Ireland: A Branding Phenomenon? An Examination of "Ireland the Brand".

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Ireland: A Branding Phenomenon?
An Examination of ‘Ireland the Brand’

Sarah O’Mahony
Ireland: A Branding Phenomenon?
An Examination of ‘Ireland the Brand’

Sarah O’ Mahony BBS

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the Requirements of the degree of:

Masters in Business Studies

Department of Continuing Education
Cork Institute of Technology

Research Supervisor: Dr. Angela Wright

September 2009
Declaration

The Author hereby declares that, except where duly acknowledged, this thesis is entirely her own work and has not been submitted for any degree.

Signed ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
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Dedication

To my parents Denis and Ellen,

Who have constantly believed in me and

whose support, encouragement and understanding

enabled me to complete this program of study.
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Abstract

This study is an examination and assessment of the branding phenomenon, 'Ireland the Brand'. An investigation into the current image of 'Ireland the Brand', was conducted as part of this research study, focusing particularly on the aspects of the brand relating to the foreign direct investment sector (Ireland Inc.), and the Irish tourism industry brand (Tourism Brand Ireland). Many events and aspects of Irish history contributed to the subsequent awareness of the values of 'Ireland the Brand'. It included the Great Famine, which led to mass emigration, marking the beginning of a substantial Irish community abroad, the Irish diaspora. Also, the Celtic Tiger, a recent pivotal era in Ireland's history influenced the success of 'Ireland the Brand' during this period. The recent global economic recession, however, had a catastrophic effect on the Celtic Tiger economy in Ireland. The global economic recession together with the worldwide banking crisis added to the failing Irish economy which currently exists. The failing Irish economy has impacted negatively on 'Ireland the Brand'. The positive associations with 'Ireland the Brand' have been eroded and credibility in the brand abroad has dropped. This study identifies, however, that 'Ireland the Brand' still has a significant amount of brand values, including, the native Irish people, the Irish diaspora, Irish culture and heritage, an educated, English speaking workforce, an attractive corporate tax structure, and an open economy.

There is a certain amount of complexity linked to 'nation branding', significantly, the structure of the organisations within a country that are deemed responsible for marketing the 'nation brand'. This current study contends that there are many stakeholders within Ireland responsible for marketing 'Ireland the Brand'. This research study recommends that a more synergistic approach, incorporating representatives from all the stakeholder groups, should be implemented on an ongoing basis, in order to increase the value proposition of 'Ireland the Brand'.

This research is therefore concerned with presenting a current overview of 'Ireland the Brand'. The direction of this research is dictated by the previous economic success experienced by 'Ireland the Brand' and the belief that Ireland, 'the land of saints and scholars', has the capacity to achieve success again. The findings of this study, demonstrate that a focus on building the knowledge economy, creating a 'Green Ireland' and utilising the emotional and commercial assets of the Irish diaspora will be key to building a successful future for 'Ireland the Brand'.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

*We are a country which has undergone an economic and social revolution in the past ten years, so enormous have been the changes which have taken place both in our economy and in our society*

President of Ireland
(McAleese, 2006: www.president.ie).

1:0 Introduction

This research study examines the branding phenomenon of ‘Ireland the Brand’. This study presents an overview of the current image of the ‘Ireland the Brand’, discusses where responsibility for the marketing of the brand lies, investigates the impact the failing Irish economy is having on the brand, and identifies future opportunities for ‘Ireland the Brand’. The current research focuses on examining ‘Ireland the Brand’ in terms of two key areas, namely, foreign direct investment, and Irish tourism.

The recent global economic downturn has had a profound effect on the success of ‘Ireland the Brand’. Ireland, as a nation, is hugely dependent on overseas customers, in particular, those from the foreign direct investment sector and inward tourism sector. The foreign direct investment sector and tourism industry played a central role in building a successful brand for Ireland, specifically during the Celtic Tiger era.
1:1 Background to the Research

The following sections provide a background to the key aspects of this research study. An overview of the concept of branding will be presented and the notion of ‘nation branding’ is explained. The core aspects of ‘Ireland the Brand’, a ‘nation brand’, are discussed, focusing particularly on the values of ‘Ireland the Brand’, from the perspectives of foreign direct investment and Irish tourism. A background to the rise and fall of the Celtic Tiger is offered, along with a historical background to the Irish tourism industry. Finally, requirements for the future development of ‘Ireland the Brand’ are examined.

1:1:1 Background to the Importance of Branding

Davis (2000) states that a brand is made up of three things: what a company sells, what a company does, and what a company is. Davis (2000) also purports that a brand, is a set of promises, implies trust and consistency, defines a set of expectations and that the strongest brands own a positioning in the consumer’s mind that is unique to that brand. Davis (2000) further argues that, in order to maximise the consumer-brand relationship, a company must understand how customers think, act, perceive, and make purchase decisions. Aaker (2008) recognises the value of a brand to an organisation, highlighting a link to the business strategy:

A brand gives a firm permission to compete in product markets and services,

and it represents the value proposition of the business strategy

According to Christopher (1996), the concept of brand values implies that what makes a brand a brand is, its ‘personality’, which distinguishes it from others and therefore, the presence of this personality imparts some utility, however tangible, to the customer.

1.1.2 Background to ‘Nation Branding’

‘Nation’ or ‘Place’ branding is built on the same premise upon which product or service brands are built. Kalandides and Kavaratzis (2009) state that place branding techniques are believed to provide valuable tools for cities, regions and even nations, to effectively manage their internal and external opportunities and transform them into competitive advantages. According to Van Ham (2001), a brand is best described as a customer’s idea about a product; the ‘brand state’ comprises of the outside world’s ideas about a particular country. Ireland is no longer merely a country which one finds in an atlas, it has become a ‘brand state’ with geographical and political settings that seem trivial compared to their emotional resonance among an increasingly global audience of customers (van Ham, 2001).

Ni Mháille Battel (2003) posits that many images of Ireland have been inimical to its national success: the centuries-old anti-Irish stereotypes of stupidity, violence, and laziness; the romantic froth of the Celtic twilight of an Ireland not quite of this world, full of fey characters, lacking in a work ethic; the recent association with political violence, historical terrorism; and even the overrepresentation of Irish genius in English-language literature can be seen as evidence of a ‘gift of the gab’ that substitutes for any ‘real’ skills. By the early 1990s, the image had shifted, to that of a young, vibrant, highly educated, stable, English-speaking country with a combination of modern infrastructure, ancient ways, traditional values, low tax and wages, and fortunately for Ireland, these were exactly the qualities that
appealed to U.S. companies seeking a base within the new Single European Market (Ni Mháille Battel, 2003).

1:1:3 Background to the Rise and Fall of the Celtic Tiger

Sweeney (1998) states that the economic boom which transformed Ireland from a bleak existence, that was present since the foundation of the state in 1922, to a successful country at the forefront of the European Union, began in 1987. According to Kuhling and Keohane (2007), throughout the 1990’s, Irish living standards rose dramatically to the point where, in 2007, the country was known as one of the richest countries in the world. This aided in the creation of positive brand associations for ‘Ireland the Brand’. Most significantly, Ireland was effectively transformed from a pre-modern, peasant, rural community to a postmodern, high-technology urbanised society, and in August 1994, the successful Irish economy was awarded the name, the ‘Celtic Tiger’, (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007). Baccaro and Simoni (2004) argue that the social partnership agreements in Ireland, which began with the ‘Programme for National Recovery in 1987, aimed at stabilising the national debt crisis through a series of actions, including, wage agreements, created an educated workforce, and exposure as part of the ‘Single European Market’, resulted in the attraction of foreign direct investments into Ireland which, contributed significantly to the emergence of the Celtic Tiger. Green (2000) supports Baccaro and Simoni (2004) and in addition maintains that Ireland’s human resource base has been a key factor in the creation of Ireland’s competitive advantage. O’Donnell (2000) also concurs with Baccaro and Simoni (2004), and further purports that, the conscious design and delivery of Irish public policy over a number of decades in the context of EU membership and social partnership has aided in the competitiveness of Ireland,
which in turn led to the emergence of the Celtic Tiger. Globalisation was also a factor which facilitated the rise of the Celtic Tiger, (Clinch et al., 2002).

Green (2000), noted that in the year 2000, Ireland had the largest market share of foreign direct investment in Europe at 55% of the total, and that nineteen of the top twenty five computer firms in the world had manufacturing operations in Ireland. The Industrial Development Authority (renamed as Industrial Development Agency Ireland in 1994) is the government agency set up to market Ireland as a destination for foreign direct investment, with the aim of encouraging foreign investors to set up a business in Ireland, (Sweeney, 2000). Green (2000) further states that with only one per cent of the EU population, Ireland gained twenty three per cent of all FDI projects in Europe in 1997, covering manufacturing, software, telesales and shared services projects. This presents an image of a successful 'nation brand', which according to Kuhling and Keohane (2007), enticed the Irish labour force who had emigrated when Ireland was in economically difficulty, to return. Many Irish emigrants, who returned, had gained many assets such as, foreign acquired cultural and educational capital. The success of 'Ireland the Brand', during the Celtic Tiger era, however, had a limited timeline.

According to Coulter and Coleman (2003), experts began to pronounce the death of the Celtic Tiger in 2001. Clinch et al., (2002) posit that the demise of the Celtic Tiger was initiated in January 2001, where the world, including Ireland entered a period of slower economic growth. Coulter and Coleman (2003) also note that the United States' (US) economy contracted in 2001 which not only affected companies in the US but, as many US companies
were based in Ireland, this also had an effect on the Irish economy, resulting in jobs losses becoming more and more common. In 2008, the Central Bank announced that the Celtic Tiger era had come to an end, (Guider, 2008). As per, Taylor (2009), it was not until the second half of 2008 that the downturn quickly turned into recession, and Ireland is now experiencing the affects of an economic crisis, that is truly global, with its parameters still unclear. Giles (2009) claims that by October 2008, it was becoming clear that the seizure of credit markets, the inability of companies to raise working capital, disappearing trade finance and fear, led to what felt like a halt in business activity resulting in investment decisions being postponed, while industrial production plummeted and world trade collapsed. Forelle (2009) maintains that Ireland, once the booming Celtic Tiger and envy of Europe, ‘is faltering badly’; the Irish put gains from their growing wealth into real estate, borrowing to keep building and when the credit crisis struck, this financial edifice tumbled down.

Whelan (2009), however, presents an optimistic image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ post Celtic Tiger, through highlighting positive values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ that exist today:

Put the Celtic Tiger to one side, and I think that there is an Ireland, post-Celtic Tiger, post-Belfast Agreement, which we have to feel confident about. We're at an ugly stage right now, because we're dealing with an economic situation which is totally unreal. I think what has emerged out of the late 20th-century Ireland is that, it's not the Ireland of the 1950s. We have all these bright people, these educated people around the world. There is an Ireland now which is ready for post-recession. And it is open for business (in Kennedy, 2009: 7).
Background to the Tourism aspect of ‘Ireland the Brand’

Deegan and Dineen (2000) state that the Irish tourism industry has experienced unprecedented growth since the mid-1980s through a benign combination of good luck, favourable external and internal conditions and supportive government policies aided by resource transfers from the European Union (EU). Travers (2003) argues that a number of factors underlie the rapid expansion of tourism in Ireland, including, a major international increase in demand driven by rising income levels in many parts of the world, the falling cost of communications and transport and currency developments favourable to Irish tourism. Central to the strong performance of Irish Tourism, in a favourable international market environment, has been the intrinsic attractiveness of the landscape, culture and people of Ireland together with the energy, enterprise and increasing professionalism of the people in a largely Irish-owned service industry (Travers, 2003). According to Cronin and O'Connor (2003), tourism has been and continues to be, a major shaping force in Irish society. Sweeney (1999) further notes that to a small open economy, trade and tourism are extremely important.

The Irish Tourism Association (ITA) was established in the 1890's by F.W. Crossley (Cullen, 2008a). Wright (2004) explains that in 1923, J.C. Foley set up a new tourism association, using the same name that Crossley used in 1893, the Irish Tourism Association, which had no support from the state initially, however, it soon became evident that this organisation could not survive without government funding. In 1939, the Tourist Traffic Act was introduced by the then Minister for Industry and Commerce, Seán Lemass, and this provided for the establishment of the Irish Tourist Board (Wright, 2004). Wright (2004) further states that the 1952 Tourist Traffic Act realised the potential and importance of tourism in the Irish market and established Fógra Fáilte to encourage and promote the development of tourist traffic in
Ireland. In 1955, Fógra Fáilte and the Irish Tourist Board merged as Bord Fáilte Ireland (Wright, 2004). Travers (2003) elucidates that Bord Fáilte’s role was redefined, following a review carried out for the government by consultants A.D. Little, in 1995 and the new emphasis was on international marketing, product development and strategic research with the outsourcing of non-core functions. This led to the development and launch of the Tourism Brand Ireland project, under which Ireland was marketed internationally in line with modern brand practice (Travers, 2003). Tourism Ireland (2005) defines Tourism Brand Ireland as an initiative which started in 1996 to brand the island of Ireland as a holiday destination (in Kennedy 2005). Tourism Ireland Limited, the jointly funded all-island tourism destination marketing organisation, was incorporated in December 2000, as a co-operation body under the terms of the Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations concluded in Belfast in April 1998 (Travers, 2003). According to McDaid (2001) Tourism Ireland Limited is responsible for the international marketing activity of Ireland as a destination, on an all-Ireland basis.

Burke (2000) asserts that tourists still rate the unspoiled countryside and the warmth and hospitality of the people as their main reasons for visiting Ireland. But increasingly the welcome mat is showing signs of wear.

The Irish welcome is what brought people here in the first place. We need to be hugely careful not to ruin what people come here for

1:2 Rationale for the Study

The researcher believes that the concept of ‘nation branding’ has existed in Ireland for a significant period of time. A ‘nation brand’ existed in Ireland, prior to any government focus on marketing the nation. It was developed through messages communicated by the Irish diaspora who were forced to emigrate from Ireland, as a result of events, such as the Great Famine. Today, ‘Ireland the Brand’ is predominantly marketed towards the foreign direct investment market and the overseas tourism market. During the Celtic Tiger era, foreign direct investment and overseas tourism contributed largely to the Irish economy. Even with the existence of the recession that is currently present in Ireland, these sectors are still key to the creation of a successful ‘nation brand’ for ‘Ireland the Brand’. In 2008, the IDA secured 130 new investments into Ireland worth over €2 billion, which also led to the creation of 8,837 new jobs. In terms of the tourism sector, Tourism Ireland (2009a) claim that over nine million visitors, visited Ireland in 2008, which created earnings of €4.8 billion to the Irish economy. As the nation moves further into an economic recession, in 2009, these sectors will inevitably experience a drop in success.

Much research has been conducted in relation to the image and values associated with ‘Ireland the Brand’ during the Celtic Tiger era, however, similar themed research relating to the post-Celtic Tiger era is scarce. Considering, the aforementioned importance of ‘Ireland the Brand’, in particular to the foreign direct investment and tourism sectors and to the nation itself, it is of the utmost importance that a clear understanding of the current image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ is understood, in order to develop and implement a focused strategy with a consistent message delivered to the target audiences. For this reason, this research aims to examine the current image of ‘Ireland the Brand’, focusing on the current values of ‘Ireland the Brand’, the current message communicated in relation to ‘Ireland the Brand’ and the
credibility of ‘Ireland the Brand’ today. Moreover, it is important that a comprehensive knowledge of the impact the failing Irish economy has had on ‘Ireland the Brand’ is understood, particularly, by those involved in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’.

IDA Ireland is the government organisation responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ to potential foreign direct investors, and Tourism Ireland Limited is the government organisation responsible for marketing Ireland to overseas visitors. In today’s complex market environment, many factors contribute to building a brand, and many stakeholders are involved in the shaping of ‘Ireland the Brand’. The current research aspires to identify all those involved in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ today, identify the consistency in the message communicated and whether or not cross functional synergies exist or should exist between those responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. The future of ‘Ireland the Brand’ is highly dependent on a strategy with clearly communicated messages which promote the positive values of ‘Ireland the Brand’, building a strong value proposition for the brand. The current research also examines future opportunities for ‘Ireland the Brand’ in order to identify strategies to grow ‘Ireland the Brand’ and aid in re-building the Irish economy, post Celtic Tiger.

*Any damn fool can put on a deal, but it takes genius, faith and perseverance to create a brand*  


In this current study, the researcher will aim to ascertain if ‘Ireland the Brand’ exists and if so, examine the current brand image of ‘Ireland the Brand’, and the core values of the brand,
including, identifying who is ultimately responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. In order to achieve the goal of the research, the following objectives were identified:

1. To analyse the current brand image of Ireland abroad
2. To examine the impact of the failing Irish economy on the brand image of Ireland
3. To find out who is ultimately charged with the responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’
4. To investigate opportunities for the future of ‘Ireland the Brand’

1:3 Research Focus of the Study

Ireland, as a nation, is facing into a difficult period, predominantly from an economic and social point of view. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Ireland is no stranger to bleak economic periods, however, on this occasion, the nation is entering these bleak times from a different base than previous times. Ireland achieved extreme success as a result of the Celtic Tiger. The current economic recession has had a significant negative impact on the Irish nation, in a very short period of time. The Irish people and those who interact with Ireland internationally were therefore forced to adapt to a less favourable environment, very quickly. As this is a relatively new phenomenon, there is limited research presenting an overview of the current image of Ireland, thus, this current study is exploratory in nature. The researcher employed primary and secondary research as part of this current study. The primary research involved conducting twelve semi-structured interviews. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there are two key sectors pertaining to ‘Ireland the Brand’ from a commercial point of view, namely, foreign direct investment, and tourism. This research study therefore required the interviewees who contributed to this study, to be knowledgeable in one or both of these areas.
In some instances, interviewees may have a more in-depth knowledge of one of the areas. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a certain degree of flexibility, whereby all interviewees would address the core questions, but it also enabled the researcher to gather information specifically on ‘Ireland the Brand’ from the perspective of foreign direct investment, or tourism from experts in each area. The interviews were conducted in the Republic of Ireland, however, many of the interviewees have experience dealing with stakeholders of ‘Ireland the Brand’ on an international basis. The conclusions of this current study are derived from the findings of the interviews conducted as part of this research study. Furthermore, this current study expands on the existing literature relating to the image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ today, identifies with whom responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ lies, investigates the impact the failing Irish economy has had on ‘Ireland the Brand’, and contributes to the research on opportunities for ‘Ireland the Brand’, in the future.

The current chapter introduces this research study. It provides a background and rationale to the research study, thereby justifying the research. The objectives are also highlighted, along with the research focus. Finally, this chapter concludes with the framework of the research study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature relating to this research study. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section reviews the concept of branding and elucidates key chosen elements of this concept. The second section presents an overview of ‘Ireland the Brand’ with particular reference to the foreign direct investment aspect of the brand. Furthermore, the key events leading to emergence of the Celtic Tiger and factors which contributed to the demise of the Celtic Tiger are analysed. The Industrial Development Authority, or the Industrial Development Agency Ireland, as it was later renamed, is also
introduced in this section and its role in relation to ‘Ireland the Brand’ is explained. The third section examines existing literature relevant to ‘Ireland the Brand’ from a tourism point of view.

The theoretical research frameworks are discussed in Chapter 3. The underlying principles of qualitative research are examined and the reasoning behind the researcher’s selection of a qualitative approach for the current study is explained. The research process followed by the researcher in this current study is introduced and a detailed analysis is provided. The interview pool selected for this current study is defined and methods for accessing the desired interview pool are detailed. The data analysis process is illustrated and the coding process is also described in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 presents the main findings from the data contributed by the twelve interviewees, in this current study, who have expertise in various aspects of ‘Ireland the Brand’. Furthermore, these findings are analysed and the results presented in chapter 4. The findings are grouped according to the main themes and sub themes relating to the objectives of this research study:

- The Concept of Ireland the Brand
  - The Values of Ireland the Brand
  - The Success of Ireland the Brand
  - Credibility in Ireland the Brand
  - Destination Ireland
- Marketing Ireland the Brand
  - Synergies in Marketing Ireland the Brand
  - Communicating the message of Ireland the Brand
- The impact of the failing Irish economy on Ireland the Brand
- The future of Ireland the Brand
The main findings as detailed in Chapter 4 are discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 is structured using the main themes as highlighted in Chapter 4, thereby, presenting the conclusions in an organised manner for future analysis. The researcher compares and contrasts the main findings to existing related literature and conclusions are drawn from the results, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge surrounding the main themes of this study, relating to 'Ireland the Brand'. As a result of the conclusions derived from this research study, the researcher provides recommendation for future practice and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2:0 Introduction

_Ireland can claim to have been one of the first countries to consciously manage its brand image. State involvement in branding the country as a tourist destination dates back over fifty years and the IDA began advertising the country as a location for overseas investment in the late 1960’s_ (Fanning, 2006: 235).

This chapter reviews the literature in relation to the concept of branding and its application to 'Ireland the Brand'. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an introduction to branding and the chosen key principles of this subject, which include brand associations, emotional brand benefits, brand identity, brand essence, brand personality, brand positioning, brand equity, brand building, brand awareness and brand loyalty. This provides the core basis of the current research study. The second section gives an insight into the fundamental aspects underlying the branding of Ireland from the perspective of foreign direct investment and highlights various factors which have impacted on this, particularly, over the last twenty years. Section 3, discusses the branding of Ireland in relation to the tourism industry. The key bodies involved in branding the tourism aspect of Ireland are detailed, along with examples of past and current branding strategies. Values which are considered to be the nucleus of Irish society are debated and quotes relating to the state of the branding of Ireland in 2009, from a tourism point of view, are presented.
Section 1

2:1 Introduction to Branding

Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind

(Landor, 1999: www.landor.com).

One of the most valuable assets for any firm is the intangible asset represented by its brands, (Keller and Lehmann, 2003). Armstrong and Kotler (2000) define a brand as:

A name, term, symbol or design, or a combination of these intended to identify
the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them
from those of competitors


Khermouch (2001) agrees with Armstrong and Kotler (2000) and also posits that a brand has to be thought of as a relationship with the customer. Kotler et al., (2005) conclude that a brand is the company’s promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits, services and experiences consistently to the buyers. Barson (2008) suggests that in order for brands to be successful they must have a unique product that defines its niche and place in the market. Barson (2008) also identifies the importance of market research when building a brand to clearly define the target market, develop a strong brand personality and create a strong
emotional connection with consumers, using the correct messages and the correct communication mediums.

Delaney (2005) claims that, brands are all about aspirations. Fanning (2006) postulates that conceiving and maintaining a brand requires answering the following four questions: 1. Where are we now? 2. How did we get here? 3. Where do we want to be? 4. How do we get there?. Belch & Belch (2004) support this by describing the brand as a promise:

*A brand is a promise to the consumer, and is therefore more than a logo. A brand also involves an image or type of association that comes to mind when consumers think about a brand*  

(in Pike 2004: 14).

According to Jobber and Fahy (2006), strong brands deliver the following benefits to companies; company value, consumer preference and loyalty, barrier to competition, high profits and a base for brand extensions. A similar observation is noted by Bergstrom (2000) who purports that if managed properly, brands create difference, relevance and affinity

### 2:1:1 Brand Associations

*Kotler et al.*, (2005) postulate that the challenge of branding is to develop a set of meanings or associations for a brand. De Chernatony (1996) argues that brand managers face many challenges including questions of brand strength, world class culture, brand architecture and brand organising.
The importance of brand associations is postulated by Arens (1996) who states that it adds to differentiating a brand. For Aaker (2008), a brand association is anything that is directly or indirectly linked in the consumers mind, including brand / product attributes and customer benefits and argues that in turn, brand loyalty should result. Keller (1993) defines brand associations as:

*Informal nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for the consumers*

(1993: 3).

According to Pavitt (2000), maintaining the reputable associations of a brand is of huge importance as these are the predominant sources of brand value. Krishnan (1996) notes that a brand that has a high proportion of associations based on direct experience, should be in a relatively strong position, i.e., it possesses high equity. Smith (2008) notes that the process of brand association relies on one core concept: that customers will perceive that there are similarities between the brand being marketed and the relevant activity, idea, event or consumer. Keller (1993) classifies brand associations into three categories: attributes benefits and attitudes. Sheth et al., (1991) previously identified five consumption values: functional, social, emotional, epistemic and conditional, and argued that these could influence the consumer to purchase, and choice behaviour.
2:1:2 Emotional Brand Benefits

According to Aaker (2008), many companies use the product attributes/functional benefits of the brand as a key part of their communication message, however, this can lead to problems for the brand including:

- Exposed to innovation and therefore, loss of competitive advantage
- Loss of credibility
- Lack of value adding credentials when the customer is not interested in the specific attributes


Aaker (2008) describes brands emotional benefits as the ability of the offering to make the customer feel something during the purchase or use experience. Wickens (2006) states that emotional benefits is just one tool in defining and measuring brands but argues that emotional resonance is the most important element of any brands future prospects and without it, a brand is merely a product and can only compete on price. Donbavand (2007) further argues the importance of emotional brand benefits by implying that consumers who are emotionally bonded to your brand are much more likely to stay loyal. Brand ambassadors play a key role in developing emotional benefits, as asserted by Matassa (2008).

Aaker (2008) posits a second form of emotive-led benefits; self-expressive benefits, and defines these as the ability of the purchase and use of an offering to provide a medium for self expression. Aaker (2008) argues that the experience of using a brand could include emotional or self-expressive benefits without any functional advantage but when an
experience combines two or even all three, it is usually broader and more rewarding. According to Doyle (2001), increasingly, it is the emotional associations that a successful brand promises, that create customer value.

Lumsdon (1997) posits that the emotional benefits of a brand and the personality of the brand are inextricably linked and further states that it is one of the core dimensions which make up the brand personality. The importance of emotional benefits in shaping the brand personality are highlighted in the following definition of brand personality as put forward by Lumsdon (1997); brand personality includes all aspects such as psychological values associated with a brand such as luxury, reliability or excitement. de Chernatony et al., (2000) maintain that there are diverse roles that added values play and the more sustainable added values are emotional values. de Chernatony et al., (2000) further posit that such intangible values represent the essence of the brand and the internal processes that deliver these values.

2:1:3 Brand Identity and Brand Essence

Simões et al., (2005) state that, the core component of brand identity is the essence of the brand, its soul and underpinning beliefs. Brand identity also has several dimensions that complete and give texture to the brand, such as symbols, logo and brand design, (Simões et al., 2005). Aaker (2008) notes that brand identity is fundamental to the brand strategy due to its functions of providing direction, purpose and meaning to the brand and identifies that the brand identity is split into two types: core identity (the primary drivers of the brand-building programme) and extended identity (the balance of elements other than those in the core identity which aid in defining the brand, aid in making decisions as to what actions and programs are compatible with the brand and drive minor programs):
A brand identity is a set of brand associations that the firm aspires to create or maintain (Aaker, 2008: 168).

Aaker (2008) concludes that the roles of brand identity include a means of driving the strategic initiative and communication program and to support the expression of the organization's values and culture. Madhavaram et al., (2005) proposes that an effective brand identity strategy informs, guides and helps to develop and nurture and implement a firm's overall integrated marketing communications strategy which in turn contributes to the firm's brand equity. According to Burk Wood (2007), a brand's identity can also add to the salience of the brand.

Aaker (2008) highlights the connection between brand essence and brand identity through defining brand essence as a single thought that captures the heart of the brand and maintains that, a good brand essence will capture much of the brand identity from a different perspective, will provide a tool to communicate the identity and will inform and inspire those inside the organisation. Van Rekom et al., (2006), outline the link between brand essence and brand personality, stating that a brands personality traits, form the essence of the brand.

2:1:4 Brand Personality

Brand personality is the characterisation of brands as perceived by consumers (Jobber and Fahy, 2006: 68).
Aaker (1997), states that the construct of brand personality refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Gibbons (2008) purports that, every brand falls into one of five personality characteristics; sincerity, competence, excitement, ruggedness or sophistication. Aaker (2008) compares the influence of a brand to that of a person in an organisation and states that a business with a personality has a higher recall level and a stronger impact on those who come in contact with it, and also argues that brands, like businesses, can have many personalities.

Freling and Forbes (2005) note that brand personality can be seen as a non-physical piece of product knowledge that shapes perceptions about the product, which when strong and positive, also leads to more brand associations that are favourable, unique, strong, and congruent, thus enhancing brand equity. Freling and Forbes (2005) further argue that marketers must be conscious of the potential for consumers to derive unintended negative conclusions about the brand's personality from marketing communications. Burk Wood (2007) argues that once a customer understands the meaning of the brand / brand personality, it aids the customer in its buying decision making process and in turn expedites the buying process and reduces the perceived risk. Prior (2008) espouses that one benefit of brand personality from a business point of view, is that it aids in its dialogue with its audiences. Van Rekom et al., (2006), argue that a focus on the enhancement of a brand's personality can result in a unique brand positioning.

2:1:5 Brand Positioning

Herrmann and Huber (2000) define brand positioning as the place a brand / product occupies in a given market with the objective of distinguishing it from competitors' brands. According
to Aaker (2008), the brand position represents the communication objectives, the parts of the identity that are the focus of any communication to the target audience. Herrmann and Huber (2000) state that the principle aim is to ensure the brand occupies a unique position in the market and that it is endowed with a precisely defined profile with clear-cut contours.

The brand position will be inherently more dynamic than the brand identity, as per Aaker (2008). Marsden (2002) posits that brand positioning is fundamental to a brand's success in today's over-communicated and product saturated consumer world. Moreover, Trout (2005) states that brands must stand for something in the mind of the consumer or, they become nothing and believes that branding cannot exist without positioning:

\[ \text{Branding is all about building a brand. Positioning is about putting that brand in the mind. You can't do branding without positioning} \]

(Trout 2005: 28).

Aaker (2008) discusses the positioning options of focusing on either points of difference or points of parity and furthermore states, that the positioning option used will depend on the direction in which it will affect the target market, i.e., if the brand has a well established image on a point of difference, it may be advantageous to communicate a point of parity which the audience are not vastly aware of. Krishnan (1996) states that unique associations are reflective of the brand's positioning in the consumer's mind and the term 'unique selling proposition' is commonly used by brand managers when positioning a brand hence, the set of associations that are unique to a brand, relative to other brands in the category, may be used to indicate brand equity.
2:1:6 Brand Equity

Pike (2004) defines brand equity as the value attributed to a brand on the balance sheet. Mohr et al., (2005) contend that there is evidence that brand equity is positively related to a firm’s financial performance and stock market valuation.

Burk Wood (2007) notes that brand equity is the extra value customers perceive in a brand, that ultimately builds long-term loyalty. Higher brand equity contributes to sustained competitive advantage, attracts new channel partners and reinforces current channel relationships, according to (Burk Wood, 2007). Kotler et al., (2008) point out that customer’s are at the core of brand equity and therefore the basic asset underlying brand equity is customer equity, the value of customer relationships that the brand creates. Madhavaram et al., (2005) comments that the integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy is essential to the firm’s strategic brand management and that it strengthens the interface between the firm’s brand identity strategy and its customer-based brand equity, i.e., brand awareness and brand image. The American Association of Advertising Agencies define IMC as a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan, in which the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines are evaluated and subsequently these disciplines are combined to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum impact through the seamless integration of messages, (in Kotler and Keller, 2009).

Kotler and Keller (2009) concur with Madharvam et al., (2005) and identify four building blocks which lead to strong brand equity; Salience, Meaning, Response and Resonance.
Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006) state that the CBBE model implies that a strong brand involves the customer over four steps:

1. **Deep Broad Brand Awareness** – establishing a proper identity and awareness for the brand
2. **Establishment of Points of Difference** – creating the appropriate brand meaning through strong, favourable and unique brand associations
3. **Positive Accessible Reactions**, eliciting positive, accessible brand responses
4. **Forging Brand Relationships** – building relationships with customers characterised by intense, active loyalty

(Kotler and Keller, 2009: 285).
Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006) furthermore posit that achieving the aforementioned four steps, involves establishing six building blocks – brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, customer judgements, customer emotions and the most valuable building block, brand resonance, as with true brand resonance, customers express a high degree of loyalty to the brand. Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006) present an extended version of the CBBE model:

![Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Pyramid](image)

Keller (2003) argues that there is a direct correlation between brand knowledge (brand awareness and brand image), and brand equity. Herrmann et al., (2007) furthermore derives that the marketing mix variables are the drivers of brand equity.

Armstrong and Kotler (2000) maintain that brands have higher brand equity to the extent that they have higher brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations, and other assets such as patents, trademarks and channel relationships. High brand equity provides a company with many competitive advantages spanning across a high level of brand awareness, brand loyalty, greater bargaining power with resellers (customers...
expect to see mainstream brands in store), (Armstrong and Kotler, 2000). Knowles (2008) concludes that the core aspect to business success lies in finding ways that brand equity can be built at reasonable costs to the company. Kotler et al., (2008) agree with Knowles (2008) in that a powerful brand enjoys a high level of consumer brand awareness and loyalty, thus a powerful brand forms the basis for building strong and profitable customer relationships.

2:1:7 Brand Building, Brand Awareness

As pointed out by Ginnings (2006), every business or organisation inertly has a brand whether it treats it accordingly or not, and thus, building a brand simply implies communicating the message more effectively so that potential customers immediately associate a particular brand with their requirements. Greenbaum (2006) proposes three steps to effectively building a brand; create a personality for the brand build a relationship with the target market based on the brand personality and create visual impact through a strong brand identity which reinforces the positive aspects of the brand, the consumers’ buying decision and evokes an emotional response. Doyle (2001) maintains that building an effective, differentiated customer proposition is the core requirement for building a successful brand thus enabling the brand to maintain or grow market share. Ojasalo et al., (2008) concurs with Doyle (2001), and further postulates that building a brand spans across both external brand communication and internal brand building processes. According to Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006), a holistic brand strategy is an effective way for building the basis for competitive advantage and long-term profitability. The holistic brand strategy should involve all those who will be involved in marketing the brand, (Kotler and Pfoertsch, 2006).

*Branding is all about being different*

(Kay, 2006: 744).
Kotler and Keller (2009) explain the importance and affect, brand elements, (those trademarkable devices that identify and differentiate the brand) can have in building a brand and maintain that a brand element provides a positive contribution to brand equity. Kotler and Keller (2009) state that there are six main criteria for choosing brand elements in which the first three; memorable, meaningful and likable, are brand building, and the latter three; transferable, adaptable and protectable are defensive and deal with how to leverage and preserve the equity in a brand element in the face of opportunities and constraints.

Aaker (1996) concurs with Kotler and Keller (2009) and observes that awareness represents the strength of the brand’s presence in the mind of the target customer, with the goal not being to achieve general awareness, but to be remembered for the reasons intended thereby, building the differentiating factor, (in Pike, 2004). Aaker (2008) notes that brand awareness can provide a host of competitive advantages; awareness provides the brand with a sense of familiarity and people like the familiar; name awareness can be a signal of presence, commitment and substance; attributes that can be very important; the salience of a brand will determine if it is recalled at a key time in the purchasing process. Kotler et al., (2008) purport that the real value of a strong brand is its power to capture consumer preference and loyalty. Kotler et al., (2008) further explain that brands which have a high degree of awareness enjoy brand preference and as a result of forging deep connections with customers, command a high degree of brand loyalty.
2:1:8 Brand Loyalty

According to Jacoby (1971), Brand Loyalty may be defined as:

The biased (non-random) behavioural response (purchase) expressed over
time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative
brands out of a set of brands and is a function of psychological processes

(J Jacoby, 1971, in Rundle-Thiele and Bennett, 2001: 26).

Pike (2004) argues that brand loyalty is ultimately measured by repeat and referral custom. As per Aaker (2008), brand loyalty can be based on simple habit, preference or switching costs. Aaker (2008) suggests that a brand loyal customer base enables sizable sustainable competitive advantages; reduction in marketing costs of doing business, a barrier to entry to competitors, and reassurance leads to a reduction in risk for new customers. In essence brand loyalty builds a positive brand image and allows a firm time to respond to competitive moves, (Aaker, 2008). Matzler et al., (2008) is somewhat critical of Aaker (2008) in that Matzler et al. (2008) believe that risk aversion is not a direct influence of brand loyalty but a result of two variables; brand trust, and brand affect. Matzler et al., (2008) make interesting comments and note that risk aversion is positively linked to brand trust and brand affect and hence the relationship between risk aversion and loyalty is mediated by brand trust and brand affect.

Rundle-Thiele and Bennett (2001) state that the market in which an organisation or company operates, must be considered in order to determine the most appropriate brand loyalty measure. Kim et al., (2008) purport that brand loyalty results from brand credibility, affective brand conviction, cognitive brand conviction, attitude strength and brand
commitment. Kim et al., (2008) further maintain that brand credibility is likely to serve as a source of cognitive and affective conviction, and that affective conviction often takes an elaborating role in cognitive conviction formation which in turn may steadily influence attitude strength, thereby aiding in the development of brand commitment, leading to true brand loyalty. Weinstein (2001) espouses that regardless of the industry, there is a direct correlation between brand loyalty and profit and return on investment.

2:1:9 Summary

This section provides an overview of the key chosen elements of branding, including, brand associations, emotional brand benefits, brand identity, brand essence, brand personality, brand positioning, brand equity, brand building, brand awareness and brand loyalty.

The next section reviews the literature in relation to ‘Ireland the Brand’ with particular reference to the foreign direct investment sector.
Section 2

2:2 Ireland: A Branding Phenomenon

Anholt (1998) states that ‘place branding’ has existed for hundreds of years and maintains that brand image is critical to a country’s success, (in Simms, 2008). Fanning (2006) posits that marketing a country’s brand image differs from marketing a product’s brand image, in that it faces special difficulties in three critical areas of brand management: agreeing the core proposition – what the country stands for; ensuring consistency of communication, and long-term planning. According to Anholt (1998), the brand image of a place is determined by the following six factors: government policies; products; culture and heritage; the people; the land and its tourism potential; and business opportunities. Clancy (2008) argues that nation branding not only refers to how a state presents a nation to an external audience, but also an internal audience, and furthermore highlights the importance of tourism and the fact that tourism nation branding, influences the conception of a country both at home, and abroad. Fanning (2006) explains that managing a country’s brand image is becoming a more important priority for two main reasons: globalisation and competition. Davidson (2008) notes that the difficulties associated with place branding arise from the conflicting requirements of the different groups involved; tourism, culture and education authorities, businesses, civil servants and politicians; and the residents themselves.

Sheehan (2005) cites that brands must deliver real and recognisable value to customers in areas that are relevant. According to Brennan (1998), Ireland Inc. is the term coined to describe the ‘company brand’ aspect of Ireland relating to all areas of the economy and foreign direct investment. Tourism Brand Ireland (TBI) is the brand at the forefront of
promoting Ireland as a tourism destination to international visitors, (Tourism Ireland, 2007). Waytiuk (2006) comments that, the recent place branding of Ireland, did not follow a slogan-led marketing campaign, but instead rebuilt its economy, which in turn led to positive associations with the brand of Ireland.

Clancy (2008) notes that place branding is a growing phenomenon in international politics and economics. Branding internally and externally shapes a national identity whereby citizens consume marketing messages and respond to external expectations of who they are, as per Clancy (2008). Furthermore, Simms (2008) elucidates that Ireland is considered as one of the most successful at self branding. Fanning (2006) concurs, and posits that Ireland’s success in effectively re-inventing itself from an ‘economic basket case’, to an economic ‘showcase’ in a few decades did not go unnoticed and during the 1990’s and countries all over the world began to dip their toe in the branding pool amid a growing realisation that economic prosperity was becoming increasingly dependent on a country’s brand image.

2:2:1 Ireland Inc. and The Rise of the ‘Celtic Tiger’

As pointed out by O’Higgins (2002), a poor brand image of Ireland existed during the mid 1980’s due to the existence of a prolonged recession, low living standards, a negative trade balance, high inflation, unemployment of over 17%, a hostile industrial relations climate and weak revenue. Lynch (2009) states that Ireland, in the 1980’s, was an economically stagnant land, notable largely for its political violence in the British-ruled North, and a stereotype of leprechauns and beer. Moreover, Allen (2000b) previously purported that emigration by the Irish had a profound effect on the nation.
Griffiths (2007), states that the 'Ireland Inc.' concept was developed in the late 1980s to indicate the social partners, which included government, industry, professional advisors, revenue commissioners and Enterprise Ireland, coming together to develop strategies to advance the country economically. Ni Mháille Battel (2003) explains that in 1987, the Programme for National Recovery was launched with the aim of stabilising the growing issue of national debt by 1990 and together with the following underlying factors, which included; fiscal policy, national wage agreements Single European Market, EU structural funds, institutional learning, foreign direct investment, human capital and demographic trends, a change in the image of Ireland occurred which led to the emergence of the Celtic Tiger. Deegan and Dineen (2000) recognised that the program for fiscal retrenchment in 1987 was the starting point for economic recovery for Ireland. Clancy (2008), maintains that the Celtic Tiger was fuelled by foreign investment, high-tech growth, low corporate tax rates and a pact between government, business and labour, that transformed Ireland from one of the poorest countries in the EU-15 (15 member states at that time), to one of the wealthiest. Allen (2000b) furthermore posits that the fact that the Irish state was able to forge a consensus for cutting back on public spending and limiting wage rises, contributed to the turnaround in its failing economy at the time.

MacSharry and White (2000) argue that fiscal stability and social partnership were the critical pillars in transforming the economy. O’Cinnéide (1998), in contrast, is critical of the effectiveness of the social partnership members due to the fact that the disadvantaged are represented by people in full-time employment who in some cases are committed to consulting and reporting back to the government. Tallon (2000) identifies five structures which make up Ireland Inc.; the political, government and administrative structure; the
judicial system, the religious institutions, the banking and financial services and the broadcast and print media.

According to Allen (2000b), the Celtic Tiger was baptised in 1994. Ni Mháille Battel (2003) contends that the title of Celtic Tiger was derived from the similarities in the growth of the Irish economy with that of the Tiger economies in the Pacific Rim. The US investment firm Morgan Stanley coined the phrase ‘Irish Tiger’, because Ireland has been growing as fast as the Tiger economies of south-east Asia, (Sweeney, 1999).

Ni Mháille Battel (2003) observes that in the height of the Celtic Tiger, Ireland was one of the world’s leading exporters of software and the fastest growing economy in the western world, taking position at the top of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Developments (OECD’s) league table for economic growth. Economic success was largely based on computer related industries, placing Ireland as a key driver of US technology into Europe, (O’Higgins, 2002). The Celtic Tiger success story is intimately linked to the way the US economy has grown, (Allen, 2000b). According to Tallon (2000), the traditional native industries including agriculture, no longer held the majority of market activities in Ireland however, as jobs were lost in these sectors, the knock-on effect was alleviated by an increasing number of multi-nationals entering Ireland requiring employees. As pointed out by Brown (2009), Ireland experienced a large increase in population during the Celtic Tiger era, predominantly, comprising of the return of Irish emigrants and mass immigration. Coulter and Coleman (2003) state that the years of sustained economic growth are held to have enabled people in the Irish Republic to banish the austerity of previous times in order to become sophisticated consumers, akin to their neighbours in other western European states. Sutherland (2009) notes that the economy of Ireland has been a phenomenon since the late
1980’s, and from a relatively poor country on Europe’s periphery, Ireland has risen to become one of the richest economies in the world.

2:2:2 The Image of Ireland Inc. in Celtic Tiger Times

A new image Ireland as a successful, well-educated, English speaking nation, modern infrastructure, low tax and wages, ancient ways and traditional values, teamed with its new found fashionable identity through lifestyle and culture, i.e., Riverdance, attracted much foreign direct investment, particularly from the United States, (Ni Mháille Battel, 2003). O’Connell (2009) concurs with Ni Mháille Battel’s (2003) description of Ireland in the times and states that the traditional image of the Emerald isle with green fields, thatched houses and shamrocks lost credence and desire and marketing blossomed it into an image of city living with sophisticated societies.

The image of literate, creative, fast-talking, slightly chancery spoofers who speak English and transformed its industrial base in the 1990’s, to that which has had an historical successful track record with foreign direct investment from those in the computer sector, has turned the country into an easily recognised international brand.

(McWilliams, 2005: 78).

McWilliams (2005) maintains that American executives like conducting business in Ireland, as do their British counterparts, which is key to sustaining a long lasting relationship with Ireland Inc. Griffiths (2007) proposes a more commercial outlook on the attractiveness of Ireland to foreign investment, which include, good infrastructure, being located in a time
zone that is friendly for the Far East, Europe and the US, the availability of skilled personnel who are either already located in Ireland or are willing to move to Ireland from the mainstream financial centres including London and New York, and a corporate tax rate of 12.5 per cent on trading profits.

Walsh (2009) states that, over the past fifteen years, Ireland has become one of the most successful economies in the world at attracting foreign direct investment. In 2001, the head of the Irish Central Bank claimed that the era of the Celtic Tiger was over, however, Ireland continued to experience a rapid economic growth fuelled by a building boom, sky-rocketing property value and ever increasing personal consumption, (Clancy, 2008). Allen (2000b) argues that an organisation which was central to the success of Ireland Inc. during the Celtic Tiger period was the Industrial Development Authority Ireland.

2:2:3 The Industrial Development Authority / The Industrial Development Agency Ireland

IDA (2009a) explain that the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) in Ireland, was established in 1949 as part of the Department of Industry and Commerce and later, incorporated as an autonomous state sponsored body. According to MacSharry and White (2000), the IDA initially had a dual function, to advise the Industry Minister on industrial development and to promote greater investment in Irish Industry, that is, giving the authority a specific mandate to attract new industrial investment to Ireland, however, that remit evolved continuously over the next twenty years, as the IDA expanded and focused increasingly on securing foreign direct investment. From the beginning, the IDA took great care to ensure it met the needs of every new company locating in Ireland, either by doing so
itself or by mediating to resolve any problems that arose, which included mediating with
government departments or local authorities where necessary, (MacSharry and White, 2000).
The IDA were one of the first who engaged in the strategic branding of Ireland and were
successful through their “Young European” campaign during the 1970’s and 1980’s, when
they were charged by the government to promote Ireland as a foreign investment destination
and sought to portray the Irish as young, highly educated, modern English speakers who
would be ideal employees for global firms moving into the European market, Clancy (2008).

Moreover, MacSharry and White (2000) attribute much of the success of the IDA on a
number of key factors including the early successful attraction of American companies
including Pfizer (which came about mainly due to the Irish-American connection) and Apple
Computers (a deal which put Ireland on the map in Silicon Valley as a potential European
base), strong leadership during difficult socio-economic times and Ireland’s entry into the
European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 (now known as the European Union / EU).

MacSharry and White (2000) report that, in 1991, a review of industrial policy was conducted
and the results were communicated in the Culliton Report which advocated splitting the IDA,
with one division specialising in foreign investment and another to provide services for
indigenous industry and reducing the status of the IDA from an authority to an agency,
thereby, renaming it the Industrial Development Agency Ireland, (IDA Ireland). In 2009,
Ireland’s inward investment promotion agency, IDA Ireland, is responsible for the attraction
and development of foreign investment in Ireland, (IDA, 2009b). IDA Ireland is an Irish
government agency with responsibility for securing new investment from overseas in
manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors and encourages existing investors to
expand and develop their businesses, (IDA, 2009c). Enterprise Ireland is the government
agency responsible for the development and promotion of the indigenous business sector with a focus on achieving export sales, investing in research and innovation, competing through productivity, starting up and scaling up, and driving regional enterprise, (Enterprise Ireland, 2009). Forfás is concerned with policy advice for the enterprise and science sectors, (Forfás, 2009).

IDA Ireland has sixteen offices world-wide and a further nine offices in Ireland, staffed with industry specialists (IDA, 2009d). In 2008, the IDA secured a total of 130 new investments (35 investments from new clients, 95 investments from existing clients), 56 research and development investments, and 39 expansions with an overall estimated worth of over €2 billion, resulting in the creation of 8,837 new jobs, (IDA, 2009e).

2:2:4 Ireland Inc. and The Demise of the Celtic Tiger

_We now preside over a society which has witnessed a reversal of the tide of emigration, the imminent approach of full employment, a surge in cultural confidence and pride, a greater respect for diversity, and the increasing depth and reach of the peace process. We can rest happily on our laurels – hasn’t paradise been regained? We know the question is ironic for already we see the downstream consequences, the equal and opposite reaction to so much that is good: the accelerating ‘left-behindness’ of the marginalized. This is a fast moving society. If you are stuck and going nowhere, those who are moving disappear from view very rapidly. A society where the stuck and moving lose sight of each other is not a healthy place._

President of Ireland

(McAleese, 2000: 1).
Tallon (2000) maintains that many of the Irish people were bypassed by the Celtic Tiger and hence created a vast divide between the rich and the poor. Kirby (2002) points out that there is substantial social scientific evidence to show that Ireland’s economic boom is resulting in growing social polarization between those who are benefiting from it and those being marginalized by it. Coulter and Coleman (2003) concur and further state that the principle beneficiaries of the advent of the Celtic Tiger have been those elements of southern Irish society that already enjoyed considerable affluence. As argued by Nolan et al., (2000), the Celtic Tiger created a complex mixture of successes and failures.

The Celtic Tiger brought with it an important milestone: Ireland had experienced its longest periods of economic expansion in its history, (Clancy, 2008). This expansion has now come to an end, as the latest EU survey shows that Ireland has slipped from 4th to second last in the league table of European competitiveness, (Walsh, 2009). O’Connell (2009) argues that key Irish brands which are of national phenomena but have international appeal and recognition such as U2, Guinness, Munster Rugby aided in the building of confidence in the brand Ireland Inc., however, O’Connell (2009) furthermore points out that the difficult financial challenges experienced by one of Ireland’s most famous brands, Waterford Wedgewood highlights that regardless of brand awareness and longevity, the worldwide economic crisis is affecting even Ireland’s traditionally most powerful brands.

Altman (2009) argues that the global financial and economic crisis of 2008 was the worst in 75 years and has frightened consumers and businesses and resulted in severe retrenchment. Ewing et al., (2009) discuss how tightly Europe is linked with the US in terms of its economic success, which stems from the close trading relationship between the two continents. This has become particularly obvious in recent times whereby the economic
crisis, which started with the issuing of subprime mortgages in the US, is now widely evident in the European economy, (Ewing et al., 2009). Coulter and Coleman (2003) highlight that the US entered into a recession in 2001 and shortly afterwards Irish growth turned negative. Furthermore, Altman (2009) states that the Irish economic recession will be prolonged as the usual government tools for solving such an issue, are either unavailable or unlikely to work. Moreover, O’Leary (2009) claims that the current Irish recession is among the most severe to date.

2:2:5 Ireland Inc. Post-Celtic Tiger

We can’t change the past but we can try to clean it up a bit

Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern T.D
(in Foster, 2007: 440).

Farrelly (2006) maintains that Ireland Inc. has a major image problem. Farrell (2009) believes that investigations in the Irish banking system and subsequent findings of mismanagement have damaged the Irish image. According to O’Regan (2009) many of Ireland’s top chief executive officers (CEO’s) have poor hopes for Ireland Inc. and believe that its prospects for the next twelve months (2009-2010) are bad. According to O’Hora (2009), the value of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) dropped to €2bn in February 2009 from €2.3bn in 2008. Kelly (2009) states that Ireland has a deficit to ‘fix’, a banking system to repair, and a regulatory framework to rebuild and argues that the image Ireland Inc. presents to the international community as it works through the aforementioned challenges, can be as influential in re-building confidence as the measures themselves. Furthermore, Kelly (2009) maintains that it is well within Ireland’s capability to address the challenges it faces.
Scanlan (2009) claims that Ireland Inc. will gain prosperity again as a result of various elements including the positioning of Ireland as a knowledge economy, one which will be built on its educated workforce. Allen (2000b) was previously critical of Ireland’s capability to build a knowledge economy when the education system is hugely under-funded and emerges poorly out of international comparisons, however, Kennedy (2009) claims that Ireland’s educational system ranks fifth in the world in the way it meets the need of a competitive economy. According to Donnelly (2009), the number of third-level graduates per 100,000 of population aged 25 to 34 in employment in Ireland was the seventh highest of any OECD country. Boland (2009) states, that while the Irish higher education system was underfunded in comparison to fellow OECD and EU countries, it is delivering in terms of quality graduates (in Donnelly. 2009). O’Mahony and Rogers (2009) state that if Ireland’s economy is to have a long term future it needs to increase its’ spending on education. O’Mahony and Rogers (2009) further purport that Ireland is not a big country, has limited resources, hence should prioritise allocation of its resources in terms of the education system, the research and development system and the government policies.

Sweeney (1999) explains that the issue of a high level of unemployment existed throughout the Celtic Tiger even when the number of jobs was greatly increased as the majority of these jobs were taken by those leaving education, returned emigrants and lately, immigrants inbound into Ireland. As per the Economist Intelligence Unit, growth in the Irish economy is not expected until at least 2011, (in Barber, 2009).
Delaney (2005) posits that the most compelling thing that a company can offer its future customers and consumers is trust (in McWilliams, 2005). McWilliams (2005) posits that 1979, (the year when Ireland held its first European election), was the beginning of the end for credible Irish politics. McWilliams (2005) notes that compared to the 80% turnout on the aforementioned election in 1979, election support has since been ever declining, with a turnout of only a little over half in 2004.

Collins and O’Shea (2000) argue that there have been many cases of serious political corruption disclosed since the early 1990’s, which resulted in four semi-judicial Tribunals of Inquiry, one Parliamentary inquiry and a High Court inquiry at the request of a government minister into allegations of payments to politicians and public officials by businessmen which may have influenced political and administrative decisions and widespread tax fraud. Kirby (2002) posits that many examples of serious fraud against the Irish state exist, (in particular those close to the Fianna Fáil party) and include, former Taoiseach Charles J. Haughey who had offshore accounts in order to evade tax (McCracken and Moriarty Tribunals), payments to politicians by private developers in return for developmental favours (Flood Tribunal), the widespread use of bogus non-resident accounts by banks throughout the country to facilitate their customers to evade tax (the parliamentary Deposit, Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) inquiry), and the many cases where bank managers aided tax evaders as a means of attracting business, of which senior figures in financial institutions, the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Finance were aware of, and did not investigate
Kirby (2002) previously argued that public trust in politics is being eroded by evidence of political corruption. Tallon (2000) identifies that there needs to be radical constitutional amendment to restore faith in government and posits that Ireland needs banking and financial institutions in which the people can have total confidence that their individual, family and community interests will be promoted and safeguarded. Gilmartin (2009) claims that there is an international perception of Ireland as the regulation-free cowboy country of global banking, which was reinforced by the scandal of Anglo Irish Bank, which has weakened Ireland’s position as a destination of choice to do business in.

2:2:7 Marketing Ireland to Foreign Direct Investors

IDA (2009f) maintains that as a result of joint marketing programs and initiatives undertaken by IDA Ireland and its sister agencies, such as Enterprise Ireland, Ireland is rapidly gaining a reputation as a keen competitor for global research and innovation from both multi-nationals and world-leading research institutes. Fagan (2008) provides the example of an IDA marketing trip to Italy in 1997, which led to five Italian life investment companies locating in Ireland, resulted in one of the IDA’s most successful marketing activities.

In 2008, IDA Ireland spent over €11 million on marketing related costs, (IDA, 2009f). IDA (2008) point out that IDA Ireland launched a strong international marketing campaign in 2006, using the theme of ‘the Irish mind’ conveying the unique characteristics of Ireland which mirror the fundamental characteristics vital for global business success. IDA (2008) further explains that the concept of the campaign focuses on talent, the correct people and skills, environment, a supportive ecosystem, infrastructure, vision and a positive and a
forward looking attitude. IDA (2006), explain the rationale behind the ‘Irish mind’ campaign:

Innovation and creativity are pre-requisites for success among global companies today. Ireland’s success in attracting international investment can be ascribed to factors such as skills availability, a supportive ecosystem and infrastructure and low taxes on businesses. These are available also, to one degree or another, in many other locations around the world. What is different in Ireland is the way we tackle issues, solve problems and seek new ways to meet needs which is evidenced in the speed, flexibility and responsiveness of public agencies and private bodies. It requires vision, cooperation and partnership among many players. It reflects a mindset that is innate and which is related to the creativity that has been manifest in the Irish literary and artistic tradition. This is what we will be conveying in our campaign

(IDA, 2006: 1).

According to Daly (2008), the IDA created a six series TV show as part of ‘the Irish mind’ campaign, which was broadcasted on CNBC World in America, and CNBC Europe, with the intention of attracting foreign direct investors to Ireland. Basis (2007) purports that a similar theme existed in the earlier marketing campaign, ‘Ireland, knowledge is in our nature’, whereby, the agile flexible and creative way in which businesses develop in Ireland, along with the cultural characteristics and creative history that are embedded in the Irish people, were strongly communicated.
Summary

This section discusses the concept of ‘nation branding’. In particular, this section focuses on the rise and demise of the Celtic Tiger economy in Ireland. The factors leading to the emergence of the Celtic Tiger, including the Programme for National Recovery, the EU, demographic trends and tax structure, are identified in this section. The demise of the Celtic Tiger is examined, citing the global economic downturn as the factor which had the greatest impact on its demise.

The next section presents an analysis of the literature in relation to ‘Ireland the Brand’ from the perspective of Irish Tourism.
Section 3

2:3 Marketing a Tourist Destination

According to Lumsdon (1997), in order to market a destination, it is important to understand the term ‘tourism destination’:

*The tourism destination comprises of the four core elements, of prime attractors, built environment, supporting supply services and atmosphere which lead to the attraction of visitors to stay for a holiday* (Lumsdon, 1997: 238).

Cert (1993) previously maintained that there are three key aspects to the definition of tourism: movement from place of residence, a particular length of stay, and a particular purpose. Lumsdon (1997) states that, there are three constituent elements which affect the degree of control in marketing a destination; natural resources, climate, and culture.

Wright and Linehan (2004) note that, tourism is a particularly important sector to the Irish economy. According to Bowler (2006), tourism is the largest tradable service sector in Ireland. Tourism Ireland (2009a) claims that over nine million visitors visited Ireland in 2008, leading to earnings of over €4.4 billion. Clancy (2008) echoes Fáilte Ireland in that Ireland has carefully engaged in a sophisticated campaign of branding the country as a tourism destination. Clancy (2008) furthermore suggests that the Irish state plays a leading role in the marketing of Destination Ireland, and hence through examining how the state promotes the nation for tourism purposes provides a window into how the state imagines the
nation itself. Kotler *et al.*, (1993) note that in the early 1990's the Irish Tourism Board engaged in investment marketing in tourist related facilities, in an effort to attract high-income, culture seeking tourists to Dublin. Cert (1993) observed that marketing a tourism product has a complex array of factors which differ from marketing products in other industries, including, intangibility, perishability, complexity, interdependence, finite supply. Lumsdon (1997) maintains that a tourist destination cannot be branded in the same manner as products in other industries, as a destination features many brands in its offering, it is difficult to mould a brand personality based on a living and dynamic community and in such circumstances, it is very difficult to control a brand identity.

Kotler and Andreasen (1991) define a place’s image as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place (in Kotler *et al.*, 1993). Kotler *et al.*, (1993) argue that image is key in the tourist industry and place images are heavily influenced by pictorial creations of the place, often in movies, on television, through music and celebrities. Furthermore, Kotler *et al.*, (1993) posit that when designing a place’s image, the final result should be valid, believable, simple, have appeal and be distinctive.

### 2:3:1 An Introduction to the Tourism Industry in Ireland

According to Fáilte Ireland (2000), the founder of Irish tourism was F. W. Crossley who in 1893, established the Irish Tourism Association (ITA) and was the first entrepreneur to market Ireland as a holiday destination, using techniques such as advertising, marketing and public relations. Fáilte Ireland (2000) state that the ITA’s aim was to promote tourism to benefit the nation and operated without any aid from the Irish Free State until 1939 when Séan Lemass, the then Minister for Industry and Commerce, introduced the Tourist Traffic
Act which provided for the establishment of the Irish Tourist Board (ITB). The ITA focused on local tourism promotion and had a seat on the board of the ITB, who also gave the ITA a grant (Fáilte Ireland, 2000). According to Wright and Linehan (2004), the government established Fógra Fáilte, to promote Ireland as a tourist destination while, An Bord Fáilte (The Irish Tourist Board) developed domestic tourism.

According to Deegan and Dineen (2000), tourism performance is determined by the complex endogenous factors (tourism policy of the government, access transport policy and prudent domestic macroeconomic management) and exogenous factors (the tastes of the international tourists, the general levels of disposable incomes and the exchange rates prevailing in outbound markets). McManus (2005) points that the growth in Ireland’s tourism industry took place in a time of radical social change, (in McCarthy, 2005). Deegan and Dineen (2000) concur and posit that following a flawed expansionary fiscal policy in the late 1970’s, Ireland entered the early years of the 1980’s with an extremely serious and endemic unemployment problem and a large debt to GNP ratio peaking at 129% in 1987. It was against this bleak performance and outlook for the economy in the mid-1980’s, that renewed government focus on tourism occurred (Deegan and Dineen, 2000).

Deegan and Dineen (2000) observe that, the development of tourism traffic, occasioned by the relaxation of regulation on the Dublin to London route, the election of a new government in 1987, and the subsequent publication of The Programme for National Recovery that highlighted the potential of the tourism industry in Ireland and, membership of the European Union (EU), which in turn provided support through the European Regional development Fund (ERDF) and Community Support Frameworks (CSF’s), all provided a strong foundation for building the tourism industry in Ireland. Hall et al., (2005) agree with Deegan
and Dineen (2000) and point out that it was in the mid-1980’s, after the publication of the first White Paper for tourism in 1985, that the industry took a more strategic approach to both its development and marketing.


Hall et al., (2005) state that since September 29, 2003, Bord Fáilte has been divided into two organisations; partially amalgamated with CERT, the national tourism training authority to form Fáilte Ireland, and also partially amalgamated with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to form Tourism Ireland Limited (TIL). Wright and Linehan (2004) state that Fáilte Ireland is now responsible for the domestic marketing of Ireland and niche marketing such as the promotion and development of golf in conjunction with Tourism Ireland.

**2:3:2 Tourism Ireland Limited**

According to Tourism Ireland (2009b), Tourism Ireland Limited was established under the framework of the Belfast Agreement of Good Friday 1998, and is jointly funded by the Irish government and the Northern Ireland Executive on a 2:1 ratio. Wright and Linehan (2004) also acknowledge that the new all-Ireland tourism industry was also funded by the International Fund for Ireland; a fund which was set up by international governments who
were concerned about the problems and political pressures in Northern Ireland and in order to promote peace in Ireland, money was injected into the marketing of Ireland, both north and south of the border. As per the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (2009), Tourism Ireland Ltd was formally incorporated on December 11, 2000 and states that its Memorandum and Articles of Association govern its operations and it is accountable to the North South Ministerial Council established under the Good Friday Agreement. According to Wright and Linehan (2004), Tourism Ireland Limited began operating fully in 2002.

The role of Tourism Ireland is to grow overseas tourism revenue and visitor numbers to the island of Ireland, and to help Northern Ireland to realise its tourism potential, Tourism Ireland (2009c). Hall et al., (2005) support the description of Tourism Ireland Limited as described by Tourism Ireland (2009b) and observe that Tourism Ireland Limited focuses on international marketing and are involved with marketing Ireland abroad as an all-Ireland destination. Central Solutions (2009) concur and add that Tourism Ireland Limited engages in strategic destination marketing on a worldwide basis to achieve these goals. Tourism Ireland (2007) posits the organisation will strive to achieve the following goals for the period between 2008-2010:

- *Increasing tourism to the island of Ireland*
- *Supporting Northern Ireland to realise its tourism potential*  
  (Tourism Ireland, 2007: 5).

Tourism Ireland (2007) defines the organisation’s vision statement and mission statement in their corporate plan for 2008-2010, as follows:
Vision Statement:
To grow tourism business to the island, Tourism Ireland’s vision is to be the strategic leaders in overseas marketing by creating and delivering world-class integrated marketing programmes. To stimulate interest and to drive consumer purchase we will exploit and enhance our use of marketing platforms so the industry can target the customer more effectively. Through the depth of our understanding and our engagement with our customers we will achieve standout in a cluttered market place. Building on this consumer understanding we will communicate to the industry and the tourism agencies, North and South, the consumer’s demands and requirements for product quality and services.

Mission Statement:
Tourism Ireland will deliver on this vision over the next three years by:

- Undertaking destination marketing programmes to stimulate demand to visit the island of Ireland
- Facilitating and supporting business linkages to improve distribution of the island of Ireland tourism product to potential consumers
- Acting as an advocate for overseas consumers and trade by communicating to industry the evolution of the Ireland brand and the quality of the tourism experience on the island of Ireland, along with the needs and wants of our visitors and potential visitors
- Undertaking regional / product marketing and promotional activities on behalf of Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board through our overseas offices

(Tourism Ireland, 2007: 5).
Tourism Ireland Limited is directly linked to the brand marketing of Ireland (Tourism Ireland 2009d).

2:3:3 Tourism Brand Ireland

Wright and Linehan (2004) explain that as a result of the Arthur D. Little report and the general approval from the industry, Bord Fáilte and the tourism industry decided that the time had come to develop a new image for Ireland. According to Tourism Ireland (2009d), Tourism Brand Ireland is an initiative, started in 1996, to brand the island of Ireland as a holiday destination, and also points out that Tourism Ireland Limited is responsible for the management of this brand, which has proven to be a highly successful global branding strategy. Connelly (1996) states that Bord Fáilte carried out a survey which indicated that the shamrock (Irish emblem) had low recognition in some countries. As per Nolan (2001), an agreement had been reached to use one logo for the whole island, and a new design was agreed incorporating people embracing which replaces the former shamrock, but includes a small shamrock in the design. Andrews (1996) is somewhat critical of the results of the survey by Bord Fáilte as indicated in Connolly (1996) and expressed concern over the relegation of the shamrock and the size of the shamrock used in the new logo:

*One would need a magnifying glass to see it and this is unfortunate because it is instantly recognised as the symbol of Ireland to people who would not ordinarily understand such matters. The logo will be less meaningful than its predecessor in the North American tourism market.*

O’Mahony (2001) supports Andrews (1996) and states that the shamrock was briefly abandoned in favour of a new ‘embrace’ motif following the 1997 Tourism Brand Ireland initiative but was reinstated amid massive controversy.

Connolly (1996) reports that Fianna Fáil threw its ‘weight’ behind efforts to ensure that the national tourist board does not drop the shamrock as part of its marketing abroad and has sent out an ‘SOS’ to the people of Ireland and in particular, Bord Fáilte to ‘Save our Shamrock’. Khan (2001) observes that a further re-design of a new logo which will be visible in all communication by Tourism Ireland Limited, was to include the shamrock. Wright and Linehan (2004) purport that, Tourism Ireland has now only one logo, which consists of a shamrock on a white background.

Foley and Fahy (2004a) assert that the Tourism Brand Ireland initiative has provided a framework for branding and promoting Ireland and highlight the positioning strategy as being one based on ‘people and place’, with the message of ‘Ireland, as an emotional experience’, used to articulate this positioning. Tourism Ireland (2009d) explain that they undertook a comprehensive brand review in 2007, and the outcome of this review is the new message, ‘Go where Ireland Takes You’, with which Tourism Ireland aims to further differentiate Ireland as a holiday destination. Furthermore, Tourism Ireland (2009e) states in its marketing plan for 2009, that there will be a clear focus on positioning the island of Ireland, through focusing on the most advantageous markets and targeting our best prospects, namely, sightseers and culture seekers, to take advantage of the opportunities that will arise as the global economy stabilises. The positioning in the Tourism Ireland marketing plan for 2009, is defined as ‘the island of unique character and characters’, which provides the basis for the brand promise of an experience that’s unique: Spontaneous, Engaging, Fun, which is
represented by the brand idea ‘Go where Ireland takes you’, (Tourism Ireland, 2009e). Tourism Ireland (2009e) clarifies the meaning of ‘character’ and ‘characters’ in their positioning statement as follows:

**Character:** Visitors are always captivated by the natural and man-made landscape on the island of Ireland

**Characters:** It’s the people on the island of Ireland that make it what it is

(Tourism Ireland, 2009e: 13-14).

### 2:3:4 Céad Mile Fáilte

*Céad Mile Fáilte, One hundred thousand welcomes*

(McAleese, 2009: July 8).

O’Donoghue (2005), provides an example of the use of the phrase Céad Mile Fáilte in his address at the welcome event for the All Blacks rugby team, and explains the literal translation in doing so:

*I would like to offer Graham Henry and his touring All Blacks a typical Irish Céad Mile Fáilte - 100,000 welcomes to our shores*

(O’Donoghue, 2005: November 5).

Tripadvisor voted Ireland the friendliest destination, (in Slattery, 2008). Moreover, Slattery (2008) points out that the 2007 independent review of brand Ireland, confirmed that the legendary Irish friendliness and the beauty of the scenery are what bring visitors here. Kennedy (2008a) supports Slattery (2008) and contends that Ireland’s unspoilt scenery, the
friendliness of the people and the sense of security were what most impressed foreign visitors. Furthermore, Wright and Linehan (2004) argue that it is the warmth and friendliness of the Irish people which is consistently high on the list of attractions of visitors to Ireland. Tourism Ireland (2008) confirms the notion that, Ireland extends a genuine welcome to tourists, (in Slattery, 2008). Henry (2009) states that as part of Tourism Ireland’s marketing overseas, a promise is made to potential visitors that they would gain an experience that is unique and full of spontaneity, engagement and fun, if they visited Ireland.

Contrary to the aforementioned view, Quinn (2009) observes that for some, the Céad Mile Fáilte may seem like a worn cliché, however, Fáilte Ireland’s survey of key overseas visitors underlines quite clearly that, when it comes to tourism, our people remain one of our greatest resources, (in Fáilte Ireland, 2009). Breheny, concurs in part, in that the perception of the Irish welcome has changed, however, also reports that the Irish welcome is important and Fáilte Ireland has always regarded customer care and friendliness as a key element of its training programme, (in O’Doherty, 2008). According to McKeown (2009), given the rapid changes being experienced today by the Irish economy, the Céad Míle Fáilte, is just as likely to be given by a young lady or gentleman from Latvia, Estonia or Poland, as it is from a local lass or lad.

2:3:5 Marketing Communications, Destination Ireland

Tourism Ireland (2009f) states that through TV, print, radio and digital campaigns, ‘things to do and see’ on the island of Ireland, will be showcased, along with bringing its ‘character and characters’ to life. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) state that the internet is now an integral part of marketing communications and many marketers use the internet to promote consumer
awareness and interest, provide information and consultation, facilitate two-way communications with customer through email and chat rooms, enable customers to place orders and advertise. Tourism Ireland (2009g) points out that Tourism Ireland's suite of international websites experienced a record 5.9 million visits in the first half of 2009, which indicates a 21% increase in the organisation's web activity over the same period in 2008. Harte (2009) notes that Tourism Ireland is increasing its digital marketing activity across the world and now invests close to 25% of its total marketing budget online, (in Tourism Ireland, 2009). Furthermore Harte (2009), observes that while the global economic downturn is impacting on Irish tourism in 2009, it is encouraging to know that interest in visiting the island of Ireland is still high.

Tourism Ireland's new marketing communications will highlight the 'character and characters' of the island of Ireland, celebrating not just what the island has to offer, but also the people who make the island of Ireland a unique tourist destination (Irish Tourism Industry Confederation, 2008). According to Cullen (2008c), Ireland really does have a unique offering – one rooted in its sense of 'place and its people' and if Ireland package, promote, and deliver it to best effect, Ireland can win business in 2009. Tourism Ireland (2009h) note that the three year 'Go where Ireland takes you' advertising campaign launched in January 2009, includes TV, press and online advertising and will have an estimated annual audience of 200 million potential visitors worldwide, (Appendix C). According to Tourism Ireland (2009h), the 'Go where Ireland takes you' campaign, uses an integrated marketing communications strategy, comprising of TV, print, radio, promotions, direct marketing, publicity and e-marketing in communicating the campaign message. Tourism Ireland (2009h) explains that research had shown the need to animate 'the character and characters' of the island of Ireland, in order to stand out from other destinations, hence, the new global
TV advertisements were designed to convey a sense of fun and spontaneity and instill the message that there is more to Ireland than just what can be found in a guidebook and some of the most wonderful things can only be stumbled upon by chance! The new press ads have been created through a technique using computer-generated imagery based on real photography, to create novel infinity maps, show multiple images or ‘icons’ from around the island of Ireland offering the potential visitor many compelling reasons to visit, (Tourism Ireland, 2009h). Tourism Ireland (2009h) further maintain that the maps play with the reader’s sense of perspective and convey texture, depth and topography, depict icons such as landmarks, iconic attractions, castles, activities and scenery, combine historic, cultural and more contemporary aspects of the island of Ireland holiday experience. According to Tourism Ireland (2009i), e-marketing is a means of communicating a message in a highly targeted and contextual method, and was used as part of the, ‘Go where Ireland takes you’ campaign.

Cullen (2008d) asserts that the ‘Go where Ireland takes you’ campaign, will feature different products, activities and regions and it will be important that tourism enterprises also play their part, in delivering the experience, in line with the promise that was made in the advertising and communications overseas.

Swarbrooke (1999), previously noted that Ireland has experienced great success in tourism, through exploiting its cultural heritage (from its amazing castles to the world class famous writers), and its modern culture (through exhibitions such as Riverdance, its hosting of the European Capital of Culture festivals and the film and rock music scene). Given the increasingly easy substitutability of destinations, the key advantages of brand loyalty for destinations include lower marketing costs, increased travel trade leverage, and word of
mouth referrals”. According to Wright (2006a), the world wide web is an essential component of tourism industry and one of the goals and targets for Tourism Ireland Limited, in 2006, was to make Ireland as accessible as possible, online.

2:3:6 The Irish Emigrants / The Irish Diaspora

We're very familiar with the Famine as a story of the deaths of a million Irish Catholics and the emigration of many more

(McAleese, 2007: 6).

According to MacLaughlin (2000), emigration has long been considered an intrinsic, even a 'defining' feature of Irish society (in Bielenberg, 2000). Coogan (2002) states that the first occurrence of Irish Emigration was in the 1840's, as a result of the Great Famine when the failure of the potato crop was allowed to develop from a crisis into a catastrophe. Johnson (1990) explains that a widely-held view is that the Great Famine broke forever, the attachment of the rural Irish to their native soil and that it has been argued that throughout Ireland, faith in an agricultural way of life, with the potato as the key subsistence crop, was permanently destroyed, so that other opportunities were seriously considered and the way opened up for emigration. O'Gráda (1995) contends that around a million people emigrated from Ireland during the famine, (in O'Rourke, 1995). Moreover, Johnson (1990) posits that pre-famine emigration existed and that every county in Ireland had some emigration, particularly, those in the northern counties, where emigration to North America had been a well established tradition in the eighteenth century. Wright (2006b) states that, although emigration existed prior to the famine in Ireland, this epoch in Irish history experienced the largest exodus, resulting in the Irish firmly establishing roots in the new host country. An
overwhelming majority of Irish Americans can trace their ancestry back to Famine times (Wright, 2006b). Smyth (2008) observes that the American Senator, Ted Kennedy had Irish ancestry and was very conscious of his Irish heritage. Smyth (2008) also notes that Senator Ted Kennedy was a great ‘friend to Ireland’ and became actively involved with various aspects of Ireland, from a political point of view relating to the troubles in Northern Ireland and from a personal point of view, visiting and exploring Ireland and his heritage. Brighton (2005), notes that over 40 million people, in the United States claim Irish ancestry. Aikins (2009) observes that there are 3.8 million Irish-Canadians, 1.9 million Irish-Australians and 500,000 Argentineans of Irish heritage.

Wyndham (2006) maintains that there were three large forces of change that gave Ireland some genuine claim to the world’s attention – the Irish diaspora, the Peace Process, and the economic boom. Kennedy (2008b) suggests that there is now a widespread attempt among the Irish diaspora to see Irish identity in cultural, non-denominational and non-political ways. Brown (2009) postulates that a central thread in the history of independent Ireland has been the ‘cunning’ ways in which the higher classes of society have looked after themselves through thick and thin and been ably protected by politicians who have mouthed patriotic platitudes while cynically relying on mass emigration to act as a safety valve whenever mass unemployment has threatened social discord. Brown (2009) explains that Brian Linehan senior, the Tánaiste during the last major economic downturn in the 1980's, publicly endorsed mass emigration as a solution to mass unemployment:

_We can’t all live on this small island_

According to Walker (2008), there is a strong interest in family and cultural attachments to Ireland, among the Irish diaspora. Higgins (2006) purports that there is a large amount of musical expressions associated with the Irish diaspora around the world. Chiffriller (2009) concurs and maintains that communities of Irish diaspora sprang up around the world and the culture, music and celebrations of the Irish were added to the lands where they lived. Wright (2006c) identifies that there a strong relationship, with bonds that are deep rooted and fervent, exists between Ireland and the United States of America.

MacÉinri (2000) believes that there has been an acceptance that the Irish identity of those within the diaspora, is not simply a pale shadow of 'authentic' Irish identity in Ireland but has something distinctive to contribute (in Bielenberg, 2000). Mac Éinri (2000) further argues that the Irish diaspora claimed its own place in international societies and denied that its culture was inferior (in Bielenberg, 2000). Wright (2006) claims that there is a strong correlation between bonds with the motherland and cultivating the native music and culture, and Irish-Americans have been responsible for fostering Irish culture and traditions, through festivals such as the Rose of Tralee.

According to Aikins (2009) Ireland's diaspora constitutes an immense source of 'soft power' and by implementing a comprehensive diaspora strategy this can be cultivated and converted into 'hard impacts' with Ireland's economic recovery. Boyle and Kitchin (2008) believe that an Irish diaspora strategy should be developed and include a diverse and wide range of schemes, in order to reach as many people as possible to maximise and realise their potential.
Summary

The initial concept discussed in this chapter, is the concept of branding. An introduction to this concept is provided, thereby forming the foundations of this study. Each of the chosen elements of branding, relative to the current study are outlined, and where applicable, their relationships are highlighted.

The aim of the second section was to give an insight into the place branding of Ireland, from the perspective of Ireland Inc. The importance of place branding, and its underlying factors are presented. Anholt (1998) stated that the brand image of a destination is determined by the following six factors: government policies, products, culture and heritage, the people, the land and its tourism potential, and business opportunities. (O’Higgins, 2002) observes that, a poor brand image of Ireland existed during the mid-1980’s, however, this chapter describes changes that occurred in Ireland over the last fifteen years which resulted in the buoyant economy termed in The Celtic Tiger. The image of Ireland in Celtic Tiger times as a nation of unwavering potential is portrayed by various writers including Ni Mháille Battel (2003). Walsh (2009) espouse that over the past fifteen years, Ireland has become one of the most successful economies in the world at attracting foreign direct investment. As noted in the literature review there were many organisations involved in the creating and maintaining of the brand of Ireland Inc., including the IDA.

The literature revealed that the Celtic Tiger had a finite lifespan and the factors relating to its demise, and repercussions of the Celtic Tiger are discussed in this chapter. The global economic downturn, together with lack of leadership skills of those tasked with running the nation of Ireland, and an acceptable culture of corruption by those in power all had significant
impacts on the Celtic Tiger economy, according to the literature reviewed in this chapter. The state now finds itself in a situation with negative brand associations and a highly educated workforce, with limited opportunities.

According to Wright (2006), there is a definite shift in the perception of Ireland as a destination and purports that while cities in Ireland, particularly Dublin, have a fast pace of life, the traditional image of Ireland is still abundant in the west. The third section of this chapter reviews the literature in relation to the tourism aspect of Ireland the brand. It is described as a nation with traditionally, a very strong tourism background. An overview of the history of the Irish Tourism Industry is presented, describing the many changes of the organisations involved, resulting in two main bodies, Tourism Ireland Limited, a body responsible for the marketing of the island of Ireland abroad and Fáilte Ireland, responsible for the domestic marketing of Ireland. The marketing of Ireland the brand, from a tourism perspective is highly structured, in the form of the brand strategy Tourism Brand Ireland, for which Tourism Ireland Limited is responsible. Throughout this section, a background to Tourism Brand Ireland is reviewed, along with the current active brand strategy. The elements of Ireland which make it such a desirable tourist destination are explained with the concept of the traditional Irish welcome, Céad Mile Fáilte, central to this discussion.

A review of the aforementioned sections leads to the questioning of the credibility of Ireland the brand. Does Céad Mile Fáilte still exist? Do the bodies responsible for marketing Ireland the brand, in its totality, communicate sufficiently? Who is ultimately responsible for such marketing activities? Is there a consistent brand message being communicated from ‘Ireland the brand’ to targeted audiences abroad? What does Ireland the brand represent in current times?
Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

If we knew what we were doing, it wouldn’t be research

(Einstein, 1879 – 1955).

3.0 Introduction

According to Sharp et al., (2002), research is defined as seeking through methodological processes to add to one’s own body of knowledge and to that of others, by the discovery of nontrivial facts and insights. Malhotra (1996) discusses the concept of marketing research, and describes it as the systematic and objective identification, collection, analysis, and dissemination of information for the purpose of improving decision making related to the identification and solution of problems and opportunities in marketing.

The researcher aims to ascertain if ‘Ireland the Brand’ exists and if so, examine the current brand image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ including the current core values of the brand and the impact of the failing Irish economy on ‘Ireland the Brand’. Furthermore, the researcher will investigate with whom the responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ lies, and identify future opportunities for ‘Ireland the Brand’.

This chapter discusses the research methodology utilised by the researcher in order to accomplish the objectives of this study. Malhotra (1996) posits that research design may be broadly classified as exploratory or conclusive. The research design chosen as part of this study is exploratory, and employs a phenomenological qualitative method.
3:1   **The Research Process**

According to Grossnickle and Raskin (2000), the research process is a structured approach that helps ensure all of the researchers efforts result in useful, actionable information. The researcher followed the research process as purported by Burns and Bush (2008):

**The Marketing Research Process**

Step 1: Establish the need for marketing research  
Step 2: Define the problem  
Step 3: Establish the research objectives  
Step 4: Determine the research design  
Step 5: Identify information types and sources  
Step 6: Determine methods of accessing data  
Step 7: Design data collection forms  
Step 8: Determine sample plan and size  
Step 9: Collect data  
Step 10: Analyse data  
Step 11: Prepare and present the final research report


3:2   **Establish the need for Marketing Research**

The researcher is conducting this study for academic purposes, as part of a taught Masters in Business Studies. The area of branding is of particular interest to the researcher, as the
researcher believes branding is a huge contributor to the success of products, services and nations. As a result of the recent negative developments in the Irish economy and the crisis affecting the global economy, both the foreign direct investment and tourism sectors in Ireland have experienced a downturn in the past year. The researcher believes it is highly important to investigate the strength of ‘Ireland the brand’ within the aforementioned sectors and try to identify aspects which can be improved upon through marketing activity, with the aim of increasing Ireland's brand equity.

3:3 Define the Problem

Malhotra (1996) states that defining the problem is the most important step, since only when a problem has been clearly and accurately identified, can a research project be conducted properly. In defining the research problem, Malhotra (1996) posits that the general rule to be followed, is that the definition should (1) allow the researcher to obtain all the information needed to address the management decision problem and (2) guide the researcher in proceeding with the project. The researcher adhered to the guidelines for defining a problem as set out by Shao (1999), which involved considering the following factors: the reasons for pursuing information, what is already known about the issue, the risks associated with the problem, resources available for the research activity, and how the information will help decision-makers.

In defining the research problem, the researcher conducted each stage of the problem definition process as proposed by Domegan and Fleming (2007) and illustrated in Figure 3.1:
The primary purpose of this study is to investigate Ireland as a branding phenomenon. The researcher will explore all aspects of Ireland the brand, paying particular attention to brand image, brand values and brand equity. The study focuses on two key areas of which branding plays a pivotal role: foreign direct investment (FDI) and the tourism industry. This study will examine the credibility of the two brands, as identified in the literature review in Chapter 2, which are used to market each of the above Irish sectors: Ireland Inc., (FDI sector) and Tourism Brand Ireland (tourism industry). The researcher will investigate the perceptions of those who are directly involved in creating these brands and those who are directly impacted and influenced by these brands.
The research question of this current study is does ‘Ireland the Brand’ exist and if so, what is the current brand image of ‘Ireland the Brand’, what are the core values of the brand and has the failing Irish economy had an impact on ‘Ireland the Brand’? This research also investigates who is ultimately responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’, and what future opportunities exist for ‘Ireland the Brand’?

The objectives of this research problem, as outlined in the next section will act as a means of focus for the researcher in the pursuit of investigating the research problem.

3:4 The Research Objective

As per Burns and Bush (2008), the research objectives states what the researcher must do to carry out the research. Shao (1999) states that, the research objectives should flow from, and be totally consistent with the research problem. Domegan and Fleming (2007) argue that research objectives are a statement of specific and limited information needs. Saunders et al., (2007) posit that research objectives are evidence of the researcher’s clear sense of purpose and direction.

The objectives of this study are outlined as follows:

1. To analyse the current brand image of Ireland abroad
2. To examine the impact of the failing Irish economy on the brand image of ‘Ireland the Brand’
3. To find out who is ultimately charged with the responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’
4. To investigate opportunities for the future of ‘Ireland the Brand’
3.5 The Research Design

The researcher identifies the importance of selecting a research design, in order to conduct comprehensive research. As pointed out by Shao (1999), a sound research design is one that is likely to achieve the research objectives. In exploring the various research design options the researcher was cautious not to focus on the task of selecting a single research design. As pointed out by Burns and Bush (2008), research is an iterative process and the researcher was required to consider this notion in the quest to choose the most appropriate research design.

Research design forms the framework of the entire research process, as its foundations are firmly based on scientific rigor and objectivity.

Chisnall (2005: 36).

According to Saunders et al. (2007), research design is the general plan of how a researcher answers the research question and will contain clear objectives derived from the research question, specify the sources from which the researcher intends to collect data, and consider the constraints that the researcher will encounter, as well as discussing ethical issues. Furthermore Chisnall (2001) states that the research design details the most suitable methods of investigation, the nature of the research instruments, the sampling plan, and types of data, i.e., quantitative or qualitative. As per Burns and Bush (2008) there are three widely recognized research designs: exploratory, descriptive and causal. Shao (1999) notes that, exploratory research identifies problems, generates hypotheses and gains insights into particular subjects; descriptive research describes attitudes, perceptions, characteristics, activities and situations and causal research provides evidence that a cause-and-effect relationship exists or does not exist.
3:5:1 Exploratory Research

Domengan and Fleming (2007) explain that exploratory research aims to identify and establish the very existence of variables through establishing trends, patterns and ranges of behaviour that are unknown. Burns and Bush (2008) concur with Domengan and Fleming (2007) and posit that exploratory research is used to gain background information, to define terms, to clarify problems and hypotheses, and to establish research priorities. Shao (1999) identifies the elements of exploratory research:

- Small-scale in nature
- Costs are relatively low
- Tends to be flexible
- May be carried out in many ways
- Findings tend to be inconclusive


Burns and Bush (2008) suggest methods of conducting exploratory research:

- Secondary data analysis
  - The process of searching for and interpreting existing information relevant to the research objectives

- Experience surveys
  - Gathering information from those thought to be knowledgeable on the issues relevant to the research problem
• Case Analysis
  o A review of available information about former situations that have some similarities to the present research problem

• Focus groups
  o Gathering small groups of people brought together and guided by a moderator through an unstructured, spontaneous discussion for the purpose of gaining information relevant to the research problem


As the researcher intends to assess the phenomena of the research problem and seek new insights and understanding, as purported by Robson, (2002), exploratory research was selected, (in Saunders et al., 2007). The researcher believes the aforementioned elements and methods of exploratory research are applicable to the research objectives identified for this study. Exploratory research through qualitative research methods will enable the researcher to provide valid information surrounding the research problem.

3:5:2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research involves collecting, analysing and interpreting data by observing what people say and do


As purported by Birn (2004), qualitative market research provides a disciplined approach to gathering and analysing information using a repertoire of open-ended interviewing techniques and formal and informal analysis methods. Malhotra (1996) posits that qualitative research
provides insights and understanding of the problem setting. Birn (2004) agrees with Malhotra (1996) and furthermore maintains that qualitative research is all about observing and listening to people as they respond in a carefully constructed environment of enquiry, and gaining the understanding and appreciation of their attitudes and behaviour. Chisnall (2001) contends that the essence of qualitative research is that it is diagnostic, it seeks to discover what may account for certain types of behaviour, it seeks deeper understanding of factors which influence buying decisions, it is impressionistic rather than conclusive, it probes rather than counts and ultimately it is subjective.

Burns and Grove (2002) espouse that within a holistic framework, qualitative research explores richness, and complexity inherent in phenomena and further state that qualitative approaches are based on a world view that has the following beliefs:

- There is not a single reality
- Reality, based on perceptions, is different for each person and changes over time
- What we know has meaning only within a given situation or context


Strauss & Corbin (1998), identify that a researcher using qualitative research methodologies must have a balanced outlook on the data received in terms of objectivity and sensitivity:

*Objectivity is necessary to arrive at an impartial and accurate interpretation of events. Sensitivity is required to perceive the subtle nuances and meanings in data and to recognize the connections*

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 42).
There are three basic components of qualitative research as put forward by Strauss & Corbin (1998); data, procedures and verbal and written reports. Chisnall (2001) suggests qualitative research techniques include: interviews group discussions / focus groups, conflict groups, and projective techniques. Easterby-Smith et al., (2004) posits that interviewing is the most important qualitative method to employ.

According to Denscombe (2003), qualitative research encompasses an array of disadvantages including: the data may be less representative, interpretation is bound up with the self of the researcher, there is a possibility of de-contextualizing the meaning, and there is the danger of oversimplifying the explanation, however, as per Strauss and Corbin (1998), the concept of a grounded theorist can alleviate many of the aforementioned disadvantages. Saunders et al., (2007) purport that in grounded theory, data collection starts without the formation of an initial theoretical framework.

Denzin & Lincoln (2003) define quantitative research as:

Quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes

(2003: 13).

Malhotra (1996) explains that quantitative research differs from qualitative research in that it seeks to quantify the data and, typically, applies some form of statistical analysis. Domegan and Fleming (2007) observe that quantitative research assumes that prior knowledge exists, background information is readily available, and this research method is heavily reliant on mathematics, statistics and probability theory. According to Burns and Grove (2002), the
findings from a qualitative study lead to understanding a phenomenon in a particular situation and are not generalised in the same way that quantitative studies are. Birm (2004) states that if the study is required to quantify the number of people in a population, or in a subset of the population that has particular characteristics or views, then a quantitative study is appropriate, however, if the objective is to obtain exploratory views on a new product or concept, then a qualitative study is most applicable.

After exploring the result capability of each method and considering the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methods, the researcher selected a qualitative methodology in conducting this study. The nature of the research problem lends significantly more to a qualitative method as opposed to a quantitative one as the researcher intends exploring behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions of respondents in the quest of gaining knowledge of the underlying factors surrounding the research problem. The researcher wishes to research further comprehension of the research problem and extract rich information, as opposed to testing any theories, as argued by Poggenpoel (2005). The research problem is not one which can be easily quantified. Qualitative research allows the researcher to get a feel for the nuances of the topic as responses are detailed and more specific, (Shao, 1999).

As per Birm (2004), qualitative research uses non-probabilistic sampling methods and recruiters are asked to work to very specific quota samples with typically, sex, age, socioeconomic status, life stage, lifestyle, attitudinal affinities.
A sample is selected from the population to give representative and unbiased data about that population and in market research the aim of drawing samples is to make inferences about survey populations and to do so with acceptable margins of error, (Birn, 2004).

3:6 Identify Information Types and Sources

Burns and Bush (2008) posit that there are two types of information: primary (information collected specifically for the problem at hand) and secondary (information already collected).

Burns and Bush (2008) state that the five advantages of secondary data are that secondary data can be obtained quickly and inexpensively are usually available, enhance primary data collection and can sometimes achieve the research objective. Burns and Bush (2008) further identify five disadvantages of secondary data as follows: incompatible reporting units, mismatch of the units of measurement, differing definitions used to classify the data, the timelessness of secondary data and the lack of information needed to assess the credibility of the data reported and argue that these problems exist because secondary data have not been collected specifically to address the researcher’s problem at hand but have been collected for some other purpose. Domegan and Fleming (2007) note that a serious time lag can occur between the publication of the secondary data and the project on hand and in effect, such lack of recency renders the data obsolete. The researcher employed secondary sources of data as part of the current study, and to ensure the objectivity, and judge the validity and reliability of the sources used, the researcher used a series of questions about the data as purported by (Domegan and Fleming, 2007):
• How was it collected?
• Why was it collected?
• When was it collected?
• Why was it published?
• How dependable is the data source?

(Domegan and Fleming, 2007: 82-83).

Malhotra (1996) agrees with Domegan and Fleming (2007) and moreover states that secondary data should be routinely evaluated as per Table 3.1. The researcher closely adhered to Malhotra (1996) criteria for evaluating secondary data. (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specification and Methodology</td>
<td>Data collection method&lt;br&gt;Response rate&lt;br&gt;Quality of data&lt;br&gt;Sampling technique&lt;br&gt;Sample size&lt;br&gt;Questionnaire design&lt;br&gt;Field work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error and accuracy</td>
<td>Examine errors in approach, research design, sampling data, data collection, data analysis, and reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency</td>
<td>Time lag between collection and publication&lt;br&gt;Frequency of updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Why was the data collected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Definition of the key variables&lt;br&gt;Units of measurement&lt;br&gt;Categories used&lt;br&gt;Relationships examined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Expertise, credibility, reputation, and trustworthiness of the source</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Domegan and Fleming (2007) classify secondary data as either internal or external. This research study demanded external secondary data which as defined by Domegan and Fleming (2007) is data in existence outside the organisation and consists of all published material, information and statistics from official, public bodies, state bodies and other entities. The researcher obtained external secondary data from a myriad of sources including state-sponsored bodies such as Fáilte Ireland, Forfás, IDA, Irish government and Tourism Ireland Limited, the internet, journals and databases. Primary research was also employed by the researcher as part of this study. The researcher exhausted secondary sources of data before obtaining primary sources.

3:7 Determine Methods of Accessing Data

The researcher identified the need to conduct face to face interviews in order to gather a fully comprehensive body of knowledge relating to the interviewees attitudes, beliefs and motivations surrounding the topics outlined in the research objectives. The first step in this process was to gain access to interviewees.

3:7:1 Gaining Access

The researcher directly approached a number of interviewees and also used existing contacts to approach other interviewees. In relation to those interviewees who were directly approached, the researcher initially made contact by email in which the purpose of the interview was outlined, and the researcher followed up the email with a telephone call a few
days later to confirm availability dates and times. The researcher established credibility through stating the name of the college and supervisor on all initial emails.

In terms of utilising existing contacts to gain access to interviewees, the researcher provided the existing contact with the same email as used for directly contacting interviewees. The existing contact then used the email to make the initial proposition of the interview to the interviewee. On acceptance, the researcher contacted the interviewees via email to confirm interview dates and time and telephoned the interviewee shortly before the interview to confirm dates and times.

3:7:2 Interviews

Chisnall (2005) states that an interview involves: a conversation with a defined intention, a purposeful exchange of meanings, a psychological experience, and a process of interaction between interviewee and interviewer. Saunders et al., (2007) state that in a semi-structured interview the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview. Saunders et al., (2007) observe that non-standardised (including semi-structured) interviews are used to gather data which are normally analysed qualitatively and these data are likely to be used, not only to reveal and understand the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ but also to place more emphasis on exploring the ‘how’. For these reasons, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews. The researcher carried out twelve interviews. Each interview lasted between 25 – 45 minutes. The purpose of the interviews was to examine the interviewee’s beliefs, attitudes and opinions on the brand of Ireland. The researcher judged and selected those who the researcher considered appropriate to this current study. A list of interviewees may be found in Appendix A.
3:8 Design Data Collection Forms

Burns and Bush (2008) explain that care must be taken to ensure that the questions asked are clear and unbiased in order to generate answers that satisfy the research objectives and therefore be used to solve the problem.

Burns and Bush (2008) observe that open-ended response format questions are those in which the respondent is instructed to respond in his or her own words. King (2004) points out that the interview guide lists topics that the researcher intends to cover in the interview, along with initial questions and probes that may be used to follow up initial responses and obtain greater detail from the participants, (in Saunders et al., 2008). The researcher used an interview guide as part of this study. For the purpose of this research study the interview guide was created using open-ended questions as it suits the exploratory nature of the current study. The researcher uses an aided open-ended question format where the interviewee is challenged with a response probe by the interviewer.

3:9 Determine the Sample Plan and Size

The population is the entire group under study as specified by the research project. A sample is a subset of the population that should represent the entire group

(Burns and Bush, 2008: 292).
Burns and Bush (2008) argue that marketing research studies are undertaken to learn about populations by taking a sample of that population. As part of this research study, the researcher used a sample of the population. Saunders (2007) state that sampling provides a valid alternative to a census when: it would be impracticable for you to survey the entire population, your budget constraints prevent you from surveying the entire population, your time constraints prevent you from surveying the entire population, and you have collected all the data but need the results quickly. According to Punch (2007), sampling is as important in qualitative research as it is in quantitative research. Domegan and Fleming (2007) maintain that sampling is central to the success of a marketing research study and is one of the most powerful tools a researcher has and furthermore posit that it allows for the study of some of the cases of interest and at the same time drawing useful conclusions for all. The researcher followed the sampling plan as purported by Domegan and Fleming (2007). (Figure 3.2).
Domegan and Fleming (2007) state that a population should have: an element, a unit, a time dimension, and a geographical boundary. Malhotra (1996) argues that defining the target population involves translating the problem definition into a precise statement of who should and should not be included in the sample. The researcher analysed the objectives of the study when determining the population and derived that the population applicable to this study entail of the following: all those, from the island of Ireland or abroad, who have been exposed
to the brand of Ireland, over the past year, and also have an association with, or interest in
tourism and industry in Ireland.

Burns and Bush (2008) define a sample frame as the master list of all the members of the
population. Wilmot (2005) argues that a well-defined sampling strategy that utilises an
unbiased and robust frame can provide unbiased and robust results. In relation to the current
study, it was unrealistic for the researcher to compile a full sample frame and hence the
researcher used an indirect sample frame including sample frame lists such as IDA Ireland
and Tourism Ireland Limited.

Saunders et al., (2007) note that there are two types of sampling techniques - probability
sampling, and non-probability sampling. Malhotra (1996) echoes Saunders et al., (2007) and
defines probability and non-probability sampling techniques as follows:

*Probability sampling is a sampling procedure in which each element of the
population has a fixed probabilistic chance of being selected for the sample.*

*Non-probabilistic sampling refers to sampling techniques that do not use
change selection procedures but rather rely on the personal judgement of the
researcher*


Saunders et al., (2007) describe the sampling techniques in Figure 3.3.
Domegan and Fleming (2007) believe the main advantages of non-probability sampling are that it:

- is cheaper, in terms of cost and the time demanded of the investigator;
- is sometimes easier to conduct
- is more convenient than the probability method of sampling; and
- can be used in the absence of a sampling frame

(Saunders et al., 2007: 207).

Saunders et al., (2007) believe that when resources are limited or the researcher is unable to identify the sampling frame, it may dictate the use of non-probability sampling. The
researcher selected non-probability sampling methods as part of this study. The advantages of non-probability sampling methods together with the exploratory nature of this study merited the researchers’ selection.

Burns and Bush (2008) that there are four non-probability sampling methods, convenience samples, judgement samples, referral samples, and quota samples. Malhotra (1996) defines quota sampling as a non-probability sampling technique that is a two stage restricted judgemental sampling whereby the first stage consists of developing control categories or quotas of population elements and in the second stage, sample elements are selected based on convenience or judgement. Domegan and Fleming (2007) explain that quota sampling is the one non-probability method that attempts to replicate the population without using random selection. According to Burns and Bush (2008), the quotas are determined through application of the research objectives and are defined by key characteristics used to identify the population. As the population associated with this research study is quite large, the researcher employed quota sampling techniques. Due to time constraints and the fact that quota sampling is quickly organised and is cost effective by nature, the researcher viewed quota sampling as the most applicable sampling technique for this study.

Malhotra (1996) states that sample size refers to the number of elements to be included in the study and moreover notes that the nature of the research also has an impact on the sample size and furthermore argues that for exploratory research designs, such as those using qualitative research, the sample is typically small. For the purpose of this study, the sample size is twelve.

The twelve interviewees were selected from various sectors which influence and are influenced by the brand of Ireland who are both Irish and International natives and includes
senior executives, politicians. See Appendix 1 for interviewee list. Domegan and Fleming (2007) posit that the administration of the sampling procedure should aim to maximise the collection of information and minimise the amount of error. The researcher agrees with Domegan and Fleming (2007) and carried out validation checks of the sample units against the defined indirect population.

3:10 Collect Data

Domegan and Fleming (2007) state that once the problem definition and research design are decided upon, the researcher is then in a position to decide how, when and where the required information is to be gathered, which incorporates, choosing a data collection method and relevant data collection instrument in light of the problem and the research design. According to Birn (2004), a number of basic principles apply to questions used in the qualitative interview, namely: ask questions that are not ambiguous, ask questions that have the minimum amount of information within them, and ask questions in such a way as to avoid leading the respondent to believe there are right and wrong ways to answer. The researcher gathered a combination of secondary and primary data in conducting this study. Chisnall (2005) defines intrinsic motivation as that which is at the heart of a good interview, and it underlines the importance of the interviewer, who must be able to establish sound social relationships of goodwill and trust with those being interviewed. The researcher decided to use semi-structured interviews as part of this study, in conjunction with the chosen exploratory methodology, and subsequently conducted the interviews, using intrinsic motivation, in a manner which enabled open discussion, with aid of an interview guide.
Each interviewee was asked for permission to audio-record the interview. Once granted, the interview was conducted and recorded. Due to geographical proximity, it was possible to conduct all interviews on a face to face basis. The researcher organised for the interviewees to be conducted in a quite area where there was minimum risk of being disturbed and outside noise did not affect the clarity of the recording of the interview. A test of the recording device was conducted prior to entry into the interview. The interviewer also took notes as the interview progressed to reduce the risk involved whereby the recording device may malfunction. No malfunctions occurred during the course of these interviews. Furthermore, the researcher made more detailed interview notes immediately following the interview.

Saunders et al., (2007) believe that the key to successful interviews is careful preparation. The researcher carried out background research on the interviewee and the organisation they belonged to. Saunders et al., (2007) posit that the ability to draw on this type of information in the interview should help to demonstrate the credibility of the researcher and thereby encourage the interviewee to offer a more detailed account of the topic under discussion.

3:11 Reliability and Validity

Patton (2002) states that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative research should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study, (in Golafshani, 2003).

*Validity refers to the extent to which the researcher gains access to their participants’ knowledge and experience, and is able to infer a meaning that the participant intended from the language that was used by this person.*
Reliability: a measuring instrument is reliable when the results it delivers are consistent. The instrument is valid to the extent that its measurements are free from non-systematic (random) error

(Domegan and Fleming, 2007: 344).

Domegan and Fleming (2007) believe that it is desirable that information has both validity and reliability. Shao (1999) explains that if the same set of test subjects are measured several times with the same or similar scales, we should obtain the same or similar results, and furthermore states that consistence is the issue in reliable measurement, not accuracy. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), while the terms reliability and validity are essential criterion for quality in quantitative paradigms, in qualitative paradigms the terms credibility, neutrality or conformability, consistency or dependability and applicability or transferability are to be the essential criteria for quality (in Golafshani, 2003). The questions in the interview guide are constructed using simple language to ensure clarity of understanding by the interviewees. (Appendix B). At the beginning of each interview, each interviewee was briefed about the study in exactly the same manner and hence all interviewees had the same amount of information about the study prior to conducting the study.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics address whether a particular action is right or wrong, good or bad

Saunders et al., (2007) state that research ethics relates to questions about how we formulate and clarify our research topic, design our research and gain access, collect data, process and store our data, analyse data and write up our research findings in a moral and responsive way. The researcher ensured that the research design was methodologically sound and of a moral nature. The universities code of ethics was adhered to in researching this study including uniformity in data collection methods.

3:13 Analyze Data

Domegan and Fleming (2007) note that in the analysis stage of marketing research, data is processed or translated into information. According to Saunders et al., (2007) the nature of the qualitative data collected has implications for its analysis and furthermore argue that during analysis, the non-standardised and complex nature of the data collected will probably need to be grouped into categories before they can be meaningfully analysed, otherwise the most that may result may be an impressionistic view of what they mean. Tesch (1990) groups the strategies to deal with collected qualitative data into four main groups:

- understanding the characteristics of language
- discovering regularities
- comprehending the meaning of text or action
- reflection

(in Saunders et al., 2007: 478).
For the purpose of this research study the researcher approached the data collection and data analysis for this study in an inductive, grounded manner. Saunders et al., (2007) describe an inductive approach as one where the researcher seeks to build a theory that is adequately grounded in the data collected. The model of *grounded theory* as developed by Glasser & Strauss (1967) was adopted and this approach involved developing a theory from data generated by a series of observations, (in Saunders et al., 2007).

The researcher closely followed the qualitative data analysis process as described by Domegan and Fleming (2007):

1. Sorting, organising and filing the data into a more manageable form
2. Becoming more familiar with the data through examination and detecting patterns and themes emerging in the data which the researcher then develops into broad conceptual categories
3. Re-examination and refining of identified categories
4. Drawing together and interpreting the findings in a manner that addresses the research project objectives

(Domegan and Fleming, 2007: 458).

Interviews were conducted as part of the primary research for this study. Each interview was recorded and the recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Organisational data including reports and planning documents from Tourism Ireland Limited were used in this study. The researcher comprised interim summaries and self-memo's relating this data as part of the data analysis process. Patterns were identified and subsequently the data was divided into broad categories and re-evaluated.
Dey (1993) defines coding as the tasks of selecting data and assigning it to a category. The researcher codes the data according to the steps in grounded theory coding, as explained by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003): (1) Research concerns, (2) Theoretical Narrative, (3) Theoretical Constructs, (4) Themes, (5) Repeating Ideas, (6) Relevant Text and (7) Raw Text. Saunders et al., (2007) argues that the process of organising the mass of qualitative data collected into categories is an important feature of all qualitative data analysis, and explains that this approach allows the researcher to:

- comprehend and manage data (categorisation)
- integrate related data drawn from different transcripts and notes (unitising data)
- identify key themes or patterns from data for further exploration (recognising relationships and developing the categories you are using to facilitate this)

(Saunders et al., 2007: 479).

- draw and verify conclusions (developing and testing theories to reach conclusions)

(Miles and Huberman, in Saunders et al., 2007: 479).

The researcher developed hypotheses in order to produce grounded conclusions which directly link to the research objectives.

3:14 Prepare and Present the Final Research Report
The final stage in the research process followed in the completion of this study is to prepare and present the final research report. In compiling the report, the research was conscious that the audience for this report are those in academia and was written in a style conducive to this reader. The report is structured according to that outlined by academia for a Master's level thesis.

According to Domegan and Fleming (2007), a good report is designed to communicate information to decision-makers by answering the questions derived from the statement of objectives. This study was focused on the objectives at all stages. This report met the guidelines as purported by Domegan and Fleming (2007) in that it was complete, concise, accurate and clear. The researcher preserved an objective approach to this study.

Malhotra (1996) maintains that the researcher should provide findings in such a way that they can be used directly as input into decision making and wherever appropriate, conclusions should be drawn and recommendations made. This study reflects this approach in the findings and conclusions chapters.

3:15 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study predominantly centred on the time scale for completion. This study is conducted on a topic on which influencing factors result in constant changes; therefore, the scope of the study is limited to the time period in which the research was conducted. The findings of this study offer the basis for further study from many different approaches.
As a qualitative methodology was adopted, a subjectivity of the findings exists. The researcher used their own judgement in assessing the data collected.

3:16 Summary

The research process, as defined by Burns and Bush (2008), which the researcher adhered to, as part of this study is clearly defined in the beginning of this chapter. Furthermore, the researcher clearly outlines the research problem, research theme and research objectives which form the foundation of this study. Following an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, the researcher chooses a qualitative methodology and explains the reasoning why.

The data collection method selected was semi-structured interviews and the data collection process was subsequently undertaken. The steps taken to gain access to twelve interviewees were explained and each interview, which lasted between 25 – 45 minutes were conducted. This chapter also identifies how the researcher defined the sample. All efforts were taken to ensure validity and reliability in collecting the data and objectivity was maintained in analysing the data. An inductive approach was used in analysing the responses to the open-ended questions asked in the interviews. An analysis of the data and empirical findings are presented in the next chapter.
Chapter 4 - Research Findings and Analysis

*I think there absolutely is, such a thing as - ‘Ireland the Brand’*

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation.

4:0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected in the interviews which were conducted as part of this study. This study is concerned with examining Ireland as a branding phenomenon. The findings and analysis discussed in this chapter, centre around the objectives as outlined in chapter 3. Furthermore, this chapter is divided into four sections as per the main themes of the research objectives:

- To analyse the current brand image of Ireland abroad
- To examine the impact of the failing Irish economy on the brand image of ‘Ireland the Brand’
- To find out who is ultimately charged with the responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’
- To investigate opportunities for the future of ‘Ireland the Brand’

The interview process in this study was semi-structured in nature and comprised of open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were outlined in an interview guide which was used as a tool for focusing the interview. The interview pool comprised of twelve people
who are employed as, industry senior executives, industry operational executives, academic professionals and a contributor from the current government. The industry senior executives are involved in the strategic function of their particular sector and included senior management of global organisations and a chief executive officer. The government representative provided an insight into the branding phenomenon of Ireland from the Irish government and European Union’s perspective. The operational executives offer a perspective from people directly implementing the strategies. It should be noted that, at the time when the interviewees were conducted, one of the interviewees, Paul O'Toole, held the position of CEO, Tourism Ireland Limited (the title attributed to him in this chapter), however, since then, this interviewee has taken a new position as Director General of FÁS (Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority).

The results presented in this chapter include direct quotations from the interviewees who contributed to this current study. The majority of the interviewees gave permission to include quotations from the interview conducted with them as part of this study whilst others requested to remain anonymous.

4:1 The Concept of ‘Ireland the Brand’

The concept of ‘nation branding’ highlighted by (Clancy, 2008) who states that nation branding refers to how a state presents a nation to an external and internal audience and argues that ‘nation branding’ influences the perception of a country both at home and abroad. Findings from this current research outline that a nation’s brand exists regardless of the presence of nation branding activity however should ‘nation branding’ activities be conducted by organisations within a country; the nation’s reputation, is the fundamental
factor to its success. This was highlighted by an interviewee who holds a senior role in an organisation which has a key involvement in marketing Ireland, Tourism Ireland Limited:

*If you push beyond brands and destination brands, what we are really talking about is reputation and how perceptions of that reputation are built up over time. So, whether there was any branding work done by Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Tourism Ireland, or anyone else, that brand existed. This was firstly identified in the mid-1990’s, when an exercise was done on where we were going, in tourism promotion. We identified the fact that Ireland has brand attributes and therefore, is very amenable to brand management. It is what you do with a brand and how you take it forward that’s important*

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

This study has found that ‘Ireland the Brand’ certainly does exists. 100% of the interviewees strongly stated this fact:

*Ireland definitely has a brand, a very well known brand and a really good reputation in terms of foreign direct investment*

Caitriona O’ Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.

The research notes that Ireland may be classified as a brand, considering it satisfies the core elements of the concept of branding:

*Ireland is a brand. It has recognition in the name. It has the attributes of a brand. It probably has the elements of a brand, therefore, you could define it as a brand*
Fiona Buckley  
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.

'Ireland the Brand' is an integral part of the work carried out by organisations such as Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland Limited and the IDA, who are directly involved in marketing Ireland. In order to promote the country of Ireland, the values of 'Ireland the Brand', must be communicated. The current study acknowledges the importance of clearly identifying such values and the importance of incorporating them into a strategy:

_I definitely think there is such a thing as 'Ireland the Brand'. It's something we have actually done a lot of research on. In 2008, we carried out a full brand review, using research conducted with visitors who were in Ireland, in order to gain an insight into what people thought of Ireland and how it compared with other destinations. As a result, we developed a whole new brand strategy for Tourism Brand Ireland which we launched in January 2009 (the positioning of the island of character and characters, communicated through the 'Go where Ireland takes you' campaign_

Sarah Fitzgerald  
Brand Executive, Tourism Ireland Limited.

Another contributor in this study states, that Tourism Ireland have the primary role of marketing the island of Ireland overseas in terms of tourism

_We in our role as tourism Ireland are responsible for what we call Tourism Brand Ireland. We do a lot of consumer work and try to understand the perceptions and reputation of Ireland._

Paul O'Toole
An impression of 'Ireland the Brand', expressed by a senior executive of a multi-national organisation which invested in Ireland, identifies that 'Ireland the Brand' has benefitted foreign companies that have invested in Ireland:

*From my perspective, being in the foreign direct investment multi-national area, I think there absolutely is, such a thing as 'Ireland the Brand', which has contributed to the success of EMC for over 20 years*

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation

An interesting finding emerging from this study, is that from a commercial point of view 'Ireland the Brand' is predominantly separated into two categories, one which targets foreign direct investment, and one which targets visitors to Ireland. This study observes that those responsible for marketing 'Ireland the Brand' believe that the demands of these two different target markets differ significantly in terms of the message they communicate. 17% of participants in this study, indicated the importance of highlighting the individual values attributed to each target market, when communicating to each market. One of the interviewees, who is directly involved in marketing 'Ireland the Brand' from a foreign direct investment point of view, supported this finding through their view on how 'Ireland the Brand' should be communicated:

*Ireland is a place to do business on an international footing. We are open for business to foreign direct investors*

Renate Murphy
Marketing Manager Cork Chamber of Commerce.
Another interviewee notes that ‘Ireland the Brand’ is all about the experience people encounter when they visit Ireland as a tourist:

*I think ‘Ireland the Brand’ is much more than a destination. It’s the whole experience people have when they come to Ireland and also the experience, people who haven’t come to Ireland, expect to have, or would associate with Ireland.*

Sarah Fitzgerald
Brand Executive, Tourism Ireland Limited.

It has emerged from this study that ‘Ireland the Brand’ is premium in nature:

*People do not come to Ireland for the hot weather. Over the years, I think the message that has been communicated is that, Ireland is a very friendly country, does not have very good weather, is not very good value for money, but it has been seen as a premium brand.*

Seamus Heaney
Director of Marketing, The Kingsley Hotel.

The ability to impress, through our recent successes in tourism, foreign direct investment, sport, and culture, to name but a few, was found to be something which instilled great pride in Irish people at home and abroad. This research indicates that such Irish successes lead to a positive image for Ireland. One of the interviewees in this current study observes that ‘Ireland the Brand’ instils a sense of hope:
Tourism Ireland has the primary role of marketing the island of Ireland overseas in terms of tourism. We watch very closely what they have been doing in terms of defining Ireland. If a brand is a promise, then what is the promise they are making and how can we, as an airport keep that promise. I think Ireland is both a product and a service and from a service perspective it’s all about the experience you get when you visit here or when you interact with people here. For a small country, on the western periphery of Europe, we ‘box above our weight’ in so many dimensions. Whether it be at the top of the poles on a Eurovision stage or whether Ireland is on an international sporting stage, I think people have a perception of Ireland as a nation of ‘triers’, accomplishers and achievers, who show the world that anything is possible if you put your heart and your mind to it and give it genuine effort.

When you look at the number of Irish people that are at the helm of organisations such as the United Nations, at the helm of EU Commission, that have held international positions as presidents and secretary generals, it is evident that we have a disproportionate level of representation and that is because we, the Irish, are actually liked. We are not a superpower, we do not have natural resources, we do not have weapons of mass destruction, we’re a threat to nobody and we are a threat to everyone.

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

An interesting observation arising from this study, is that when Ireland is successful in the area of foreign direct investment and tourism, it has broad implications for the nation. These include the creation of jobs within Ireland and the ability to learn and grow, resulting in an environment which promotes entrepreneurship:
In essence foreign direct investment helps small to medium sized enterprises to build a value proposition and grow and create a legacy. Take for example, Digital Equipment Corporation, that closed back in 1994. They had around twenty years here and left a legacy of very professional, experienced staff who either joined other companies or started their own businesses. The legacy of foreign direct investment has created a very experienced, confident generation of people who can go and take on other challenges and gives them opportunity to re-invest in their future.

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation

4:1:1 Values of ‘Ireland the Brand’

100% of participants of this study observe that ‘Ireland the Brand’, has many different aspects to it:

*If you look at the traditional brand of Ireland, in terms of tourism, what do you associate with ‘Ireland the Brand’? You associate green-ness, fresh air, rural countryside, historical, pleasant people, so there is still a pretty positive warm brand in term of selling ‘Ireland the Brand’ in that respect, abroad. I think a new Ireland has been created over the last ten years, in terms of Celtic Tiger Ireland which includes – go-getters, successful, individual, materialistic Ireland*

Simon Coveney
Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Previous Member of the European Parliament.

54% of the interviewees in this study found that ‘Ireland the Brand’ is currently predominantly associated with positive emotional brand values. It was found in the current
research study that a range of different values contributed to the positive image of ‘Ireland the Brand’. This research reports that the emotional brand value, which was noted by the interviewees in this study as being the most important contributor to ‘Ireland the Brand’, is the Irish people:

*I think when people experience the country they see the natural beauty of Ireland. Irish people in general, have a charm about them. Whether it’s the ‘gift of the gab’ or the friendliness, or the inquisitiveness that we have, I think they are endearing qualities and characteristics that people enjoy*

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

Another interviewee concurs, and outlines the important role that the Irish people play in building ‘Ireland the Brand’:

*People – that’s absolutely at the top of the agenda. A country is effectively a factor of its people, its heritage and background. The biggest reason why people say they come here and why people say they come back is, the openness and engagement of the Irish people. People are absolutely core to Irish Tourism. The things that we do and the things that are typically Irish resonate around people, whether it be music or dance or socialising, or in a pub or having the ‘craic’, it’s always around that touch point of the person*

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.
Another contributor observes the important value of the characters of Irish people as a means of an attraction to Ireland and as a means of maintaining a positive outlook on ‘Ireland the Brand’, in this post Celtic Tiger era:

*The principle contributors to the image of ‘Ireland the Brand’, from our point of view are the people. Right now, the positive reputation which was associated with ‘Ireland the Brand’ is a little tarnished. People read for years about the Celtic Tiger. Some people are pleased that the Celtic Tiger has been tamed and some would say ‘you got your comeuppance, you got ahead of yourselves for a while’, but most people can see past that and focus on the positive things that Irish people are renowned for around the world which include the sense of Fáilte or welcome, spontaneity, wit and the ability to engage and get involved. They are powerful attributes that will withstand the current slightly tarnished reputation*

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

25% of the interviewees in the current study, believe that the character of the Irish people is something which is unique to Ireland:

*There’s an attitude that people get from Irish people, a kind of flexibility, which I think they always talk about, because I think they don’t get it elsewhere*

Caitriona O’ Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.
According to 58% of the interviewees, Céad Mile Fáilte does still exist in Ireland today and is a key brand value of ‘Ireland the Brand’:

*Céad Mile Fáilte certainly does exist. Last year, the lonely planet called Ireland the friendliest destination in the world. It was fantastic to have such a high profile in an international publication*

Sarah Fitzgerald
Brand Executive, Tourism Ireland Limited.

This study has found that it is probable that the Céad Mile Fáilte will become a much more integral part of Irish society in the near future. It has been noted by the interviewees responding in this study that, the Céad Mile Fáilte will be a key leveraging value in overcoming the current economic situation:

*I think it Céad Mile Fáilte still exists but maybe not to the same extent that it once did. Ironically, one of the positives to come out of the current Irish economic downturn is that, there is a realisation domestically, that there is a need to return to a destination with a strong sense of community values and that as a destination we can’t offer people glorious sunshine, but what we can offer is a unique unrivalled scenery and culture and, what people relate via word of mouth, is not just the character of the place but the characters of the people they meet while they are here. Very often, it is the road less travelled, it’s a chance encounter with somebody in a B&B or a guest house, or an Irish pub, that leads them on to discover another part of Ireland and it’s not by mistake that Ireland’s tourism industry challenges people in their call to action to, discover Ireland. I always say to folk that there is a hidden Ireland*
out there and it is off the main roadways, it is when you go into the secondary and tertiary roads, into the small villages and communities that you will discover the Ireland that is here. It is comprised of the sense of the local parish, the local GAA club, the local church, the local traditions, the community effort, that sense of identity and locale that I haven’t found any other nationality articulating in the same way Irish people can identify with their country. I think we still genuinely extend our ‘hand of friendship’ to any visitor. The face of that welcome has changed in terms of the demographic profile of the person extending the ‘hand of friendship’, or the ‘good morning’, but then the international diaspora who have now found a home in Ireland and a place to work in Ireland are as much part of delivering that Céad Míle Fáilte as a red haired freckled cailín or buachaill. So, I think there are opportunities for Ireland to embrace the multi-culturalism that exists in Ireland today, and not see it as a negative but as an opportunity. The international diaspora who work in the Irish hospitality industry need to be educated on what the Céad Míle Fáilte means and that they probably need to go a little bit further in terms of the ‘welcome’ they offer, than what they might have had to do in their own country, because that’s what people come here to experience, it is that charm, it’s that warmth, it’s that welcome, it’s that friendliness and it’s that smile that makes up for the loss of the sunshine

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

A similar view was aired by another interviewee in this study, who maintains that the Céad Mile Fáilte will become more evident in Irish society in light of the economic climate that currently exists:
I think we will see a lot more emphasis on the céad mile failte. Service level has become more important. Maybe a year or two ago, I might have said it has declined hugely, but I think there is movement back to Céad Mile Fáilte and it does still exist.

Dr. Aisling Ward
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

This research reports that with the influx of multi-national immigrants into Ireland, it is a regular occurrence that the Céad Mile Fáilte is provided by an individual who is not Irish. This is viewed as highly acceptable by organisations who market Ireland, such as, Tourism Ireland Limited. It is noted in the current study that, one does not have to be of Irish origin to give the Céad Mile Fáilte and furthermore, the research notes that training programmes, such as the SHINE programme, are in place to ensure that all people working in the Irish tourism industry are fully aware of what Céad Mile Fáilte means and how they can put it into practice. The SHINE programme which shares the vision of the Céad Mile Fáilte with those involved in the Irish tourism industry is presented by one interviewee as part of the current study:

*We have just launched an initiative with the Irish Tourism Trade here in Ireland, called SHINE. SHINE is almost like a charter for Irish people involved in the Irish tourism industry and basically what we want to re-iterate and ensure is, that the promise that we make to the overseas visitors is experienced when they come here, and they have a unique, fun and engaging time and that we live up to the promise. Basically, we identified four behaviours. Irish people are doing these behaviours anyway, but the SHINE re-iterates them so people can re-emphasize and focus on them again. It will*
really instil the Irish welcome in the Irish tourism industry and make sure everybody enjoys their unique experience. The four behaviours include being; 1. happy, 2. interested, 3. natural and 4. expert. A key factor to this is that you don’t have to be Irish to give a Céad Míle Fáilte just once they are aware of the Irish welcome and what it involves, and just be friendly and open and be yourself

Sarah Fitzgerald
Brand Executive, Tourism Ireland Limited.

33% of the interviewees in this research study state that Céad Míle Fáilte no longer exists in the Irish society:

I think it is fair to say that we have lost our way a little bit during the Celtic Tiger era. While the Céad Míle Fáilte may have been there it was a) not necessarily being delivered by an Irish person and b) people who were in the fast lane and the fast track were caught up in all of that and maybe forgot for a little while our notion of ‘fáilte’ or welcome but even though they may have forgotten for a while, it is something within us. I think that all it needs is just a little reminder and maybe through the current economic difficulties, that are terrible for so many people, we might remind ourselves and we might remember ‘fáilte’ in a more real way than we have in recent times. I think, the nature and quality of ‘fáilte’, is something that comes from within, and it is there but as we embrace and absorb the other cultures that have come here, they are going to contribute to the character of that welcome in the future

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.
Another interviewee observes that the existence of céad mile failte has been eroded as a result of the Celtic Tiger:

*I struggle to find Céad Mile Fáilte. I think everyone is too busy now. I think that the recession might help us find the Céad Mile Fáilte in Ireland again. I think customer service is inevitably going to get better. We had a very ambivalent approach to customer service. Now, business will have to be fought for. If you imagine for somebody coming into Ireland, either from a business perspective or from a tourism perspective, if we feel it, then they've got to see it as well, probably more pronounced than we do*

Anonymous X
Managing Director.

This research acknowledges the fact that not only are the Irish people important to ‘Ireland the Brand’ but the physical landscape also has a significant role in creating value to tourists experiences. 42% of the interviewees in this current study returned a similar outlook relating to the physical landscape being one of the key functional brand values:

*Our current expression of the brand is the idea of unique character and characters, that this island is a place of unique character and characters. Behind that is a language of what character means and about what characters means. They tend to be positive attributes including lyrical, witty and charming, in terms of characters and proud, island, deep or diverse, in terms of the character of the place. We identified those through brand research and we wrap it up in the expression, the idea of a brand essence of unique character and characters*

Paul O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.
Irish culture was also referred to in this study as a brand value of ‘Ireland the Brand’:

*I think the associations of music, dance, sport and literature are still relevant to the Irish culture today. Also, Ireland has won the Eurovision four times. I think Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, when selling Ireland, should bring out the messages that music, heritage and the warm welcome is still here. Munster rugby has become a huge brand within Europe, U2 is also a very strong brand, Riverdance became an international phenomenon and all of these sell Ireland as well. The opportunity that Ireland has to offer, whether it is the opportunity to discover more about themselves or the country or the heritage, is something that attracts investors and overseas visitors to come to Ireland.*

Seamus Heaney
Director of Marketing, The Kingsley Hotel.

According to another participant, Irish culture is a key factor when selling ‘Ireland the Brand’, from a tourism point of view. She argues that there are certain aspects of Irish culture which are engrained in visitors’ minds, such as, the Irish pub and the beauty of the scenery. The same participant observes that it is the stories or the heritage, linked with the landscape and scenery in Ireland, which adds an emotional aspect to this value and hence leads to successful results through the attraction of visitors to Ireland:

*I think there are pockets of people in overseas countries, particularly, the United States and Australia who tend to centralise around the Irish pub, which isn’t necessarily a bad thing. There have been examples where organisations like ourselves have moved away from this idea in our marketing*
communications and tried to position ourselves away from being associated with the Irish pub scene because of the negative connotations with alcohol, however, the more we look at it, we cannot disengage the cultural factor of Ireland from that social factor. The Irish pub is centred on the person, it's the people factor, the integration that makes it so appealing and so we do involve that cultural scene a lot more now. In our marketing imagery, we might not show a table full of pints but it might be brown bread and soup and maybe one pint to show obviously that there is a range of offerings but it doesn't mean that you have to exclude yourself from what is a very strong association with Ireland. About 66% of the reasons why people come here is because of our culture and heritage and it is because of scenery. It is because of the story behind the scenery. Our heritage has from the outset, built brand Ireland and it is the reason why most people come here. We attract cultural seekers. We are moving towards offering them added value by saying, you can come here, you can engage, you can watch, you can see, you can view and breathe it all in. You can visit our castles, you can see all these attractions but now we want you to start getting down and dirty with the landscape so we want you to get engaged, with walking and hill-walking and mountain climbing and biking and all the various different activities that allow you to see, allow you to experience the cultural factor via an activity. We are putting a lot more focus on communicating an active Ireland image. It's going to take a lot longer to do because it involves a mindset change.

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.
Another interviewee concurs with this view:

*We have values from our people and our cultural background*

Maria Benson  
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

This research observes that the Irish pub concept adds value to 'Ireland the Brand'. Another interviewees also supports this view:

*All the Irish people and all the Irish people who travel, are responsible for ‘Ireland the Brand’. This concept of the Irish pub abroad, which took off in the 1990’s, is important to the developing of Irish culture abroad. Every city you go to has an Irish pub in it and that’s part of branding Ireland as well because you go in there and you see things that are quintessentially Irish, it’s like a concept of tourism without travel. You allow yourself to feel like you are on holidays but you’re not. Visitors to Ireland, who have experienced the Irish pub abroad, expect to get the same experience then when they come to Ireland, that ‘craic’*

Dr. Aisling Ward  
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

The research acknowledges the fact that the feast of St. Patrick has blossomed into one of the largest celebrations in the world and subsequently is a pivotal asset in adding value to ‘Ireland the Brand’. 17% of the interviewees, including the following, expressed this fact:
I think we have another intangible asset, St. Patrick’s Day. The whole world celebrates March 17\textsuperscript{th} each year. Whether it’s a parade, or a ‘knees up’, in every corner of the world in every major capital city, all major governments and media outlets are focusing on Ireland and what it means to be Irish. That’s a phenomenal asset to have and I think people want to be part of that success and the broader Irish diaspora, as Mary Robinson used to put it

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

Another interviewee in this study concurs with the view of St. Patrick’s day as an important brand asset leading to added value for ‘Ireland the Brand’:

One good example is the fact that St. Patrick’s Day is the one national holiday that is celebrated in most countries worldwide so again there are strong ties with the Irish diaspora, who in turn encourage people to visit Ireland

Sarah Fitzgerald
Brand Executive, Tourism Ireland Limited.

This is an important point, as this study can note that Irish culture is used in the current marketing communication of ‘Ireland the Brand’, when selling Ireland as a destination for foreign direct investment and a tourism destination. This is confirmed by the following interviewee:

We had a communications campaign running for about two and a half years where we worked with print as well as online. We worked with the artist Louis le Brocquy. We used some of his work in our print advertising which
included images of W. B. Yeats, le Brocquy himself, Bono and Oscar Wilde.

Yes, I think culture is still important because I think our main market is North America and in North America, one of the most famous Irish men is Bono. One of the world's best known Irish people is Bono. So, absolutely, Irish culture is relevant. No doubt

Caitriona O’ Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.

Another interviewee presents a similar view of the cultural value associated with ‘Ireland the Brand’:

We get very strong images out of music and dance. Dance has evolved. Riverdance has moved that along. We now tend to use more traditional music rather than the contemporary Irish music that we used in the recent past

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

One interviewee in the current study points out that Ireland has evolved and the modern element of Ireland has added value to ‘Ireland the Brand’:

Some people will brand us with the qualities of the traditional "green emerald isle" image of Ireland. We’re different now. We're the Post-Celtic Tiger emerald isle now and we still have an awful lot more to offer

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation.

Another interviewee supports the fact that a modernised view of Ireland is communicated and that it has the capability to continuously add value to ‘Ireland the Brand’:
I think all perceptions evolve over time. The reflection of the modern Ireland experience, with the prevalence of Intel, Dell, Microsoft and ICT hubs in our city centres, is a big part of the re-engineering of Ireland for a new era and it does not in any way detract from the fact that our future can be as promising as our past is proud

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

One of the interviewees in this research study, referred to the value of 'Ireland the Brand' from a brand equity perspective:

Tourists are attracted to Ireland for a number of reasons, predominantly for the people (the characters) and the culture, heritage and landscape, (the character). It is crucial that these underlying aspects are nurtured. The tourism industry in Ireland is one of the only indigenous industries which is truly indigenous

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.

This study acknowledges that 'Ireland the Brand' has a particularly strong connection with the United States of America:

The brand has real value as we face west. The corporate tax environment in the industrialised Western European countries such as France and Germany is probably a negative. In North America I think the values of 'Ireland the Brand' are that our work ethic is very ambitious and our mindset is very similar to American companies

Anonymous X
Managing Director.
According to 100% of the interviewees, promoting ‘Ireland the Brand’ with specific focuses on certain parts of the world is more likely to translate into equity as a result of targeting particular regions of the world. 83% of the interviewees claim that North America is a key target market for ‘Ireland the Brand’ for foreign direct investment and tourism customers:

I think that, with the existence of the Irish diaspora, particularly in North America, traditionally, there has been a lot of influence there and IDA Ireland have been able to tap into this. Most of our foreign direct investment base includes US multi-national businesses that are primarily North American centric and I think that the brand of Ireland Inc, as it is called, has played particularly well in this market. In North America, I think that the values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ are that our people have a very similar work ethic, our mindset is very similar to that of American companies, and we speak the same language which is a clear advantage, as well as the entry into Europe which we offer. So, the competitiveness comes from a tax perspective and the language, physically in terms of the language spoken but also in terms of the mindset are values that IDA Ireland try to offer, and that, they can sell very quickly

Anonymous X
Managing Director.

This study has found that the availability of green-field sites, that is, land which has not been developed, is considered a value of ‘Ireland the Brand’: 
Things that are associated with ‘Ireland the Brand’ include a favourable tax system, the corporate tax structure, a great location for headquarters, an intelligent workforce and the availability of green-field sites.

Renate Murphy
Marketing Manager Cork Chamber of Commerce.

Another interviewee who contributed to the current research study concurs and suggests that similar brand values have aided in the establishment of a close relationship between ‘Ireland the Brand’ and the United States of America. These include, proximity to the United States of America, Irish culture, Ireland’s open economy, the ability to communicate, the tax system in Ireland and an educated workforce:

_We are only five hours from the east coast of America. We have huge experience in the international marketplace. The time difference means that we can deal with the US, Asia and Europe very comfortably. We have a very good communications strategy with the US and other areas. We have a very open economy. We have a good educated workforce and a very healthy tax regime. There is no doubt that the content of the brand is changing. Previously it was mainly associated with basic manufacturing. Now we have moved to higher content activities. Knowledge is the asset now. Ireland has to move up the value chain because we are at a period where we have to re-invent. We are building a knowledge economy proposition which is key going forward._

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation.
Arising from the values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ as previously identified in this chapter, especially its people and culture, the current study reveals that the quality of life in Ireland is considered by one of the interviewees, who in involved in inward investment into Ireland, to be excellent:

*I think the quality of life Ireland has to offer is excellent. A lot of expats who come to Ireland truly enjoy the time they spend here. We have a very good school system and our infrastructure is improving. When people spend extended periods of time here and have positive experiences, they bring positive feelings back to their home countries thereby adding to the positive image of ‘Ireland the Brand’*

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation

This study has found that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has longevity and strength. It has overcome many difficult eras in the past and has continued to become a success time and time again:

*It has positive values for the most part, notwithstanding the troubles. It has a very strong heritage, so it’s got longevity. It’s been around for a long time so it has built up its brand asset over a long period of time and if you look at the history of brand Ireland, it has had an interesting history whether it be, its conflict or the fact that it was a pilgrim country and the various institutions came over to learn of the Christendom of Ireland. The Great Famine adds richness, even though it was a tragedy at the time. There are lots of stories about Ireland which people can talk about and not every country has that. So yes, I would see it as being a very strong positive brand*

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.
A very interesting finding from this study is that Ireland the nation, has experienced great success as a brand. The same interviewee expanded on his experience of the success of ‘Ireland the Brand’ and described reactions he received from international colleagues:

*I passionately believe that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has been successful. I was the world president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce internationally in 2005, and I had the pleasure of meeting various heads of states, government ministers and Kofi Anan. I was repeatedly being asked to explain the phenomenon of the Irish success story. It invariably came down to a convergence of circumstances that led to growth in the Celtic Tiger years but ultimately it was about people, about a highly educated, young English-speaking population who want to shape our own future, our own destiny. We can stand proudly amongst the best in Europe and indeed the world. We act as a phenomenal gateway into the European Market particularly for US multinational organisations but equally we have had success stories in what we have done with the Irish dairy industry, the Irish beef industry and what Bórd Bia and Bórd Glas have done internationally. We have the most successful airline in the world right now and Denis O'Brien, Michael Smurfit, Tony Ryan and Mary Robinson, all have achieved phenomenal success. These are all individuals that really put an Irish stamp on the world. We are still basking in the success of the Irish rugby team’s success of late. I think we have another kind of intangible asset in St. Patrick’s Day. The whole world celebrates March 17th each year.*

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.
92% of the interviewees responding in this study, state that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has experienced success, both from a foreign direct investment point of view and from the perspective of Irish tourism. Another interviewee proposes that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has experienced success as a result of key values such as; the favourable tax structure, intelligent workforce and again the availability of green-field sites. It was found that these values attracted foreign direct investment which in turn allowed for the creation of an entrepreneurial environment, where ‘spin off’ businesses are created to service the foreign direct investor’s needs:

*I think Ireland was very successful as a result of a number of factors including the Irish government being so favourable to the tax system and keeping that precious, in all the EU treaties. They managed to hold onto all the tools which attract business to Ireland and then when they got the right foreign direct investment businesses establishing in Ireland, they had great references to sell Ireland to other potential foreign direct investors. For example, we had references from Microsoft, Boston Scientific, Pfizer, and Schering Plough. Foreign direct investment allowed for the creation of clusters of indigenous companies that were actually serving those companies. For example, in Cork, there is the example of the pharmachem companies and the indigenous companies that services them. Qumas software, who are now an international company started out, just feeding that cluster of pharmachem companies in Cork. Foreign direct investment does create huge spin offs, so in that sense, ‘Ireland the Brand’ was a success, as it created an environment for indigenous companies and entrepreneurs to flourish. Ireland Inc. is a great business idea and works as a brand. Ireland Inc was positioned as a
great business hub, where you could do business and be very successful. That was based on Ireland moving up the value chain. We have an intelligent workforce to create new companies and new employment. Now, with the economic recession that is here, there is a re-positioning required. We have high costs. We are not competitive compared to India and China. We have lost our positioning and that will certainly affect the success of Ireland in the next 10 years, unless it is re-positioned successfully

Renate Murphy
Marketing Manager Cork Chamber of Commerce.

This study has found that Ireland has experienced phenomenal success, considering the size of the country. One interviewee argues that this occurred as a result of the strong benefits the country has to offer including; the scenery the people and the activities it offers:

*I think Ireland is successful. We have 'punched above our weight' for a number of years. Obviously, visitor numbers coming to Ireland will drop this year. They dropped last year and they are going to drop a lot more this year. That's part and parcel of the global recession, but not withstanding that, in the last ten years, the growth that has been witnessed by Ireland is phenomenal, given the size of the country and the type of visitor we are attracting and the revenues stemming from that. We are attracting a culture seeker, someone who's possibly a little more affluent. They are coming here to engage with the scenery, the people, and the things to do*

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.
An interesting observation arising from this study is that success in ‘Ireland the Brand’ from a foreign direct investment point of view, has had a knock on affect on the Irish tourism industry by increasing the tourism market through business tourism:

*The amount of new businesses set up in the last 15-20 years has bred most success in our business market and in particular, business tourism has grown substantially in that time. So yes, the answer would be, Ireland is a success*

Maria Benson
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

Of the 92% of interviewees who contributed to this current study, who believe that ‘Ireland the Brand’ is successful, 42% noted that in the past twelve months, in particular, the success which ‘Ireland the Brand’ had experienced has been eroded somewhat, as a result of the negative brand image associated with the failing Irish economy. One interviewee, who has a background in foreign direct investment, states that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has experienced huge success across many aspects, including significant positive brand awareness and brand equity, however, the interviewee also acknowledges that in the past twelve months in particular, the path of success for ‘Ireland the Brand’ has been damaged:

*Up to now, ‘Ireland the Brand’ has been extra-ordinarily successful but there are some issues at present. As we move towards a knowledge economy, there are some concerns, cost competitiveness being one, because what you are seeing now is that business is truly global and it’s not just the US and Ireland anymore, there are other great areas, such as India and China that have fantastic talent and they are of a very high quality in terms of their knowledge base and are much more cost-effective. That is a serious threat. We have to*
be focused. *We are working to ensure that we are competitive on energy costs, which is extremely important for us.*

Anonymous 1  
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation.

Another interviewee responding to this study acknowledged that the functional and emotional values at the core of ‘Ireland the Brand’ are strong and would be key to regaining the level of success similar to that which was experienced in the Celtic Tiger era:

*I think we have to regain our confidence, to articulate the things that have stood us well over time and not be afraid of retaining that sense of Irish-ness and not to dilute it, but to show that we are part of a broader European community. That may be part of the reason people feared the Lisbon Referendum in 2008, as maybe there was a sense that that Irish-ness was being diluted too much. Ireland needs to address those fears domestically and people need to embrace all the benefits Ireland has accrued from its membership of the European Union, because we need strong allies in Europe in terms of investment and tourism. If we can find that confidence and reassure ourselves that we have the unique characteristics to take us to the next level then, I think that confidence may act as a catalyst to get us out of the current economic challenges quicker maybe than some other countries that don’t necessarily have the same degree of confidence and resilience and community spirit. I think that could be part of the solution here.*

Kevin Cullinane  
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.
One interviewee identifies that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has had success from a tourism perspective, but believes that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has had limited success in terms of attracting foreign direct investment, as they describe our value proposition as appealing only to certain markets:

*I think it is successful, from a tourism perspective. I think it has limited success from a business perspective, for example, trying to find affinity or a value proposition into China*

Anonymous X
Managing Director.

4:1:3 Credibility in ‘Ireland the Brand’

*I think there is, credibility in ‘Ireland the Brand’*

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation

75% of the interviewees indicated that there certainly is, credibility in ‘Ireland the Brand’ across the foreign direct investment and tourism sectors:

*In our business yes there is credibility, absolutely. Really that’s down to the references one can make to all of the companies that are here and companies are not in it for the good of their health so obviously citing their peer groups and the global brands that are here works absolutely well for us in terms of credibility*

Caitriona O’Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.
According to another participant responding in this study, Ireland certainly can deliver on the message it sells:

If you come to Ireland, seeking the traditional tourism image, you can still get that. There are a lot of tour operators basing their tours on the concept of taking tourists to B&B's where the woman of the house will make fresh scones in the morning. They will take them to Killarney on the jaunting carts, but, if they want contemporary Ireland, they will go to the cities, so I think all the elements are here.

Dr. Aisling Ward
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

This is further supported by another interviewee who states that surveys on Irish tourism have revealed that Ireland delivers on the preconceived expectations of visitors:

The surveys have shown that the levels of satisfaction of the experience of ‘Ireland the Brand’ received from a tourism point of view, are very high.

Maria Benson
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

17% of the interviewees reported in the current study that they believed ‘Ireland the Brand’ had credibility, in relation to the messages which are communicated about the brand, during the Celtic Tiger period but this credibility has been reduced over the last one to two years:

I think it has been slightly set back over the last year or two as a result of some of the economic challenges the country is facing at present. We had this huge brand asset in terms of the Celtic Tiger, which was much admired.
internationally, and then for us to see ‘the wind taken out of our sails’ so quickly, and people are now legitimately questioning, what next for Ireland Inc.? Some of the gloss has probably come off ‘Ireland the Brand’ but I think Ireland is very resilient nation and that we will bounce back from the current setbacks, it’s a matter of when, rather than if

Kevin Cullinane  
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

One interview in this current research study believes that Ireland’s economic credibility has been seriously damaged:

There’s no credibility in the Irish economy at the moment, so, for people who are looking at Ireland, I think there is great uncertainty as to what the future holds. Whether the Irish economy collapses or not, the Irish brand still remains strong because it is still a country that a lot of people know about, despite the fact its population is less than 4 million people. I think ‘Ireland the Brand’ will remain; the question is how it will look

Simon Coveney  
Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Previous Member of the European Parliament.

100% of the interviewees in this research study observe that credibility, in relation to fulfilling the aspects of the messages which are communicated about ‘Ireland the Brand’, is of the utmost importance. One senior executive explained the level of detail that his organisation takes to ensure credibility in the aspect of the brand, which they are responsible for marketing, Irish tourism overseas:
Something that we have worried about is how can we fit contemporary, cosmopolitan and modern affluent Ireland into the more traditional image. It is something that you have got to take great care with. So, what we have tried to do in our communication to ensure that the brand remains credible, is we have tried to interpret it in a way that reflects a contemporary modern European affluent society, at least until recently, but one which is very much in touch with its traditions, its heritage and its culture. That is the sort of delicate balance that we are trying to communicate. We're Irish, we are proud to be Irish. Irish means a diversity of things for Tourism Brand Ireland, Northern Ireland and the different traditions that contribute to the island of Ireland brand. You have got to understand all of those diversities. We are trying to do that, so we would show contemporary imagery but we would always try and root it in a traditional message as well. We try to be very subtle in our communications. You are not going to see the donkeys and the hay car only, in our advertising imagery. We will show people in context interacting with Irish people. One of the techniques we are using at the moment is a series of 5 minute web films on our website. We got real people, not actors, or people paid from an agency, to simply talk about their place in the way that they want to speak about it. We have filmed one film in Belfast, one in Connemara, and one in Enniskillen, with ordinary peoples who are willing to talk about their place, their way. That grounds it and by grounding it and keeping it as real as you can, it ensures that the brand remains credible and keeps in touch with the key messages that we are trying to convey, while reflecting the reality of modern Ireland.

Paul O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.
4:1:4 Destination Ireland

This research study has observed that Ireland as a destination has huge recognition amongst the foreign direct investment and tourism sectors, overseas. It has furthermore been noted that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has evolved and now provides people with a diverse range of offerings:

From attending fairs, or promoting, I have noticed that when people see the Irish stand, their instant reaction is always very positive. Ireland is always on their list of where they want to go. I think ‘Ireland the Brand’ has evolved and people can see the diverse selection of what’s on offer, from a relaxing spa break to an active walking break or long break where you go touring around the whole country, or city break. I think we have worked hard to show the range of what’s on offer to each market

Sarah Fitzgerald
Brand Executive, Tourism Ireland Limited.

This study has found that a trend towards green tourism currently exists, and that an effort is being made to make Ireland known as a green destination. One interviewee in this current research study notes however that, much effort is required to develop Ireland into a legitimate green destination, in order to be able to market it accordingly:

Ireland has such a rich brand name. I think you go to Ireland for the experience, and the experience is holistic. It is absolutely absorbed in everything. Take a trend towards green tourism. What does that mean? I have this debate with people; there is the green box up the country which is an
area that has labelled itself and branded itself for being green for tourism, but
what does that mean to a tourist? What does a tourist want? They don’t just
want to go into a camp where there is an area defined around them of ten
square miles, and be told that this is where your green area is and by the way
it’s nowhere else. There is an absolute understanding that Ireland is the
green isle. We need to capitalise upon the notion that green-ness equals
brand, Ballygowen for water, equals brand, Kerrygold for healthy food equals
brand, an Bòrd Bia for meat. So, it’s all positive and it all is linked from the
farming background, and from the green fields, and from the clear waters and
from the fresh air, so that effectively the entire island of Ireland should be a
green box. We should be seen as the green island at the edge of Europe, and
by many, particularly areas such as Germany, we are seen as green. We are
at risk of eroding that because we are not necessarily living up to that
performance. We work very closely with the trade and we are trying to get a
lot of the hotels and a lot of the accommodation and activity providers to
reach for green. There are certain EU green labels out there that are
recognised and we are trying to develop those for the activities aspect of the
business because currently they are not relevant to activities. They are only
relevant to accommodation. If we can get the trade to have an overall green
accreditation of some sort, then they are delivering a green experience within
a green environment so then we are a green destination, one which is not
limited to a certain area but one that is part and parcel of everything we do.
It’s about keeping our tidy towns initiative going. It is important to have
respect for your area and to keep it clean, to work with the local authorities to
make sure that we can try and get more effort put into cleaning streets or
cleaning roads so that when people come off the plane or off the boat, they see something clean and fresh

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.

Another interviewee also presents a view highlighting the importance of focusing on the ‘activity aspect’ (things to see and do) of Destination Ireland in the marketing communication message and purports that activity holidays in Ireland are undersold:

*I still think the actual imagery and the things to do in Ireland are still attractive, but I think we should be trying to attract new types of visitors. I think activity holidays in Ireland are totally undersold, in terms of biking, trekking, sailing, horse-riding, and fishing to name a few. There is a lot to do physically in Ireland. People don’t come here for the weather. Generally people have come here either to walk or trek, to look for their roots, or else they think it’s a fun place to visit, which it is. It is still all of those things and I think hopefully, once other countries start coming out of recession and people have money again that one of the industries that will help Ireland to get back up on its feet, will be tourism. I think the brand, if developed, can remain very strong*

Simon Coveney
Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Previous Member of the European Parliament.

On assessment of the aforementioned views posited by the interviewees in this current study, relating to the communication of the traditional aspects of Irish culture and the modernised view of Ireland, it is clear that there are many value added aspects to ‘Ireland the Brand’.
75% of the interviewees raised the importance of Irish people or, people with a claim to being Irish, as important ambassadors of ‘Ireland the Brand’:

*Many associations of ‘Ireland the Brand’ were brought to an international platform via the Irish who went abroad so they are absolutely ambassadors. They act as brand touchpoints. They are able to sell Ireland*

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.

### 4:2 Marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’

67% of interviewee’s stated that the Irish people hold the greatest responsibility in the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’. Each of the 67% of the aforementioned the interviewees who contributed to this current study also identified at least one government agency that also bears responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’:

*Every citizen in Ireland is responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. Obviously, there are groups such as IDA Ireland or Tourism Ireland Limited that are ultimately responsible, but it can’t be left to say it is their job, not mine. So, when I am travelling, I formally consider myself an ambassador of the country*

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation

According to Paul O’Toole, a number of stakeholders have key roles in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’:
Who owns brand Ireland in that nation branding sense? We collectively own it. In my opinion we collectively contribute to that. Obviously, the Irish government has a role, but the Irish diaspora, are also key players in marketing Ireland. We the citizens are stakeholders in the brand – the industrialists, the commercial people, anyone who is involved in any way and cares about it, have a responsibility towards the brand

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

Another interviewee responding in this research also supported a similar outlook on where the responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ lies, and maintains that the two main stakeholders involved are the government and the Irish people themselves:

Every person in Ireland is responsible for ‘Ireland the Brand’. The government or a government department or an authority or a body can help shape the direction and rallying the call to action but ultimately I think it is down to each Irish person to look into their own heart and soul and say what does it mean for me to be Irish and I think if they reflect that then ultimately it is up to each individual citizen

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

A significant finding emerging from this study, is the importance of the role of the Irish Diaspora in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ abroad:

I think our diaspora are mainly responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’
- Irish people selling Ireland abroad. Fáilte Ireland has done a good job, but
there is no substitute of, for example, an Irish guy owning a bar in New York and telling people who come in for a drink, you should go back to Ireland if you get a chance. It is without question, that it’s the Irish people sell Ireland

Simon Coveney
Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Previous Member of the European Parliament.

Another interviewee notes that the Irish diaspora are of the utmost importance and provides the example of how a group of Irish executives are actively promoting Ireland in Silicon Valley in the United States of America:

Yes, the Irish diaspora are of the utmost importance. There is an Irish Executive Branch of Silicon Valley. They group together as Irish Executives from Silicon Valley to try to articulate the success of Ireland, so, I think that is a clear example of people being ambassadors

Anonymous X
Managing Director.

58% of the interviewees named IDA Ireland and Tourism Ireland Limited organisations as the bodies responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’:

I think that the two best organisations at marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ are the IDA and Tourism Ireland. I think that they are responsible. I think that they have done an incredible job in terms of creating and packaging it with the appropriate value proposition, to particular audiences

Anonymous X
Managing Director.

This study has found that the current responsibility for marketing Ireland, as undertaken by Tourism Ireland, is to act as a guardian to Tourism Brand Ireland:
We, in our role as Tourism Ireland, are responsible for what we call ‘tourism brand Ireland’. In terms of the tourism destination brand we are the guardian of that brand. Built into our remit is that we are the guardian of ‘tourism brand Ireland’, and we have specific responsibilities in terms of the work we do and we are measured on the effectiveness of what we do

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

Another interviewee who contributed to this current research concurs and further posits that as the leaders of the IDA Ireland and Tourism Ireland are appointed by the government, the responsibility therefore, ultimately lies with the government:

Most of the organisations responsible for marketing Ireland are government agencies. At the end of the day, they are the ones who appoint the heads of these agencies. Tourism Ireland or Fáilte Ireland or the IDA, or Enterprise Ireland – all of those agencies are led by the Irish government

Seamus Heaney
Director of Marketing, The Kingsley Hotel.

On reflection of the views mentioned relating to the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’, a very interesting finding which emerges from this study is that there is no one overarching brand strategy, for the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’ in its entirety. This current study has found that the organisation set up to promote Ireland as a destination for foreign direct investment are responsible for developing ‘Ireland the Brand’s’ strategy for this purpose and similarly, the organisations responsible for creating ‘Ireland the Brand’s’ strategy from the perspective of inward tourism develop this aspect of ‘Ireland the Brand’s’ strategy, lies with the
organisation set up to market Irish tourism abroad. This study has found that there was limited communication between the key bodies at the time of creating the brand strategies for their target markets resulting in overlap:

There is multi-organisation, multi-party responsibility and this is an issue. We have had quite a number of discussions with tourism Ireland. We have been involved in their branding work and they have been involved in some of the work we have done. We work with Science Foundation Ireland, we work with Enterprise Ireland, we work with Forfás, so the issue that I have is that every small little group wants to create their own little brand which I really find is a waste of time, effort and resources. There should be one brand for Ireland Inc. that each party can take an element of and it can work for them but that there is one over-arching brand. Who is responsible for that at the moment? Nobody. We are trying to drive a similar concept with other people bodies. We are pushing it but it is not going to be easy to do given resources at the moment so I am not quite sure what will happen. We are going to continue trying to push it but there is nobody responsible for it at the moment

Caitriona O’ Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.

This study has also found that many powerful people influence the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’, including, government strategists and people who have been successful in business. One interviewee also notes that Ireland’s membership of the European Union has had a significant impact in shaping Ireland’s brand values, in particular, the value of our educated workforce:
From a business point of view, government strategists have had a significant impact on 'Ireland the Brand'. The winner of the entrepreneur of the year received a special award for being a government advisor and for stimulating the whole knowledge economy and getting Ireland to embrace that side of things. Chuck Feeney, a multi millionaire who gave away all of his money to charities is responsible for funding Irish universities. He contributed €80 million to universities and so he in turn played a role in creating this environment, whereby the universities were given funding and as a result more people were able to go to college. EU membership also had a big role in the funding of the universities to create this knowledge economy.

Renate Murphy
Marketing Manager Cork Chamber of Commerce

4:2:1 Synergy in Marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’

This research has found that there is a degree of overlap in the message communicated by two of the key bodies responsible for marketing 'Ireland the Brand'—IDA Ireland (for investment) and Tourism Ireland Limited (for tourism):

I get regular updates from those bodies including copies of presentations and market research summaries. I think there is already a degree of overlap. Obviously, they have their own specific remits, in terms of their role in marketing Ireland overseas but you will see as much in an IDA credentials presentation to a potential investor in Ireland about the people here, the education of those people, the values of those people, things to see and do if you base a company here and information on the employees that you hope to
attract or employ here, as you will in an Irish tourism presentation. There is a high degree of similarity and they are dipping into the same pool to a large extent in terms of researching what Ireland has to offer. They may dial up different dimensions of that, they may articulate it slightly differently but ultimately you know the core values are very similar.

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

An alternative view aired by other interviewees who contributed to this current study, relay that each of the aforementioned organisations have very different strategies and objectives as they target different markets with different requirements, and hence, disagree with the idea of overlap in terms of research and the message communicated, between the two main bodies for marketing Ireland overseas. 25% of the interviewees do not believe synergies should exist between the aforementioned bodies responsible for marketing different aspects of 'Ireland the Brand':

It's difficult because each has very different strategies and very different focuses and objectives so, I don't know if something like synergies would work in terms of marketing Ireland because if you are targeting the business world you are looking at things like an educated workforce, efficiency and good transport links. Transport would be linked also from a tourism perspective but with tourism you are playing on peoples heartstrings. You are trying to conjure up an image of something where expectations should be satisfied. It (results of synergistic affects) would lead to a huge amount of confusion amongst the target markets because you have such different aspects to each market.
Another interviewee supports a similar view of resistance to a more synergistic approach, to work practices and the development of communication messages about ‘Ireland the Brand’, between the two main organisations responsible for marketing Ireland overseas:

*I don’t know if that would work. I think from a marketing point of view, it is a lot easier to segment the market and target specifically. The business market won’t respond to the tourism romantic messages and vice versa, the cold business messages of Ireland as being industry focused is not going to translate well into tourism so I would say it is certainly much easier to keep them separate and you would probably do a better job.*

Renate Murphy  
Marketing Manager Cork Chamber of Commerce.

Another interviewee responding in the current study concurred in that the message used to communicate to the different target market differs significantly, however, notes that consolidation within each division could occur and furthermore posits that such action, together with large funding, would result in more success:

*I think enterprise Ireland and the IDA Ireland should be merged, but I think there is a big difference between trying to attract jobs and industry into Ireland and trying to attract tourists on their holidays, so I wouldn’t merge Tourism Ireland and for example the IDA / Enterprise Ireland but I do think that there should be two big bodies that are well funded and are very aggressive - one to sell Ireland as a destination for tourism, the other to sell Ireland as a destination to set up your business and expand here. Having two*
separate entities of IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland is something that
needs to change at this stage because there is a lot of overlap in terms of
funding and staffing

Simon Coveney
Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources,
Previous Member of the European Parliament.

17% of the interviewees responding in this study believe synergies currently exist between
the bodies responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’:

Certainly overseas, all the Irish agencies are working together

Sarah Fitzgerald
Brand Executive, Tourism Ireland Limited.

33% of the interviewees replying in this research study, both from a foreign direct
investment, and tourism background, do not believe synergies currently exist between the
aforementioned bodies, but support such a concept and strongly believe that it would have
positive results:

Absolutely, there is no doubt about it. They are whole groups of people that
definitely could work together in terms of getting ‘Ireland the Brand’ concrete

Caitriona O’ Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.

Another interviewee in this study concurs and furthermore believes that any action which
results in more synergies between the IDA and Tourism Ireland Limited, would lead to a
stronger value proposition:
I think that there is opportunity, to explore more cross-functionality across the organisations who actively market Ireland. I believe another value proposition is created through the ‘all-Ireland’ marketing concept. It is a great point and I would see that there is more could be done between these organisations.

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation

This was further enforced by an interviewee from a background in the tourism sector, who passionately believes that a steering group or a committee comprising of key members from the foreign direct investment sector and tourism sector and astute business people from the private sector, should be established with the objective of developing a clear brand strategy for ‘Ireland the Brand’:

You don’t necessarily need a body but you would need I think you would need an overarching strategy and possibly a steering group or a committee of the relevant persons of each of those organisations who could influence and set the strategy and meet quarterly to tweak and shape it as things happen. There is not anything similar occurring at present. In fact, I have been trying to do something similar in a smaller level in Cork. It would be absolutely no harm to have some kind of structure to pull the ‘think tank’ together. There are various different committees for particular sectors, for example, the ‘Tourism Renewal Group’, which the government have pulled together last year. Quite a few private sector people, quite prominent business people and leaders would also bring another perspective to it and a very pragmatic perspective to it and assist in identifying the big issues that are either hindering the development of the flow or people into this country or the opportunities that we should be extricating from that. So they do have the
'think tanks' that do come together but equally speaking it would be important then to have that 'think tank' link into a broader one which might involve the IDA or the enterprise Ireland or 'Good Food Ireland' or Bórd Bia or anybody or anything that communicates all the different elements of brand Ireland

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.

One interviewee in the current study observes that synergies between all organisations involved in marketing 'Ireland the Brand', such as the IDA and Tourism Ireland Limited could exist as the end goal for all of the above organisations is ultimately, to increase the positive associations of 'Ireland the Brand':

*I certainly agree on the synergies idea because ultimately we are all trying to promote a positive image of Ireland*

Paul O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

4:2:3 Communicating the Message of 'Ireland the Brand' Overseas

50% of the interviewees responding in this study state that when marketing 'Ireland the Brand' overseas, the message is tailored to particular markets:

*The expression 'global similarities, local differences' applies here. In all the research we have done, there are some messages that come out very strongly, such as, the character and characters - the people, place and culture. That's the key cornerstone. We did an exercise a number of years ago called 'Customers Journeys', where we put people from our profile in a room with*
Irish people, started conversations and did exercises with them. We did this in America, England, France and Germany. One of the exercises included putting several hundred postcards on a table and groups of six people, had to pick twelve postcards, which somehow expressed their idea of Ireland. The results showed that stereotypes or archetypes were very deep rooted within people, but there are local differences. Americans are probably a little more stereotypical. For the Germans, it's more about the west and the landscape. For the British, it's about fun and craic and Temple Bar. For the Nordics, it's about green and the environment.

Paul O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

Whilst there is a certain degree of tailoring ‘Ireland the Brand’ to local circumstances, the pillars of the brand remain the same:

_I think the brand image has to be tailored and adapted to local circumstances, local cultures. I think the core pillars of the identity are consistent around the world because they have been largely shaped by people and the people reflect the country, the topography, its geography, its ideals, its culture, its heritage, its literature and its music. It never ceases to amaze me when you step into a lift in Bali or Indonesia and the music playing is Enya or U2. It just shows how far globalisation has gone and how acceptable those facets of Irish-ness are taken for granted. So, I think there is a huge degree of commonality and consistency in the message_

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.
From a foreign direct investment point of view, the message communicated in relation to ‘Ireland the Brand’ needs to be tailored, somewhat, to each particular market:

*IDA as an organisation has limited resources, so for example, let’s look at China. It is a huge market, so what we have done is focused on a geographical area where most of the business is done. We don’t want everybody; we are very specific and very focused. We have a strategy of marketing communication with each focused target market in a way that matches our resources. Somewhere like China would be much more focused in terms of direct marketing. So yes, China and India would be different, Tokyo would be different, North America would be different and Europe is very different. The message would need to be tailored somewhat. Some of the core things such as the language used would be very different*

Caitriona O’ Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.

### 4:3 The Impact of the Failing Irish Economy on ‘Ireland the Brand’

75% of the respondents in this current study believe that the failing Irish economy has had a negative impact on the image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ abroad:

*There is no doubt about it. Given the amount of media coverage, that is all quite negatively skewed, I defiantly think it has damaged our reputation*

Caitriona O’ Kennedy
Manager, Marketing Communications Division, IDA Ireland.
This research study has found that Ireland is in a brand position whereby it has recently acquired many negative associations linked to its' brand. The research further notes that it is of the utmost importance that action is taken in order to recover some of the positive associations with the brand image, which have been eroded:

Yes, it has been damaged, there is no question. We have to pragmatically defend where Ireland is. We have to talk about this as a blip and that we have a strategy, which we are committed to, to get out of it and we are willing to suffer some pain in order to do so. For me, it is very important that I talk to my bosses and executives in the US about where we are - not exaggerate, not make it look better than it is, but give current update of where we are. People need to see that yes, we are in a poor position, things have gone awry but most importantly it needs to be communicated that we have a plan of recovery for the next three to five years

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation

Another interviewee responding in this current research, also notes that it is important that Ireland is seen to be implementing strategic decisions with the hope of resolving issues which have negatively impacted 'Ireland the Brand'. This study has found that the Irish government has recently implemented strategies to begin building the economy of Ireland again:

I think that in the short term, it has affected us negatively because we were placed on a very high pedestal in terms of our accomplishments over the last fifteen to twenty years. Suddenly, that pedestal has been kicked from underneath us and we found ourselves with nothing really substantial underneath us. The challenge now is to address that situation. I think some
of the initiatives that are being taken are being looked at favourably, whether by the European central bank, the European Commission, that perceive that Ireland is serious about tackling its problems. We might have been slow to address them or come back with quick solutions. We could be critical of our leaders in that respect but hopefully we will look back in a couple of year’s time and say that it was a blip, in the short term. The current climate we are going through isn’t unique to Ireland and there isn’t an economy in the developed world that isn’t experiencing these challenges right now so we are not alone but we will have to find some unique solutions to solve the Irish dimension of the global problem

Kevin Cullinane
Marketing Manager, Cork Airport.

Another interviewee supports this view, whereby they acknowledge the work being carried out by the government to take corrective action, with the hope of portraying ‘Ireland the Brand’ in a more positive light. This study has found that Ireland is inextricably linked to international economies, as noted by the next interviewees’ response:

*It is impacting on our reputation, without a doubt and again you have to think of broad masses of audiences and occasionally we need to get over ourselves, because we are pre-occupied about Ireland and Irish-ness and what’s happening. We live here and it is important to us and rightly so. Most of the world is getting on with its own challenges. We are a tiny economy in the scheme of things. However, to the people who spend time studying financial reports and economic appraisals certainly Ireland’s reputation has taken a leap in the way of a battering but so have many other places. So, the*
difference I suppose and I don’t know the answer to this, is in relative terms, how much has our reputation declined compared to others? The government are very clearly, trying to take corrective measures and that message is getting being communicated too. Everybody recognises that we are a small open economy. We do well when global economies do well. We do worse when global economies are suffering and that’s exactly what’s happening right now

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

A significant finding arising from this study is in relation to the affect publicity has in creating a negative perception of ‘Ireland the Brand’. One interviewee stated that it can have a huge impact on a brand but concurs with the fact that Ireland is in a fortunate position at present, as many other economies are also suffering:

I always think of Berlusconi and I associate Italy now with corrupt politicians, because of a story out a couple of years ago. It is amazing how one story, can have a huge impact. There have been a lot of stories about Ireland and the banks and corruption recently. Having said that, we are lucky, in that everyone else in the world is in the same boat, for example, Germany is in recession, Europe in is recession, and the States is in recession, so from that point of view, at least we are not being isolated. It is being experienced everywhere internationally, so that is probably letting us get away with it a little bit more. People are saying, Ireland isn’t doing well at the moment, but then where is it doing well at the moment and because of the times we are in we escape potentially a lot more negative publicity. I think
Ireland Inc. has been weakened by all of the corruption scandals recently attributed to the nation

Renate Murphy
Marketing Manager Cork Chamber of Commerce.

An alternative view is aired by another respondent contradicting the impact of negative publicity in relation to ‘Ireland the Brand’:

Economists might have said that Ireland was bust, forget Ireland. Ireland and Iceland are linked together in the media due to their failing economies. That kind of story really only relates to a week of publicity, probably a day or two, then it’s gone. It doesn’t really resonate outside of that to be honest. Take the UK, for example, they have their own issues. They are all looking at their own corporate governance and own public finances, so, I don’t the negative publicity relating to Ireland is really sticking in people’s minds too much because it’s not in isolation. Every other country has its own problems and they might be worse than what’s being broadcasted about Ireland or maybe they are better

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.

As noted by McWilliams (2005), Ireland had an excellent history of foreign direct investment, during the Celtic Tiger era. This current research has found that this legacy has been reversed and as a result of the failing Irish economy, a large drop in foreign direct investment has occurred:
I do think, as a result of the failing economy, business is not coming to Ireland. I think there is a lot of businesses who have looked at Ireland as an attractive destination where they saw it as a success story and now it has lost a lot of its competitive advantages in terms of cost base, in terms of language, so there are new challenges there that we need to respond to

Simon Coveney
Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources,
Previous Member of the European Parliament.

17% of the interviewees contributing to this study stated that the negative perceptions of Ireland will not have longevity internationally. This study notes that many other countries around the world are in a similar position and subsequently those nations are more concerned about their own economies, as opposed to placing their concentration on others economies.

In terms of foreign investors analysing international investment sites, this study has found that the fact that many other nations are in a similar positions, has in a sense equalised the market:

I don't think, it is as bad as we perceive it to be, because when you travel to the US, or when you travel to Asia, those guys have very similar problems to Ireland, right now. Our government is not helping themselves, particularly in terms of how they address some of the issues but then, Gordon Brown has exactly the same situation and I think that the UK are becoming more concerned with the UK than they are with Ireland and I think that the same is true of North America. I don't think that we have had as bad a deal in the foreign press as sometimes it is presented that we have, but it certainly hasn't helped. I don't think the corruption thing is a big deal. I don't think it is something that has been picked up hugely on abroad
Managing Director,

4:4 **The Future of 'Ireland the Brand'**

This research observes that 'Ireland the Brand' requires radical adjustments, in order to compete internationally, in today's market environment. Arising from comments posed by the interviewees, it is clear that Ireland needs to move up the value chain if it is to increase its brand value. This current study notes that this can be achieved through re-positioning 'Ireland the Brand' and portraying an image of Ireland as experts in innovation:

*I would propose a re-brand now. The 'innovation island' route is probably the way to go. We can't compete on a cost level with China and India and such places, so we have to compete higher up the value chain and make sure we can deliver on that. I would definitely propose the innovation Ireland route, linking R&D and the universities, continuing to attract foreign direct investment, which is going to be very difficult in this climate. It will have to be a long term play for innovation Ireland – it won't be a fast one as it will have to be re-positioned.*

Renate Murphy
Marketing Manager Cork Chamber of Commerce.

Another interviewee notes that Ireland is presently unable to compete in the market of attracting foreign direct investment, in terms of cost competitiveness and concurs with the previous contributor, that the brand must position itself further up the value chain, through some form of differentiation. This research has found that there are many opportunities in
which Ireland can achieve this, including, an unspoiled natural environment which is applicable to the tourism market, expertise in the area of research and development and the development of green energy:

*I think we are going to have to continue to differentiate ourselves versus our competition. I think cost competitiveness is something that we can’t differentiate ourselves on. You hear the IDA talking about moving up the value chain and I think that there will have to be really serious initiatives and investments to get up the value chain to give the brand something to sell. From a tourism perspective, that’s going to be very different, I think that as the world becomes more concerned about environmental issues and population problems, then we can subtly change our message into the green island again, into the remote wilderness of Connemara and tap into that market and I think that it would be a huge market if we do it right. I think the one thing I would consider is that they need to be thinking, where are we going to be in 10 years and how are we going to get there so if they say that they want to do R&D for example which is something that they are doing, then they’ll need to have a certain number of engineers coming through the colleges to do that. If they want to do green energy, there are going to have to have a certain number of green energy engineers coming through the education system to have that in ten years time, they’ll have to change the primary curriculum now and I think that industry is aware of that. I think that the government is vaguely aware of that but I don’t they have a real plan and I don’t think that the current environment is helping them in terms of figuring*
this out. We need to continue to spend it even though we are not going to see a return on it for eight to ten years

Anonymous X
Managing Director.

This research acknowledges the fact that the educated workforce available in Ireland will play a significant role in the future of ‘Ireland the Brand’. The knowledge economy, as it is referred to by the interviewees, is crucial to maintaining a positive image of ‘Ireland the Brand’, in particular from the perspective of foreign direct investment. The current study also found that in order to nurture the knowledge economy in Ireland, a transformation of the Irish education system is required:

*From an economic perspective I think that developing the knowledge economy will be a key objective for the future. I think that we need to do more to develop the small-medium enterprise businesses. We need to keep transforming, now more than ever*

Anonymous 1
Managing Director, Multinational Organisation.

One contributor to this current study also notes that Ireland should be viewed as country with high expertise in the high-tech sector. This interviewee further proposes that the Irish people will continue to be an important brand value to ‘Ireland the Brand’ and the green aspect should be key in the marketing communication message. The importance of the Irish diaspora in building this message is also revealed in this study:
We should market Ireland as a clean, green, high-tech, interesting place that’s full of personality. That’s the kind of Ireland I want to grow up in. Ireland has to stay open and liberal. I think where we can be different to other countries is that we can have this image of a clean, green, high-tech island which has this diaspora all over the world and which is a really friendly, interesting place, full of personality and activity and that should be our message.

Simon Coveney
Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Previous Member of the European Parliament.

According to 33% of the interviewees responding in this study, green tourism should be a key for ‘Ireland the Brand’ in the future. One interviewee strongly suggests that achieving a reputation for green tourism is by far the most important objective for ‘Ireland the Brand’, and also posits that this needs to be teamed with the concept of Ireland as a safe destination:

I think Ireland’s big future is the green agenda. It’s already half way there naturally, we don’t have to create it, and we have to mind it. We probably have to fix it in parts so if we could have a very strong policy around green Ireland, for example, ideally if towns and villages and cities could invest in cycle routes and in facilities to allow for that green kind of exposure I think we would have a very strong product because we actually have pretty good access into Ireland. Our infrastructure is improving, our road network is improving, our rail network is improving and I think people can get here and get around here easily. There is a lot of savings that can be made within individual businesses if a green approach is adopted. So it is not only the
marketing image that would be aided but it actually resonates as being a business rationale. I believe we are ready for the green agenda.

Another thing on people’s agenda at the moment is safety. It has been since 9/11 and continues to be. Every now and again something kind of rattle people’s cages, whether it is a swine flu or whether it be a pandemic, safety comes to the fore again and again, so Ireland should project itself as a green, safe, and an honest to goodness place.

Fiona Buckley
General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West.

The study has also found that adventure tourism or activity tourism should be marketed together with the image of a green Ireland. It was also identified that focuses on engaging visitors whereby, the visitors play a hands-on role in experiencing Ireland:

Green tourism is a key area, in the south west specifically, focusing on coast tourism and adventure tourism, using the coast as the drawing point

Dr. Aisling Ward
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

Another interviewee in this research study concurs with the previous respondent’s view that Irish tourism is moving towards engaging visitors with the country, through activities with the aim of improving their experience:

Tourism is moving from the concept of ‘Go and See to Go’, ‘See and Do’, whereby now we are moving into actually hands on creating their own memories within the destination. Take food for example, maybe do the
cooking yourself, so that you are not just tasting it, but getting more involved in the experience

Maria Benson
Lecturer, Cork Institute of Technology.

17% of the interviewees who contributed to this study propose that continued investment in ‘Ireland the Brand’ is fundamental to its future. Paul O’Toole also proposes a strategy of ‘stop- recover-grow’ as a means of building a future for ‘Ireland the Brand’ from a tourism perspective:

*Speaking in tourism terms I think we have a situation at present where we are going through very difficult times and through that we have to work for the survival of as much of our industry as we possibly can. It is a very tough and difficult time so a lot of our work currently is working on how to win business right now. We have taken the decision to continue to overarch that with our brand message so what we believe is that, continuous investment in the brand and not backing off it even when it is difficult is critical to long-term sustainability. So, what are our future goals: we want to get back on track and a way of looking at it is to stop, recover and grow - stop the losses, recover what has been lost and get back on a growth curve. We have long term objectives in terms of the growth potential of tourism, however, these have been knocked out of track right now because of the current situation. So, our objective will be to get that back on track and in essence what we are talking about is that over time, over a long period, that the island of Ireland will out-perform its competitors in Western and Northern Europe by winning*
market share. We’ll match European growth and potentially world growth as well and the context for that is that over time world tourism will grow, Europe will continue to have the lions share but will lose share to the rest of the world. The action in terms of world travel growth will not be in Europe but Europe will sustain its overall size (because it’s the most developed market in the world) but not grow in absolute terms, at the same rate as other parts of the world. It is a big goal for Ireland to meet that sort of goal and we have done it for five to six years in a row. We lost a bit of ground last year we will lose more ground this year and then when the upturn comes, the aim is to stop losing, recover what’s lost, grow and grow meaning, that Ireland will win share in its competitive set in Europe

Paul O’Toole
Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Ireland Limited.

4:5 Summary

This chapter presents the opinions of the twelve people interviewed as part of this study.

Chapter 5 develops conclusions of the findings of this current study and provides a comparison with existing literature and secondary data.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions & Recommendations
5:0 Introduction

This chapter presents an evaluation of the main themes of the research findings. This current study centres on the concept of Ireland the brand. The study examines the overall image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ today, including Ireland’s brand values, the level of success associated with Ireland the brand and the credibility of ‘Ireland the Brand’ within the island of Ireland and abroad. An analysis of the impact that the failing Irish economy is having on ‘Ireland the Brand’ is conducted, and an investigation into who is ultimately responsible for marketing Ireland the brand is carried out. Furthermore, this research study explores opportunities which may lead to future successes for ‘Ireland the Brand’, within two chosen sectors, namely, the foreign direct investment sector and the Irish tourism sector. Supporting this study is the analysis of the responses of twelve people, who were interviewed as part of this current research, whose professional responsibility allows them to speak with authority on these subjects. The interview pool consists of industry senior executives who are involved in the strategic function of their particular sector, senior management of global organisations, a chief executive officer, a government representative and operational executives.

The analysis and conclusions that follow are based on the researcher’s primary and secondary research. This chapter presents a summary table outlining the key conclusions of this current study and a summary table outlining recommendations for the future. Furthermore, recommendations for future research studies are presented.

5:1 Review of the Main Findings
Bradley and McGurk (2003) maintain that ‘Ireland the Brand’ exists. The findings of this research study has also found that ‘Ireland the Brand’ does in fact does exist today. This research study focuses on the image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ and in particular concentrates on the current values of ‘Ireland the Brand’. This current study identified a wide range of values that are associated with ‘Ireland the Brand’, including, the Irish people who reside in Ireland, the Irish diaspora, Irish culture and heritage, the knowledge economy, the Irish corporate tax system and an English-speaking workforce. Cowen (2009a) states that, the ‘Irish Brand’ has distinct and intrinsic value, (in Minihan, 2009). According to O’Mahony (2009), Irish culture is extremely important to the Irish economy and generated €11.8 billion in 2008. Desmond (2009) states that, the fact that we have such a strong culture as a country, really gives us advantages over other nations (in Cullen, 2009). Desmond further observes that Ireland is famous for our writers, our artists and our poets (in Cullen, 2009).

According to Sutherland (2009), the economy of Ireland has been a phenomenon since the late 1980’s, and risen to become one of the richest economies in the world. The economic success that ‘Ireland the Brand’ experienced during the Celtic Tiger era was highlighted by 100% of interviewees who contributed to this current study, however, this study also notes that, as a result of factors including the global economic recession and the Irish banking crisis, the Irish economy is now in an economic recession and observes that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has been negatively impacted as a result of the failing Irish economy. Even though the Irish economy and moreover, the world’s economy is in a difficult position at present, business and marketing opportunities, which may lead to the future success of ‘Ireland the Brand’, still remain and it is critical that Ireland focuses on these and implements strategic plans to take advantage of opportunities.
This current study suggests that Ireland needs to re-position its brand strategy and that the Irish people, native to Ireland and the Irish diaspora will be central to developing and implementing a re-positioning brand strategy. This research study has also found that the knowledge economy and a focus on innovation, research and development and green assets (in terms of green energy and a green island offering green activities breaks), will be crucial to building a successful future for ‘Ireland the Brand’. This current study furthermore states that it is likely that a greater value proposition could be created, should a synergistic approach be taken by the stakeholders who are involved in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. According to Cowen (2009b), ‘Ireland the Brand’ has many facets from which it can build a successful future:

> We must connect with the Irish Brand now, renovate it and use it, in order to give us a competitive advantage in a globalised world. The Ireland we envisage for the future is a smart, high-value, export-led economy. It will have some of the world's leading research-intensive multinationals, a number of which will be Irish-owned

(in Minihan, 2009: 5).

5:1:1 The Concept of ‘Ireland the Brand’

Hoeffler and Keller (2002) state that, the power of a brand is what resides in the minds of consumers. The challenge for marketers in building a strong brand is ensuring that customers have the right type of experiences when interacting with the brand (and their accompanying marketing programs) so that the desired thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, perceptions and opinions, become linked to the brand (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002). According to Anholt
(1998), the brand image of a place is determined by the following six factors: government policies, products, culture and heritage, the people, the land and its tourism potential, and business opportunities. ‘Ireland the Brand’ certainly does exists. It satisfies the core aspects of a brand, including brand awareness and brand associations, therefore, may be managed as a brand. “We identified the fact that Ireland has brand attributes and therefore is very amenable to brand management” (Chapter 4: 94).

A significant finding emerging from this study is that from a commercial point of view, ‘Ireland the Brand’ is divided between two sectors – foreign direct investment and tourism. The brand name associated with the foreign direct investment aspect of Ireland the brand is known as ‘Ireland Inc.’ ‘Ireland Inc’ was a great business idea and worked as a brand. ‘Ireland Inc.’ was positioned as a great business hub, where you could do business and be very successful” (Chapter 4: 117-118). Tourism Brand Ireland is the brand name used to describe the brand strategy for marketing Irish tourism abroad (Tourism Ireland, 2007).

This research study found that Ireland as a destination is largely recognised among the foreign direct investment and tourism sectors, and the current study further notes that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has evolved and has a diverse range of offerings. “I think Ireland has evolved and people can see the diverse selection of what’s on offer, from a relaxing spa break to an active walking break or long break where you go touring around the whole country, or city break. I think we have worked hard to show the range of what’s on offer to each market” (Chapter 4: 125). This study found that whether Ireland is being marketed from a foreign direct investment point of view or from a tourism perspective, it is important that the values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ are identified and incorporated into the communication strategy.
This current research study has found that Ireland has benefitted from many foreign companies that have directly invested in Ireland, but also Ireland has benefitted the foreign companies that invested in Ireland. Foreign companies are attracted to Ireland as a result of the values 'Ireland the Brand' has to offer, which include, a well educated workforce and open market economy. In terms of tourism, the current study notes that the experience which overseas visitors receive when they visit Ireland, is fundamental to their perception of 'Ireland the Brand'. This study has found that 'Ireland the Brand' is recognised as a brand with premium brand values. “Over the years, I think the message that has been communicated is that Ireland is a very friendly country, does not have good weather, is not very good value for money, but it has been seen as a premium brand” (Chapter 4: 97). The study also reports that recent successes that ‘Ireland the Brand’ achieved during the Celtic Tiger era, has instilled hope in other nations. 75% of the interviewees who contributed to the current research study, indicated that there is credibility in ‘Ireland the Brand’ within the domestic and international markets. Other interviewees in this current study challenge the credibility of ‘Ireland the Brand’, domestically and internationally, and maintain that the credibility of ‘Ireland the Brand’ has been damaged as a result of the failing Irish economy, in post Celtic Tiger Ireland.

5:2:1 The Values of ‘Ireland the Brand’

The excellent values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ include the Irish people residing in Ireland and abroad, Irish culture and the physical landscape. Unreservedly, the findings of this research confirm that the importance of the Irish people, both, those who reside in Ireland and also the Irish diaspora who live abroad, to Ireland the brand, is paramount. 75% of interviewees who contributed to this study stated that Irish people, both Irish natives and the Irish people
abroad, have the greatest responsibility in the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’. “The biggest reason why people say they come here and why people say they come back is the openness and engagement of the Irish people. People are absolutely core. The things that we do and the things that are typically Irish resonate with people” (Chapter 4: 100). According to Wright (2007), American tourists are primarily motivated to travel to Ireland because of people, pace and place. This current research has found that the Tourism Brand Ireland strategy, which is created and implemented by Tourism Ireland Limited, also uses the values of people, pace and place in their current brand strategy through the portrayal of the character and characters of Ireland. The congruence in both findings indicates the importance of the values of people pace and place. This research study reports that the character of the Irish people is something which is unique to Ireland. At the recent Global Irish Economic Forum, one of the five discussion sessions, related to Ireland and its diaspora, with the aim of suggesting ways of harnessing the unique resource of the Irish diaspora. According to Cowen (2009c), we must harness the best asset Ireland has to offer – the talent and ingenuity of our people, (in McEnaney, 2009).

Cowen (2009c), supports the findings of this current research study whereby Irish culture and heritage are key brand values of Ireland today, and further purports that being Irish holds a distinct and intrinsic value:

*People know us. Our country her landscape and her culture are known the world over* 

The warmth of the Irish welcome is consistently cited as a motivational factor for the potential tourist (Wright, 2006). “Céad Mile Fáilte certainly does exist. Last year, the lonely planet called Ireland the friendliest destination in the world” (Chapter 4: 102). It is surprising however, that only 58% of interviewees in the current research study state that Céad Mile Fáilte does still exist in Ireland and is a core value of ‘Ireland the Brand’.

With the influx of multi-national immigrants into Ireland, many of whom work in the hospitality sector, the face of Céad Mile Fáilte has changed. According to McKeown (2009), given the rapid changes being experienced today by the Irish economy, the Céad Mile Fáilte, is just as likely to be given by a young lady or gentleman from Latvia, Estonia or Poland, as it is from a local lass or lad. This current research observes that Tourism Ireland Limited recognises that many foreign nationals work in the Irish tourism industry and further believe that you do not have to be Irish to give an Irish welcome. An interesting finding emerging from the current research is that Tourism Ireland Limited have launched a programme called SHINE which aims to educate foreigners working in the Irish hospitality trade. “A key factor to this is that you don’t have to be a local, you don’t have to be Irish because there are so many non-Irish people working in the tourism industry in Ireland. Just once they are aware of the Irish welcome and what it involves, and that you don’t have to be Irish to give an Irish welcome, just be friendly and open and be yourself” (Chapter 4: 105).

According to 33% of interviewees who contributed to the current research study, evidence of the Irish Céad Mile Fáilte diminished during the Celtic Tiger period, in Ireland. “I struggle to find Céad Mile Fáilte. I think everyone is too busy now” (Chapter 4: 106). This study reports, however, that the Céad Mile Fáilte will become more evident in the future and will aid in counteracting the negative affect that the failing Irish economy has had on Ireland the
brand. The future for ‘Ireland the Brand’ will require an experience that exceeds customer’s expectations therefore, customer service (i.e. Céad Mile Fáilte) will be pivotal. “I think customer service is inevitably going to get better. We had a very ambivalent approach to customer service. Now, business will have to be fought for” (Chapter 4: 106).

This research study notes that emotional benefits such as Irish culture and heritage are important in differentiating ‘Ireland the Brand’ from other tourist destinations, “the people, place and culture; that’s the key cornerstone” (Chapter 4: 139). This current study argues that Irish culture today, comprises of old elements, such as, the traditional Irish pub, and modern elements, such as modern arts including, Riverdance. Riverdance played a large part in presenting a view of modern Ireland, globally. Ni Mháille Battel (2003) also purports that an image of Ireland which has ancient ways and traditional values, teamed with its new found fashionable identity through lifestyle and culture, is communicated internationally. Swarbrooke (1999), notes that Ireland has experienced phenomenal success in tourism, through exploiting its cultural heritage (from its amazing castles to the world class famous writers), and its modern culture (through shows such as Riverdance, its hosting of the European Capital of Culture festivals and the film and rock music scene). This study has found that, in terms of the old elements of Irish Culture, St. Patrick, plays a significant role. This study notes that St. Patrick’s Day is one of the world’s most celebrated occasions which in turn aids in building ‘Ireland the Brand’ globally. “I think we have another intangible asset, St. Patrick’s Day. The whole world celebrates March 17th each year” (Chapter 4: 110).

The current study has found that the values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ which appeal to foreign direct investors include, the availability of green-field sites, proximity to the United States, an open economy, the Irish corporate tax structure, and the fact that Ireland is an educated
English speaking nation. Duffy (2009), previously noted that, for many US firms located here, Ireland is the gateway to Europe, the biggest market in the world. McGee (2009) concurs and observes that the Minister for Communication and Energy, Eamon Ryan, is actively communicating a message to US based companies that, Ireland is ideally suited, through its facilities and people, to become a ‘test base’ in Europe, for American high-tech companies. “In North America, I think the values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ are that our work ethic is very ambitious and our mindset is very similar to American companies” (Chapter 4: 112). McGee (2009) further purports that, Ireland could become the ‘Silicon Valley’ of Europe. Wright (2006) observes that Ireland is becoming more cosmopolitan due to extraneous factors, such as economic success, the currency shift from the pound to the euro, changing demographics, the influx of migrant workers from other European countries, new technologies, a chic lifestyle and a more financially driven society.

5:1:3 Marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’

The research findings in this study suggest that many stakeholders are responsible for the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’ including, the Irish people who reside in Ireland, the Irish diaspora, the IDA Ireland, Tourism Ireland Limited, and the government. “Who owns brand Ireland in that nation branding sense? We collectively own it. Obviously, governments have a role in that side of things, but the diaspora are key players in it. We the citizens are stakeholders in the brand, the industrialists, the commercial people, anyone who is involved in any way and cares about it, have a responsibility towards the brand” (Chapter 4: 129). Tourism Ireland Limited has the primary role of marketing the island of Ireland overseas, in terms of tourism, according to Tourism Ireland Limited (2009). This is further supported in this current study. “We in our role as Tourism Ireland are responsible for what we call brand
Ireland. We do a lot of consumer work and try to understand the perceptions and reputation of Ireland. Our current expression is that this island is a place of unique character and characters” (Chapter 4: 106). This research study notes that the Irish people who reside in Ireland, and the Irish diaspora play a significantly important role. “I think our diaspora are mainly responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the brand’. It is without question, that it’s the Irish people sell Ireland” (Chapter: 130).

This current study acknowledges the important role of the IDA in marketing Ireland to foreign direct investors. Kennedy (2009) supports this and explains that the IDA market Ireland to potential foreign direct investors, through the communication of Ireland’s key strengths, in marketing campaigns. Recent campaigns include the ‘Innovation comes Naturally’ campaign, which is aimed at keeping Ireland at the forefront of investors’ minds as the major economies come out of recession, (Kennedy, 2009).

The current study also found that whilst organisations such as the IDA and Tourism Ireland Limited are key to marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’, the government is ultimately responsible for these organisations, as it is the government that funds and staffs these organisations. Interestingly, this current research study relays that the two main stakeholders responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ are the Irish government and the Irish people.

This current study observes that the Irish people both domestically and internationally, hold the greatest responsibility in marketing Ireland. “Every citizen in Ireland is responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. Obviously, there are groups such as the IDA or Tourism Ireland Limited that are ultimately responsible, but it can’t be left to say it is their job, not mine. So, when I am travelling, I formally consider myself an ambassador of the country”
(Chapter 4: 128). “The government departments or authorities, can help shape the direction and rally the call to action but ultimately, I think it is down to each Irish person to look into their own heart and soul and say, what does it mean for me to be Irish” (Chapter 4: 129). Significantly, another finding in this current study observes that there is no one overarching brand strategy directing the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’ abroad.

This current study investigated the concept of the existence of a synergistic working relationship between the government organisations that are responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. 17% of interviewees in the current research study believe synergies between the organisations responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ currently exist; 33% state that such synergies do not currently exist but should exist, and 25% do not believe that synergies between these organisations should exist. This study notes that a greater value proposition could exist with the introduction of synergies between all groups responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. “I think that there is an opportunity, to explore more cross-functionality across the organisations who currently market Ireland” (Chapter 4: 137). This study has also found that many of the organisations that market Ireland, such as the IDA and Tourism Ireland Limited have common goals, hence a synergistic effort could exist. “There are groups of people that definitely could work together in terms of getting that brand concrete” (Chapter 4: 136).

This current study has found that a steering group, comprising of all of the stakeholders of ‘Ireland the Brand’, which predominantly consists of the government, (including government organisations tasked with marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’), and the Irish people (Irish people both at home and abroad, from all social classes and backgrounds), should be established with the objective of developing a clear brand strategy for ‘Ireland the Brand’. “You don’t
necessarily need a body but you would need an overarching strategy and possibly a steering group or a committee of the relevant persons of each of those organisations who could influence and set the strategy and meet quarterly to tweak it and to shape it as things happen. There isn’t anything similar at present” (Chapter 4: 137). In the concluding days of this current research study, the ‘Global Irish Economic Forum’ took place in Dublin, Ireland. The Global Irish Economic Forum was the first forum of its kind, in Ireland, and was similar in structure to that which was proposed in the findings of this current study, of a steering committee with the purpose of creating a comprehensive strategic proposals to increase the value proposition for ‘Ireland the Brand’.

Furthermore, 25% of the interviewees, state that synergies should not exist between government organisations tasked with marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ as they believe that due to the fact that they targeting different markets, including the foreign direct investment and tourism market, the need for different brand strategies for the each of these markets should exist. “It’s difficult, because each has very different strategies and very different focuses and objectives” (Chapter 4: 134). This study reports that consolidation of some of the government organisations involved in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’, from the perspective of Ireland Inc., namely the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, should occur.

Another finding emerging from this study, is that there is a degree of overlap in the message communicated about ‘Ireland the Brand’. The IDA recently ran a communications campaign whereby the creative aspect focused on Irish figures who contributed hugely to Irish culture. “We had a communications campaign running for about two and a half years where we worked with the artist Louis le Brocquy. We used some of his work in our print advertising which included images of W. B. Yeats, le Brocquy himself, Bono and Oscar Wilde” (Chapter
This message was used in conjunction with a second message presenting Ireland as a knowledge economy. The campaign, ‘Ireland, knowledge is in our nature’, was a creative way to encourage foreign direct investment in Ireland, and also included messages about the cultural characteristics and creative history that are embedded in the Irish people (Basis, 2007). The Tourism Brand Ireland campaign ‘Go Where Ireland takes You’ also communicates messages about the Irish culture and characteristics, which represents an example of overlap in the messages communicated about ‘Ireland the Brand’.

An interesting finding emerging from this study is that the concept of ‘global similarities and local differences’ should be utilised in terms of branding Ireland abroad, employing a certain degree of tailoring of the message when communicating to different markets, whilst maintaining consistency in relation to the pillars of the brand message of ‘Ireland the Brand’. This study therefore identifies the need for a holistic brand strategy for ‘Ireland the Brand’ which states what the pillars of ‘Ireland the Brand’ are.

5:1:4 The Impact of the Failing Irish economy on ‘Ireland the Brand’

Sutherland (2009) notes that the successful Irish economy has been a phenomenon since the late 1980’s and from a relatively poor country, Ireland has risen to become one of the richest economies in the world. The current research study found that the success or failure of Ireland’s economy is highly dependent on other economies. “We do well when global economies do well. We do worse when global economies are suffering and that’s exactly what’s happening right now” (Chapter 4: 143).
Significantly, this research study has found that there are negative associations with 'Ireland the Brand' at present. The findings of this research study state that the failing Irish economy has impacted negatively on 'Ireland the Brand'. "Given the amount of media coverage, that is all quite negatively skewed, I definitely think it has damaged our reputation" (Chapter 4: 141). This study found that it is highly important that Ireland is seen to be implementing strategic decisions, with the aim of resolving the issues it currently faces. Notably, this current research observes that there has been a considerable drop in foreign direct investment as a result of the failing economy. This research reports that the aforementioned negative perceptions won't have longevity, as many other nations around the world are in a similar situation and are focused on their own economic situation.

5:1:5 The Future of ‘Ireland the Brand’

The findings of this research study show that the image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ and the message it communicates needs to be radically changed in order to compete in today’s market environment. Wright (2007) previously noted that the future management of the Irish tourism industry is dependent on proactive development of the product range. The current study found that ‘Ireland the Brand’ needs to move up the value chain and undergo a repositioning, as it currently is in a very weak position and unable to compete effectively. "Ireland has to move up the value chain because we are at a period where we have to re-invent" (Chapter 4: 114).

The current research study found that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has recently acquired many negative associations. The research observes that it is of the utmost importance that action be taken in order to recover some of the positive associations with the brand, which have
recently been eroded. “People need to see that yes, we are in a poor position, things have
gone awry but most importantly, it needs to be communicated that we have a plan of recovery
for the next three to five years” (Chapter 4: 141). Notably, this research has found that the
different target markets, namely the foreign direct investment market, and the tourism
market, require a renewed focus on the benefits each sector can offer and strong
communication of these benefits. This study notes that Ireland should be associated with
expertise in areas such as innovation, and research and development, particularly, in the high
technology sector. Cowen (2009) announced that Ireland must renovate its brand order to
achieve a competitive advantage in a globalised world. At the Irish Global Economic Forum,
Cowen (2009) outlined a vision for the future of Ireland as a smart, high-value, export-led
economy, with some of the world’s leading research-intensive multinationals, a number of
which will be Irish owned.

Arising from contributions by the interviewees’ of this research study, a number of key
important elements to shaping the future of both the foreign direct investment sector and the
tourism sector, were highlighted, namely, all Irish people, the development of a knowledge
economy and a focus on green activities within the island of Ireland. This study observes that
the Irish people, residing in Ireland and the Irish diaspora are extremely important as they are
the foundations to building the knowledge economy in Ireland, which, as part of this study
was found to be key to the future of Ireland. McWilliams (2009) states that, there are many
reasons to be optimistic about the fusion of the emotional and commercial power of the Irish
diaspora, and the realities of Irish economic recovery. It was also noted that in order to build
a knowledge economy, the education system needs to be transformed to meet the future
knowledge needs of ‘Ireland the Brand’. McWilliams (2009) further posits that this present
crisis presents an opportunity for Ireland to reinvent its brand abroad through the Irish
diaspora by embracing the Irish diaspora as part of ‘New Ireland’s’ foreign and industrial policy. Having organised the Irish Global Economic Forum in Dublin 2009, McWilliams has galvanised the power of the Irish diaspora.

From the foreign direct investment aspect, this study found that Ireland has issues with its ability to offer cost competitiveness. A significant finding emerging from this study is that Ireland should be offering green energy as a means of communicating its cost competitiveness and also green energy may become a strong export of the Irish economy thereby, aiding the restoration of the Irish economy. This study can also report that a green offering will also aid in securing a successful future for the Irish tourism sector. “Green tourism is a key area” (Chapter 4: 150). It was noted that activity and adventure holidays with a green association would be key to the future of Irish tourism. The Irish people are also centre to the future of Irish tourism. This study has found that the future for tourism will involve engaging visitors, through activities such as cookery and art, and the Irish people will play an important role in achieving this.

Furthermore, it was noted that the Irish diaspora will be pivotal to the future of Tourism Brand Ireland, through continuing to build a positive image of ‘Ireland the Brand’, through, for example, positive word of mouth and personal recommendations, together with their strategic input into the development and implementation of strategies for ‘Ireland the Brand’. Cullen (2009) states that, the global association of Irish (the diaspora), with its creativity and imagination it has the potential to support the concept of a knowledge economy and reinforce the branding of Ireland as the ‘innovation island’ and position the brand as a global creative hub and attractive destination for foreign direct investment (in O’ Mahony, 2009). Martin (2009) proposed the importance establishing a new, more dynamic relationship between
Ireland and its diaspora, and suggested the use of technology, such as an online portal to act as a means of creating such a link, and promoting diaspora related tourism (in Cullen, 2009). Boyle and Kitchin (2008) believe that if an Irish diaspora strategy was implemented, many gains could be achieved socially, culturally, politically and economically.

17% of interviewees who contributed to this research study propose that continued investment in ‘Ireland the Brand’ is central to the future success of its brand. Paul O’Toole, former CEO of Tourism Ireland, proposes a strategy of ‘stop-recover-grow’ to achieve success for ‘Ireland the Brand’ in the future. “We have lost a bit of ground last year, we will lose more ground this year and then when the upturn comes, the aim should be to stop losing, recover what was lost, grow and grow meaning” (Chapter 4: 152).

### Table 5.1 Summary Framework of Research Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ireland the Brand</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place branding has existed for hundreds of years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The brand image of a country is critical to its success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of globalisation and competition, managing a country’s brand image is becoming a more important priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland the brand does exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From a commercial point of view, Ireland the brand is divided into two sectors – foreign direct investment and tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland Inc. is the term coined to describe the ‘company brand’ aspect of Ireland relating to all areas of the economy and foreign direct investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Brand Ireland is the brand at the forefront of promoting Ireland as a tourism destination to international visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is highly important that the brand values of Ireland the brand are incorporated into the communications strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland has benefitted many foreign companies who invested in Ireland, through the values it has to offer including a well educated workforce and open market economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recent successes of Ireland the brand have instilled hope to other nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland the brand is a premium brand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Has experienced phenomenal success in the past.
Successful history of Ireland the brand has been eroded by recent negative associations resulting from the failing economy.
Ireland the brand still has credibility.

Values of Ireland the Brand

- Irish People
- Céad mile failte
- Irish Culture
- Irish Heritage
- Physical Landscape
- St. Patrick's Day
- Availability of green field sites
- Proximity to the United States of America
- An open economy
- Corporate tax structure
- Educated workforce
- English speaking nation
- Elements of modern Ireland including cosmopolitan cities
- Excellent quality of life
- Strong willed nation

Marketing of Ireland the Brand

- Many stakeholders are responsible for the marketing of Ireland the brand - the Irish people including the Irish diaspora, the IDA, Tourism Ireland Limited and the Irish government
- Tourism Ireland Limited - responsibility for the marketing of the Irish tourism industry abroad
- Tourism Ireland Limited - responsibility for Tourism Brand Ireland
- There is no one overarching strategy for Ireland the brand
- There is a degree of overlap in the message that is communicated about Ireland from a foreign direct investment and a tourism point of view
- If more synergies existed between those who marketed Ireland, a greater value proposition would be achieved.
- A steering group could propose solutions for both the foreign direct investment point of view and the tourism point of view and also maintain a holistic view of the brand in its entirety.
- Others reported that synergies between those who market Ireland should not exist as different audiences are targeted and hence an individual focus is necessary.
The message communicated about Ireland the brand may need to be tailored to each market however the pillars of the brand remain the same.

The Impact of the Failing Irish Economy on Ireland the Brand

- The failure or success of Ireland's economy is highly dependent on other economies.
- The failing Irish economy has impacted negatively on Ireland the brand.
- The negative associations of Ireland the brand will not have longevity as many other nations are experiencing a similar situation.

The Future of Ireland the Brand

- Ireland the brands needs to be re-positioned further up the value chain in order to compete in today's market environment.
- Ireland should be portrayed as having expertise in areas such as innovation, research and development (particularly in the high-technology area) and green activities.
- Ireland needs to build a powerful knowledge economy and to do so, the education systems need to be transformed.
- The Irish people and green activities will be critical to the future of Ireland the brand.
- The Irish Diaspora will be a key element to the future of Ireland the brand.
- Ireland should focus on creating and selling green energy.
- Activities holidays should be central to the tourism marketing communications campaign.

5:2 A Model for developing ‘Ireland the Brand’ brand strategy: Structure and Foundation to its Development

Figure 5.1 presents a model of the structure and foundations for developing a brand strategy for ‘Ireland the Brand’. Following an analysing the contributions from the interviewees in this current research study, the researcher identified issues pertaining to the development of a clear brand strategy for ‘Ireland the Brand’. The model accentuates the findings of this current study and adds to the existing literature on the structure and process of developing ‘Ireland the Brand’
One of the objectives of this current study is, to identify who is ultimately responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. Whilst researching this objective, it became clear that mixed opinions exist with regard to the credibility of the message communicated about ‘Ireland the Brand’ and the efficiency to which the brand strategies for the various sectors for ‘Ireland the Brand’ are developed. Few examples of how the various stakeholders who have a responsibility for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’, including the IDA and Tourism Ireland Limited, have limited cross-functional influence in the development of the brand strategies for their different sectors (foreign direct investment / Irish tourism abroad), were communicated in this research study. Furthermore, limited inclusion of the other stakeholders in ‘Ireland the Brand’, including, the Irish diaspora, the Irish people who reside in Ireland ply a limited role, if any, in developing the brand strategy for Ireland the Brand’, according to this study. To conclude, this research suggest a model which includes a steering committee, made up of the key stakeholders, who develop a ‘Holistic Brand Strategy’ detailing the pillars of ‘Ireland the Brand’ which in turn act as the foundation for building brand strategies for ‘Ireland the Brand’ specific to various target audiences.
Figure 5.1 A Model for developing 'Ireland the Brand' brand strategy: Structure and Foundation to its Development

'Ireland the Brand'

Steering group

- Irish People residing in Ireland
- Irish diaspora
- Government (including representatives from government organisations who have a responsibility to market Ireland)
- Representatives directly from foreign direct investment sector
- Representatives from tourism sector

'Ireland the Brand'

Holistic Brand Strategy

- Development of the pillars of 'Ireland the Brand'

Government Organisations Develop
'Ireland the Brand'
Brand Strategy per Target Audience

- Developed upon the concept of global similarities, local differences and including the pillars of 'Ireland the Brand'
5.3 Recommendations for the Future of ‘Ireland the Brand’

The current research study has found that ‘Ireland the Brand’, does exist. It is a brand which has experienced phenomenal success, in the past, particularly during the Celtic Tiger era, however, as a result of the failing Irish economy, negative associations are linked with ‘Ireland the Brand’, and subsequently the credibility of ‘Ireland the Brand’ has been negatively affected.

This current research study recommends that, as a key stakeholder involved in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’, the government needs to develop and implement a re-positioning strategy for the brand, in order to rebuild the lost credibility and create a value proposition to ensure the future success of ‘Ireland the Brand’. This re-positioning strategy should act as the guiding principles for ‘Ireland the Brand’, highlighting the key pillars of ‘Ireland the Brand’ which in turn should form the basis of other marketing strategies developed by the various organisations responsible for marketing Ireland. Central to this re-positioning strategy should be the concept of the knowledge economy, green activities, the Irish diaspora and a renewed focus on the Céad Míle Fáilte. Furthermore, this current study has found that the implementation of strategies pertaining to the future of ‘Ireland the Brand’ is key.

As outlined in Chapter 4, green activities will play a key role in the future of ‘Ireland the Brand’. An environment encouraging the development of green energy, in terms of knowledge and production needs to be created. From a tourism perspective, Ireland should strive to become known as ‘the green island’. In order to do this, a conscious effort needs to be made by all people living in Ireland, to contribute to making Ireland a green nation. The government should implement policies surrounding, litter, recycling and carbon footprint, to name but a few, in order to ensure the crafting of ‘the green island’. Green standards should
be implemented for all businesses servicing the Irish tourism sector, with strict controls in place.

Continued investment in building a knowledge economy, or an ‘innovation island’, as described by one interviewee who contributed to this research study, is vital. This will involve making changes to the education system and implementing campaigns to promote a knowledge economy. Research funding and greater funding for education needs to be forthcoming from the government to achieve the knowledge economy in Ireland.

This research recommends that synergies between the stakeholders involved in marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’, as described in Chapter 4, and in this current Chapter, namely, the Irish government, the Irish people (both those residing in Ireland and the Irish diaspora) and astute business people, should exist in order to aid in the creation of a stronger value proposition. Finally, considering the importance of the Irish diaspora to ‘Ireland the Brand’, as highlighted in this current study, more efforts need to be put in place to include the Irish diaspora in developing and executing marketing campaigns relating to ‘Ireland the Brand’. The Irish diaspora are key to selling ‘Ireland the Brand’, abroad.

5:4 Recommendations for Future Research

This section provides a list of recommendations for future research pertaining to ‘Ireland the Brand’. The findings of this current research provide the opinions and insights of twelve interviewees, relating to the objectives highlighted in Chapter 3, which relate to the concept of ‘Ireland the Brand’. The findings in this study can be used by those involved in marketing
"Ireland the Brand" from a foreign direct investment or tourism perspectives, or by those studying marketing, business or economics, or by research professionals.

As presented in Chapter 4, the Irish diaspora are an important brand value to "Ireland the Brand". One area in particular, which deserves extensive research, is the relationship between the Irish diaspora and the Irish government organisations that are responsible for marketing "Ireland the Brand". Also, research could be undertaken to identify opportunities to utilise the Irish diaspora, with the aim of building a positive brand image for "Ireland the Brand". Furthermore, an area research, should Ireland recover from the current economic recession, would be to examine how the Irish diaspora contributed to the recovery of the Irish economy post economic recession of 2009.

Further research is also needed on identifying opportunities to increase the value proposition "Ireland the Brand" has to offer potential foreign direct investors, paying particular attention to the knowledge economy, innovation and green energy. The scope of Ireland's ability to build each of these values and the potential importance of these values (in co-existence with the existing brand values) requires further exploration.

Research could also be undertaken to examine the organisational structures of government organisations responsible for marketing "Ireland the Brand", including the IDA and Tourism Ireland Limited, with the specific purpose of identifying cross functional areas where synergies could be implemented in order to streamline responsibilities and processes, thereby, increasing efficiencies within these organisations.
An exciting area for future research would be an empirical study of the overseas target market for Irish tourism. Is there untapped potential in this target market? Another interesting area which merits further research is an investigation into the perceptions and effectiveness of the recent marketing campaigns relating to ‘Tourism Brand Ireland’, examining whether more creativity is required in order to appeal to a wider audience surprising people and enticing more visitors to Ireland. As outlined in Chapter 4, the latest Tourism Ireland Limited campaign ‘Go where Ireland takes you’ followed a traditional process in developing this campaign, whereby Tourism Ireland Limited carried out extensive market research and produced a campaign which appealed to the wants of the target market, which were highlighted in the market research report. Could there be a more creative aspect to the marketing of ‘Ireland the Brand’?

Finally, this research was conducted within the island of Ireland. It would be interesting to conduct this research, with the same research objectives, internationally, with potential foreign direct investors and potential visitors to Ireland for tourism purposes.

5:5 Conclusions

This study expands on existing academic literature through findings in this current study relating to ‘Ireland the Brand’. This study has examined the key chosen elements of ‘Ireland the Brand’, presented the current brand values of ‘Ireland the Brand’, put forward the image of ‘Ireland the Brand’ as it is perceived today and investigated who is responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’. This research study also addressed the issue of the failing Irish economy and the impact it is having on ‘Ireland the Brand’. It further observed that Ireland is highly dependent on other economies but concluded that the negative associations
with ‘Ireland the Brand’ will not have longevity. Finally, this research study investigates future opportunities for ‘Ireland the Brand’. Semi-structured interviews, conducted with twelve senior executives who are involved in the strategic function of their particular sector, senior management of global organisations, a chief executive officer, a government representative and operational executives, provided the data which allowed for analysis of key findings in Chapter 4. The qualitative findings enabled the research to present comprehensive conclusions to the research objectives.

The conclusions of this research study confirm that ‘Ireland the Brand’ does exist and from a commercial point of view, it is divided into two key sectors, foreign direct investment industry and the tourism industry. Ireland Inc. is the brand name used when describing ‘Ireland the Brand’ relating to the Irish economy and foreign direct investment. It has been observed by interviewees contributing to this research study, that ‘Ireland the Brand’ has benefitted from many foreign companies who invested in Ireland and also benefitted many foreign companies who invested in Ireland through the values it has to offer. Tourism Brand Ireland is the brand used when discussing ‘Ireland the Brand’ in terms of Irish tourism abroad. ‘Ireland the Brand’ experienced phenomenal success over the past twenty years, however, this success has recently been eroded by negative associations, predominantly resulting from the failing Irish economy.

This study has highlighted the importance of brand values and notes that powerful brand values are key to achieving success for ‘Ireland the Brand’. The brand values of ‘Ireland the Brand’ as identified in the current study include, the Irish people residing within Ireland and the Irish diaspora, the Irish welcome, Irish culture, Irish heritage, the Irish landscape, St. Patrick’s Day, the availability of green-field sites, proximity to the United States of America,
an open economy, the Irish corporate tax structure, an educated workforce, an English speaking nation, cosmopolitan cities and an excellent quality of life. This study can conclusively state that the Irish people residing in Ireland and Irish diaspora are the most important values that ‘Ireland the Brand’ possess.

This study can conclusively observes that, currently there are many stakeholders responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ including, the Irish people residing within Ireland, Irish diaspora, the IDA, Tourism Ireland Limited and the Irish government. This research identified that a synergistic approach between the stakeholders responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’, teamed with an overarching brand strategy for ‘Ireland the Brand’ should lead to an increased value proposition.

This research has observed that ‘Ireland the Brand’ needs to be re-positioned further up the value chain in order to compete in today’s market environment. The Irish people and Irish diaspora will be key to adding value to ‘Ireland the Brand’. This study notes that Ireland should be portrayed as having expertise in areas such as innovation, research and development and green activities. The Irish people, both those who reside in Ireland and in particular the Irish diaspora will be pivotal in order to achieve such expertise. This current study observes that using the influence, brains, money and attitude of the Irish diaspora to promote ‘Ireland the Brand’ will be crucial. A transformation of the Irish education system was also purported by one of the interviewees who contributed to this current research study.

An interesting opportunity for the future of ‘Ireland the Brand’, identified in this study is, green activities. Green energy can add value to the foreign direct investors in terms of a means of cost competitiveness and adds value to the Irish tourism market not only through
cost as a result of green energy, but the concept of green adventure activities or the idea of a green destination, appeals to a niche market.

In conclusion, this study acknowledges that ‘Ireland the Brand’, does exist, is a very strong willed brand which has risen to success from a low beginning, and hence instils hope in many other nations. It does have credibility, however, it is currently in a situation where its success has been eroded somewhat, predominantly as a result of the failing Irish economy. An increased synergistic approach needs to be taken between the organisations responsible for marketing ‘Ireland the Brand’ with the aim of increasing the value proposition and consistency in the communication message about the core pillars of ‘Ireland the Brand’. The future of ‘Ireland the Brand’ lies predominantly with the following key aspects, the Irish people residing in Ireland and the Irish diaspora, a green proposition in terms of energy and a green tourism product, and the development of the knowledge economy.
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**Appendix A**

**Interviewee List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Paul O’Toole</td>
<td>Tourism Ireland Ltd.</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>01/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Caitriona O’Kennedy</td>
<td>IDA Ireland</td>
<td>Manager, Marketing Communications Division</td>
<td>01/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sarah Fitzgearld</td>
<td>Tourism Ireland Ltd.</td>
<td>Brand Executive</td>
<td>01/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>EMC Corp.</td>
<td>Vice President, Managing Director EMC Ireland</td>
<td>13/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kevin Cullinane</td>
<td>Cork Airport</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>14/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Aisling Ward</td>
<td>Tourism Dept CIT</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>18/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Maria Benson</td>
<td>Tourism Dept. CIT</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>18/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous X</td>
<td>Company X</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>22/05/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Fiona Buckley</td>
<td>Fáilte Ireland</td>
<td>General Manager, Fáilte Ireland South West</td>
<td>15/06/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Seamus Heaney</td>
<td>Kingsley</td>
<td>Director of Marketing</td>
<td>18/06/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Simon Coveney</td>
<td>MEP</td>
<td>Fine Gael spokesperson on Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Previous Member of the European Parliament</td>
<td>21/07/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Renate Murphy</td>
<td>Cork Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>18/08/09</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix B

The Interview Guide

Questions:

1. In today’s world, many powerful brands exist, for example Coca Cola, Mercedes, Prada, Dell. Such big brands have clear brand values and through focused brand strategies, build awareness and knowledge which has subsequently translated into substantial brand equity for these brands. With this in mind, do you think there is such a thing as Ireland the brand?

2. What do you think Ireland the brand is all about?

3. Do you believe Ireland the brand has value, and if so, what do you consider to be the values of Ireland the brand?

4. In your opinion, what domestic and international factors contribute to the brand value of Ireland?

5. Do you believe Ireland the brand is successful? If so, what are the main factors which make it successful?

6. Traditionally, Ireland is perceived as having a strong cultural heritage of music, dance and literature. This was re-enforced globally through those who were part of mass Irish Emigration. It may be argued that the Irish emigrants acted as powerful brand
ambassadors. Do you think these associations are still being communicated by the Irish emigrants today?

7. Do you think these perceptions still exist?

8. What importance do you place both historically and today on these brand associations with Ireland the brand?

9. Do you believe Ireland's brand image differs from market to market? If so, do you believe it has been marked to achieve this?

10. Do you think there is credibility in the brand of Ireland?

11. What is your opinion on “Destination Ireland” as a brand?

12. Do you believe “Cead Mile Failte” (Ireland of the Welcome) still exists?

13. Who do you believe is responsible for this branding phenomenon?

14. Do you believe synergies could exist if those who marketed Ireland worked more closely together?

15. Do you believe the recent negative publicity attributed to Ireland Inc., as a result of the failing Irish economy, cases of corruption by those in authority, poor corporate
governance and high unemployment has had a significant effect on the brand image of Ireland the brand?

16. What future do you envisage for the brand? What are your strategic goals and long term objectives for Ireland the brand?

17. Do you have any further comments on the brand value Ireland the brand?

These questions were the lead questions for each of the areas investigated in the interviews as part of this current study. Supplementary questions were asked where appropriate in order to explore more fully the opinions of the interviewees.
Appendix C

Sometimes, it's the things you didn't plan that make the journey more interesting.
So if you're trying to get from Shannon to Dublin but find yourself surfing in Donegal, don't worry - Dublin is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
Visit discoverireland.com or call 0800 039 2000.
Glossary

**Bord Bia:** Bord Bia is also known as the Irish Food Board and acts as a link between Irish food, drink and horticulture suppliers and the worldwide market. It aims to develop markets for the Irish products from these sectors.

**Bord Glas:** Bord Glas held the responsibility for the horticultural industry in Ireland, however, on the first of July 2004, Bord Glas was integrated into Bord Bia.

**Buachaill:** The Irish word for ‘boy.’

**Brand Architecture:** This refers to the structure of brands within a organisation's portfolio.

**Cailín:** The Irish word for ‘girl’.

**CNBC World / CNBC Europe:** A business news television channel.

**Craic:** An Irish term meaning fun.

**Diaspora:** This refers to members of a population relocating to another area / country.

**Digital Marketing:** The process of marketing communications using interactive mediums such as the Internet.

**Fáilte:** The Irish word for ‘welcome’.

**FAS:** Ireland’s National Training and Employment Authority.

**GAA:** The Gaelic Athletic Association, is an amateur sporting organisation.

**Global Irish Economic Forum:** An event which brought together, the Irish government including the government organisations with responsibilities to market Ireland, business people from Ireland and influential and successful Irish diaspora.

**Great Famine:** A period in Irish history between 1845 and 1852, which involved starvation of the population as a result of a potato blight and resulted in mass death and emigration.

**Green-field sites:** These are sites which have not yet been developed on.

**Integrated Marketing Communications:** This refers to the means of communicating an organisations with the aim of increasing sales message through different mediums including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotions, PR and personal selling.

**Industrial development agency (Ireland):** are responsible for the development of foreign direct investment in Ireland.
Irish Tourism Association (ITA): This was set up by F. W. Crossley in 1893 marketed Irish tourism overseas.

Knees-up: This refers to a party.

Marketing Mix: This is commonly known as the ‘4 P’s’ of marketing – Product, Place, Price and Promotion.

OECD: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. This organisation enables governments to compare policy, experience and exchange solutions to common problems.

Online Portal: This allows for the presentation of information on the world wide web.

Point of Difference: In business, this highlights the areas of differentiation of an organisation, product, service, or brand.

Points of Parity: In business, this highlights commonality between organisations and their products, services or brands.

Programme for National Recovery: This was a three year programme which created agreements between the Irish government and the social partners.

SHINE: A shared vision created by the tourism industry to ensure visitors to Ireland have a positive experience. This programme is based on four qualities which people in the tourism industry should express to visitors in order to ensure an enjoyable experience for the visitors. These are, being happy interest, natural and expert.

Single European Market: Enables the free movement of people, goods, services and money within the EU.

SOS: Indicates a distress call for aid.

Subprime Mortgages: A risky category of consumer loans

Temple Bar: An area in Dublin with a lively nightlife.

The Belfast Agreement: A plan agreed on April 10 1998, which set out a plan for developed government in Northern Ireland on a stable and inclusive basis and provided for the establishment of human rights and equality commissions and decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.

Think tank: An organisation of people who come together to create a strategy.

Tourism Ireland Limited: An organisation responsible for marketing Irish tourism overseas.