

BRAND STORYTELLING:

A COMPARISON OF THE BRAND STORIES OF TIFFANY AND BULGARI

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Many businesses use stories to build relationships with customers. Through the events that the story includes, excludes, and emphasizes, the company illustrates its version of the action and provides an interpretation on its action. Therefore, this study uses the narrative approach to look at press releases of Tiffany and Bulgari before, during, and after the recession and found there are similarities and differences in terms of what kinds of stories they tell. The study then moved on to discuss reasons that explain the similarities and differences and how those brands use stories as one of the branding components of success. Other companies may incorporate those findings into their management strategies to lessen the gap between consumer and company, to create a bridge of longevity, loyalty, mutual understanding, connection, trust establishment and to build a strong brand.

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## Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
LIST OF MULTIMEDIA OBJECTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
The Elements of Brand and Brand Building.....	5
Story.....	10
Luxury Brand: Be Part of the Story.....	14
Conceptual Development.....	17
METHOD.....	19
Subjects.....	19
Tiffany.....	19
Bulgari.....	20
Period of Study.....	23
Data Collecting.....	24
A Narrative Analysis Approach.....	25
Theme Analysis.....	27
FINDINGS.....	32
History as an Essential Component of the Story.....	32
Stories Address Company’s Legacy and Heritage.....	33
The Use of Metaphor.....	34

Stories of Sponsorship.....	35
Unique Symbol.....	35
Multicultural Marketing.....	36
Designer as One of the Representatives of the Brand.....	36
Social Responsibilities.....	37
Management Team as the Brand Spokesperson.....	38
Celebrity as the Brand Endorsement.....	39
Emotional Appeal.....	40
The Second Research Question.....	41
DISCUSSION.....	44
Study Limitations.....	53
Recommendations for Future Research.....	54
CONCLUSION.....	55
REFERENCES.....	56
APPENDIX A.....	71
APPENDIX B.....	73
APPENDIX C.....	76
APPENDIX D.....	78

**Lists of Multimedia Objects**

Figure 1: Chernatony's Brand Pyramid.....	8
Figure 2: Tiffany and Bulgari Sales Revenue from 2007 to 2009.....	21
Figure 3: Tiffany and Bulgari Sales Percentage Annual Change from 2007 to 2009.....	22
Figure 4: Bulgari and Tiffany's Stock Movement from 2006 to 2010.....	22

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Many of us grew up learning of the world through stories we read or heard from our parents, grandparents, and teachers. The elders handed down the myths and legends surrounding their gods and ancestors and knowledge and experience was exchanged and passed along the generations. In every great movie or book, there must be a good story that grabs people's attention. Storytelling is what humans have done for millennia. Everyone is drawn to a good story, wants to hear the most emotional story, and wants to hear the best ones over and over again (Healey, 2008). Stories help shape the identity of groups, give them values and boundaries and help establish their reputation among rivals. A good story can create emotions and feelings among the audience, can simplify and transmit complex messages (Hermansson & Na, 2008).

In many ways the modern company resembles these groups: the stories that circulate in and around the organization paint a picture of the company's culture and values, heroes and enemies, good points and bad, toward both employees and customers. Business communicators inherently understand the importance of telling a story. According to Kotler, Wong, Saunders, and Armstrong (2005), modern marketing requires more than just producing quality goods, tailoring pricing strategies and ensuring those products available to the appropriate customers. The foundation of marketing communication is as same as all the other communications among humans (Varey, 2001). Healey (2008) considered storytelling to be one of the primary components of branding. By sharing stories, companies define "who they are" and "what they stand for." Many business leaders use good stories to present ideas to staff, investors and customers



because they know that each story contains a personal message and focuses the listener intently on their personal relationship to the message. Storytelling is a way of ensuring the company is working towards the same goals and that the same values are shared within the organization as well as conveying messages to potential customers so that they buy the products (Hermansson & Na, 2008).

Hancock (2009) suggested that in recent years, companies have raised the variety and market perception of branding messages and methods. Designers, especially those focus on the luxury items, are using brand power as a competitive strategy to target and attract consumers to purchase their products. He noted that luxury branding is about generating and creating an identity, a history, and a story that catches the attention and makes the product and brand appear unique and valuable to an individual, while at the same time appearing trendy and something that everyone wants to obtain. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) referred to luxury items as the extreme end of prestige. Silverstein and Fiske (2003) mentioned in their book that America's middle-market consumers are trading up to luxury brands, regardless of their economic status, because these products provide an opportunity for the middle class to attain the perception and feeling of prosperity (Schwartz, 2002).

There are many luxury brands with long histories such as Tiffany & Co. and Bulgari. Tiffany & Co., founded in 1837, has promoted itself as the world's premier jeweler ([www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com), 2010). Bulgari started its business in the late 19th century, and since then, it has been creating fine jewelry. Those brands have been widely known for a long time. Their names, logos, and symbols represent quality and a certain lifestyle and value in people's minds. Liebenstein (1950) mentioned that consumers use those products

to show their wealth and to differentiate themselves from others.

These brands have existed for a long time, while many other companies have failed to prosper. It is tough to grow and maintain a strong brand in today's environment, with the splintering of mass media, competition from new retail formats, and skepticism from value-conscious consumers (Aaker, 1995). It is difficult to make consumers understand the value of products or services in this economy. The latest recession, being considered by many economists to be the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, hit us like the 9-11 terrorist attacks, but affected a wider range of people and areas. Companies claimed bankruptcy, the housing and stock markets collapsed, and people lost their jobs. Brand builders face substantial internal and external pressures and barriers (Aaker, 1995). To retain the loyalty of consumers in today's competitive environment, companies have to create an experience that is relevant and differentiates their brand. The physical products no longer make the difference. The difference lies in the story, because the story is one of forces that drive the bond between the company and the consumer. Vincent (2002) and Fog, Budtz and Yakaboylu (2005) highlighted the importance of delivering a point of view when they talked about brand stories. Kelly (1998) suggested that a story is considered to be worthless if it does not press home a point of view. Bruce (2001) argued that every brand has its own stories, and if a brand is to have a strong sense of its own value, it must have a good story.

The goal of this research is to reveal the differences and similarities of the content before, during, and after the recession that is inherent in the narratives of brand stories delivered by Tiffany and Bulgari. Through this context of brands, it will also be possible to explore the theoretical ramifications of content of narratives in brand stories in general,

thereby contributing to a company's understanding of how they construct and enact narrative methods of delivering messages in general, and particularly during crisis situations. There are vast numbers of company narratives constructing their luxury brands; the narrative that shapes people's perceptions of brands will also shape people's emotions, conversations, and buying decisions cite. As Walter Fisher (1984) suggested, humans are essentially narrative beings, and narrative is so essential to us that we should think of ourselves as storytellers. The study also intends to fill in gaps left open in previous research by lack of comparisons of brand stories with similar product categories. To fully understand how to communicate a good story that will serve the objectives that almost all modern companies want to achieve, long and fruitful relationships with consumers, it is necessary to study the differences and similarities presented by two brands that ultimately had different outcomes after the economic recession.

The study followed the order of literature review, methodology, findings, discussions, limitations, and future research. The literature review is divided into four parts: the overall understanding of brand and brand building, storytelling, luxury brands, and conceptual development. The methodology section gives detailed information about Tiffany and Bulgari and the reasons for choosing the two brands. Examples were presented in the methodology section in order to explain how the appropriate method was adopted by the author. The results of the study are provided, followed by limitations of this initial study as well as implications and future research directions, each discussed in the final section.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### The elements of brand and brand building

The word “brand” has become a part of people’s basic vocabulary. The American Marketing Association (AMA) defined a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, design or some combination of these elements, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Bennett, 1988, p. 18). Within this view, as Keller (2003) said, “Technically speaking, then, whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo, or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand” (p. 3). He recognized, however, that brands today are much more than that. As can be seen, these definitions described what brands are and to some extent what they do, but it failed to capture what brands mean to the consumers who support them. Ewing (2010) addressed when and why a brand may matter to consumers and found out that the importance of a brand to a consumer may vary depending on certain conditions such as how the consumer primarily views an object.

Healey (2008), based on previous explanations of brand, considered a brand as a promise of satisfaction. He said, “[A brand] is a metaphor operating as an unwritten contract between a manufacturer and a consumer, a seller and a buyer, a performer and an audience, an environment and those who inhabit it, an event and those who experience it” (p. 6). A brand has become synonymous with the name of the company, the consumer’s experience of the company, the consumer’s experience with the company’s products and the consumer’s expectations. Franzen and Moriarty (2009) considered a brand to be “a complex system of interrelated management decisions and consumer reactions that

creates awareness, visibility, and meaning, as well as distinguishing a product from its competitors” (p. 6). However, the meaning of “brand” changes when it is used in different context. Sometimes it is a noun, as in “This is my favorite brand,” and sometimes it is a verb, as in “Let’s brand this new product.” Brands are embedded in people’s daily lives; they use the names of the brands as if they are a part of the vocabulary. When used as a verb, “brand” is equal to “branding,” that being “the strategic process that manages the presentation and influences the perception of a brand” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 6). This study will focus on branding, the strategic process of managing a brand.

According to Aaker (1991), Duncan (2002), and Keller (1998), the purpose of branding was to build, maintain and enhance relationships with consumers. A company uses its brand name, logo, slogan, package, spokesperson, and message to influence consumers’ brand perceptions, to lead them to have brand association to shape brand image and finally to achieve a long-term brand relationship. Whether is to enhance a relationship or to achieve a long-term brand relationship, the final goal of branding is to increase the company’s ability to compete with others. People have more choices than ever before, and they are not only choosing between good and bad products or service providers, the choices are among an array of good opportunities. As Neumeier (2005) mentioned: “The degree of trust I feel towards the product, rather than an assessment of its features and benefits, will determine whether I’ll buy this product or that product” (p. 18).

Since the Second World War, customers have relied on a familiar and trusted brand name as the antidote to the perceived risk of the product and service failing to

provide its basic functional benefits (Chernatony & Mcdonal, 1998). “At a psychological level, a trusted brand minimizes the risk that the image created for customers using the product or service falls short of that desired” (Knox, 2004, p. 106). Jacoby, Szybillo and Busato-Schach (1977) reported that in a pre-choice information acquisition task, brand name information was the most frequently acquired piece of information. Also, subjects who were familiar with the brand name tended to acquire lesser amounts of other information compared to subjects who did not have the brand name available. Crimmins (1992) found in a survey conducted by DDB Needham, which measured consumer’s beliefs in brand names, that more than 60% of the respondents reported that they generally try to stick to well known brand names. Based on those ideas, Kim (2008) conducted a research on branding for nonprofit. Through discussing brand’s relationship with the organization’s mission, branding trends and risks, he found that a strong brand is essential for fundraising and further implementing nonprofit organization’s missions. Building trust with customers and donors helps nonprofit organizations succeed in an insecure and rapidly changing environment.

Regarding brand building, Chernatony (2006) envisioned a brand pyramid: 1) attributes; 2) benefits; 3) emotional rewards; 4) values; and 5) personality traits (p. 226).



Figure 1: Chernatony's Brand Pyramid

Figure 1 shows to build a strong brand; the brand needs first to identify the advantages it should have over and beyond competitors. The brand should then consider what emotional rewards could be associated with that particular advantage what value would this emotional reward link into, and finally what personality trait could tie in with this value, which relates to how consumers feel when they choose or use the services or products. For instance, some people like to buy branded clothing, which cost several times more than regular brands. People buy branded clothing not just for the quality and style, they buy them also because they feel branded clothing makes them different from others and makes them feel special. The feeling of special and different is what we called emotional rewards (Chernatony, 2006). The strength of employing brand pyramid is that it then stimulates ideas about creatively positioning the brand and developing the brand's personality. Chernatony (2006) also postulated that brand essence has to transfer into brand positioning and brand personality to lead the growth of the brand. According to him, positioning was the process of how a brand competes with similar product providers in the consumer market. He thought that brand positioning could be utilized from two

aspects, one from a view of functional attributes or utilitarian value, and the other from a viewpoint of emotional attributes, also known as hedonic value. Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) explained that utilitarian value has been described as a tendency to emphasize functional value or physical performance features, such as quality and value of products in choice behavior. Traditionally, marketers have believed utilitarian value drives market choices and consumer preferences (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). People with greater utilitarian values tend to live simpler lifestyles and may consider consumption necessary for survival or as a tool to reach higher-order life goals rather than as the terminal goal of enjoyment (Tse, 1996). Consequently, they tend to be more value conscious and have more positive value perceptions regarding prices paid (Feinberg, Kahn, & McAlister, 1992; Wakefield & Barnes, 1996). In contrast, hedonic value is an outcome related to spontaneous responses that are more subjective and personal (Babin et al., 1994).

Those who focus on hedonic values are those who tend to use surplus income to satisfy their ever-growing new desires for consumption (Campbell, 1987). As such, consumers with stronger hedonic values may not be satisfied by the functional value of a product. Instead, they may be more concerned with the expressive or emotional value of a product, such as brand, designs, appearance and packaging, than with quality and price. They appear to derive their gratification from the immediate hedonic pleasure experience of consumption (Fischer & Arnold, 1990). Wang, Chen, Chan, and Zheng's (2000) research investigated the influence of hedonic value on the consumer behavior of young Chinese. 960 participants interviewed who were chosen from four major cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chengdu. Wang and his colleagues revealed a



negative relationship between hedonic values and utilitarian value. In addition, the study also showed positive relationships between hedonic values and consumer novelty seeking, responsiveness to promotion stimuli, and preference for foreign brands.

This study agrees that brand essence has to take both functional and emotional levels into consideration, as a brand should have functional or emotional appeal to its customers. People rationalize and legitimize with their brains, but they buy with their hearts. A brand has to follow its essence to achieve its vision and goals, which means a brand has to keep its unique value in mind and relate it to its consumers. Consumers associate the value of the product with the brand. The brand then can convey either a positive or a negative message about the product to the consumer (Kim & Chung, 1997). For example, Disney® makes people think about happiness, family, and fun while BP led people to consider disaster, pollution, and environmental irresponsibility following the oil spill event.

How can a brand relate its value to the consumers? The underlying value of a brand is often based upon specific association of a use context such as luxury brands' contribution to self-image enhancement, which provides a reason-to-buy that can attract customers. Such an association represents the product's meaning to customers. Such a context can be delivered as a story.

### **Story**

Storytelling is what humans have done for millennia (Healey, 2008). Everyone is drawn to a good emotional story, wants to hear the strongest emotional story, and wants to hear the best stories over and over again. Why would anyone care to read or listen to stories? Three rationales help to explain this behavior (Healey, 2008). First, telling stories

is inherently pleasurable to both the story teller and the audience; authors and narrators as the protagonist feel part of the story, and audiences, who hear, enjoy, and can vent anger or report bliss about events and outcomes over and over again, and take pleasure in the nostalgia of reliving earlier experiences (Schindler & Holbrook, 2003). Second, to some extent consciously, but mostly unconsciously, storytelling permits the teller to experience an archetype fulfillment; the plot line in the story told provides evidence that the storyteller-as-protagonist represents a regular guy/gal, lover, creator, ruler, sage, hero, magician or some other archetypal primal form. Third, telling stories revises and deepens sense making of the meaning of events in the story and what the complete story implies about oneself and others.

Healey (2008) mentioned before that “when we buy brands, we take part in their story: great brands reassure us as to what an important role we play in their great story” (p. 7). He considered storytelling to be one of the components of branding, which correlated with previous research that found that stories and storytelling are central to achieving a deep understanding of consumer psychology (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Holt, 2004). A brand is built in the consumer’s mind, where he or she gathers up all the knowledge regarding the company, its products and/or services, the communication they have with the outside world, and the associations all those elements bring up. When excitement builds up, people remember the brand and it becomes a reference for them in their daily life. Branding should be done in a way that address the needs and wants of the target audiences, and provide a solution to the audiences’ needs (Yastrow, 2003). A good way to appeal to customers’ needs and wants is through stories to engage those imaginations (Gargiulo, 2006). A story is something that evokes emotional bonds

between the receiver and sender of the message. Cesario, Grant, and Higgins (2004) examined the aforementioned possibilities. Specifically, they hypothesized that when messages are framed in a manner consistent with an individual's focus or needs, they are more persuasive. A supporting hypothesis is the idea that when there is a connection between a given message and an individual's needs, this could generate a sense of "feeling right." This sense of "feeling right," then, could transfer to the perceived rightness of what someone is reading. According to Fog et al. (2005), the brand is strong if it is built on an "emotional connection with the consumer" (p. 16).

Fisher (1987) considered that "people are essentially storytellers...[and] the world is a set of stories from which we choose, and thus constantly re-create, our lives (pp. 64-65). Studying the elements of storytelling, narrators should first understand what makes a story gripping. The term "narrative" is frequently taken to connote the threading together of a set of events or experiences in a temporal sequence in order to make sense of them (Dean, 1998). For example, McAdams (1996) defined narrative as a particular way of collecting data or applying the data obtained. Denning (2006) considered storytelling as narrative, stating that using a narrative approach is what helps make information tangible and that it creates and evokes memories in the audience. Vincent (2002) suggested that narrative is when a storyteller adds his or her own opinion to the story. When storytellers tell a story, they choose what they believe to be important. In other words, narrative is when people tell a story, decide what to say, what not to say, what to emphasize, and what to understate. This study agrees with the idea that a research of story narrative cannot dismiss the purpose of the storyteller.

According to Fog, Budtz and Yakaboylu (2005, pp. 31-35), a story has four

elements: message, conflict, characters, and plot. The three scholars (2005) used these four elements to explain that storytelling is one of the tools that companies use to build their brand. From a strategic perspective, the essence of a story equals the value of a brand. They went on to say that storytelling makes the brand value easier to understand and more meaningful. The brand value that is carried by stories in both functional and emotional ways is powerful and more appealing to customers.

Polkinghorne (1991) explained that narrative helps people's cognitive organization process. Inherent to Polkinghorne's idea, Escalas (1998) suggested that story has two functions: sense making and emotional appeal. Stories and storytelling are central to achieving a deep understanding of consumer psychology (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Holt, 2004). Gargiulo (2006) posited that storytelling in the business environment enables companies to present their messages in a more effective way, position their products, appeal to their audiences and create dialogue with their customers. Through interviewing two management level people in two companies and analyzing the stories of both companies to find that with one company it is important for the external message to coincide with the core values and with another company (Hermansson & Na, 2008).

In this research, the focus is on putting storytelling in the context of external marketing. It can be said that storytelling as a tool for branding is becoming increasingly important. Some argue that consumer purchase decisions in the future will be strongly influenced by invisible factors, such as the stories about the company (Mossberg & Nissen-Johansen, 2006). Jensen (1999) discussed this point of view further by stating that, although there will still be demand for products with practical values, their functionalities will not be as important as it used to be. Rather, it is the story part of the

product that will play an important role in consumer's minds when deciding to make a specific purchase. He continued to argue that today's consumers tend to purchase products and services to experience the stories, which represent lifestyle; they value that stories about the products they purchase subsequently create added value for them.

Branding, which can be considered the goal with storytelling, is also addressed to give clarity to the relationship between the two concepts that are intimately connected to each other. Companies and people in general use different brands to signal who they are. It could be that they use a specific kind of perfume or bag, drive a specific car, or live in a special area. They reason why they choose precisely this brand instead of the numerous competitors is because of the story attached to that brand. This means that whenever consumers choose one brand over another, it is because that brand can tell a story that none of the others can. Storytelling gives personality and meaning to products and brands (Simmons, 2006), appeals to the needs and wants of the proposed target audience, and thus communicates to that audience issues that give them a positive impression (Yastrow, 2003). That is how luxury brands, even though they are listed at a high market price, are still able to build a solid sales base.

### **Luxury brand: Be part of the story**

As this study is about luxury brands, it is necessary for people to understand what is luxury? Luxury is written in different ways in different languages, such as the French *luxe*, the Portuguese *lujo*, and the Italian *lusso*. Although there are many ways of saying luxury, most originated from the Latin term *luxus* (Dubio et al., 2005). When Kapferer (1997a, 1997b) talked about luxury, he used the terms beauty, enlightenment, and good taste as well as the luxury items themselves, which provide extra pleasure and flatter all

senses at once.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) referred to luxury items as the extreme end of prestige. Luxury was considered by Phau and Prendergast (2000) as beauty, uniqueness, excellence, magic, or sensuality. Others thought luxury items were difficult to obtain, a means to reach happiness, personally rewarding, providing emotional benefits, intrinsically pleasing rather than functional (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991), gratifying (Rossiter & Percy, 1997), and delivering sensory pleasure (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). According to Mandhachitara and Lockshin (2004), luxury justifies the high price. It was Thorstein Veblen (1970) in his attack on the inequalities of the capitalist system in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, who forged the association between luxury, class hierarchy, and status. Veblen argued that human beings have to show off their wealth and power in order to really hold their self-esteem. This thought is similar to what Kapferer (1998) stated, that luxury goods are rarely the subjects of intense price competition, rather, they exist in a stratosphere where pricing is indicative of perceived value and status. Human beings like to compare themselves to others, and through these comparisons, they evaluate their own opinions and abilities. These social comparisons may be done by directly measuring others or by reading and hearing about them by word of mouth (Wood, 1996). Tungate (2005) stated that when consumers spend a lot of money buying luxury brands, they want to have more than just high quality products; they wish they could be a part of the stories.

Providing prestige to the buyer to show their high level of wealth is one of the reasons to purchase for those who buy luxury products (Bagwell & Douglas, 1996; Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Grossman & Shapiro, 1998; Nueno & Quelch, 1998). It is

also readily apparent that luxury goods providers differentiate themselves from other products through measures of quality, workmanship, materials definition, exclusivity and market range definitions.

Silverstein and Fiske (2003) mentioned in their book that America's middle-market consumers are trading up to luxury brands, regardless of their economic status, because these products provide an opportunity for the middle class to attain the perception and feeling of prosperity (Schwartz, 2002). Conspicuous consumption of such products displays an individuals' wealth, differentiating them from others (Liebenstein, 1950). The process of differentiation is a key component of the process of branding, recognition, and consumer ownership of branding messages.

When explaining his eternal principles for developing and managing a luxury brand, Herman (2010) mentioned that behind a luxury brand, there are often legends of eccentric genius creators, mysterious production processes, secret formulas and exceptional preparations, which create mystery, and have been treated very seriously by luxury brands. Designers are also frequently associated with luxury brands. Ryan (2007) examined the relationship between luxury brands and the arts through a case study of Prada and the artist Rem Koolhaas's collaboration. He found that the artists are appropriated to produce symbolic capital, product, for the Prada brand.

Incorporating previous research, this study suggests that brands that have great brand equity or legendary stories must obtain a large amount of narrative materials, and each brand has its own characteristics, therefore, it is interesting and useful for us to look into the strategies of successful legacy brands. As we grow up learning from others, many

people become successful by standing on the giant's shoulders. In the world of social science, every step forward is based on the previous steps. Thus, this study is also based on previous research.

### **Conceptual Development**

Scholars have been studying the nature of brand stories for a long time. For instance, Huang (2006) used the comparison of three jeweler brands' stories in characters, messages, event, and conflicts to examine what stories brands like to tell. As a result, he found that there are 10 types of stories that are often used by companies: (1) the establishment of a brand; (2) the development of the brand; (3) success stories; (4) about the brand value; (5) brand identity and personality; (6) the goal of a brand; (7) brand and its consumers; (8) brand and its spokesperson; (9) brand and the society; and (10) organizations of a brand such as the founder of the company and the management team (pp. 12-13). Woodside, Sood, and Miller (2008) moved to a psychological level to examine that brand use dramatic and lecture functions of stories to connect with consumers to enable consumers to tell their own experience associated with brands, supporting word of mouth storytelling. Comunale (2008), using H&M, Forever 21, and Urban Outfitters as subjects, discovered how brands use storytelling to create a bond with the consumer while also providing a narrative context that creates a perceived lifestyle, and furthermore, emotional appeals that are able to entice the consumer to not only believe in a product, but also to support the fantasy or the retailer's identity for the product merchandising. Vincent (2002) and others (Fog, Budtz & Yakaboyly, 2005) looked into the elements of brand stories: message, conflict, characters, and plot. Content analysis has been adopted as a common way to examine brand stories. Building on the



existing findings regarding the components of brand stories, Chen (2009) conducted research that focused on a comparison of brand stories. In the study, he adopted a quantitative methodology of content analysis in looking for the similarities and distinctions in the area of brand stories in terms of the types of the stories and the stories' message, conflict, characters, and plot. Chen's research provided some basis for this study. However, since little has been done in the academic world that focuses on comparing the similarities and differences that occur in brand stories, especially for brands that have survived and thrived through a certain economic event, for example the recent recession. This study suggests that through analyzing the similarities and differences of brand stories, it can help to explain how those legacy brands use stories as one of the branding components to success. Other companies may incorporate those findings into their management strategies to help build a strong brand.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) strongly emphasize that research questions should be clearly defined and stated. This will be crucial for the outcome of the research itself, since the clarity of the conclusions drawn will depend solely on this fact. The research questions that will guide and fulfill the purpose of this study are:

RQ1: What are the differences in the storytelling between the two brands, and what do these differences imply?

RQ2: In terms of the stories that Tiffany and Bulgari told before, during, and after the recession, what are the differences between the two brands and how did they impact business performance?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Method**

To answer the questions above, to reach the heart of the brand story, and to capture an insider understanding of how storytelling relates to branding strategy, this study requires an analysis approach that allows the author to develop an interpretation of brand stories and to understand the unique qualities of these brands. After reading and comparing the two brands' stories, the author found that narrative is an appropriate approach to analysis as these stories do not stand alone, rather, they are about the company's experiences of events and major turning points over a certain period of time. Chapter three introduces the concept of narrative analysis, theme analysis, the two subjects, Tiffany and Bulgari, and the reason for choosing the two brands as well as the description of the analysis method. The data collection was presented followed by the procedure of the analysis.

### **Subjects**

This study chose Tiffany and Bulgari as research subjects. Tiffany & Co. and Bulgari represent two similar accessory categories, and they have each been around for a significant period of time, but they performed differently during the worldwide recession. The detailed reason for choosing the two brands is explained in a later section.

**Tiffany.** Charles Lewis Tiffany founded Tiffany in 1837 in New York City. Its official US website is [www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com). Since day one, Tiffany has promoted itself as the world's premier jeweler and America's house of design. Charles Lewis Tiffany's obsession with the simple elegance of classic silver design earned Tiffany the highly coveted Award of Merit at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1867. This was the first

time an American company had been recognized by a European jury. Tiffany is always at the forefront of the world's greatest design movements. From film stars to first ladies, Tiffany jewels have adorned the world's most stylish women. On red carpets and at society events, celebrities and women of influence adore Tiffany designs. Many people are familiar with Tiffany Blue Box®, which was Charles Lewis Tiffany's mandate that the coveted boxes could only be acquired with a Tiffany purchase. Its designs have graced both the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Presidential seal, recently redesigned and on display on the updated dollar bill. Tiffany also creates trophies for the United States Tennis Association and PGA TOUR championship, as well as other sports tournaments.

**Bulgari.** Bulgari is based in Rome and was founded by Sotirilo Bulgari in 1884. In 1905, with the help of his sons Costantino and Giorgio, he inaugurated the shop in Via Condotti, which today remains Bulgari's flagship store. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the two brothers started taking over their father's role in the management of the business. By the 1950's -60's, the bold and innovative style of Bulgari had gained success within the jet set and movie world. In 1970's Bulgari began its international expansion. The business reached New York, Geneva, Monte Carlo and Paris. Following a period of strong business performance during the 1980's, Bulgari started making a wide range of product portfolios in the early 1990's. Entering the 21st century, Bulgari began purchasing a series of companies. [www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com) is its official website. Bulgari S.p.A. is the parent company and the owner of the BVLGARI brand.

The reasons for choosing Tiffany and Bulgari are:

- 1) They both present similar products, which include jewels, accessories, watches

and other gifts, as global players in the luxury market for a significant period of time.

2) They both were affected by the recession. Figure 2 and figure 3 shows that in 2008, both Bulgari and Tiffany had a small dip in their sales. In 2009, Bulgari's annual sales dropped by 13.84 percent compared to 2008 while Tiffany's annual sales declined 4.85 percentage points. In other words, Bulgari was impacted by the recession more significantly than Tiffany.

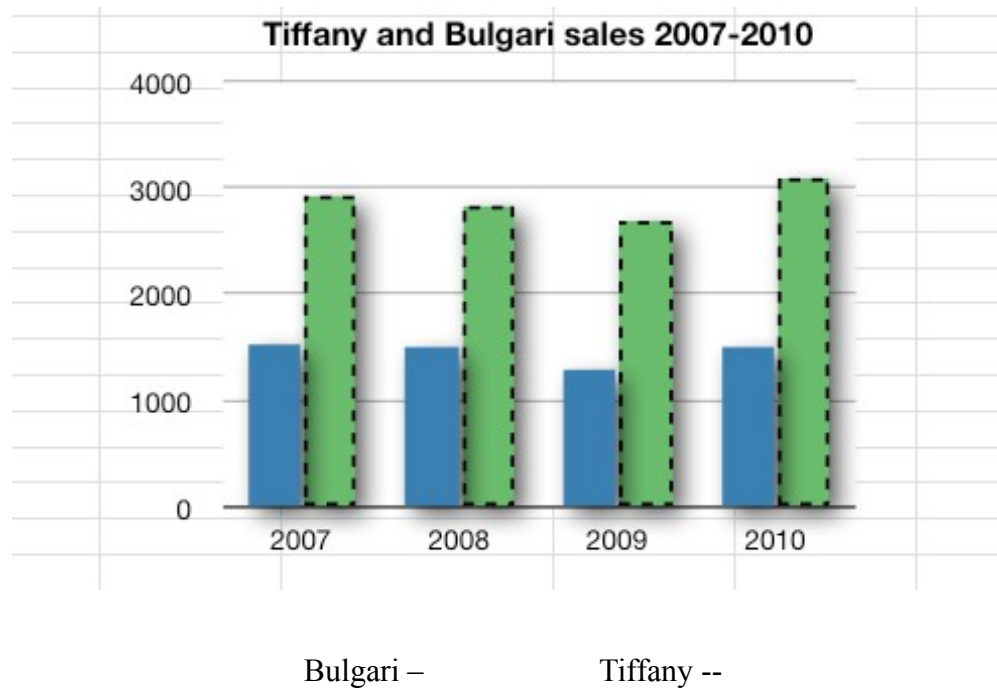


Figure 2: Tiffany and Bulgari Sales Profit from 2007 to 2010

Note: All the numbers are in million. All the information was taken from [www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com) and [www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com).

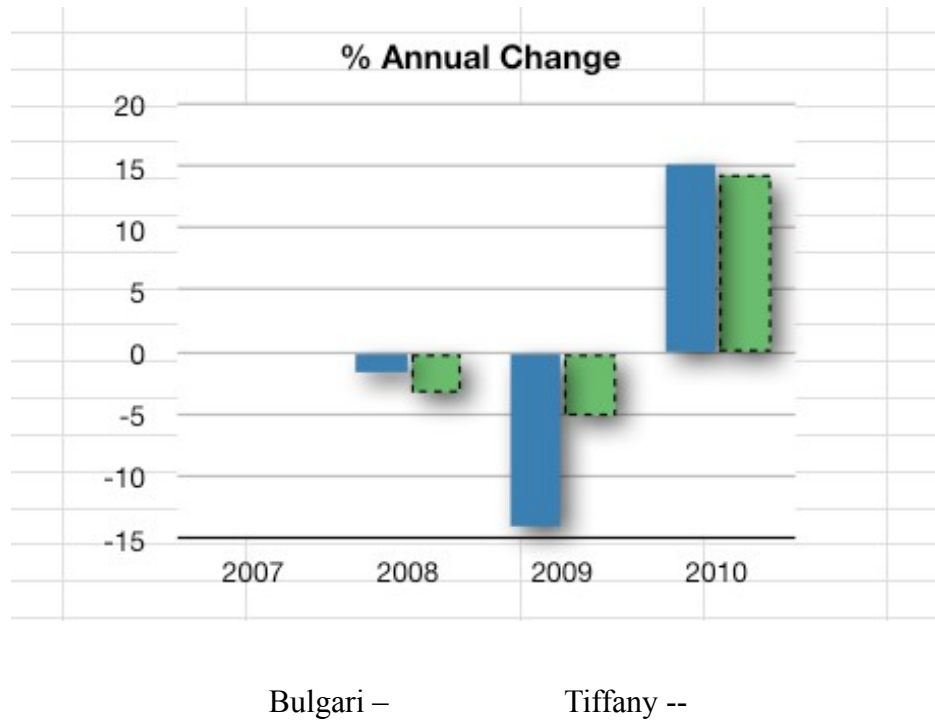


Figure 3: Tiffany and Bulgari Sales Profit Percentage Annual Change from 2007-2010

Note: All the information was taken from [www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com) and [www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com).

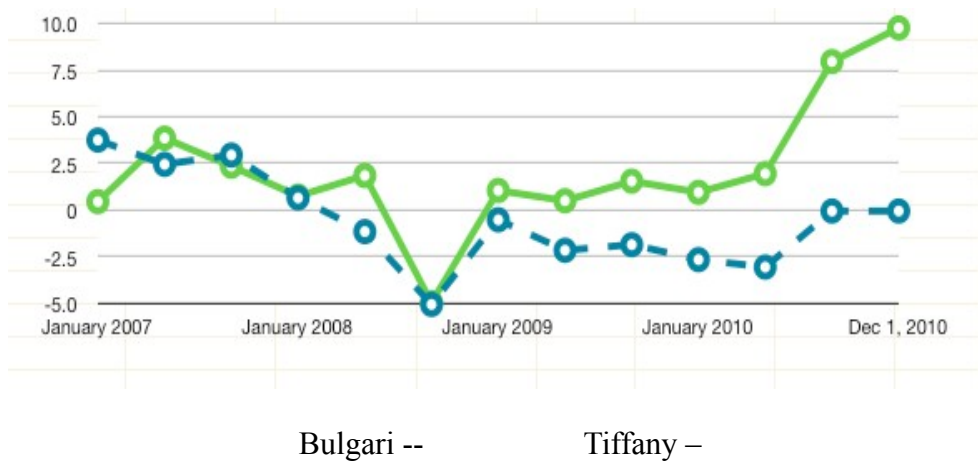


Figure 4. Bulgari's and Tiffany's % stock changes from 2006 to 2010.

Information from: [www.cnnmoney.com](http://www.cnnmoney.com) on March 19, 2010

In figure 4, the blue line indicates the stock trend of Bulgari and the green line represents the stock trend of Tiffany. The image shows that in 2006 and 2007, Bulgari's

stock performed better than Tiffany's as its stock price during that period was higher than Tiffany's. Their stock prices both started dropping around 2008, but Bulgari fell more sharply than Tiffany and has not been able to return to a level of value equal to Tiffany's.

3) They all present press releases on their website. This is important for this study since not every luxury brand actually puts its press releases on the website and some do, but their stories do not reflect the three-year time frame of the recession.

### **Period of Study**

The time frame of this study ranged from January 1, 2008, to December 31, 2010. The reason for choosing the past three years' press releases was because companies and the general public finally realized the presence of the recession at the end of 2008, and the majority of economists believe that the recession "officially ended in June 2009" (Isidore, 2010).

### **Data Collecting**

As mentioned earlier, brand's stories are about a company's experiences of events and major turning points over a certain period of time. Furthermore, this study wanted to find out the differences and similarities used by the two companies when they talk about stories. Therefore, this study collected press releases that announce brand events or major company decisions over the past three years from the two companies' official websites. A brand's official website can be considered a bridge that connects the brand with its internal and external audiences. The information on the web sites represents the company. This study thought that everything that is posted on the company's web site has been thought through and collected by the company for bridging with its consumers, which fits this study's idea –storytelling is a way of branding; therefore, they are realistic and strong

examples to be used for researching how companies tell their stories before, during, and after the recession. All press releases of brand recognition were collected from each company's English version of its official website. Press releases that were about revenue reports were not to be used for this study due to content simplicity. There were in total 79 Tiffany press releases and 40 Bulgari press releases from the beginning of January 2008 to the end of December 2010 on their websites, and they range in length from half a page to one and a half pages. Each press release was considered as a story.

Each press release included in this research was downloaded and then printed out. In this way, it was easier for the author to analyze as well as to make notes and comparisons.

The coding was done by the author of this study. Every code is organized by the company name's first initial, the last two digits of the year, month and date when the story was published. For certain words, phrases, or sentences from a press release, the code would be what we discussed above followed by the number of the paragraph. An example would be:

Tiffany & Co. opens a Store in Chengdu, China (See Appendix A)

CHENGDU, CHINA (March 17, 2008)

Tiffany & Co. (NYSE: TIF) opened a store in Chengdu, China. The approximately 2,200-square-foot store is located in Maison Mode, a luxury retail center on Renmin South Road, the city's most fashionable shopping area.

The new store offers an array of renowned TIFFANY & CO. collections, including the jeweler's famous diamonds in engagement rings and jewels of ultimate glamour; fine and sterling silver jewelry; the signature designs of Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Frank Gehry; watches; gifts and accessories.

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, is a growing center of business, culture and tourism. "The city's high level of sophistication and our prominent location in the elegant Maison Mode provides us with the ideal environment for a TIFFANY & CO. store," said Sylvia AuYeung, Director-China. "We look forward to introducing residents and visitors to our superb collections and outstanding service that make shopping at Tiffany a unique experience."

Chengdu is Tiffany's seventh location in China. The jeweler operates two stores each in Beijing and Shanghai, as well as a store in Tianjin and a store in Shenyang.

Tiffany & Co. operates jewelry and specialty retail stores and manufactures products through its subsidiary corporations. Its principal subsidiary is Tiffany and Company. The Company operates TIFFANY & CO. retail stores and boutiques in the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe and engages in direct selling through Internet, catalog and business gift operations. Other operations include consolidated results from ventures operated under trademarks or trade names other than TIFFANY & CO. For additional information, please visit [www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com) or [www.tiffany.cn](http://www.tiffany.cn).

This Tiffany story was published on March 17, 2008. The way to code it is with the first initial of the company's name, T, and the last two digits of the year, month, and date of the story's published date, 080317. Afterward, the code for the above press release is T080317. If the author used the second paragraph in this press release alone, the code is T080317P2. Here P refers to paragraph.

### **A Narrative Analysis Approach**

Looking back on the origin of the term "narrative," Fisher noted that it is derived from ancient Greece (Fisher, 1987). Labov (1972) and Riessman (2003) mentioned that a narrative might be considered a narrative of personal experience if it contains a narrative clause with a sequential organization and temporal junctures. This means that the narrator does not simply deliver the narrative, but that the words and phrases are formed in a way that makes the best sense to the narrator, and the information that the audience receives is interpreted by the narrator. A written narrative delivers the meaning of the narrated event by choosing certain words and structures (Freeman, 2004; Josselson, 2006). Narrative is "a distinct form of discourse" and "retrospective meaning making"; it is "the shaping or ordering of past experience" and "a way of organizing events and objects into a



meaningful whole, and of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time” (Chase, 2005, p. 656).

Fisher (1987) developed the idea of “narrative paradigm” for better understanding human communication. His viewpoint built upon the narrative foundations of communications: (1) people are essentially storytellers; (2) humans make decisions on the basis of good reasons; (3) history, biography, culture, and character determine what people consider good reasons; (4) narrative rationality is determined by the coherence (which means narrative probability or the tale hanging together as a good story) and fidelity (which meets the tests for reason and values proposed in the logic of good reasons) of people’s stories, and (5) the world is a set of stories from which we choose, and thus constantly re-create, our lives (pp. 64-65).

Based on Fisher’s “Narrative Paradigm,” some scholars developed detailed analytical methods for narrative criticism. For example, Foss (1996) presented the idea of eight elements for analysis. These include setting, characters, narrator, events, temporal relations, causal relations, audience, and theme (pp. 402-406). The researcher’s technique included a review of the releases, followed by a structuring of their research questions and direction, prioritized based on need and relevance to the primary elements of the study. The researchers indicated that narrative critique considers the narrative content and analysis of the narrative format. In short, the narrative content is answering the question of “What is it?” and the narrative format is the question of “How did he say it?” (Lin, 2002).

Collins and Clark (1996) used a narrative standpoint to analyze the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) program *Nightline* as it offered to guide the American

public to recognize and interpret the conflict between Israel and Pakistan. For purposes of this study, the process was as follows: First, the research design determined the research's motivation and topics. Then related literature was reviewed to understand the themes in the two brands' stories. After building this holistic concept, this research generated a set of questions as follows: What characters have been mentioned in the brand stories? How do the brand stories present the products? How do the stories relate the products to the readers? Then this research determined the most appropriate research method and design. This study adopted the method of narrative to be the framework of analysis.

### **Theme Analysis**

Theme analysis of the interpretive method was used in this research. As to theme, it is a relevant issue, thought, idea, concept, expression, understanding or question. Starosta (1988) suggested that use of a qualitative thematic analysis to (1) explore the rich meanings embedded in the selected text, (2) group the text in relation to other texts that serve as reference of the text, and (3) illustrate the significance of the text in the contextual terms. To do so, first, the author engaged the text by doing multiple readings of every news story sampled to gain a general understanding of the contents. Descriptive notes were taken at every stage. Second, the study conducted a close reading of the text in a more detailed manner. During this stage the research identified the topics that came up in the press release and the various themes that emerged were put into categories. The author also constantly compared the themes with the theoretical model and other relevant literature as discussed earlier to derive the conclusion of this research. To become a theme for this research, according to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), three criteria are required. The first criterion is about occurrence, which means that the same thread of meaning must appear at least twice in the analyzed data. The second

criterion is the repetition of key words, phrases, or sentences in the selected artifacts. The last criterion is what Glesne and Peshkin called forcefulness, which refers to the emphasis of words or phrases in the data concerned. After a close reading of the text, the researcher later categorized these on thematic basis by assigning names and labels to them. Fourth, the author went over the stories taking cognizant note of the thematic categories. Further, the author engaged the texts to develop a deeper interpretation of the themes by “looking for how they were related..., [and the] finer distinctions and or broader connections between them” (Gavrilos, 2002, p. 434). Through this process the researcher took the analysis of the brand stories beyond their manifest meaning. The analysis was in-depth and profoundly contextual. Last, the researcher conducted an analysis and interpretation of the stories conscious of how these could be accomplished. Below are two examples of the selected press releases. This would allow both the author and the readers to draw a richer picture of the specific context of the research and to reassure the reader of the depth and thoroughness of our understanding of that context.

Example #1 (see Appendix B)

Tiffany & Co. today opened an approximately 6,200-square-foot store in Easton Town Center, an upscale lifestyle center in Columbus, Ohio, that was developed by The Georgetown Company and Steiner & Associates. The store occupies a prime corner location in a newly renovated area of the 1.7 million square-foot center that is noted for shopping, dining and entertainment, in addition to luxury residences, hotels and office properties with landscaped walkways, fountains and green spaces (T081107P1).

Example #2 (see Appendix C)

Tiffany & Co. today announced plans to open a store in Perth, Australia, in July 2008. The approximately 4,500-square-foot store will be located at 37 King Street, a historic building in the city’s premier shopping area (T080221P1).

In these two examples, each mentioned the new store location and the size of the store, so in the first stage of analysis, we considered both location and the size as themes.

Other examples are that the press releases frequently used the term “seduction,” leading to “seduction” being considered as one theme, and the study treated “premier” and “highest” as belonging to the same theme. After the first stage of analysis, the study examined themes and sought the connections between them, in order to group by hierarchal themes. This examination and grouping process might occur several times until the author reached a list of master themes. Tiffany’s list of master themes then would be used to compare with Bulgari’s list of master themes in order to find the similarities and differences. After comparison, the study moved on to perform an analysis of the themes themselves.

While reading the stories of both companies, the author also identified the story line of each press release. The story lines were categorized by the year in which the story was published and were used to determine the focus of the company year by year. The purpose for doing so was to be able to find out if there is any difference in the stories before, during, and after the recession. Below is a detailed explanation of identifying the story line.

#### Example #3 (see Appendix D)

##### Tiffany Devotes Store Windows to Coral Conservation Reaffirming ‘No Coral Sales’ Policy

NEW YORK, NY (June 3, 2009) -- Tiffany & Co. today unveiled store windows worldwide with an “Under the Sea” theme to raise awareness about the damage coral harvesting inflicts on critically important marine ecosystems.

Tiffany window designers created a fantasy world around this serious subject. Each window offers a different view—and a different hue—of the ocean floor.

The topography of hills and valleys is shaped by glittering sand and bathed in deep blue, pristine white, lavender or turquoise. Gossamer fabric forms waves of color and bubbles swirl around vibrant coral shapes sculpted in resin. The ocean-themed windows seek to inform the public that corals are living animals. Together

with the reef systems, which they help create, corals provide marine life with food and fertile grounds for reproduction.

“Today, corals are in crisis—the result of destructive fishing methods, climate change, and their removal for use as decorative objects and jewelry” said Michael J. Kowalski, chairman and chief executive officer of Tiffany & Co. “In 2002 we discontinued selling coral jewelry, concluding that in a world where corals and reef communities are under siege, we could not be complicit in their destruction.

It is our hope to raise consumer awareness of this important issue and to urge fellow jewelers to join us in refusing to sell coral jewelry.”

In addition, Tiffany supports SeaWeb, a nonprofit organization, and its Too Precious to Wear campaign, designed to educate consumers and retailers about coral conservation. Tiffany also backs the reauthorization of a U.S. Coral Reef Conservation Act and the addition of red coral to the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix II, which lists species that could become threatened with extinction if trade is not carefully monitored.

The protection of corals is just one of several initiatives Tiffany has undertaken in the area of social and environmental responsibility. Tiffany is committed to what it calls “sustainable style,” enduring designs of beauty that pose no threat to natural resources.

The “Under the Sea” windows will be on view throughout the summer, with rotating designs from Tiffany’s renowned collections, including Bezet, a new diamond engagement ring (T090603).

The story is selected because it is about Tiffany’s announcement of a major event.

The story line is the basic point (sometimes points) that the analyst thinks the company is trying to tell the audience about itself. This is a simple, yet essential preliminary step in the analysis because stories often contain multiple lines. Therefore, identifying a story line, or coming up with a one or two sentence summary of the story, compelled the author to be very clear and concise about the argument or arguments this study wanted to concentrate on in its analysis.

The story line the author constructed for the story above is as follows:

Tiffany unveiled store windows worldwide with an “Under the Sea” theme to

raise awareness about the damage coral harvesting inflicts on critically important marine ecosystems. It is one of several initiatives Tiffany has undertaken in the area of social and environmental responsibility.

In this story, the company is expressing its understanding and reasoning for supporting such a good cause. Notice that there are a few subplots in the story, including the design of the window. However, this study decides to focus on the main theme- social responsibility.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

This study is based on the stories of Tiffany and Bulgari. It examined 79 Tiffany brand stories and 40 Bulgari brand stories in the period from 2008 to 2010. After data analysis, the study found that there are differences and similarities in the storytelling between the two brands. Additionally, differences were observed in terms of the two brands' stories before, during, and after the recession.

To address RQ1, which asked if there are differences and similarities in the storytelling between the two brands, the researcher employed thematic analysis. Analysis of the data yielded support for this first research question. The themes are in the following:

#### **History as an Essential Component of the Story**

Treating history as an essential component of the story is the first theme that made a significant difference between Tiffany's stories and Bulgari's stories. The study found that history is one of the most important components of the Tiffany's stories as they managed to highlight the historical connection in most of the articles. Bulgari, on the other hand, is more concerned with the story itself and simply stated what was happening. It did not frequently blend the brand history into each story piece. Two major focuses of history in Tiffany's stories were the founding of the company and the descriptive words that alluded to the history of the brand.

Tiffany's stories exhibited that the founding of the company is an important part of the brand. The historical moment of the establishment of the company has been stated in the articles. One press release mentioned: "Now, the jeweler of legendary style since

1837 adds three new Keys to the selections, inspired by Art Deco jewelry in the Tiffany archives” (T090526P1). Another one talked about “[T]he collection shines with a heritage of quality and legendary style that was established with Tiffany’s founding in 1837” (T090720P1), and “Tiffany & Co. was established in 1837 with a commitment to quality and craftsmanship” (T090216P6). Bulgari’s stories did not regularly mentioned company’s history:

“The exhibition, entitled ‘Between History and Eternity: 1884-2009’ will revisit the most significant chapters in the history of the company and the evolution of Bulgari design, from the opening of the first shop on Via Sistina in 1884 to our own day” (B090520P2).

Other articles show the essential position of history by directly using words like “history” (T090105P2), “legendary” (T090213P1), or “heritage” (T090720P3). For Bulgari, it did use the word “history” (B1003P3), but not as being a essential part of brand stories.

### **Stories Address Company’s Legacy and Heritage**

The second theme is the highlight of “legendary.” There is recognition that Tiffany is truly proud of its legacy as it was addressed in the majority of the stories. They used legendary when they discussed their styles, the designs, as well as the creators. Some of the examples that include these claims in the articles “... the collection shines with a heritage of quality and legendary style” (T090720P1), “These coveted collections continue a great legacy that has made Tiffany the world’s premier jeweler and gift resource for all of life’s important occasions” (T101201P8), or “the jeweler of legendary style since 1837 adds three new Keys to the selections, inspired by Art Deco jewelry in



the Tiffany archives” (T090526P1). Bulgari’s stories focused on telling people what new designs, products or events are available: “BVLGARI today announced it will introduce a specially-designed silver and ceramic ring in October 2010” (B100708P1), or “Bulgari will celebrate the opening of its new Paris flagship store” (B080939P1).

### **The Use of Metaphor**

The use of metaphor is the third theme observed in Tiffany’s stories. Metaphor as a way of description frequently appeared in Tiffany’s stories as they used it to create the images of products. The company emphasizes products by relating them to special life experiences such as love and relationships with both friends and parents. Tiffany portrayed jewelry as love: “Anticipating their desire for uniquely beautiful jewelry on their wedding day, Tiffany fashions exquisite diamonds and pearls in stylish and contemporary designs that, like eternal love, will last a lifetime” (T080101P1). For Father’s Day or Mother’s Day, Tiffany creates special pieces for the greatest fathers and mothers in the world, and they acknowledge the days as “a family’s history” (T090213P3). There are also stories, which use jewels to represent romance:

“The Tiffany Hearts® collection offers the most emblematic of all Valentines with an elegant pendant and drop earrings in platinum and exquisite round brilliant diamonds. The sparkling jewels highlight the spirit of romance and emotions that come straight from the heart” (T091001P2).

Bulgari’s stories use vivid language to create sensuality to portray their product allure. They quite frequently use “seduction” to feature products:

“The distinctive elements of Bulgari style are found again in the new leather accessories for Fall-Winter 2009. The most successful lines, Doppio Tondo, Leoni, 1910

ad Twist, are reinterpreted in new, refined versions that skillfully combine seduction and elegance” (B0907P1), or “It expresses refinement, discrete allure and feminine seduction in a perfect balance of forms” (B0904P2).

Bulgari also likes to use women’s femininity or “discrete allure” to connect with products: “BLV Eau de Parfum II interprets the essence of a woman with vivacious femininity and irresistible magnetism. Her harmonious gestures are innately graceful, and her intense gaze is enticing and seductive” (B0908P4).

### **Stories of Sponsorship**

Sponsorship as a story focus is the fourth theme presented in the Tiffany’s stories. Tiffany has been active in the sports and entertainment fields as the company has been a sponsor to tennis champion Maria Sharapova, the Golden Globe® Awards and movie premieres such as the comedy BRIDE WARS which Tiffany’s hosted with Twentieth Century Fox. The sponsorship of Maria Sharapova was appealed to in the stories of 2009 and 2010. Contrary to Tiffany, Bulgari did not include their sponsorship as a part of the story during the period that has been studied.

### **Unique Symbol**

Frequent mention of the company’s unique symbol is another thematic difference between Tiffany and Bulgari. In Tiffany ‘s stories, Tiffany Blue Box® and Tiffany Blue® have been frequently used in the stories when introducing new products. As they described “Wrapped in the Tiffany Blue Box®, signature of excellence worldwide, Tiffany Bezet is the latest milestone in a legacy of world-famous engagement ring designs” (T090127P4) or “The perfect companion for this pen is a journal crafted in leather of Tiffany Blue®, the color of legendary style” (T090720P4). Examining

Bulgari's story, the author did not find any consistently used symbolic items.

### **Multicultural Marketing**

Tiffany's story lets the audience know that the company also focuses on multicultural marketing. An conspicuous observation was that Tiffany's stories have mentioned Chinese several times regarding the adoption of traditional Chinese culture. For example, Tiffany's designer Paloma Picasso created a collection of charms, which were inspired by the Chinese zodiac, depicting each of the 12 animals that make up the horoscope's 12-year cycle (T091203P1). In 2010, Tiffany created a collection based on a similar idea again. Also, at Tiffany's private sales salon, staff is fluent in Mandarin and other languages (T090923P9). From Bulgari's stories, the author did not notice a clear statement that mentions multicultural marketing. One thing that should be noted is that opening stores in other countries or having a partnership in other markets were not included as multicultural marketing. This will be explained in a later section as a separate theme.

### **Designer as One of the Representatives of the Brand**

It was surprisingly to find out that Bulgari did not mention its designers so often as Tiffany does. Tiffany's designers were those who appealed in the stories regularly. Designers like Elsa Peretti, Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Frank Gehry were mentioned whenever the company introduces new lines or products, or when there is a new store opened:

“Pearls, too, take on fresh allure in the hands of exclusive designer Elsa Peretti. Acclaimed for her collections of sculptural elegance, the designer introduces cultured freshwater pearls to the bridal ensemble” (T080101P3).

“[T]he boutique showcases the collections of exclusive Tiffany designers Elsa Peretti, Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Frank Gehry; fine and bridal jewelry; sterling silver and gold fashion jewelry; watches, gifts and accessories” (T080425P4).

On the other side, Bulgari did not include designers in many stories. It referenced designer Matthew Williamson in a story about the new partnership and the along with Bulgari’s Matthew Williamson, and mentioned the Master Perfumer Jacques Cavallier when the company launched BLV Eau de Parfum II:

“Bulgari’s CEO Francesco Trapani: ‘We chose Matthew Williamson for the great sense of color and design he brings to his work which resonates with our brand’s rich history” (B1003P3).

“‘For me, the universe of BLV Eau de Parfum II is the universe of matter in transparency’, declares the Master Perfumer Jacques Cavallier, ‘in creating this new fragrance, I wanted to make a great perfume””(B0908P8).

This finding was different than Huang’s study results. Huang (2006) reported in his study that a designer is one of the main characters in brand stories.

### **Social Responsibility**

The fifth theme is social responsibility. In this theme, the company practices in the area of social responsibility is a similarity as well as a difference of the two companies, which was an unexpected finding. The similarity is in both companies practicing social responsibility. The difference is that Tiffany worked on several projects at once and some were on-going programs, but Bulgari only focused on one. Bulgari joined forces with Save the Children to support quality education for the world’s needy

children. This initiative took place at the end of 2008 and throughout the years of 2009 and 2010. Tiffany, on the other hand, has been working on several initiatives including to help “raise awareness about the damage coral harvesting inflicts on critically important marine ecosystems” (T090603P1) as well as partner with New York Road Runners for the ING New York City Marathon by creating awards for runners. This partnership has been maintained for more than 20 years.

Even though there are several differences in the way the two brands tell their stories, the study also found the similarities between the two brands’ stories.

### **Management Team as the Brand Spokesperson**

In both cases, the two brands consider company management level staff to be an important component of the stories. Company executives were often quoted when explaining certain decisions, such as new store locations and why the firm has forged a relationship with certain personalities.

“Mr. Quinn and Michael C. Christ, president of Tiffany & Co. Japan, officially opened the store by pressing a lighted Tiffany Blue Box®, which triggered the façade’s lights to shine with their diamond” (T081030P4).

““Today, corals are in crisis—the result of destructive fishing methods, climate change, and their removal for use as decorative objects and jewelry’ said Michael J. Kowalski, chairman and chief executive officer of Tiffany & Co.” (T090603P3).

““Education has the power to transform lives, and yet access to a quality education is very limited for the 72 million children of primary school age who are not in school,’ said Francesco Trapani, Chief Executive Officer” (B100708P6).

“Bulgari’s CEO Francesco Trapani: ‘We chose Matthew Williamson for the great

sense of color and design he brings to his work which resonates with our brand's rich history" (B1003P3).

Above examples show that both companies management level people constantly shown up at company's new store opening event, charity events, and new partnerships.

### **Celebrity as the Brand Endorsement**

Highlight celebrities in the story is the second similarity of the two brands. Both companies would invite celebrities to the new store opening celebration. When Tiffany opened a new store in Japan, Japanese stars Misaki Ito, Meisa Kuroki, and others were joined the ceremony. Bulgari associated one of their collections with Elizabeth Taylor and Julianne Moore:

"Celebrities including Misaki Ito, Meisa Kuroki, Ikki Sawamura and An walked a Tiffany Blue® carpet in front of the Kuma-designed store exterior" (T081030P2).

"[S]pectacular creations worn by the likes of Ann Magnani and Gina Lollobrigida, here on display for the first time ever. Another entire room will be reserved for the fabulous personal collection of need Elizabeth Taylor" (B090520P5).

"On Kate Winslet and Claire Danes, Tiffany jewels glittered with breathtaking beauty" (T100221P2).

"Named after the highly coveted bag that stars alongside Julianne Moore in our current campaign, a glamorous party was held in the restaurant and garden of the Bulgari Hotel of February 26<sup>th</sup>" (B1002P1).

### **Emotional Appeal**

Both brands use emotional appeal as a technique in their stories. On top of telling customers about the products, companies also used vivid words to create a picture in

people's minds that enables them to imagine.

“Memories may remain in the heart, but they have a captivating symbol in the latest Tiffany Keys, keepsakes of experience and emotions” (T090526P3).

“BLV Eau de Parfum II interprets the essence of a woman with vivacious femininity and irresistible magnetism. Her harmonious gestures are innately graceful, and her intense gaze is enticing and seductive” (B0908P4).

“The symbol of harmony and seduction, green jade evokes the vivacious elegance of a young, modern woman who seduces with her innocence” (B0901P2).

Tiffany's words tell their audiences that by having the Tiffany key, they are able to feel and relive the good memories associated with that key. Bulgari's stories give the readers a sense of how the perfume will feel. After reading it, people can bring to mind the essence of the scent. The two companies put the emotional appealing in element and help consumers imagine the possibilities.

One of the interesting findings was that although emotional value has been studied by many researchers and many agree that emotional value is what drives consumers to make the final buying decision. However, this study found that using emotional value to drive consumer decision-making should be added for certain conditions. For female products, the company is likely to use emotional value, but for males, functional value is still the major player. For example, when Tiffany introduced new products for Mother's Day, it offered consumers a wide array of choices and products and also focused on describing the products as being chic and elegant as well as standing for “World's Greatest Mom” (T090213P3). When speaking about the gifts for Father's Day, it clearly stated that the gift is to be used to “enhance daily life with designs that embody both

function and style” (T090217P1).

Another interesting observation was Tiffany launched an iPhone® app for engagement rings in 2010. Through this app, customers can view the range of shape, setting, metal or design of rings and learn about the qualities of its diamonds. The app also includes an accurate size-checking tool to help customers determine their size.

### **The Second Research Question**

After identifying the differences and similarities of the stories between the two brands, the study moved on to explore the second research question: In terms of the stories that Tiffany and Bulgari told before, during, and after the recession, what are the differences between the two brands and how did they impact business performance? The author studied the story focuses for each year and observed the three points below.

### **2008 Is an Expansion Year**

2008 was an exciting year for Tiffany. There were always reasons to celebrate new styles; Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day, and even the summer season. Designers diligently created holiday and seasonal gifts. Moreover, it was an expansion period for the company, which opened 17 new stores around the world, more than one store per month. People in the United States, Spain, China, UK, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Australia had greater access to the brand. In some of these countries, Tiffany opened more than one store, such as in the U.S. and Japan. The brand stories in that period were about expansion either of new territories or of new products.

“Tiffany & Co. today announced plans for a July 2008 opening of a store in the coastal city of Qingdao, China” (T080610P1).

“Tiffany & Co. (NYSE: TIF) the world-renowned jeweler, today announced plans



to open an approximately 1,670-square-foot boutique in Berlin's KaDeWe department store, in October of 2008" (T080923P1).

"Summer beckons with carefree images of sun and sea and a language of ease and escape. Tiffany translates the allure of it all in classic style with the new Tiffany Notes collection" (T080701P1).

For Bulgari, 2008 was devoted to new designs and store as well. It opened new stores, such as its new Paris flagship, presented new products, appointed a new Board of Directors,

"On the 125th anniversary of its foundation, Bulgari launches a major fund-raising project for the defense of children's rights" (B0810P1).

"On September 30th 2008, Bulgari will celebrate the opening of its new Paris flagship store. Located at the corner of Rue François 1<sup>er</sup> and Avenue George V, the new store will be the fourth location in Paris following the boutiques on Avenue Montaigne and Place Vendôme at number 10 and 25" (B080930P1).

### **2009 Had Different Focuses**

From the stories in 2009, the author saw that the only store that was opened in that year was in Las Vegas. Clearly, there were not any stores opened that year outside of the United States. The company continued to make an effort to bring new styles to customers, and made great progress on sponsorships and company social responsibility. The company sponsored the tennis champion Maria Sharapova and devoted store windows to coral conservation as well as supported the ING New York City Marathon.

"Tiffany & Co. today unveiled store windows worldwide with an "Under the Sea" theme to raise awareness about the damage coral harvesting inflicts on critically

important marine ecosystems” (T090603P1).

In 2009, Bulgari continued to bring out new collections, including the new fall-winter accessories collection, BLV Eau de Parfum II, and the new steel and diamond collection.

“Intense accords and glowing lightness: BLV Eau de Parfum II is the latest woman’s fragrance by Bulgari, expression of a new naturalness” (B0908P1).

“Bulgari presents a new and distinctive collection that draw inspiration from the power and dynamism of the serpent...” (B0909P1).

### **2010 Had Different Business Strategy**

Moving forward to 2010, among Tiffany’s stories, the author saw more continuing sponsorship focus and a new focus on the use of current technologies such as the social media genre. Differing from the previous year was the opening of a new store in Barcelona.

Bulgari’s stories focused on presenting new products including jewelry, watches, and perfume, and brought attention to the company’s 125th anniversary celebration and theme parties in 2010.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The results of this study show that company executives and popular celebrities as characters of the stories is a common theme between Tiffany and Bulgari. The author suggests that the reason behind this phenomenon is because branding is fueled by the influence of including image and celebrity. Vincent (2002) pointed out that brand stories often deliver messages by describing what the executives do, say, and believe. The brand managers are high in the organization, have a long-term job horizon, and are strategists as well as communications team leaders. This study thinks that a company's management group appearing in the brand stories is consistent with Vincent's idea, and that this tactic is generally perceived by the public as expressing the core values of the firm. A company's executives represent the company; their action and voice make them the spokespersons who can deliver the brand messages in the stories.

Besides the company's executives, there are celebrities in both brand stories. This study suggests the reasons are in the following:

The celebrity is an individual of known status who endorses a brand. Connecting a brand with celebrities can transfer associations such as reliability, strength, performance, glamour, and so on. As Tungate (2005) said, a celebrity offers to consumers the fantasy world that famous people live in. Consumers are interested in the lives of famous people; therefore, to have them in the brand stories gets the consumer's attention.

When luxury brands use a celebrity to tell the story, it gives the product a richer meaning beyond the product itself. A representation of an opportunity to experience a portion of that luxurious life is presented and has a clear effect on the public audience.

For example, consumers seem concerned about what everyone is wearing, so much so that some magazines, websites or TV programs actually list exactly what each celebrity is wearing and who designed it. Individuals have a drive to evaluate their own opinion and abilities, which they satisfy by comparing themselves to others (Festinger, 1954). Their social comparisons may involve not only directly comparing the dress of another person, but also reading about others in the newspaper or hearing about them by word of mouth (Wood, 1996). People nowadays are motivated to express personality through fashion. Consumers prefer to buy brands that best reflect their personality because brand image ultimately reflects self-image. Luxury goods are able to help the consumers to publicly demonstrate their social standing, taste, and attitude and encourage them to feel more capable and confident.

It is interesting to find that Bulgari does not use its designers as main characters in the company's stories. Which is different than Tiffany's stories as well as previous research finding. In Huang's (2006) study, after comparing three luxury brands' stories, he found designer to be one of the major characters. Just as Tungate (2005) mentioned, a poor design decision made by a designer could lead to lower competitive positioning for the company. It is essential to research the balance between marketing and creation. A superior designer not only can create special and popular products and give life to them, in the best circumstance is also able to deliver the spirit and history of the company in the designs they produce, which are in turn marketed as cornerstones of the firm, representative of the ideals of the company, to be seen as extensions of the themes and standards throughout the life of the brand. Some companies also consider the designers a major component of the company image. It is notable when readers saw the news on The

New York Times (Horyn, 2011) that Dior fired its star designer, John Galliano, after he made an anti-Semitic slur in a bar. As the company's top designer, many customers view him as representative of the brand; he has a responsibility to his image as well as to the company brands.

Brands use executives to articulate a vision and drive the company growth; designers create alluring products to attract customers and sales; and celebrities help build a desirable image to increase brand visibility. However, the most success lies in the brand's ability to remain consistent, create an atmosphere reflective of its personality, and create the idea of a lifestyle that is relevant to the target consumer. Brands do not work if they do not promote a lifestyle (Klein, 2000). When telling their stories, brands utilize emotional appeal, one of storytelling's primary functions, to get customers to purchase their products. The study saw emotional appealing was demonstrated in both brand stories.

Escalas (1998) noted that stories help people understand the feeling, evaluate the feeling, and deal with the feeling. If the retail brand is able to evoke a memorable image, then the consumer should feel as though it adds to their own identities, which individuals seek (Power & Hauge, 2008). When companies market a luxury brand, they are selling more than the functional product itself. No one would pay thousands of dollars for a bag if they just wanted a bag. We can easily find a bag that costs only a few dollars and can hold our necessities. Clearly a bag costing just a few dollars does an equally effective utilitarian job as a thousand-dollar bag might. Beyond the purely functional, there is some other quality to the attraction, and it is clearly the symbolic draw. Apparently, it is the identity, which the brand confers upon the owner that creates the interest. Marc Gobe

(2001), one expert on emotional branding and author of *Emotional Branding: The New Paradigm for Connecting Brands to People*, stated that this concept "...provides the means and methodology for connecting products to the consumer in an emotionally profound way" (p. XV) He also pointed out that "the emotional connector is what differentiates one brand from another..." (p. XXVI). Brands should always connect with the consumer on an intimate level (Holt, 2004). Emotional branding communicates the brand essence by appealing to consumers on an emotional and personal level. This study thinks that both companies should always keep in mind what emotional attachment the brands can offer to their customer that is beyond the functional value. Producing an emotional draw to a product is extremely effective as a marketing technique. They should always have in mind the issue of what customers really want to get from buying the product, as well as what the product will make customers feel, and what the customer will feel the product gives them. These directives are well represented in both Tiffany's and Bulgari's stories, as they favor use of the story's emotional appeal. They emphasize their products by stimulating consumers' feelings.

Although both companies adopt emotional appeal as a brand strategy, there is a difference between the two in terms of what kind of consumer emotional values they try to inspire. Tiffany's stories relate to people's image of beauty and love, while Bulgari's stories speak about sensuality. Love is something all human beings are looking for. When we were still children, we heard stories such as *Snow White, Cinderella, and The Little Mermaid*. After we were grown, we realized that life is not a fairy tale, not everyone would end up with his princess or her prince; regardless, people hoped that they would be the lucky one. Tiffany understands the importance of love to people. The company knows

that this is something every couple is looking for when they are shopping for their engagement ring. On top of that, Tiffany understand the importance of being different. Chernatony (2006) suggested that company positioning is to increase a company's ability to compete and its position in the mind of consumers. If a brand wants to grab the consumers' attention, it has to differentiate itself from others. This leads to Tiffany's stories, which emphasize love, relationships and the beauty of the life. People buy their ring not only for the brand name but also for the good fortune and the meaning behind it. In reacting to those stories, consumers view Tiffany's products as signs of good luck or ways of attaining the love, relationships and life they want. Appropriately using an emotional function makes the product not just commercial; instead, it makes the product more symbolic – a symbol of a good future and a better life. The products are welcomed by the public and the brand can successfully stand out among all similar product brands. In contrast with the appeal of love, Bulgari uses sensuality as a selling point, as the stories consistently mention “seduction,” “femininity,” and “irresistible magnetism.” This is less attractive, especially in certain cultures. This study considers the selection of the marketing direction that is desirable for most people to be one of the reasons that Tiffany's performed better than Bulgari during the recession, as their message delivered hope to people.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, this study found that for female products, Tiffany is likely to use emotional value, but for males, functional value is still the major player. The author suggested that the differences might be based on the differences of shopping habits between men and women. According to Wharton marketing professor Stephen J. Hoch (2007) the differences of shopping habits between men and women exist

in many aspects of life. Researchers at Wharton's Jay H. Baker Retail Initiative and the Verde Group found that women react more strongly than men to personal interaction with sales associates. Men are more likely to respond to more utilitarian aspects of the experience.

America is a country with a short history when compared to many countries in Europe and Asia, but having a short history does not mean it does not have a long lasting company. Tiffany, as one example of a historically recognized business, has a deep appreciation of its roots. Every culture has an origin; everyone comes from a family of a certain background; every company was started by specific individuals. A company's history not only tells people where it came from, it also tells the stories of the company, which leads to visions of where it is going. This study thinks a well-respected company also appreciates its history and the place where it came from. By understanding a company's history, consumers are able to understand where the company stands. This reflects how people perceive the company and its actions; accordingly, it helps the company to build solid relationships and trust with its consumers.

Another method to increase confidence among customers is to demonstrate concern for society or to give back to society. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is having an increasing influence on brand development recently. Both branding and CSR have taken an increasingly critical role, as organizations are acknowledging that these strategies can either add or detract from their value (Blumenthal & Bergstrom, 2003). CSR can be characterized either in terms of legitimate ethics or from an instrumentalist frame of reference where corporate image is the primary concern (McAdam & Leonard, 2003). CSR refers to the responsibilities of the firm to society (Smith, 2003). It also refers



to the scrutiny of and response to issues greater than the confines of economic, technical, and legal demands a firm deals with, to bring about social benefits in addition to traditional economic gains (Husted, 2003). Social responsibility suggests that a business decision maker while attending to his business interests is obliged to respond in a manner that protects and enhances society's interests, which in turn has the affect of presenting the company in a favorable light to the general public. This becomes more important each day as the public wants to know what, where, and how much brands are giving back to society.

Companies also use sponsorship in their efforts to create greater exposure. This can be achieved by sponsoring influential people and events of importance to social movements. The sponsorships to sport and entertainment celebrities Tiffany did, it shows that the company is aware of the social capital of sponsorship, and the corresponding impact on the business.

America is an immigrant country where people from around the world have come together. African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics are increasing in numbers and purchasing power, and their growing shares of the U.S. consumer market are drawing greater attention from producers, retailers, and service providers. Consequently, multicultural marketing has become increasingly important to companies, which realize that the world is globalizing, that the differences between countries are becoming smaller. Multiculturalism will be part of the United States forevermore. Tiffany understands the importance of doing business with different cultures.

Another notable item to mention is from Tiffany's brand stories; we see a focus on growth of market in China. The study thinks the focus is a result of rising Chinese

influences in the world economy and political territory. The American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai (2006) predicted the Chinese market to be the second-largest market for luxury goods in the world by 2015. With increases in personal income and greater influences from outside China, particularly from Western cultures, the values of Chinese consumers have recently been changing in reaction to years of deprivation and institutionalized discouragement of consumption. More Chinese consumers have accepted buying for hedonistic reasons rather than for utilitarian need. There is a tendency for young Chinese consumers to pursue a “modern” lifestyle by spending on big brand name products and keeping up with the fashion trends (Bow & Ford, 1993; Cui, 1997). Chinese seek to advance their social standing by imitating the consumption practices of Westerners to the extent their incomes allow (Friedman, 1994; Garner, 2005; Wang 2000). Tiffany foresees the enormous potential of the Chinese market, and therefore is driving their marketing strategy to design products that adopt Chinese traditions and provide extra language services to Chinese customers. This strategy is a result of a deep understanding of the market and their products.

It is interesting to see that Tiffany’s story focuses were changing along with the economic situation, which is very strategic. When the economy is good, the buying power of the consumer is strong, a company is willing to offer more selections and locations for people to choose from; when the economy goes down, consumers spend money more cautiously and wisely. Some will give up some unnecessary spending and luxury products will be on that list. In order to keep customer momentum and the company’s visibility, Tiffany chose to practice social responsibility. Giving back to society is something precious, especially in a tough economy. In contrast, Bulgari’s

stories during the years examined consistently focused on creating new products. This lack of reaction to the market change may indicate the reason that Bulgari did not hold the market well during the recession.

Using social media as a tool to connect with consumers can be seen as the innovation of the company's strategy. The app acts as an extension of the company reaching out with its brand service to deliver quality and beauty. It increases the company's engagement with its consumers as well as the brand visibility.

Overall, the study thinks that the reasons Tiffany reacted to the recession better than Bulgari are below:

First, respect the history of the company. Tiffany lets its consumers know that the company deeply appreciates its roots and is proud to be one of the leading jewelry companies from America, as most jewelry brands are actually from Europe. Second, understand the differences. Tiffany knows how to differentiate itself from others, especially from those that sell similar products. Telling stories of love, relationships and the beauty of lives makes them the most desirable jewelry products. Third, identify areas of opportunities. Adopting other cultures and understanding the importance of the Chinese market gives Tiffany more opportunities and presence. Being able to set its position in those markets enables Tiffany to gain market strengths and a competitive advantage. Fourth, be humane. Corporations are normally perceived as organizations whose main goal is to make money. By practicing social responsibility, Tiffany presents itself as a company that is concerned about society and people, which helps boost the company's positive image. Fifth, Bulgari does not seem to be fully aware of narrative and its impact on the business. Despite the recession, the company did not do a good job

utilizing narrative to communicate with their consumers. On the other side, Tiffany understands the impact that narrative brings. The difference in understanding of narrative may contribute to the different business performance results. Sixth, the idea that one strategy fits all is wrong. A company does not exist in a vacuum. It is affected by management strategy, public opinion, government policy, market trends, and economic conditions. Due to the many factors that can cause impact, a company has to think proactively in anticipation of change.

Based on the findings and the discussion, the study suggests that brands should consider finding the unique points of their products that are able to identify consumers' needs correctly and choose the right angle to appeal their desires and address those points in their story consistently. By consistently doing so, customers are able to remind themselves of the images, which they want to achieve. Companies should also take social responsibilities into serious practice and be proactively descriptive of what they have accomplished and contributed. Be mindful that social responsibility is a long-term practice rather than a short-term fix. Instead of focusing on short-term returns, companies should have a forward-looking view that enables them to think strategically and react in accordance with markets and consumers.

### **Study Limitations**

The findings from this study may not be applicable to the population as a whole, because only two brands' stories were examined. Although all the relevant press releases were collected, those press releases were written for specific purposes depending on the company's intentions.

An additional limitation of this study was the small sample size (Tiffany=79;

Bulgari=40). If the study was able to look at a longer period of press releases, then that might lead to more findings. In 2010 many people were still affected by the recession; some companies were slowly recovering, and analyzing a longer recovery period may have provided additional results.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As mentioned in a previous chapter, Tiffany started using mobile apps to reach customers and to stay in touch with them. Technology development allows Luxury brands to join in the online conversation. Future research can analyze changes in company's consumer demographics after implementing social media programs. Researchers can also examine if there are differences in reaction based on the content and delivery style differences between apps and websites. Further more, in Healey's (2008) book "What is branding," he mentioned "price" as one of the components that involve in branding. This research paper studied two company's press releases, therefore, did not take the price of product into consideration; future research can look into the price range of the two companies' products.

When finishing up this thesis, Bulgari announced that the company joined the family of LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton. This move may affect the overall branding strategies. Future study can take a deep understanding of how the new ownership influences decision-making.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

The study examined 79 press releases of Tiffany and 40 press releases of Bulgari and found that there are differences and similarities in brand storytelling between the two brands. The results also indicated that the two brands' story focuses before, during, and after the recession were divergent from one another. From the results, the study was able to interpret the strategies that led to Tiffany's achieving better performance than Bulgari. The luxury market today offers many opportunities as well an abundance of challenges. Consumers have become increasingly educated, are sophisticated in both taste and price comparison techniques, and increasingly desire value and prestige. A company has to find an effective approach to capture customers' attention. This study sought to close gaps left open in previous research; a lack of comparisons of brand stories in specific product categories during special economic crisis. Additionally, from a company's point of view, the findings of this study may provide an opportunity to recognize specific areas of storytelling and strategies discussed that are applicable to its own situation, in order to guide strategic decision-making.

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## Appendix A

Tiffany & Co. opens a Store in Chengdu, China

CHENGDU, CHINA (March 17, 2008)

Tiffany & Co. (NYSE: TIF) opened a store in Chengdu, China. The approximately 2,200-square-foot store is located in Maison Mode, a luxury retail center on Renmin South Road, the city's most fashionable shopping area.

The new store offers an array of renowned TIFFANY & CO. collections, including the jeweler's famous diamonds in engagement rings and jewels of ultimate glamour; fine and sterling silver jewelry; the signature designs of Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Frank Gehry; watches; gifts and accessories.

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, is a growing center of business, culture and tourism. "The city's high level of sophistication and our prominent location in the elegant Maison Mode provides us with the ideal environment for a TIFFANY & CO. store," said Sylvia AuYeung, Director-China. "We look forward to introducing residents and visitors to our superb collections and outstanding service that make shopping at Tiffany a unique experience."

Chengdu is Tiffany's seventh location in China. The jeweler operates two stores each in Beijing and Shanghai, as well as a store in Tianjin and a store in Shenyang.

Tiffany & Co. operates jewelry and specialty retail stores and manufactures products through its subsidiary corporations. Its principal subsidiary is Tiffany and Company. The Company operates TIFFANY & CO. retail stores and boutiques in the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe and engages in direct selling through Internet, catalog and business gift operations. Other operations include consolidated results from ventures

operated under trademarks or trade names other than TIFFANY & CO. For additional information, please visit [www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com) or [www.tiffany.cn](http://www.tiffany.cn).

## Appendix B

### Tiffany Celebrates New Store in Columbus, Ohio Jeweler Debuts in Region's Premier Luxury Retail Center

NEW YORK, NY (November 7, 2008)

Tiffany & Co. today opened an approximately 6,200-square-foot store in Easton Town Center, an upscale lifestyle center in Columbus, Ohio, that was developed by The Georgetown Company and Steiner + Associates. The store occupies a prime corner location in a newly renovated area of the 1.7 million square-foot center that is noted for shopping, dining and entertainment, in addition to luxury residences, hotels and office properties with landscaped walkways, fountains and green spaces.

The morning Founding Ceremony, followed by the first Breakfast at Tiffany in Columbus, was attended by corporate and civic leaders, as well as customers and representatives from BalletMet Columbus, Frank Park Conservatory and Wexner Center for the Arts, community groups the jeweler has pledged to support. "Our new store is ideally located at the center's crossroads of high-end living and shopping," said Beth O. Canavan, executive vice president of Tiffany & Co. "We invite our many customers in this region and everyone new to the Tiffany experience to visit us and discover the quality, design expertise and service that are the basis of our renowned reputation."

Store director Christiane Branderhorst, added, "We are very pleased to add the convenience of shopping at Tiffany to the many amenities offered at Easton Town Center. It is a pleasure to open our doors here, and we look forward to building many lasting relationships in the Columbus area."

The jeweler's spectacular diamonds were well represented by models in Tiffany Blue® gowns by Angel Sanchez and in showcases filled with exquisite engagement



diamonds, including the classic Tiffany® Setting; patented Lucida® diamond cut and setting; lavish Tiffany Legacy™ ring; and Tiffany Novo, a brilliant cushion cut.

Customers may also choose from Tiffany Celebration® rings, brilliant colored gemstone jewelry, watches, and the collections of exclusive Tiffany designers Elsa Peretti, Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Frank Gehry.

A wide selection of sterling silver jewelry is available, highlighting the jeweler's reputation as master of American silver design. Among the collections are Tiffany Somerset™ mesh jewelry and iconic charms such as the Tiffany Blue Box®, Atlas®, 1837®, and Return to Tiffany®. In addition, an array of accessories and crystal gifts anticipate customers' varied tastes and desires.

The store's façade features a flamed and polished black stone arch, combined with architectural elements of Tiffany's New York flagship store, including Art Deco-inspired doors and metalwork in brushed stainless steel. Visitors enter the store through a gallery of rusticated stone that opens to a stylish interior with walnut paneling, brushed stainless steel showcases, custom furnishings in a neutral palette and hand-painted wall coverings that altogether create an elegant and welcoming environment.

Tiffany & Co. (NYSE:TIF) operates jewelry and specialty retail stores and manufactures products through its subsidiary corporations. Its principal subsidiary is Tiffany and Company. The Company operates TIFFANY & CO. retail stores and boutiques in the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe and engages in direct selling through Internet, catalog and business gift operations. Other operations include consolidated results from ventures operated under trademarks or trade names other than TIFFANY & CO. For additional information, please visit [tiffany.com](http://tiffany.com) or call our shareholder

information line at 800-TIF-0110.

Easton Town Center was co-developed by The Georgetown Company, Steiner + Associates and Limited Brands. Opened in June 1999, Easton is a 1.7 million square-foot ‘New Urban Retail’ center that features pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, open-air gathering spaces, fountains and parks for children, in addition to over 160 best-of-class retail, entertainment and dining tenants. The International Council of Shopping Centers honored Easton with its Innovative Design Award in 2000. The development draws more than 20 million visits annually and is on the internet at [www.eastontowncenter.com](http://www.eastontowncenter.com).

Easton Town Center sits within the larger 1,300-acre “Easton” development, a 12 million square-foot mixed-use development undertaken by The Georgetown Company and Limited Brands, Inc. since 1994. With over 7 million square feet of retail, office hotel and residential properties already complete, Easton has in this time become a dominant destination for commercial activity in Columbus and throughout the entire central Ohio region. With 25,000+ employees already in place, Easton will eventually be home to over 40,000 employees.

TIFFANY & CO. and TIFFANY are trademarks of Tiffany and Company. TIFFANY SETTING, LUCIDA, TIFFANY LEGACY COLLECTION, TIFFANY CELEBRATION, TIFFANY SOMERSET, the color TIFFANY BLUE, TIFFANY BLUE BOX, TIFFANY 1837, ATLAS and RETURN TO TIFFANY are trademarks of Tiffany and Company.

## Appendix C

### Tiffany & Co. to Open Store in Perth, Australia

NEW YORK, NY (February 21, 2008)

Tiffany & Co. (NYSE: TIF) today announced plans to open a store in Perth, Australia, in July 2008. The approximately 4,500-square-foot store will be located at 37 King Street, a historic building in the city's premier shopping area.

The building, constructed in 1905 and a prime example of classic Victorian architecture, is listed with the Heritage Council of Western Australia. Tiffany architects and designers will preserve the building's original façade and create a modern and gracious interior on three levels that showcases an array of renowned TIFFANY & CO. collections. Among them are the jeweler's celebrated diamonds in engagement rings and jewels of ultimate glamour; fine and sterling silver jewelry; the signature designs of Elsa Peretti, Paloma Picasso, Jean Schlumberger and Frank Gehry; watches; gifts and accessories.

"We are extremely excited to be entering the Perth market and offering its residents and visitors the convenience of shopping at Tiffany & Co.," said Glen Schlehuber, managing director of Tiffany & Co. Australia. "Our prominent location in a historic building in the city's most desirable shopping area provides us with the ideal environment for introducing everyone to our own heritage of design and outstanding service for which Tiffany is renowned."

Perth is Tiffany's fourth location in Australia. The jeweler currently operates stores in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Tiffany & Co. operates jewelry and specialty retail stores and manufactures products through its subsidiary corporations. Its principal subsidiary is Tiffany and Company. The Company operates TIFFANY & CO. retail stores and boutiques in the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe and engages in direct selling through Internet, catalog and business gift operations. Other operations include consolidated results from ventures

operated under trademarks or trade names other than TIFFANY & CO. For additional information, please visit [www.tiffany.com](http://www.tiffany.com).

TIFFANY & CO. and TIFFANY are trademarks of Tiffany and Company.

## Appendix D

### Tiffany Devotes Store Windows to Coral Conservation Reaffirming ‘No Coral Sales’ Policy

NEW YORK, NY (June 3, 2009) -- Tiffany & Co. today unveiled store windows worldwide with an “Under the Sea” theme to raise awareness about the damage coral harvesting inflicts on critically important marine ecosystems.

Tiffany window designers created a fantasy world around this serious subject. Each window offers a different view—and a different hue—of the ocean floor. The topography of hills and valleys is shaped by glittering sand and bathed in deep blue, pristine white, lavender or turquoise. Gossamer fabric forms waves of color and bubbles swirl around vibrant coral shapes sculpted in resin. The ocean-themed windows seek to inform the public that corals are living animals. Together with the reef systems, which they help create, corals provide marine life with food and fertile grounds for reproduction.

“Today, corals are in crisis—the result of destructive fishing methods, climate change, and their removal for use as decorative objects and jewelry” said Michael J. Kowalski, chairman and chief executive officer of Tiffany & Co. “In 2002 we discontinued selling coral jewelry, concluding that in a world where corals and reef communities are under siege, we could not be complicit in their destruction. It is our hope to raise consumer awareness of this important issue and to urge fellow jewelers to join us in refusing to sell coral jewelry.”

In addition, Tiffany supports SeaWeb, a nonprofit organization, and its Too Precious to Wear campaign, designed to educate consumers and retailers about coral conservation. Tiffany also backs the reauthorization of a U.S. Coral Reef Conservation

Act and the addition of red coral to the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix II, which lists species that could become threatened with extinction if trade is not carefully monitored.

The protection of corals is just one of several initiatives Tiffany has undertaken in the area of social and environmental responsibility. Tiffany is committed to what it calls “sustainable style,” enduring designs of beauty that pose no threat to natural resources.

The “Under the Sea” windows will be on view throughout the summer, with rotating designs from Tiffany’s renowned collections, including Bezet, a new diamond engagement ring.