



Online-Appendix

„The Role of Sustainability in Family Firm Branding: An Identity-Based Analysis“

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Appendices

Appendix A 25 Case Study Firms

Industry	Firm Name	Family Name	Founding Year	Firm Age	Revenue (\$ Billion)	Employees
Retail 1	Schwarz Group	Schwarz	1930	95	197.09	575,000
Retail 2	The Gebr. Heinemann Group	Heinemann	1879	146	4.02	9,000
Retail 3	ALDI SÜD Group	Albrecht	1913	112	91.76	50,000
Retail 4	Premium Food Group (Tönnies Holding)	Tönnies	1971	54	7.22	15,000
Retail 5	Deichmann SE	Deichmann	1913	112	9.50	49,000
ConsumerProducts 1	maxingvest GmbH & Co. KGaA (Tchibo)	Herz	1949	76	13.98	32,000
ConsumerProducts 2	Intersnack Group	Pfeifer / Langen	1968	57	4.64	14,000
ConsumerProducts 3	Miele & Cie. KG	Miele / Zinkann	1899	126	5.75	23,000
ConsumerProducts 4	HELM AG	Schnabel	1900	125	8.44	2,000
ConsumerProducts 5	Dr. August Oetker KG	Oetker	1891	134	7.55	29,000
Mobility 1	INA-Holding Schaeffler GmbH & Co. KG	Schaeffler	1946	79	65.67	305,000
Mobility 2	Freudenberg & Co. KG	Freudenberg	1849	176	12.99	52,000
Mobility 3	DRÄXLMAIER Group	Dräxlmaier	1958	67	6.11	72,000
Mobility 4	DACHSER Group	Simon	1930	95	7.75	34,000
Mobility 5	Brose Group	Stoschek	1908	117	8.62	32,000
AdvancedMfg 1	Robert Bosch GmbH	Bosch	1886	139	99.99	429,000
AdvancedMfg 2	Adolf Würth GmbH & Co. KG	Würth	1945	80	22.27	87,000
AdvancedMfg 3	Voith GmbH & Co. KGaA	Voith	1867	158	5.88	22,000
AdvancedMfg 4	Andreas Stihl AG & Co. KG	Stihl	1926	99	5.75	20,000
AdvancedMfg 5	TRUMPF SE + Co. KG	Leibinger	1923	102	5.61	18,000
ResourceIntensive 1	Wilhelm Hoyer B.V. & Co. KG	Hoyer	1924	101	9.54	3,000
ResourceIntensive 2	Messer Group	Messer	1898	127	4.79	12,000
ResourceIntensive 3	CRONIMET Holding Group	Pilarsky	1981	44	4.32	2,000
ResourceIntensive 4	Vaillant Group	Vaillant	1874	151	4.15	17,000
ResourceIntensive 5	Diersch & Schröder Group (DS Group)	Karstedt	1920	105	7.03	1,000

Note. The verbatim text data from the 25 firms, along with their corresponding web addresses, are available here.

Appendix B FFSBIM Guiding Questions Adapted from Previous Literature

CBIM Element	CBIM (Urde, 2013; Urde & Greyser, 2016)	FBBIPRM (Astrachan et al., 2018)	FFSBIM
Mission & Vision	What engages us, beyond the simple aim of making money (mission)? What is our direction and inspiration (vision)?	What is our family's shared vision?	What sustainability aspect is reflected in our mission or vision that guides or inspires us? (e.g., source of commitment)
Culture	What are our attitudes and how do we work and behave?	What attitudes and norms does our family encourage in the business?	Which of our attitudes, values, and practices support sustainability integration? (e.g., heritage, track record)
Competences	What are we particularly good at, and what makes us better than the competition?	What does our family business excel at, based on experience built over generations?	Which of our capabilities enable effective implementation and differentiation of sustainability?
Brand Core (Core Values)	What do we promise, and what are the core values that sum up what our brand stands for?	Who are we as an organization? (Identity)	What sustainability purposes, values, and commitments are embedded in our core values that we stand for?
Personality	What combination of human characteristics or qualities forms our corporate character?	What is the owning family's role?	What human characteristics or traits are associated with our sustainability approach?
Expression	What is unique or special about the way we communicate and express ourselves ... ?	What uniqueness does the family add to our communication, helping us differentiate ourselves ... ?	What unique means are we using to convey our commitment to sustainability?
Value Proposition	What are our key offerings and how do we want them to appeal to customers and non-customer stakeholders?	What promise does our family make to our stakeholders?	What sustainability-related benefits are offered to our stakeholders?
Relationships	What should be the nature of our relationship with key customers and non-customer stakeholders?	What can the family contribute to establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with our stakeholders?	What aspects of our stakeholder relationships support our sustainability initiatives? (e.g., a mode of conduct)
Position	What is our intended position in the market and in the hearts and minds of key customers and non-customer stakeholders?	How do we position ourselves vis-à-vis our competitors while leveraging our family identity?	What is our intended position regarding sustainability in the market and society? (e.g., a point of reference)

Appendix C FFSBIM Categories (Codes) and Subcategories (Subcodes) in MAXQDA

FFSBIM Codes	Subcodes (First Batch_5)	No.	Subcodes (All Batches_5 x 5)	No.
1 Mission & Vision	1.1 sustainability	4	1.1 sustainability	28
	1.2 family	1	1.2 sustainability-family	15
	1.3 sustainability-family	4		
		9		43
2 Culture	2.1 sustainability	6	2.1 business	11
	2.2 family	2	2.2 family	25
			2.3 sustainability	43
		8		79
3 Competences	3.1 commitment to standards	5	3.1 compliance-certification	10
		10	3.2 business-production	60
	3.2 business	5	3.3 collaboration	12
	3.3 collaboration			
		20		82
4 Core Values	4.1 family-sustainability	1	4.1 family-sustainability	14
	4.2 business-sustainability	2	4.2 sustainability	28
	4.3 business	2		
		5		42
5 Personality	5.1 non-family	3	5.1 non-family	42
	5.2 family	2	5.2 family	12
		5		54
6 Expression	6.1 foundation	3	6.1 pledge-commitment	14
	6.2 product	3	6.2 foundation	12
	6.3 active communication	5	6.3 product	8
	6.4 partnership	3	6.4 report	14
	6.5 award-certification	5	6.5 partnership_alliance_initiative	31
			6.6 award-certification	15
		19		94
7 Value Proposition	7.1 family	3	7.1 product-service	46
	7.2 cost-benefit	3		
	7.3 track record	4		
	7.4 product	7		
		17		46
8 Relationships		9	8.1 non-family	56
			8.2 family	8
		9		64
9 Position		6	9.1 concrete commitment	22
			9.2 strategy	30
		6		52
Total		98		556

Note. The subcategory names represent preliminary thematic groupings created during the coding stage, prior to the interpretive stages. The two MAXQDA files can be found here.

Appendix D The FFSBIMs of 25 Case Study Firms Adapted from the CBIM

Name: Retail 1 – Schwarz Group

Affordable and sustainable products for everyone	Long-term cooperation	“With our leading ecosystem, we take a holistic approach to climate protection.”
Recycled packaging, climate-friendly products, partnerships, reporting	“Our brands, products, and services stand for quality, sustainability, and innovation.”	Optimistic, respect, trust, grounded, and belonging
“We exist to make life better – today and for future generations to come.”	Acting ahead rather than just thinking ahead.	Circular economic capability, unique ecosystem

Name: Retail 2 – The Gebr. Heinemann Group

“We promote the sustainable development of global travel retail.”	Family values, as a family member, collaborative, non-bureaucratic, empathetic	“As a family business, we are leading the way in sustainability.” most human-centric company in travel retail
Think-Tank partnerships, reporting, sustainability awards, membership	“We want to protect the environment and preserve the planet for future generations.”	Family values, passionate, respectful, open-minded, approachable, reliable
“As a family business, Gebr. Heinemann feels a special responsibility to secure the future for generations to come.”	Forward-thinking, responsible, productive. Sustainability is in our DNA. DE&I	Reduced emissions, green products, green collaborations, fact- and figure-based approach

Name: Retail 3 – ALDI SÜD Group

Sustainable products at the best price for everyone	Cooperative, transparent, long-term partnership	Deforestation- and conversion-free supply chains, science-based target
Product labelling, direct communication, sustainability certification, reporting	Simplicity, consistency, responsibility, non-negotiable human and environmental rights	Fair, respectful, loyal, understanding
“Making sustainability affordable for our customers”	Efficient, supportive, honest, fair, responsible, DE&I	Partnership for circular economy, setting standards, vertical integration, reduced emissions

Name: Retail 4 – Premium Food Group (Tönnies Holding)

Modern, balanced nutrition with sustainability, deforestation-free soy feed	Sustainable and valuable community, reliable, responsible	“to become one of Europe’s most sustainable food producers by 2030”
Foundation, sport sponsorship, reporting	“We advocate for sustainable and valuable nutrition through high-quality, wholesome products.”	Objective, balanced between scientific and practical
“We implement innovative, sustainable, and resource-efficient processes.”	Dedicated to social cohesion, forward-looking, committed to the region, protecting others’ rights	Green collaboration, innovative and sustainable processes, minimizing waste, research projects

Name: Retail 5 – Deichmann SE

Products made of skin-friendly materials, vegan products, reasonable price	Fair, personal, cooperative, dependable, supportive	Setting new standards through responsible, social, and ecological action
Membership, foundation, sustainable pilot products	“Making a profit is not an end in itself for us.”	Entrepreneurial, independent, cooperative
“The company must serve the people” [which includes] “customers, employees, suppliers, and people in need.”	Family Christian values, connected to the regional roots, DE&I, committed to those in need	Environmental initiative collaboration, responsible supply chain, exceeding compliance

Name: ConsumerProducts 1 – maxingvest GmbH & Co. KGaA (Tchibo)

Providing high-quality, responsibly produced coffee for the long term.	Collaborative on equal footing, cooperative, dialogue on an equal level	All our coffees will come from responsible sources by 2027.
Foundation, product packaging, partnership and alliance, sustainability awards, reporting	“As a Hanseatic family business, taking responsibility is a given for us.”	Connected to the immediate community, ambitious, honest, entrepreneurial, humble
Enabling conscious living through sustainable products, contributing to people and nature	“We must take responsibility and act responsibly.” Trust, proximity, inspiration, joie de vivre, and quality	Precise impact analysis and targeted solutions, tailored programs, recognizable certified materials

Name: ConsumerProducts 2 – Intersnack Group

Sustainable and healthy snacks without taste compromise, sustainable packaging	Collaborative journey with determination, active multi-stakeholder engagement	We aim to create a positive impact, one snack at a time. 100% renewable electricity by 2032.
Partnership and alliance, reporting, membership	“Everything starts with thinking responsibly.”	Entrepreneurial, excellence-driven, empowering, people-centric
“We are fully committed to a more sustainable world.”	Inclusive, team-oriented, responsible, impact-aware, zero-loss mindset, dedication to efficiency	Partnerships for green innovation, responsible sourcing, reducing waste, redesigning packages

Name: ConsumerProducts 3 – Miele & Cie. KG

High-quality, long-lasting products, efficient premium products	Reliable partnership, strong partnerships for impact	Our aim is to reduce calculated CO ₂ emissions by 50% by 2030 compared to 2019.
Partnership for green projects, coveted sustainability awards, products	“As a family-owned business, we believe that the future needs to be sustainable.”	Improvement-driven, caring, ambitious, forward-thinking
“‘Immer Besser’ defines Miele’s commitment to always do better in everything we do.”	Always better, always caring, long-term thinking and planning	Sustainability across the value chain, R&D, long-term spare parts availability

Name: ConsumerProducts 4 – HELM AG

Sustainable and innovative solutions, products with lower ecological impact	Hand in hand, local community engagement, employee social action day	HELM 2030 framework for sustainable business with a positive impact
Partnership for social initiatives, reporting, venture for green business	Family-rooted values and triple-bottom-line responsibility	Passionate, respectful, innovative, collaborative
“HELM uses its opportunities to drive innovation and sustainable solutions.”	Adaptability, reinvention, collaboration, courage, sustainability heritage, equality	Sustainable alliances, emission reduction, products that reduce biodiversity impacts

Name: ConsumerProducts 5 – Dr. August Oetker KG

Sustainable products with the same quality and taste, vegetarian and vegan products	Committed to the customers, responsible, cooperative, collaborative engagement	All our packaging will be recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2030. climate-neutrality by 2050
Partnerships for the environment, reporting, products, foundation	“We aren’t solely focused on economic success – for us, social added value is the focus of our actions.”	Innovative, customer-centric, quality-driven
“We think in terms of generations, not just until the end of the quarter.”	DE&I, creative, innovative, respectful, safe, values-driven	Sustainable products, using sustainable raw materials, supply-chain due diligence

Name: Mobility 1 – INA-Holding Schaeffler GmbH & Co. KG

Innovative products for CO ₂ efficiency, bridging the gap between sustainability and cost efficiency	Guided by integrity and stakeholder dialogue, collaboration for sustainability, reliable partner	Bridging the gap between sustainability and cost efficiency, production and supply-chain climate neutrality by 2030 and 2040
Public recognition, awards, reporting, alliance with an eco-startup	“Business activities must always be in line with the values of ‘Sustainable’, ‘Innovative’, ‘Excellent’, and ‘Passionate’.”	Optimistic, ethical, integrity, law-abiding
In the spirit of a family business, to develop the company responsibly and sustainably in the long term	Respect, reliability, trust, passion, business first, stability, innovation, resilience, can-do attitude, long-term focused	Environmental innovation, emission reduction, products for sustainability, energy-efficient production

Name: Mobility 2 – Freudenberg & Co. KG

Resource-efficient, sustainable solutions and products that have a positive impact on people’s lives	Co-innovation, lasting relationship for collective success, based on integrity and ethical standards, trust, customer focus	“By 2045 at the latest, we aim to make our operations CO ₂ -neutral.”
Membership, employee-led non-profit projects, social initiatives, and support, reporting	“[Freudenberg] stands for respect and tolerance, social and ecological responsibility ... and adherence to standards.”	Dedicated to quality, reliable, inclusive, conscientious, passion for detail, innovative, willingness to change
“At Freudenberg, sustainability plays a key role in everything we do.”	Honesty, modesty, loyalty, decency and trust, innovation, long-term orientation, responsibility	Sustainable products and solutions for impact, minimizing footprint, and continuous optimization

Name: Mobility 3 – DRÄXLMAIER Group

Sustainable solutions across the value chain	Strongly networked manner, a good neighbor, reliable, fair, responsible	Preferred system partner in the premium segment, 1.5 degrees by 2029
Social partnership and sponsorship, reporting, awards	“We operate sustainably along the value chain: economical, ecological, and social.”	Humble, courageous, future-oriented, pioneering
“We think in terms of generations. This is how we shape the character of the mobility of tomorrow.”	Market & customer focus, innovation, independence, sustainability, excellent processes, employee focus, family DNA (long-term focus)	Circular economy, efficient manufacturing processes, Ecological integration across the value chain, Renewable energy use, innovation, expertise

Name: Mobility 4 – DACHSER Group

Playing a key role in sustainably increasing customer value through innovation, intelligent logistics	Long-term partnership for climate, worldwide social engagement beyond business, through shared goals	Sustainability as a prerequisite for long-term business viability, technical emission reduction prioritized over offsetting
Social initiatives, partnership for sustainability projects, reporting	“As a family-owned enterprise, we have a responsibility to society.”	Creative, entrepreneurial, courageous to innovate, efficient, integrity, a global company with heart
“As a family-owned company, DACHSER is committed to a long-term and sustainable corporate policy.”	Human-centered, respectful, tolerant, rich tradition, loyal, committed, integrity, entrepreneurial responsibility	R&D for ecologically-oriented concept, process efficiency, energy efficiency

Name: Mobility 5 – Brose Group

Sustainable and future-proof solutions	Consulting employees for the changes that affect them, supplier engagement for the standard compliance	“From 2039, we want to be able to offer our customers net carbon-neutral products.”
Foundation, membership in sustainable supply chain initiative, reporting, local social initiatives	“As a globally active family-owned company, we have a responsibility for social issues.”	Caring, trustworthy, reliable, dependable, dedicated, responsible
Long-term economic success over generations through sustainable action	Long-standing sense of responsibility, openness, tolerance, respect, trustworthy collaboration, fairness, reliability, honesty	Innovative concepts for climate protection, reducing ecological impact, sustainable product development

Name: AdvancedMfg 1 – Robert Bosch GmbH

Products for safe and sustainable mobility	Guided by openness, trust, fairness, and respect, based on a common understanding of ethical and sustainable action	“Strong and meaningful development”, “Ecology is thus a driver of innovation.”
Foundation, reporting, sustainable products	“We act prudently and responsibly for the benefit of society and the environment.”	Honest, fair, trustworthy, integrity, honor, care
“to develop hardware and software technology that’s accessible to all, improves people’s quality of life and uses natural resources responsibly.”	Long-standing progressive labor values, DE&I, entrepreneurial, responsible, innovative, socially committed	Sustainable supply chains, innovation partnership for circular economy, products aligned with SDGs

Name: AdvancedMfg 2 – Adolf Würth GmbH & Co. KG

Products with material passports and sustainable packaging, connecting people, industries, and materials	Long-lasting connections with stakeholders through mutual trust, working for the common good, and a sustainable society	“We aim to decouple our growth from the consumption of finite resources.”
Foundation, cultural establishments, awards, social initiatives, reporting	“In the long term, the circular economy should be inextricably linked to the Würth brand.”	“Family means mutual trust.”, “We are our customers’ employees.”, reaching out to people
“Our vision: the transformation to the circular economy.”	Openness, gratitude, respect, curiosity, responsibility, humility, modesty, commitment, heritage, family values	Circular economy capability, exclusion criteria for supplier cooperation, committed to the highest quality standards, reducing emission

Name: AdvancedMfg 3 – Voith GmbH & Co. KGaA

Certified sustainable solutions and products that have economic benefits	Close and continuous cooperation for sustainability, stakeholder relationships based on ESG standards, regular dialogue on sustainability	“We want to make Voith the benchmark in sustainability issues.” “Voith wants to be a catalyst of a decarbonized industry.”
Foundation, membership, sponsorships, social initiatives, reporting	“As a family-owned company, we are committed to environmentally friendly, fair, and long-term business practices”	Future-oriented, capable, motivated
“Developing sustainable technologies for future generations”	DE&I, mutual respect, tradition, responsibility, innovative, reliable, fair, sustainable, and ambitious	Sustainable business model, solution for renewable energy, reducing emissions

Name: AdvancedMfg 4 – Andreas Stihl AG & Co. KG

Quality products with sustainability considerations that protect resources and prevent waste	Long-term, cooperative and responsible partnerships based on the fundamental values of honesty, lawfulness, and fairness	“We remain true to our roots and are dedicated to protecting ecosystems, including by consistently addressing climate change.”
Commitment to SDGs, reporting, social initiatives	“As a family-owned company, at STIHL we believe we have a special responsibility for people and nature.”	Pioneering spirit and passion to reshape the future
“Making it easier for people to work in and with nature.”	Openness, trust, caretaker legacy, long-term, independent action, strong cohesion, entrepreneurial, innovative, fair	Reducing long-term energy consumption, efficient sustainable processes, long-term strategic capability

Name: AdvancedMfg 5 – TRUMPF SE + Co. KG

Energy-efficient products, carbon-neutral manufacturing	Based on mutual trust, fairness and standards, perceiving the social environment as part of entrepreneurial activities	Climate protection strategy “Climate Action 2030” for emission reduction, covering the entire value chain
Commitment to global climate targets, social and cultural initiatives, public discourses	“Sustainability has always been at the heart of what we do as a core component of our corporate responsibility.”	Customer-centric personality, free to take responsibility, creative
“Sustainability is part of our corporate strategy. We are taking responsibility for climate action ... ”	Committed to employees and community, DE&I, responsibility, family values, long-term orientation	Carbon-neutral production, committed to renewable energy

Name: ResourceIntensive 1 – Wilhelm Hoyer B.V. & Co. KG

Individually customized solution, excellent, safe, and secure services by protecting people and the environment	Long-term stakeholder relationships to deliver sustainable growth, an open feedback culture, based on the laws and regulations	The Executive Board drives long-term sustainable growth guided by ethical principles and social responsibility.
Foundation, participating in sustainability assessment, and committing to SDGs, awards	“Quality, safety, reliability together with sustainability ... – these are our central corporate values.”	Optimistic, customer-centric, innovative spirit, conscientious, responsible
“As a family-owned company, we think and act in generations to build a sustainable future.”	Family values, reliability, quality, safety, committed to employees and society, continuous improvement	Emission and waste reduction, safe transportation, alternative fuels, high recycling rate

Name: ResourceIntensive 2 – Messer Group

Customized gas solutions for greater safety, sustainability, efficiency, progress, and quality, as economical as possible	Customer care and interaction via digital tools, regionally tailored D&I strategies, stakeholder engagement via materiality assessment	Emission reduction by 40 percent by 2030 compared to 2019, green hydrogen as a lever for decarbonizing the industry
Foundation, participating in sustainability assessment, and committing to SDGs, awards, social initiatives, membership	“Sustainability, customer focus and satisfaction, efficiency, teamwork, and profitable growth are among Messer’s top priorities.”	Trust, mutual respect, helpful, socially committed
“As an energy-intensive company ... Messer has responsibilities and is committed to environmental and climate protection.”	DE&I, mutual trust, respect, a culture of safety, health, and well-being, work-life balance, compliance with the law	Investment decisions based on the climate risks, emission reduction, innovation for the circular economy, energy efficiency

Name: ResourceIntensive 3 – CRONIMET Holding Group

Efficient recycling of valuable metals and alloyed scrap with almost no loss, which leads to less mining	Supplier relationship based on respect for human rights and the environment, investor relationship-building via CSR activities	“We are working with our partners to develop green products. We will become climate-neutral by 2030.”, the first point of contact for customers and suppliers
Foundation, reporting, social and cultural initiatives through long-standing partnerships, and sport sponsorship	Sustainable corporate success must be compliant with legal requirements, industry standards, and self-imposed rules.	Open, respectful, mutual trust, respect, tolerance
“We are working on a recycling economy that connects raw material demand and resource protection.”	Value-oriented, teamwork, integrative, cooperative, entrepreneurial, a learning company, autonomous decision-making	Certified energy management system, circular economy, sustainable business model, energy-efficient production

Name: ResourceIntensive 4 – Vaillant Group

Energy-saving and eco-friendly products, intelligent systems and comprehensive services	Supply-chain based on mandatory environmental and social standards, customized programs for employee development	The trusted global market leadership in sustainable heating solutions, halving CO ₂ emissions by 2030
Commitment to UN principles, social initiatives, special sustainability program, reporting	“Sustainability is the foundation of our business activities.”	Innovative, courage, passion, integrity

“Taking care of a better climate. Inside each home and the world around it.”	DE&I, responsible, future-oriented, shared ethical foundation, firmly anchored values	Energy-efficient production, emission reduction, renewable energies, recyclable materials, digitalization
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Name: ResourceIntensive 5 – Diersch & Schröder Group (DS Group)

Sustainable products for the future in the energy and chemical sectors	Long-standing supply chain collaborations via deep trust, attractive & long-term employment	“By 2045, the DS Group will have completely converted its core business to future-proof products and services.”
Reporting, awards and certifications, social engagement	“Our business practices are always characterized by reliability, performance and sustainability.”	Reliable, fair, respectful, thoughtful, adaptive, bold
“As a family business, we think in generations.”, “Taking responsibility and being able to adapt are in our DNA.”	Customer and employee-centric, collaborative, holistic approach, tradition, long-term thinking	Innovative and well-trained employees, environmentally friendly & secure locations, sustainable & innovative business model

Note. The structure of each FFSBIM follows the layout of the CBIM shown in Figure 1. Each FFSBIM element occupies the same position as the corresponding CBIM element.