some short-term and long-term recommendations for the survival of the brand.

In the short term, HBO’s marketing strategy is highly successful by cultivating relationships with fans of varying degrees of loyalty as well as by successfully getting fans excited for the new season.

Time Warner owns HBO, who manages the *Game of Thrones* brand. Similar to *Harry Potter*, HBO utilizes perpetual and tease marketing to create excitement leading up to the next season. HBO released *Game of Thrones* trailers before their other hit series starting in January. In addition, they fueled this buzz via social media and billboards, and they integrated the brand into various newspapers. Through this strategic campaign, they were able to excite the fans for the upcoming season (refer to Appendix O to view some of HBO’s perpetual and tease marketing techniques).

In addition to this campaign, HBO also frequently utilizes social media to create excitement, share fan created content, and promote different events involving *Game of Thrones* as well as interacting with fans on a daily basis. For example, most recently, they have been sharing fan creations on social media outlets, in order to get fans excited about the new season. Another example is HBO brand ambassadors on college campuses who allowed students to dress up as *Game of Thrones* characters before special screenings at their college (refer to Appendix P for examples of how HBO actively creates relationships with fans). These tactics not only excite consumers, but they also further cultivate relationships.
HBO’s marketing strategy also appeals to loyal fans through the *Game of Thrones* exhibit, which travels to different cities and allows fans to immerse themselves in the *Game of Thrones* brand with various artifacts from the show (HBO).

Although this marketing plan is highly successful, the creation of multiple touch points for nostalgia and memory-making—an important aspect of iconic entertainment brands—is key to long term success. Instead of *Game of Thrones* fans becoming nostalgic of when they were children like many *Star Wars* fans, they may become nostalgic about dressing up during their college days or attending the *Game of Thrones* exhibit. They also may hang their artwork up in their homes, and when they look at their art, they will be reminded of that deep bond.

Many of these bonds will most likely exist for the hardcore *Game of Thrones* fans, such as the ones that do create the art, get a tattoo, or have a *Game of Thrones* wedding. However, more marketing tactics should be aimed at the average fan, such as myself and my brother, that currently have a deep connection, but may need more memories, in order for the brand to resonate further within oneself.

Although this short-term strategy is highly successfully, *Game of Thrones* must continue to manage and sustain deep brand relationships. In order to become that long lasting best friend or pen pal, *Game of Thrones* must start promoting events and experiences that resonate with the consumer. While tease and perpetual marketing works well to excite fans, these techniques need to be coupled with events, experiences and personal connections that cause the *Game of Thrones* brand to have deep emotional meaning that help shapes one’s identity. To accomplish this task I have a few recommendations:

1. **Brand salience as consistent reminder of the brand.** While the show is airing, continue to cultivate relationships through event and social media as well as continue to utilize event, promotional and merchandising marketing that elicit excitement for new seasons as well as other brand extensions. (These would be tactics similar to the examples in Appendix O.) As
with a long-distance friendship, every postcard, text and email can serve as a touchpoint and reminder of the importance of the relationship. This will create brand salience with new fans as well continue to remind fans of their favorite brand.

2. *Brand feelings via fan content.* Continue to encourage fan-created content (similar to the examples in Appendix P) because connections that are more personal can lead to a deeper connection, which in turn could lead to longer brand life. Returning to our analogy of the long-distance friendship, those more personally invested in a relationship want to see it succeed. Also, consider running a campaign or contest where fans share which character they relate to the most as well to also establish a deeper connection. This type of scenario will create strong brand feelings where fans can further relate to the brand.

3. *Brand feelings through interactions with brand promotion.* Consider creating a national contest for *Game of Thrones* that could involve all types of fans. Bing had the innovative idea of a giant scavenger hunt to find pages of Jay-Z’s memoir plastered on walls through cities. A similar idea for *Game of Thrones* could generate excitement for an upcoming season and give fans more opportunities to interact with the brand. In addition, these events could create fond memories that elicit nostalgia down the road.

4. *Brand feelings and resonance through direct interactions with the brand.* Another idea is to target college students studying abroad to take tours of where *Game of Thrones* was shot in Ireland and other European cities. Students, such as myself, often reminisce of their days and experiences and various trips abroad, and vow to go back. Adults love to reminisce about their college “glory days,” and will never forget that trip that they took where that got drunk off *Iron Throne Beer* and took pictures on the Iron Throne. A *Game of Thrones* trip could be one of those memories that fans could look back on as well as vow to visit repeatedly, just as one would vow to visit a long-distance friend over time. They also could promote college clubs, such as the current clubs that exist for *Harry Potter,* which would
result in social commitment that could build long lasting relationships based upon mutual feelings of love for the *Game of Thrones* brand. If a less loyal fan with few personal connections enters a contest, attends an event, takes a trip or even joins a club, the result is a better long-term relationship. It will be a memory and connection to the brand that they could look back on, in turn, creating long lasting brand resonance.

5. **Brand judgment, feelings and resonance through community and nostalgia.** Promote events in which fans establish annual events for fan communities to gather, share and validate their love for the brand or perhaps create one, which could be the *Game of Thrones* exhibit or a convention. This will also create strong brand feelings of nostalgia, validation for their judgment of brand quality and long-lasting brand resonance. These types of events could result in an easy trigger for after the brand has declined a bit, just like the *Harry Potter* bar tours and conventions.

6. **Brand salience and resonance through destination marketing.** Consider establishing a destination spot, in the long term for added brand resonance and to keep the brand top-of-mind in different locales (brand salience). *Harry Potter* as well as *Star Wars* experienced much success with destination vacation spots. Because *Game of Thrones* is geared toward adults this could be a permanent exhibit with maybe an interactive component or maybe a restaurant or a tour in Europe as discussed earlier. These trips and destination spots would create feelings of nostalgia or fond memories that will be easily recalled. Like a long distance relationship, friendships can be rekindled with each visit.

These recommendations or ideas are meant to elicit an even deeper more meaningful relationship, so even if the relationship diminishes, the connection will always be there and can still be triggered, as described in the long distance best friend relationship model established in this paper. Refer to Appendix Q to see a hypothetical long distance best friendship model for *Game of Thrones*. This hypothetical model mimics the *Harry Potter* model with a cyclical relationship.
leading up to the maturity of the brand and then slightly declining, but later surging with different triggers discussed in some of the recommendations listed above. By establishing events and promoting personal interactions now, average fans will have a deeper relationship with *Game of Thrones* that will become apart of them and could be easily triggered in the long term. In turn, this will allow the *Game of Thrones* brand to survive and make future brand extensions more plausible, as they are with both *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars*. Without the long-term best friend relationships that keep the brands’ popularities alive, extensions would not be possible.
Chapter 6

Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

The purpose of this paper was to define branding elements and brand relationships, with regard to entertainment brands (which for the purpose of this paper are defined as the individual movie, television show and book franchises or a combination of these brands). The goal of this analysis was to determine how entertainment brands could extend their lifecycle beyond the life of the original show, movie or book. Keller’s branding elements and many of Fournier’s brand relationship forms apply to entertainment brands. By applying both of their models to two iconic brands, Star Wars and Harry Potter, I was able to discover certain implications about the factors that cause the longevity of those brands. These findings were then used to analyze and make recommendations about how to extend the brand life of the newest entertainment craze, Game of Thrones.

Although this paper discovered some insights into the branding strategy and the longevity of an entertainment brand, there are many directions future research could take involving branding in the entertainment industry. In this analysis, I defined entertainment brands as specifically movies, television shows, books or combination of those brands. Future analysis could look at entertainment networks, such as HBO, ABC, and Disney, to gain their perspective on the management of their brand portfolio as an entirety. Perhaps, these networks like to control the length of their brand and develop strategies around that trajectory? In addition, my research was applied to iconic television shows, books or movies, while future research could focus on brands of varying success, which could lead to new marketing implications. Furthermore, my
research was empirical in nature and based on my own observations, future research could include a survey study with more quantitative and concrete results.

*Star Wars, Harry Potter and Game of Thrones* all involve stories that bring magic and fantasy to life for adults and/or children. Like their stories, their brands have some magic within them that have inspired and affected our culture in a special way, allowing *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, and hopefully *Game of Thrones* to live within fans for decades. The Long Distance Best Friend relationship that applies to these brands could be utilized for future entertainment brands, so they can create this magic for their viewers and their marketing strategy, which in turn will increase the longevity of their brand.
Appendix A

*Game of Thrones* Description from IMBD and the HBO websites

**Plot Summary - IMBD summary as written by a member on the IMDB website**

“Nine noble families fight for control of the mythical land of Westeros. Political and sexual intrigue is pervasive. Robert Baratheon, King of Westeros, asks his old friend Eddard, Lord Stark, to serve as Hand of the King, or highest official. Secretly warned that the previous Hand was assassinated, Eddard accepts in order to investigate further. Meanwhile the Queen's family, the Lannisters, may be hatching a plot to take power. Across the sea, the last members of the previous and deposed ruling family, the Targaryens, are also scheming to regain the throne. The friction between the houses Stark, Lannister, Baratheon and Targaryen and with the remaining great houses Greyjoy, Tully, Arryn, Tyrell and Martell leads to full-scale war. All while a very ancient evil awakens in the farthest north. Amidst the war and political confusion, a neglected military order of misfits, the Night's Watch, is all that stands between the realms of men [as well as crows that are known as children of the forest] and icy horrors beyond.”

- Written by Tfilm78 and Cajunman (www.imdb.com)
Screenshots of information on major characters and four major houses that are mentioned in this paper from HBO website (http://viewers-guide.hbo.com/game-of-thrones/houses)

Note: Each noble family has a house sigil or symbol and saying (listed below the name) associated with the house, which is the right hand corner of each symbol.

**House Baratheon**

The House of Baratheon was founded after the conquest of Aegon Targaryen by the conqueror’s general (and rumored bastard brother) Orlys Baratheon. More recently, following Robert’s Rebellion, the Baratheons of Storm’s End seized the Iron Throne from the Mad King Aerys Targaryen and have ruled the Seven Kingdoms since.

Joffrey Baratheon

Joffrey resembles his mother Cersei in both looks and comportment – in part because he has been ignored by King Robert most of his life. The over-indulged Joffrey took the throne after Robert’s unexpected death, but his new title has not stopped him from acting impulsively.
**House Stark**

The Stark family traces its lineage back to the First Men, who landed in Westeros more than 10,000 years ago and eventually forged a lasting peace with the continent’s druidic natives, the Children of the Forest. The Starks still worship the Old Gods of their forebears at the heart tree in Winterfell.

**Jon Snow**

Ned Stark’s bastard son, Jon was raised at Winterfell on near-equal footing with his half-siblings. He joined the Night’s Watch where he serves as steward to Lord Commander Mormont. Despite his instincts to join Robb Stark on the battlefield, he stayed up north to honor his vows to the Watch. His direwolf is named Ghost.

**Eddard “Ned” Stark**

Stoic, duty-bound and honorable, Ned Stark embodied the values of the north. In moving to King’s Landing to serve as Hand to his longtime friend Robert Baratheon, Ned fell on the wrong side of court intrigues and paid for it with his life.
The Lannisters descend in part from a group of Andal adventurers who invaded Westeros more than 6,000 years ago and settled at Casterly Rock. The Andals married the daughters of the King of the Rock (an ancestor of Lann the Clever, the legendary trickster who acquired the Rock through his wiles during the Age of Heroes). The Lannisters ruled as kings in their realm until the Targaryens brought dragons to conquer the continent, placing all the lords of Westeros under control of the Iron Throne.

A dwarf, Tyrion is considered an embarrassment to his House and the fact that his mother died during his birth has not endeared him to his father. What Tyrion lacks in size and strength, he makes up for in mental acuity; his loyalty to House Lannister and the good of the Seven Kingdoms is unquestioned, but as acting Hand of the King, he has been given more responsibility than ever.
House Tarygarean

The Targaryens came from the ancient civilization of Valyria, bringing dragons from the eastern continent and settling on the island of Dragonstone. After an unknown disaster known as the Doom of Valyria wiped out their homeland and killed most of the world’s dragons, the Targaryens invaded Westeros.

Daenerys Targaryen

Daenerys is mourning the death of her husband, Drogo, but has not stopped strategizing her return to the Seven Kingdoms to take back the Iron Throne. Impervious to fire, Dany used the heat of Drogo’s funeral pyre to hatch the dragon eggs she was given as a wedding gift.
Appendix B

*Game of Thrones* inspired beer and cookbook (Facebook as of September 25, 2014 and Amazon.com as of April 1, 2014)
Appendix C

*Game of Thrones* on Pinterest (as seen on April 2, 2014)
Appendix D

Star Wars Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid
Appendix E

Long Distance Best Friend Relationship Trajectory for *Star Wars*

[Diagram showing the trajectory of closeness to brand over time with key events:
- Saw the 1st trilogy
- Saw the 2nd trilogy
- Went to Walt Disney World and went on the *Star Wars* ride
- Built Legos with young cousin
- Plan to go to see the next film installment]
Appendix F

*Harry Potter* Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid

![Diagram of Harry Potter Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid]
Appendix G

Long Distance Best Friend Relationship Trajectory for *Harry Potter*

Examples of slight bump:
1. Annual read books
2. Annual went on *Harry Potter* bar tour
3. Watched all of the movies on cable TV, during ABC Family's *Harry Potter* weekend

Examples of large bump:
1. Study abroad and visited all of the *Harry Potter* sites in London
2. Watched some Quidditch matches, the adapted game

Maybe visiting *Harry Potter* World in Orlando, FL
Appendix H

*Game of Thrones* Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid

- **Active, loyal fans**
- **Tattoos, wedding themes**
- **Links friends**
- **Large fan communities**

- **High quality**
- **Critically acclaimed**
- **Often viewed as number one show**

- **Excitement**
- **Social Approval**
- **Self-respect**
- **Fun**

- **Unique Plot**
- **Interesting relatable characters**
- **High quality writing**

- **Dramatic**
- **Fantasy**
- **Thrilling**
- **Complicated**
- **Violent**

*Books/ Movies*
Appendix I

Fan quotes illustrating their dislike for King Joffrey (*Game of Thrones* Facebook as of December, 13, 2013)

“HIS MOTHER A LION, HIS FATHER A STAG: BUT SHE FOUND INTER-BREEDING TOO MUCH OF A DRAG. SO SHE SLEPT WITH HER BROTHER AND ISN’T THIS RICH? Sired of two lions yet somehow still a bitch?”

- SHANE M.

“ROSES ARE RED, VIOLETS ARE BLUE, WANT A GOOD LAUGH? REMEMBER WHEN JOFFREY GOT NAILED BY Poo.”

- @THE_SAM_TARLY

“JACK GLEESON’S A DOLL BUT JOFFREY’S A LION. JACK MAKES GIRLS SWOON AND JOFF LEAVES THEM CRYIN’”

“SANSA HAD A LITTLE CRUSH ON LITTLE LION JOFF, BUT KNEW THAT SANSA STARK COULD NEVER GET HIM OFF. FOR SANSA MAY HAVE LOVELY HAIR AND HAVE A SHAPELY BUM, BUT THOUGH SHE MAY BE PRETTY SHE’S NOTHING LIKE HIS MUM.”
Appendix J

Fan tweets illustrating their love for Khaleesi (as seen on Twitter as of March 2014)

Kris @krizzleee · Mar 29
Always be yourself. Unless you can be khaleesi... Always be khaleesi.
#GameOfThrones

KD Drummond @KDP10for10 · Mar 27
42 days til draft, 10 days til #Khaleesi, 4 days til Nats quest for WS starts, 3 days til Walking Dead finale. #Milestones

InstaThrones @InstaThrones · Mar 26
In 2012, there were over 160 babies named “Khaleesi” in the United States. (Even though it’s a title, not a name.)

Jake from State Farm @iGrowBeard · 8h
One more #WCW because GOT returns Sunday... The Khaleesi aka The Mother of Dragons aka Miss Emilia Clarke pic.twitter.com/jUTSvA1roW

Olivia @aveuaskew · 8h
The rabies shots after wrestling these bats into dragon costumes will be worth it if one person calls me Khaleesi.

louise @louisehynes · 36m
starbucks guy thought i said that my name was khalees. i did not correct him.
#khaleesi

Adina Johnson @adinafaith · 40m
Lord of light please let me wake up as khaleesi 😇
Appendix K

Fan tweets illustrating their excitement and love for *Game of Thrones* (as seen on Twitter)

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**Dennis Wilson**
@DWilson_9

*game of thrones should be two hours long and air year round*
#wewantmore

Retweeted by Kevin stormCrowe

---

**Caroline**
@CarlosLantana

*When does *Game of Thrones* come back on my life is boring*

Followed by True Blood and 1 other

📍 from Texas, US

---

**Trav**
@J_Trav · Mar 23

*2 weeks til Thrones.*

---

**Joseph Mahon**
@BatMahon · Mar 30

*7 days till Game of Thrones #throner*

---

**Blake Northcott**
@ComicBookGrl · 3h

*Life is nothing more than a series of depressing, vacuous experiences wedged in between episodes of *Game of Thrones.**
Tweets (as seen on Twitter) and Text Messaging of fans’ personal interactions with the brand

Tweets showing how certain instances remind us of the show

Text messages between my cousins, brother and I referencing the show
Appendix M

Headlines and Advertisements that integrate *Game of Thrones* into their brand (as seen on Facebook and Google)
Appendix N

*Game of Thrones* costumes on Pinterest (as seen on April 2, 2014)
Appendix O

Examples of HBO’s perpetual and tease marketing techniques for *Game of Thrones* fans (as seen on Facebook and Twitter)
Appendix P

Examples of *HBO’s* active relationships with many *Game of Thrones* fans (as seen on Facebook, Twitter and Google)
Appendix Q

Long Distance Best Friend Relationship Trajectory for *Game of Thrones*

Examples of slight bump:
1. Re-watched some of the seasons
2. Reminisced about your trip abroad
3. Played the *Game of Thrones* board game.

Examples of large bump:
1. Study abroad and visited all of the *Game of Thrones* sites in London
2. Went to the annual *Game of Thrones* exhibit or a convention.

Reading a comic book extension of the brand
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ACADEMIC VITA

Jennifer Mahon
1005 Edwards Drive, Springfield, PA 19064
jcm5438@gmail.com

EDUCATION:
The Pennsylvania State University
Smeal College of Business, Schreyer Honors College
Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Minor in Economics

The Institute of Palazzo Rucellai
Studied International Marketing
Florence, Italy
Summer 2013

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:
Acutedge | Salesforce Consulting Partner
Wayne, PA
Business Development and Marketing Summer Intern
June 2013- August 2013
• Compiled over 127 leads and entered them into Salesforce, thus far 7 have become viable business opportunities
• Finalized Statement of Works and crafted case studies based off of Statement of Works
• Formulated a competitive analysis on nonprofit CRM systems as well apps located on Salesforce.com and the cloud
• Developed nonprofit CRM product ideas through collaboration with CEO
• Streamlined sales process with CEO, marketing manager and Human Resources Manager
• Composed press releases
• Reworded articles from corporate partners whose second language is English

Schreyer Consulting Group
Leadership Team Member
University Park, PA
January 2013- Present
• Assist with general body meetings, case preparation, networking and semester goals
• Consulting on new Malini Foundation Merchandise project with group of 5
• Brainstorming product ideas with team in which sales in U.S. will cover 50% of operating expenses within 3 years

Student’s Consulting Non-Profit Organization
Consultant | Child Protection and Safety Collaboration
University Park, PA
January 2013-May 2013
• Analyzed Centre County statistics with a team of 6
• Determined marketing outlets that will increase brand awareness and customer base
• Recommended best public awareness practices to client

Mr. Youth
Bing Campus Ambassador
University Park, PA
September 2011- December 2011
• Supervised all brand promotions at the University Park campus
• Orchestrated 3 Bing events, including the showcase EA Video Game Event
• Awarded 1st place for best marketing practices against 5 other Bing Campus Branding Campaign
Delaware County Government Center

Media, PA

Judicial Support Intern

June 2011 – January 2013

• Prepared and organized legal files for judge, DA and prosecution for all criminal cases
• Entered cases into electronic database for public record

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Dean’s List every Semester
1st place in the Crisis Management Simulation in 2011 Berg Case Competition at the University of Pittsburgh

LEADERSHIP/ACTIVITIES

Schreyer Consulting Group, 2012-2014
Students Consulting Nonprofit Organizations, 2013
Phi Beta Lambda Business Fraternity, 2010-2013
Penn State Marketing Association (PSMA), 2010-2012