

MA DISSERTATION FOR SUBMISSION TO QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST

'Designed & Made in Ireland' – A brand for Irish Craft?

An exploratory study of the value and impact of the Design and Craft Council of Ireland's branding exercise on the craft enterprises which it represents.

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Abstract

The 'Designed & Made in Ireland' brand identity was conceived by the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) in 2010 as part of a consumer focused campaign to develop the commercial market for Irish craft to act as a visual indicator of product quality and provenance (DCCoI, 2016). Developing a national craft brand *seems like* a beneficial initiative but preliminary research uncovered issues relating to strategic direction, eligibility and clarity of purpose. This research project was conducted to investigate the impact and effectiveness of this identity on the craft enterprises it claims to represent though both theoretical investigations of branding concepts and craft market peculiarities and by gathering original research data from those craft enterprises though use of a survey questionnaire. A 'grounded theory' methodology was applied with theory and conclusions building as new evidence emerged. Survey results indicated that while respondents were positive about the potential of a national craft brand, this particular exercise in branding has with it some key issues which limit its application as a strong brand with measurable impact and reputation. In the final section recommendations for overcoming these issues are suggested. To date, there have been no published academic studies on branding within the craft industry so this dissertation is positioned to act as a starting point which potential future research could build on

Images



Figure 1: Original 'Imagined Designed Made' in Ireland thumbprint brand identity



Figure 2: 'Creative Island' catalogues covers from 2012, 2011 and 2014



Figure 3: Examples of the brand identity in use in Arnotts Department Store, Dublin



Figure 4: 'Designed & Made in Ireland' - New logo design

Introduction

The idea of 'craft' is a contested concept and therefore within the 'crafts industry' there exists a spectrum of practitioners operating to various capacities as both artists and enterprises with vastly different needs and desires. Such variety within the industry creates distinct challenges for craft development agencies in their efforts to advocate for the industry as a whole. In Ireland, the DCCoI is the national body for stimulating, developing, championing and communicating the unique identity of the craft and design sector (DCCoI, 2016). From their most recent strategic planning document, two of the organisation's overarching aims are found to be 'to develop the market for Irish craft and design' and to 'raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of Irish craft and design' (DCCoI, 2014, p7). These issues are intrinsically linked as a lack of knowledge regarding price, production and point of purchase are consistently identified in industry reports as significant barriers to buying craft (Milward Brown 2013, HI-Arts *et al.*, 2009; PHT Consultants, 2011; MHM, 2010).

In 'Future Focus', a report exploring potential audience and market development for the Scottish craft industry a recommendation was made to establish a national 'unique Crafts "brand"' that could be promoted and marketed strategically by craft development agencies (HI-Arts *et al.*, 2009, p57). In 2010 the former *Crafts Council of Ireland* (now trading as the DCCoI) launched a consumer focused campaign to increase public engagement with Irish craft in the domestic market. As part of this initiative the brand identity 'Designed, Imagined, Made in Ireland' and thumbprint logo (*figure 1.*) was created to act as a visual indicator of product quality and provenance. Since its introduction this brand identity has been attached to various DCCoI campaigns: It was heavily promoted during the 'Year of Craft' in 2011; it features on promotional material distributed to DCCoI retail partners (*figure 3.*) and it is often presented at and in promotional material for *Showcase*, Ireland's creative export trade fair (*figure 2.*). The DCCoI consumer focused website 'Give Irish Craft' displays the new 'Designed & Made in Ireland' logo (*figure 4.*) on all pages in its domain and uses it as home-page navigation button. The logo therefore seems to be performing, as and how the DCCoI describe it as a 'brand identity' for Irish

commercial craft and design and living up to that recommendation referred to previously, by providing a 'unique Crafts "brand"' (HI-Arts *et al.*, 2009, p. 57).

However; developing a brand requires more than just creating a logo.

Brands are an intangible organisational asset, developed over time through both conscious and unconscious associations formed about the product or organisation in the mind of the consumer (Design Council, 2013). Developing any brand requires time, money and commitment (Randel, 2003) but utilising a strong brand can potentially create many advantages such as increased market visibility, recognition and enhanced customer loyalty (Randall, 1993; Dutta, 2012; de Chernatony, 2006; Design Council, 2013). Although craft is a broad field of practice (which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 1), many of the DCCol's registered clients are producing commercial products to be sold and traded domestically and internationally. As small and micro-enterprises, individually they lack the resources and influence to run marketing and promotional campaigns on a scale that could compete with typical mass-produced goods (Fillis, 2003; 2002 and with McAuley, 2005). Developing an umbrella brand which could be used to promote Irish craft and design through the sector leading body therefore *seems like* a beneficial and strategic initiative. Closer examination of DCCol documents however, reveals inconsistencies in how the organisation incorporates and refers to the brand identity from year to year, indicating a possible lack of strategic direction and raising further questions about the purpose, value and effectiveness of the initiative. As stated previously, developing a brand requires resources; time, money and commitment. If the brand cannot be evidenced as being beneficial to the products and businesses it represents then those resources might be better channelled into other projects.

While there are expected differences between the objectives of a conventional product brand and those of a brand designed by a national agency for developing the Irish craft and design sector (which will be discussed in detail later in Chapter 2), a brand mark should add value to a product, differentiate it from its competitors, act as a guarantee for the expected benefits and most importantly, be 'a clear and unambiguous identity' for communicating those values and benefits (Randall, 1993, p12). With this purpose in mind,

this dissertation has been constructed around the following research aims and endeavours to:

- 1) Analyse the development of 'Designed & Made in Ireland' as a brand identity within the framework of the DCCol's wider market development objectives.
- 2) Investigate its suitability as a branding concept by interpreting commercial marketing and branding theory in the context of the craft industry.
- 3) Design and use a questionnaire to gather original data from craft enterprises 'represented' by the brand in order to discover their awareness of the initiative and assess the impact it has had on their practice.
- 4) Make recommendations for the direction of further research and possible future development of the initiative.

To deliver these aims the format shall be laid out as follows: To begin *Chapter 1* will introduce in more detail the contested nature of the crafts industry explaining key terms and the specific focus within this thesis. Its purpose is to provide background and context for the initiatives which will be discussed throughout the study. Accordingly it will explore the origins and role of the DCCol, providing an overview of its structure and existing support systems and outline the history of the 'Designed and Made in Ireland' brand identity and other support programmes. *Chapter 2* takes the form of an extended literature review for the purpose of providing a contextual and theoretical framework for interpreting the survey results. Initially, key concepts from branding theory will be explained before moving to use what academic literature that exists on craft marketing in conjunction with craft industry reports to establish a context for branding within the craft sector, highlighting the peculiarities of the market. In *Chapter 3*, the methodology and theoretical approach behind the research design and data collection is explained: Detailing how the research sample was chosen, survey question design considerations, response rate and statistical significance. It also considers the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and how it could be expanded and improved on in further studies. This dissertation is a represents a new area of exploration in Irish craft and the survey generated a large amount of original data. In *Chapter 4* this data will be analysed and interpreted against the theoretical and industrial research gathered thus far highlighting emerging issues around the branding concept. *Chapter 5* considers the research findings

in their totality and offers recommendations for improving brand performance under three themes; 'strategic direction', 'moderation and eligibility' and 'funding and finance'. The final chapter will conclude the dissertation with a summary of the issues investigated, consider if the research project has delivered its objectives and suggest areas for future study.

Chapter 1: Terms and background

The purpose of this first chapter is to introduce and explain the background of the craft industry in Ireland. It will provide an overview of the spectrum of activity that falls into the category of 'craft' and specify the particular focus and parameters area of this study; Irish craft products that are produced in small batch production, with a high-level of handmade input and designed to be sold for profit. The chapter will introduce the structure, origins and role of the DCCoI and highlight the recent change in trading name. The history of the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' brand identity will be outlined using as much information as was publically accessible to the researcher. In addition, two other significant DCCoI projects *Showcase* and *Irish Craft Portfolio* will be explained as they relate to promotion and branding and will be referenced in the findings and analysis of the survey data in Chapter 4.

1.1 – What is Craft?

The definition of craft is widely contested. The word can imply skilful labour but also denotes 'a class of objects' crossing a spectrum ranging from abstract sculpture to utilitarian products (Metcalf in Dormer, 1997, p70). It is both a methodology for making and an approach for commercial business rejecting mainstream mass production (Thomson, 2014). The craft sector is categorised as a niche within the 'creative industries', defined originally by UK policy as those industries 'that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent with the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property' (DCMS, 2008). It is a diverse spectrum encompassing a wide range of practitioners; some of whom are operating like artists producing highly original, bespoke work and motivated by a desire for personal expression (Fillis and McAuley, 2005; Dormer 1997) and many operating as profit-making small businesses producing goods for trading on the international market. To further confuse matters, the same practitioner may function as both simultaneously. This places craft at an interesting juncture in relation to marketing practice, lying somewhere between fine art and product design. Creating specific marketing theory for the craft industry as a whole therefore, is laden with a

further layer of complexity and to limit the scope it is necessary to concentrate on one type of craft production practice.

This thesis will focus on Irish craft that is produced for the commercial market. Adopting Dr. Ian Fillis's preferred definition, craft is used to mean; 'an object which must have a high degree of handmade input... produced as a one-off or as part of a small batch, the design of which may or may not be culturally embedded in the country of production, and which is sold for profit' (2004, p61; Metcalf, 1997). Despite a persistently disputed definition, it is generally accepted that craft 'cannot be dematerialised' (Dormer, 1997, p70). As the objects under consideration are physical products, it is appropriate to interpret how they are branded and marketed through theory adopted from the conventional consumer goods industry. While it is recognised that the individuals producing this work may also produce artistically driven products, arts marketing possesses its own challenges and considerations which fall beyond the scope of this research.

1.2 - The DCCoI

The DCCoI describes itself as the national 'champion of the design and crafts industry in Ireland' (DCCoI, 2016). Beginning as a voluntary organisation it became a registered company in 1976 with a brief to work for the improvement of standards in crafts, the welfare of craftspeople and to act as a government advisor in all matters concerning crafts (CCoI, 2012). Today it is principally funded by the *Department for Jobs Enterprise and Innovation* through *Enterprise Ireland*, the 'government association responsible for the growth and development of Irish enterprises in world markets' (Enterprise Ireland, 2016). To be eligible for support and to participate in their programmes designers and makers are required to register as clients. In the last available annual report from 2014, the number of registered clients in Ireland (including Northern Ireland) was 3,004. In addition to government funding membership fees and service provision also provide income streams for the organisation. When the total DCCoI expenditure is divided by Ireland's population their spending equals 86 cent per person (DCCoI, 2014) – making it significantly better funded than the UK agencies which average only 6 pence per person (Craft Council UK, 2014)

Formerly known as the 'Crafts Council of Ireland' the organisation changed their trading name in 2013 which significantly broadened the remit of makers it can represent. Under their new identity design disciplines such as animation, visual communication and product design are also supported and promoted under DCCoI initiatives. In this study only craft enterprises which would have qualified for support prior to the change in trading name are considered. Applying this limitation refines the scope of investigation and allows for easier comparison of relevant information published by UK and other agencies which deal with craft exclusively.

1.3 – 'Design & Made in Ireland' – a brand identity for Irish Craft

In November 2010, the *Crafts Council of Ireland* launched a consumer focused campaign to increase public engagement with Irish craft in the domestic market. As part of this initiative the brand identity 'Designed, Imagined, Made in Ireland' and thumbprint logo (*figure 1.*) was created to act as a visual indicator of product quality and provenance to assist shoppers in 'identifying genuine Irish products' (DCCoI, 2016).

Since its introduction this brand identity has been attached to various DCCoI campaigns: It was heavily promoted during the 'Year of Craft' in 2011; it features on promotional material distributed to DCCoI retail partners (*figure 3.*) and it is often displayed at and in promotional material for *Showcase*, Ireland's creative export trade fair (*figure 2.*).

Accordingly to the DCCoI's figures over 400 makers have been represented by the brand (DCCoI, 2012 B). The identity was re-designed in 2014 to the current 'Design & Made in Ireland' logo (*figure 4*). No reference explain the change could be found in any DCCoI publications, but it can be assumed the re-design was connected to the change in trading name from CCoI to DCCoI in 2014. On their primary website, the 'Design & Made in Ireland' brand identity is explained as follows;

'Whenever the thumbprint symbol is displayed, customers can be reassured that the design and craft they see is conceived and produced by craftspeople working in Ireland, taking inspiration from Irish traditions and materials. Designed & Made in Ireland stands for quality, craftsmanship and authenticity.' (DCCoI, 2016)

The brand identity was created primarily for use by retail partners to display on point-of-sale material in order to raise the profile of genuine Irish craft in their stores. Retailers who regularly stock work from at least ten different Irish designers and makers can register with the DCCol as partners to receive these POS's and to avail of benefits from association with the stated 'brand values' and direct DCCol promotional activity around the brand (DCCol, 2016). Over 130 stores, both within Ireland and overseas had participated in the initiative by the end of the year 2012 (DCCol, 2014, p20). Materials were also provided to makers selling directly in their own outlets or at fairs and events in the run up to Christmas (CCol, 2010).

Central to the efforts of both the brand identity and the DCCol's retail partnership scheme is the 'Give Irish Craft' website. Listing approximately 196 businesses across four categories; 'Home and Gift', 'Jewellery', 'Ceramics and Pottery' and 'Fashion and Textiles'- a press release asserts that 'each piece presented in the collection has been imagined, designed and made in Ireland and carries an authentic story' (DCCol, 2014 C.). The website displays the new 'Designed & Made in Ireland' logo (*figure 4.*) on all pages in its domain and uses it as home-page navigation button. Each business profile has a short biography, product gallery and contact details for both the maker and stockists. Makers selling through any of the DCCol partner retailers can be listed on the 'Give Irish Craft' website and promoted through the consumer campaigns (DCCol, 2016) but it is not clear if there is a formal application process or quality criteria attached other than a requirement that products are made in Ireland.

The 'Designed & Made' logo seems to be performing many of the functions of an established brand by differentiating products, adding value and asserting product quality (Randal, 2003). The information on this brand initiative has been sourced and collated from DCCol information available online. It is probable that internal documents were produced on the brand's design, objectives and values but regrettably the researcher was unable to obtain access to them.

1.4 – Related DCCoI support projects

The lack of consensus on ‘the crafts’ as a recognised industry creates a significant challenge for organisations tasked with developing it (Dormer, 1997). As could be expected therefore, the DCCoI’s work is necessarily spread across a range of activities but the focus within this research project will be allocated to their objectives to ‘to develop the market for Irish craft and design’ and to ‘raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of Irish craft and design’ (DCCoI, 2014, p7). Both these objectives are intrinsically linked as a lack of knowledge regarding price, production and point of purchase are consistently identified in industry reports as significant barriers to buying craft (Milward Brown 2013, HI-Arts *et al.*, 2009; PHT Consultants, 2011; MHM, 2010). Creating a ‘brand identity’ for Irish craft is just one minor DCCoI initiative among many market development activities. Organisational projects are influenced and developed from the work of other projects, so to provide context the relationship between the ‘Designed & Made in Ireland’ brand and two other initiatives which also deal with promotion and reputation should be explained before advancing this study further:

The ‘*Irish Craft Portfolio*’ is one of the DCCoI’s most recognised and established projects designed to grow the reputations and potential of makers across all disciplines of contemporary craft (Portfolio, 2016). A collection of designers and craftspeople making high-quality one off products or limited edition works is selected through an annual application, juried by an international panel of experts. *Portfolio* is positioned as distinct and separate from the more commercially focused ‘Designed & Made in Ireland’ brand, however the same maker may sometimes be represented by both simultaneously. Interestingly, in the strategic plan 2013 – 2015 the DCCoI refers to *Portfolio* as another distinct ‘consumer brand’ (2014, p. 11) despite the fact that consumers for these high-end products are a very small and specialist segment.

Showcase is Ireland’s creative trade fair, presented by *Showcase Ireland Events Ltd.* on behalf of the DCCoI. It is held annually at the Royal Dublin Society (RDS). Since 2010, the same year that the ‘Imagined, Designed, Made in Ireland’ logo was rolled out, *Creative Island* has been a curated selection of ‘unique and authentic products that are exclusively Designed and Made in Ireland’ (Showcase Ireland, 2016). As can be seen in the quotation and also the catalogue covers (figure 3) *Showcase* regularly features ‘Designed & Made in

Ireland' brand indicators. Exhibiting under *Creative Island* and by implication, the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' tagline is claimed to enhance product's quality credentials; 'In today's global market, provenance and heritage add value, desirability and exclusivity to products' (McGrath in DCCol, 2014b, p. 3). Businesses featured in *Creative Island* receive a higher level of publicity and promotion throughout the event because of this DCCol endorsement.

Chapter 2: Literature & Context

To date, there has been no academic research published on branding within the craft sector. The level of industry research in the field is low and studies that exist are often commissioned by national craft development agencies or large craft collectives leaving them susceptible to potential positive bias. They have generally concentrated on public perceptions of craft and its market potential (Milward Brown, 2012; Scotinform, 2007; Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2013; HI-Arts *et al.*, 2009) or they have been used to analyse the range and economic impact of the sector (TBR, 2014; Willie Miller Urban Design, 2013; PHT Consultants, 2011; BOP Consulting, 2012; Brown, 2014) but there is little engagement with academic theory in these reports. This dissertation is an exploratory study which can hopefully be used as a jumping off point for further research. In order to provide a necessary grounding for interpreting its findings, a number of concepts need to be introduced and related to craft industry particularities. The following chapter will take the form of an extended literature review, where brand development concepts from commercial marketing will be discussed in respect to craft marketing theory. To begin, the idea of what a brand is and what it should do will be elaborated on. Key terms, models and concepts from within branding theory will be explained. Secondly, the status and reputation of Irish craft will be discussed, drawing heavily from the work of Dr. Ian Fillis, one of few academics writing about craft in a marketing context. His work has looked at how the lifestyle preferences of the crafts-person impact business development (2003; 2014 and McAuley & Fillis 2005) and how Celtic entrepreneurialism effects craft marketing in Ireland in particular (2007; 2014a). Fillis's findings along with theory from Peter Dormer will be used in conjunction with craft industry reports to create a picture of the current peculiarities and challenges for marketing practice in craft. Finally, these concepts will be related to the idea of the DCCol's national craft branding initiative and some of the key theoretical implications for this study will be raised.

2.1 Branding terminology

The word brand is used liberally in a marketing context often with confusion about what it actually means (Design Council, 2013). Detailed examination of DCCol documents also

reveals inconsistencies in how the organisation refers to 'Designed & Made in Ireland' from year to year. The modern marketplace has created many types of 'identity marks', while they all share similar functions; essentially communicating something about the product in question, there are subtle differences implied by the terminology used. These various terms and the difference between them will be discussed below.

Brands have evolved into an essential marketing tool for differentiating products in today's over-saturated consumer market where supply far exceeds demand (International Trade Centre et al. 2003; Dutta, 2012). A brand is something *more* than a product and much literature implies that a good brand will have a sort of 'life of its own' or personality that goes beyond the products or services it represents (Randall, 1993). This creates an intangible element to a brand that is formed through both 'conscious and unconscious associations in the mind of the consumer' (Design Council, 2013). To engage in 'branding' is to make a deliberate effort to control, harness, generate or influence those associations to help the business perform better (Design Council, 2013). It is not possible for an organisation to have complete control over a brand as they are formed through the opinions of persons external to the organisation but brands still require planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that they are performing as desired.

A strong brand is more than just its visual associations such as the logo, slogan or typeface; at its core it should be based on a foundation of brand values which these visual indicators represent (Dutta, 2012; Design Council, 2013). Having a clear set of brand values provides guidelines about how to develop a brand for the benefit of its customers. While there are generic values about quality performance and customer satisfaction implied by practically all brands (de Chernatony, 2006) in order to stand out in crowded market a brand's values should make it unique. 'People buy brands whose values concur with their own' so clear and memorable values create an advantage in attracting customers (De Chernatony, 2006, p116).

When used effectively a strong brand can create many advantages for an organisation such as increased market visibility, recognition and enhanced customer loyalty (Randall, 1993; Dutta, 2012; de Chernatony, 2006; Design Council, 2013). The words 'brand' and 'trademark' are often used intermittently. While they share similarities, each being a 'sign

or any combination of signs, capable of distinguishing a product or service from other products or services on the market' (International Trade Centre et al. 2003, p10), brands are not legally protected under intellectual property law unless registered as a trademark. It can also be said that trademarks become brands when they become recognisable icons capable of conveying product associations in their own right (International Trade Centre et al. 2003). No evidence could be found indicating that the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' logo has been registered as trademark.

'Brand architecture' is a term used to describe the different models of brand organisation within a company. Umbrella branding, sometimes called 'family branding', is a type of brand architecture that involves marketing many non-related products under a single brand name (Bhasin, 2016). The 'Designed & Made in Ireland' identity, as it covers a range of diverse products, could be considered and exercise in 'umbrella branding'. Umbrella branding's advantage as a marketing method lies in the fact that consumers infer certain characteristics, such as quality or reliability, from other products under the same umbrella (Hakenes & Peitz, 2008). In theory, the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' campaign aims to share the positive reputation of both the DCCoI itself and more established Irish craft products across all products within the brand-family.

In their last available strategic planning document DCCoI referred to 'Designed & Made' and *Irish Craft Portfolio* as 'endorser brands' (2013). To endorse something means 'to declare one's approval' (OED online, 2016). In brand architecture, an 'endorser brand' refers to a branding sub-structure where a distinct range of products are linked together by a supporting parent brand (Distility, 2011). Recognisable examples from the consumer goods industry include, 'Walkman' and 'Playstation' both endorsed by parent brand Sony. There is typically a 'lighter touch' shown by the parent company on endorsed brands compared with umbrella or family branding structures – the parent company may only be visible in a minor way but both brands benefit from their linked reputations.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the modern market has created more than one type of 'identity' for differentiating products. Outside the terminology of brand architecture, other types of regulated 'identities' - almost a type of branding themselves, can be used in addition to the main trademark. A *certification mark* can inform consumers

about certain specified characteristics of a product; the mark is legally owned by one organisation and may be used on or awarded to any product that complies with the standards for use as defined by the owner (International Trade Centre et al. 2003). At the time of registration, the owner of the certification mark must be considered competent to certify products under the mark and must not be trading goods in that category themselves. Like brands, certification marks are viewed by the consumer as a guarantee for the expected standards in quality and production.

Collective marks are 'used to distinguish products or services provided by a group of enterprises, generally members of an association' (International Trade Centre et al. 2003, p82). Collective marks are useful for groups of small businesses to brand together under in order to share resources and split costs associated with promotion and entering new markets (International Trade Centre et al. 2003; Dentoni & Gow, 2009). Generally, members will be producing goods with some common feature such as origin or product type. Only members of the collective are allowed display the collective mark and there will be specified eligibility criteria for joining. Collective marks can be legally registered and protected like individual trademarks with the costs split and the rights owned between all members. Collective marks function like a 'bottom-up' answer to branding's traditional top-down approach as it is a group of enterprises banding together to achieve the same benefits as a larger brand, more market penetration, visibility and increased reputation.

2.2 Reputation and market features of the crafts industry

Branding theory was developed for the corporate world of international and for-profit marketing - in order to apply them to the craft industry the particularities of this industry, both generally and in Ireland, must first be outlined to provide context. Dr. Ian Fillis is one of few academics writing about craft in a marketing context. In the following section his findings will be used in conjunction with craft industry reports to create a picture of the current status and marketing practice in craft.

The first section of this chapter showed that branding relies on managing reputation and creating an image out of an intricate web of values, associations and expectations, so any attempt to engage in branding needs to consider the products, or in the case the sector's,

existing image and status. Ireland has an internationally recognised reputation for craft heritage, a fact often capitalised on by Irish makers (Fillis, 2003; 2014). The DCCol also embraces this heritage in its promotion and advocacy work. Statements about Ireland's tradition of creativity are commonly found, for example;

'We Irish are a crafty lot. Living on the edge of the wild Atlantic we've learned to transform local materials into beautiful everyday objects with imagination and reverence.... (DCCol, 2014b, p3)

Despite this apparent heritage, even in Ireland studies (Milward Brown, 2012) show that the "ordinary consumer" is puzzled by what the value of craft is supposed to be' (Dormer, 1997, p19) with confusion over pricing rationale and a perceptions that it is 'just' something to be given as a gift or a souvenir persisting. One factor contributing to this is that an awareness of craft is often based on exposure to it as a leisure activity (Dormer, 1997) and this view of it as hobby and amateur activity undermines the status of professional craft practitioners. This enduring reputation of something 'twee' and amateur places craft goods at a disadvantage in the commercial market. Ironically, established luxury brands and designer labels often use a heritage of fine craftsmanship as a selling point which offers customers 'reassurance about the price' they are paying, despite only a small number of these luxury brands still having genuine craft credentials (Thompson, 2014). This clever marketing uses the power of advertising and image to sell the idea of skilled craftsmanship and authenticity while genuine craft products miss-out due to being as Dormer points out, 'largely unadvertised, unpackaged (and) un-promoted' (1997, p86).

Craft practitioners often describe themselves as 'designer-makers', the title originating from the fact that in craft production the same person both designs and realises the final product (Dormer, 1997). The majority of craft enterprises are self-employed sole-traders or micro-enterprises, a figure of over 88% according to a *Crafts Council* report (BPO Consulting, 2012). In addition to being the creative producer, designer-makers must spend a significant amount of time administrating their businesses (Shultz, 2015). Fillis has written extensively about the marketing and entrepreneurial orientation of the individual craft practitioner (2002; 2007 and with McAuley, 2005), arguing that, the aspirations of that owner/manager dictates the business's commercial goals. He has profiled them into

four categories, 'the lifestyler', 'the entrepreneur', 'the idealist' and 'the late-developer', based on their motivation for producing craft products (2002).

Certain tensions between lifestyle preference and business development exist in each category, for example; 'the lifestyler' has typically chosen craft because of the freedom of self-employment and personal values and is unwilling to expand commercial operations if that would require a move away from those values (Fillis, 2002; Dormer, 1997). The 'idealist' is also limited in commercial application as this type of maker tends to adopt an 'art for art's sake' approach to their work, eschewing customer demand for artistic integrity. While Fillis recognises that these profiles are not binding and characteristics may cross between categories, it is 'the entrepreneur' who is characteristically more willing embrace marketing philosophy by adopting a customer focused approach (2002).

Entrepreneurial activity is characterised by an ability to seize new opportunities and take calculated risks for business growth and development (Fillis, 2003). In another study, Fillis puts forward the view that Celtic entrepreneurs in particular have a more creative approach to marketing due to the geographical isolation of the Irish market, rendering exporting a necessity for business sustainability (2003).

Branding development in the crafts sector is likely to be of greater concern to 'the entrepreneur' than to those operating in the other categories, reducing the wide spectrum across which craft operates to a smaller segment. However despite their high ambitions, due to their nature as micro-enterprises these entrepreneurs have extremely limited resources making branding in the craft sector 'totally different to the majority of other businesses' with unconscious brand visualisation only occurring at 'generic industry level' or at the level of the individual maker (Fillis, 2003, p.244). At this individual level advertising and promotion may only create local level awareness and indeed achieving 'mass-communication' as corporate industry literature pushes for, may not be desirable for the business in the first place (Storey 1997 in Fillis, 2003). Branding requires strategic management, monitoring and planning (Randall, 1993) and this can be difficult for small businesses as daily pressures of both administration and production take priority.

Further limitations of the craft market are noted in a Morris Hargreaves McIntyre report (2013) which points out that the encouragement of self-employed, designer-makers to 'be

their own advocates' results in very little subscription activity through networks of retailers, dealers and critics. They describe the craft market as having a very 'flat' structure; there are many producers but few elites or super-stars that are actively sought after by collectors; a pattern evident in the fine art sector which encourages prestige and drives up prices. Comparable 'subscription' activity can be seen in the commercial consumer goods sector with designer and luxury brands being highly sought by retailers – market demand legitimising cost and building value associations. The prevalence of wholesaling and direct selling of work prevents the growth of subscription and endorsement activity in the sector through a vicious cycle: Practitioners are often put-off using galleries and retailers by the mark up applied to their products and customers will avail of discounts by buying direct from the maker, undercutting any retail partnerships that may be already in place and making it difficult to develop such a model in the first place (MHM, 2013; Thelwal, 2015). While the lack of exclusivity in craft can be seen as a positive, making it more accessible to a greater number of people it reiterates the problem for buyers of being able to distinguish between professional and amateur work (MHM, 2013).

2.3 Implications of these factors in the study

Branding has become a necessary tool to differentiate and communicate value for almost every product or service the crowded 21st century market place. Randall (1993, p12) summarises that brands should perform five main functions; 1) be a clear and unambiguous identity, 2) trigger a network of associations, 3) act as a guarantee for the expected benefits 4) differentiate a product from its competitors and 5) add more value to the product. By creating a 'brand identity' for Irish craft products the DCCol is making an attempt to overcome the limitations faced by micro-enterprises and enable the promotion of Irish craft and design on a national and international scale.

However, forming a brand for Irish craft is a unique endeavour which presents many challenges. With a conventional for-profit business the objective of branding will ultimately be to increase sales and profits for the company and its shareholders. The DCCol has no ownership or shares in the businesses represented under its 'brand' but does have duty as the national representative body to help these businesses perform to their best ability. This makes the relationship between the 'umbrella brand' and the

businesses it represents unclear and normal methods of evaluating of brand performance cannot be applied. The variety of practitioners operating across the spectrum of the craft sector expands the problem; how can cohesive brand image and values be implemented over such a diverse range of products?

A key issue raised, is whether 'Designed and Made in Ireland' should be even considered a proper brand? While it can be said to performing many of the same functions as a brand perhaps the idea of it as a 'collective mark' or 'quality mark' is more appropriate - but these too present questions: If the initiative represents a quality mark, is the DCCol an appropriate body to assign it? When registering a quality mark the awarding organisation must be deemed competent to award it and there should be a clear set of criteria attached to its use (International Trade Centre et al. 2003). The DCCol exists to be the national champion of craft and design in Ireland so it represents all levels of practitioners, not just those producing professional commercial products. If the organisation themselves dictate who is eligible for this mark there is potentially a conflict of interests. Similarly, understanding the initiative as a 'collective mark' is tricky as while collectives represent a 'bottom-up' approach, this initiative has been conceived by the national development agency, clearly a 'top-down' manoeuvre. Furthermore, the issue of criteria for 'membership' in this collective grouping is vague and decisions regarding are not made democratically as a group.

The role of development agencies in marketing craft can be assumed to be valued by makers who are constrained by limited resources and the day-to-day running of their enterprises to develop strategic plans for national promotion. In 'Future Focus', makers thought of representation on umbrella sites like a national agency, retailer or gallery, as 'just as important if not more important as their own websites' (HI-Arts et al. 2009, p45). However, whether or not marketing is a primary concern for makers will depend on their personal business orientation and it is likely that commercial branding will only be of concern only to those makers that fall into Fillis's 'entrepreneur' category, limiting its benefit to the rest.

With the virtual absence of other networks promoting 'subscription' activity, such as dealers and collectors in Ireland, the DCCol is the only agency seen to be visibly endorsing

craft activity so there is little industry competition against which to measure their performance. Being represented by the DCCol high-quality events such as *Showcase Ireland* can be considered a form of brand endorsement, but it is unclear if this endorsement is valuable to consumers as there is, what Dormer describes as 'a significant gap between those inside the craft industry and those outside it in terms of understanding its value' (1997, p19).

The preceding chapter has raised issues with developing and utilising a national craft brand on a theoretical level. These issues can be summarised as pertaining to quality, eligibility and performance evaluation. Literature on brand development repeatedly emphasises that building a brand is a strategic process that requires, time, money and commitment (Randel, 2003; de Chernatony, 2006; Design Council, 2013) and that without a clear sense of direction 'a brand will flounder' (de Chernatony, 2006, p128). Deeper investigation into branding theory and the specifics of the craft sector has raised doubts about the strategic direction of the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' brand identity: from analysis of the DCCol plans and annual reports only ad-hoc developments seem to be made to the initiative since its introduction and the terminology used is inconsistent from year to year. Craft is at a market disadvantage compared to the might of multi-national industrial manufactures. The sector leading body for craft development in Ireland has a vested interest in seeing the performance of craft business improve: if developing a strong brand for Irish craft has the potential to raise the profile of the sector and overcome the limitations faced by small micro-enterprises then it seems like a beneficial and strategic initiative to pursue. The theoretical issues warrant further investigation and the next section outlines the methodology for how the original research data was gathered, in order to explore these issues in their real world application.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Evident from the previous chapter, there is a very limited amount of both academic and industrial research available in this subject. As this study represents a new exploration in the field, it was necessary to take a pragmatic approach towards data collection. As a research paradigm, pragmatism is not committed to any single philosophy, allowing the researcher to use mixed methodologies to draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative methods of enquiry (Creswell, 2014). This chapter discusses the particulars of the 'Grounded Theory' approach and traces the evolution of research objectives. The specifics of the data collection method - a survey questionnaire - are rationalised and the potential weaknesses are considered. Full details of survey questions and responses can be found in appendix 1.

3.1: Theoretical approach

Investigating brand performance and establishing brand value is a complex issue as brands are an intangible asset, developed over time through both conscious and unconscious associations formed about the product or organisation in the mind of the consumer (Design Council, 2013). Morse (1991), describes qualitative research methods 'as particularly useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine' within a subject which has not yet been examined or where existing theories do not apply (in Creswell, 2014 p.50). As branding relies on creating feelings and associations in the mind, qualitative research methods were considered an appropriate method of investigation but given the lack of existing study in the field it was also necessary to gather some quantitative, statistical data to present as baseline data which could be expanded on in future research so an approach which allowed for both was required.

Grounded theory is 'a strategy of inquiry where the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants' (Creswell, 2014, p.13). It is a general qualitative methodology that emphasis an 'inductive research process focused toward theory development' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Dey, 1999, in Dentoni & Gow, 2009, p5): The initial research problem is built on and refined by stages as more data is gathered, often moving from the general to specifics during the process. The "grounded theory" is recognized as an appropriate

method to analyze and evaluate complex and dynamic issues where limited data points or cases studies are already available (Stake, 1995; Westgren and Zering, 1998 in Dentoni & Gow, 2009), thus being an appropriate method of enquiry into branding within the craft sector - an area where no previous scholarly research has been conducted to date.

3.2: Research process and emergent theory

Enquiry into the potential and value of a national craft branding scheme, was developed from of a conversation with a craft retailer who mentioned the problem of quality control and authenticity within craft and referred to the use of the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' POS material in store. Preliminary research seemed to indicate that the 'Designed & Made' was a unique CCoI initiative with nothing similar being offered from our neighbour craft development agencies in the UK which was interesting and warranted further investigation.

The researcher began with an intention to investigate the objectives and impact of the branding campaign through in-depth interviews with staff members from the DCCoI. In order to formulate suitable questions, initial unstructured interviews were conducted with two craft-practitioners featured in the 'Design & Made in Ireland' brochure from 2014 in order to gauge general impressions of the brand from the perspective of a maker. Constant comparison and refinement of the emergent theory is a key characteristic of the grounded theory methodology (Creswell, 2014), so when the DCCoI declined to take part in the research the interview data was re-assessed and the direction of approach altered accordingly as follows: If the DCCoI exists to be the 'national champion' of the industry and that industry is made up of individual enterprisers and practitioners, examining the branding initiative from the perspective of the craft enterprises it was designed to represent is therefore an appropriate route of enquiry.

After the initial interviews the following points of interest were raised in relation to the DCCoI branding scheme and promotion for craft work generally:

1. Makers had a relatively low awareness of the various marketing/branding schemes they were involved in but did think more opportunities possibly resulted from taking part.

2. There was confusion about how they were selected to be involved with the brand. One interview admitted that at a direct selling event, 'someone from the CCoI just gave me business cards with that thumbprint logo and said I could display them on my stall.'
3. Agreed that being part of any DCCoI initiative provided a sort of 'quality stamp' which carries weight internationally. For example; *Creative Island* at *Showcase* is *the* place to exhibit and was considered very competitive.
4. Most makers are taught or can access training that teaches 'best practice' for branding and marketing themselves but individuals or even other collectives are limited to local approaches which only access a very small market. It is important therefore that organisations like the DCCoI undertake this kind of work.

It was evident from this initial enquiry that there were some issues emerging relating to participation, eligibility, and quality but also that in general, support from development agencies was beneficial to makers. A theory was being to emerge but evidence for a larger sample was needed to validate it and provide grounding for further analysis. A survey of brand participants was chosen as the next step in data collection. While research questionnaires are most commonly used in quantitative studies, they can also be useful in profiling a sample from a larger group (Rowley, 2014) and as no other studies have been done on the subject, gathering some baseline statistical data was deemed necessary.

3.3: Survey Design

The DCCoI claims that over 400 designers and makers have been represented by 'Designed and Made in Ireland' initiative (DCCoI, 2012 B). On the 'Give Irish Craft Website' there are 196 businesses listed across the categories of 'Jewellery', 'Ceramics and Pottery', 'Home and Gifts' and 'Fashion and Accessories' (figures are approximate as some businesses were listed in more than one category). A sample of 60 businesses that were felt to meet the criteria of 'craft' enterprise as defined within this study were identified and contacted to participate in the survey.

A short online survey of nine questions was designed to collect opinions from a variety of makers working in various disciplines. No personal details were required and respondents

could chose to remain anonymous if desired. The majority of questions were multiple-choice, an option deliberately chosen to enable both easy completion and reading of the data. The first section of the survey asked questions about the business and the second part asked opinion questions relating their relationship with the ‘Designed & Made’ brand. There were two questions left open to provide explanations and comments. Full details of survey questions and results are included in Appendix 1.

A response rate of just over 50% was deemed sufficient to begin analysis. While this figure is less than 2% of those listed, the focus on ‘craft enterprises’ specifically reduces the total eligible to participate significantly from the DCCol’s own remit. Additionally, those surveyed were drawn from a variety disciplines and so can be considered a proportional representation of the varied craft industry. A low response rate is common in craft industry data collection; the survey element for the ‘Future Focus’ report had a response of just 16% from a survey of 100 practitioners (HI-arts et al., 2009) so in perspective the response rate was quite high.

13 of 32 survey responses (40%) were gathered by telephone, creating a semi-interview situation. Respondents contacted by telephone gave more in-depth and elaborated answers; engaging in conversation with the researcher on topics related to or prompted by the question. Exactly 50% of survey respondents expressed a desire to remain anonymous, so the decision was taken to obscure all personal names and business names. Respondents have been generalised into categories relating to discipline; where the word studio is used the business has more than one employee and distinct product ranges. An asterix denotes that the survey response was collected by telephone.

1. Jewellery Studio A*	17. Fashion Accessories Studio B*
2. Jewellery Studio B	18. Textiles Accessories Studio C
3. Jeweller A*	19. Textiles Accessories Studio D*
4. Jeweller B	20. Glass Studio A
5. Jeweller C*	21. Glass Studio B
6. Fashion Accessories Studio A*	22. Stonemasons
7. Jeweller D*	23. Woodturner
8. Ceramicist A*	24. Glass Studio C
9. Ceramicist B*	25. Basketmaker*

10. Ceramicist C*	26. Textiles Accessories Studio E
11. Ceramicist D	27. Mixed Media Jeweller A
12. Ceramicist E	28. Mixed Media Jeweller B
13. Textiles Accessories Studio A*	29. Jeweller E
14. Textiles Accessories Studio B	30. Furniture Design Studio
15. Leather Design Studio A*	31. Glass Studio D
16. Leather Design Studio B	32. Textiles Accessories Studio F

This methodology is not without its weaknesses. The grounded theory approach lacks standard rules for the researcher to follow and tends to generate large amounts of data, not all of which might end up as relevant to the specific study (Ke & Wenglesky, 2010). Additionally, in mixed methods research it is preferable to ‘triangulate’ data against other sources and studies (Creswell, 2014). As the DCCol declined to participate in the research project the information on the branding initiative has only been drawn from published reports. As these reports are produced to show the organisations success and achievements evaluations found there are likely to contain positive bias (Brindle & de Vereaux, 2011). It is difficult to evaluate an initiative where the original aims and objectives remain unknown and without access to internal documents or information these have not been identified; presenting the findings to the organisation for their input and feedback would strengthen the research and that is a consideration future development of the study.

Chapter 4: Research findings and analysis

This dissertation has so far been structured to provide a contextual frame through which the findings of the author's original research can be discussed and interpreted. Despite its short length and relatively small number of responses as this survey represents a new area of enquiry for the craft sector, it has generated a large amount of discussion worthy data. In this chapter, those findings will be explored in detail with reference back to the key theoretical issues that were raised in chapter 2. As the first section of the survey was designed to capture a profile of respondents, analysis will begin by highlighting profile trends and discrepancies that appear in the results. The second part was designed to explore the intangible network of 'associations' upon which a brand is constructed (Design Council, 2013), as it currently stands between the craft businesses, the DCCoI and the 'Designed & Made' initiative. A range of questions were used to uncover maker's opinions on the branding exercise itself as well as their thoughts regarding the role of the national development agency in branding and marketing generally. Part 2 of this chapter will discuss and interpret the results of the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' word-association question and makers responses to a range of statements about the brand and marketing concerns. The final, critical section 3 will concentrate on the relationships between makers and the brand, looking at on how they became involved and whether they think their association with the 'Designed & Made' branding initiative has been beneficial for their business.

4.1 A profile of the response sample

Out of 60 requests, responses were gathered from 32 businesses, just over 50%. The requests were spread across a range of craft disciplines and the responses received were fairly representative of the range of craft practice in Ireland. Makers that could be grouped in the categories of textiles, jewellery and ceramics contributed the majority of responses but these areas are also the most prevalent and well known craft disciplines in Ireland (Milward Brown, 2012). Also present were responses from practitioners working with glass, stone, wood, leather, basketry and in furniture design.

Literature and industry reports have emphasised that the vast majority of businesses are self-employed, sole traders (BPO consulting, 2012; Fillis & McAuley, 2005) this fact was echoed in the survey sample with 70% of respondents choosing the term 'designer-maker' to describe their job-description. Even when the business had other employees, both the commercial and creative direction of business was the responsibility of one dominant individual, echoing Fillis's theory that in craft, the entrepreneurial drive of the owner/manager sets the direction for the company (2007; with McAuley 2005). Where other the terms were chosen – artist, designer, craft practitioner – the business structure followed the same pattern. The majority had also been established enterprises for less than 10 years, which classifies them as mid-career makers.

With regards to their current marketing methods, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 – 5 the methods by which they market their goods. Their answers reflected the prevalence of wholesaling in the sector discussed in chapter 2, with over 60% ranking it as their main marketing method followed by direct sales from the maker's own studio, website or outlet. Retail placed third in the ranking only slightly behind direct selling. Considering that the makers who were surveyed were all listed on the 'Give Irish Craft' website, and the requirement for being listed is apparently that they are selling through one of the DCCol's retail partners, the poor performance of retail sales is notable and seems to be indicative of the craft market's lack of well developed subscription activity (MHM, 2013). While it ranked low, there were a notable number of respondents – 5, equal to 20% - who reported selling mainly through commission. This potentially indicates that a different style of practitioner, someone producing more bespoke and individual work, is also being represented by the 'Designed & Made' brand despite it being an initiative designed for commercially produced products.

In question 3 respondents were asked to chose and list which DCCol support schemes they had been involved in during the last 5 years. Options given were; *Showcase*, *Creative Island* at *Showcase*, *Irish Craft Portfolio*, *Future Makers*, and Business Mentoring Support. There was also an option to list others if applicable. Only one respondent claimed to have availed of no DCCol support during the last 5 years but otherwise it is evident that their range of support schemes are being utilised by the majority of Irish makers. The largest

number of respondents (23 or 72%) reported being part of the *Creative Island*; the DCCoI's curated selection at *Showcase Ireland*. As the publications and promotional material for Showcase regularly feature 'Designed & Made in Ireland' branding (Figure 3), these findings reinforce the idea that the two projects are somehow linked but exactly how or to what extent remains unclear.

Of the 8 respondents who reported being part of *Irish Craft Portfolio*, 3 were also part of 'Creative Island'. Although *Portfolio* is positioned as distinct and separate from the more commercially focused 'Designed & Made in Ireland' brand, in the spectrum of craft practice it is recognised that the same makers may have both a commercial product line and limited edition pieces (Fillis & McAuley, 2005). However, the fact that 5 makers in the survey sample had been part of *Portfolio* but not *Showcase* highlights again that idea that not all makers 'represented' by the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' branding have the same commercial focus.

In summary, profiles of the craft business who responded to the survey seem to broadly align with data that has been gathered on the sector as a whole in terms of their business set up and marketing practices. A very basic analysis of these profiles has revealed some interesting discrepancies in the type of maker that represented by the 'Designed & Made' identity, as even within this small sample there appear to be a minority making work that is more artistic than commercial and is perhaps unsuited to target market of this branding exercise.

4.2 Impressions of 'Designed & Made' and the role of the DCCoI in marketing Irish Craft

The second part of the survey focused on gathering impressions of the branding exercise and also attempted to explore the maker's thoughts on marketing and branding within the sector in a more general way. This section will analyse responses to the 'Designed & Made' word association question and then discuss the responses that were collected through the Likert scale method of measuring the level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements.

As branding is an attempt to influence the associations formed about a product in the mind of the consumer (Design Council, 2013), in evaluating brand performance, gathering word association data from consumers is a common research method (de Chernatony, 2006). It was therefore considered an appropriate by which to gauge maker's impressions of the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' brand identity.

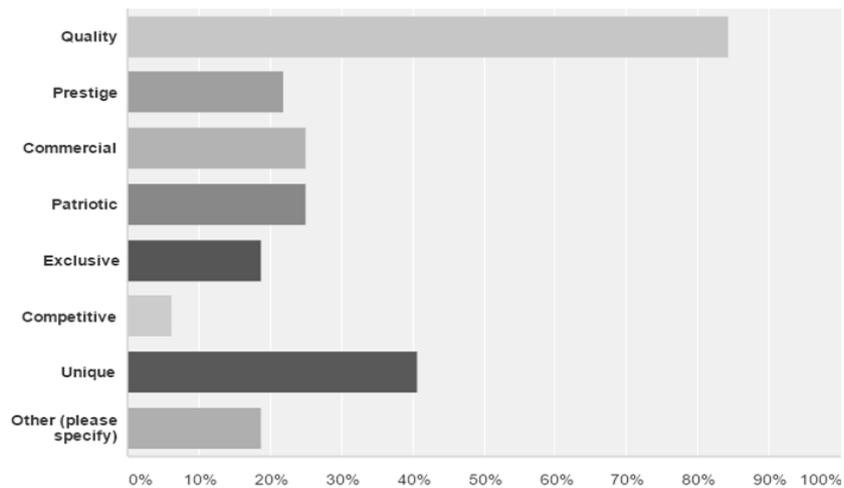


Figure 5: Word Association Results

'Quality' was the clear leader, selected by 84% of respondents who associated the brand with 'quality' products. After quality, a significant gap followed with 'unique' at 40%. Respondents who were contacted by telephone specified that they chose 'unique' and 'quality' with respect to the products represented by the brand identity rather than the brand itself. The word 'patriotic', was chosen by 8 respondents but related words were supplied by several participants such including; 'Irish', 'Tradition', 'Heritage' and 'Irish Pride' which suggests that the value of both the brand representing goods being made in Ireland is recognised. Surprisingly, there was a low selection rate for the words 'prestige', 'exclusive' and in particular 'competitive' (selected by just 2 respondents). This low rating could be attributed to respondents selecting words they associate with the products, rather than the brand, but may also suggest that being represented under the 'brand' is simply not that highly regarded amongst makers for reasons that will emerge later in this analysis.

Question 8 asked respondents to scale their responses to a series of statements. Notable data emerging from this question will be discussed below but a full breakdown of the data is available in Appendix 1. Overall the respondents tended to agree with the statements proposed: there was a consensus of 93% to the statement iterating that ‘as a small business marketing and branding my products takes a lot of resources’. While support from the DCCoI in establishing their business was deemed important by the majority - 2 disagreed and 4 selected the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ option. Despite this, a massive 98% felt it was important that ‘organisations like the DCCoI undertake this sort of activity’ in relation to their efforts in branding and market development. This near consensus is evidence that there is definitely demand across the craft sector for support and promotion through a national development agency however Fillis’s classification of different types of craft practitioners should be remembered: it is likely that the makers and business owners represented by ‘Designed & Made’ fall into the ‘entrepreneur’ category (2002) and should the same question be put to a wider selection of practitioners on the craft spectrum, other areas of activity might be considered more important. This classification issue also stands for the almost unanimous agreement to the statement that ‘a commercial branding scheme like this is suitable for marketing craft products’ and indeed the only respondent hesitant to agree (choosing ‘neither’) did not feel he was an appropriate participant for the scheme anyway, which again raises issues about eligibility criteria.

Echoing the finding that for a small business marketing and branding takes up a lot of resources the majority of respondents (87%) agreed with the statement that: an ‘umbrella/collective brand’ like this *in theory* has greater reach an influence than any single craft business working alone. This agreement *in theory*, contrasts somewhat with participants view on the value of this particular branding exercise as the statement asserting that ‘being part of this initiative has raised my reputation’ received the lowest level of agreement and 4 counts of disagreement. There were also 4 counts of disagreement with the statement that ‘the Designed & Made in Ireland’ logo makes it easy for consumers to recognise quality Irish craft’. While those disagreeing were still in a minority, they do indicate that some participants have strong opinions on the effectiveness and direction of the scheme.

4.3 Relationships between makers and the brand

There were three key questions in the survey which allowed an investigation into the complex relationships between makers, the DCCoI and this branding initiative. In both an 'umbrella brand' and 'endorser brand' structure there is a formal relationship between the parent brand and the brands below it (Design Council, 2013). In the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' branding exercise the relationship between the DCCoI's 'umbrella' and the enterprises it represents has already been found to be unclear at a theoretical level. Furthermore, at the beginning of the research process one interviewee admitted that at a direct selling event, 'someone from the CCoI just gave me business cards with that thumbprint logo and said I could display them on my stall.' It seemed pertinent therefore to ask a wider sample how they became involved with the initiative; results are displayed in figure 6.

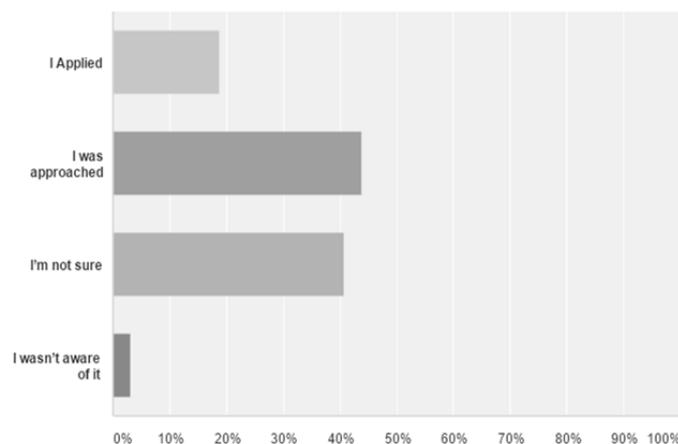


Figure 6: Results: 'How did you become involved with the 'Designed & Made' Brand?'

Alarmingly, only 6 respondents had directly applied to be represented by the brand and the majority were approached by the DCCoI to take part raising concerns again about criteria and eligibility. Some respondents who were contacted by telephone selected either 'applied' or 'approached' in conjunction with 'I'm not sure' as they could not discern what had initiated the process and assumed it was linked to their involvement with another DCCoI project. The high level of responses for 'I'm not sure' and fact that one maker - despite being listed on the 'Give Irish Craft' website, stocked in several high profile

retail outlets and exhibiting at *Showcase* - was 'Not aware' of the initiative raises serious red-flags about brand visibility and clarity of purpose. It also seems to indicate a low level of regard for and interest in the initiative from those it is designed to promote and represent.

While the results indicate that most makers avail of DCCol support schemes, it was considered interesting to investigate if the relationship between makers and the DCCol was reciprocal. If 'Designed & Made' is considered a type of 'quality mark' or an 'endorsement' for certain values, do makers highlight their relationship with the DCCol on their own marketing material? The results are displayed in figure 7.

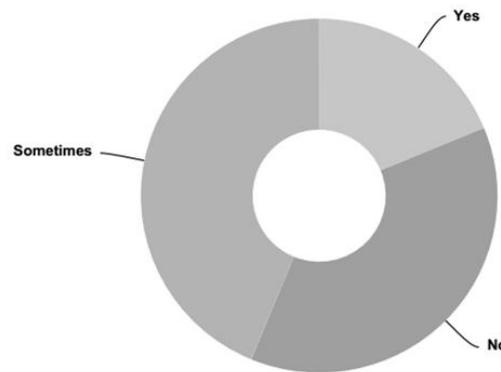


Figure 7: Results: 'I display my association with the DCCol on my own marketing material'

A significant amount of respondents (37%) do not show any association with the DCCol on their products or marketing materials and the majority only do so 'sometimes' at selected events. This seems to suggest that craft enterprises do not actively seek to associate themselves with the 'brand' of the DCCol. This finding makes it difficult to consider 'Designed & Made' in terms of a collective mark. In a collective, the individual businesses are invested in brand performance (International Trade Centre et al, 2013; Dentoni & Gow, 2009). The reluctance of the enterprises surveyed to promote their involvement with the DCCol themselves sits at odds with the perceived value of the support from a national development organisation.

Finally, the survey asked respondents whether they felt that their association with this brand had increased opportunities for their business. Three options were provided to select: 'Definitely', 'Possibly' or 'No' and there was an option to elaborate on why or why not they felt that to be the case.

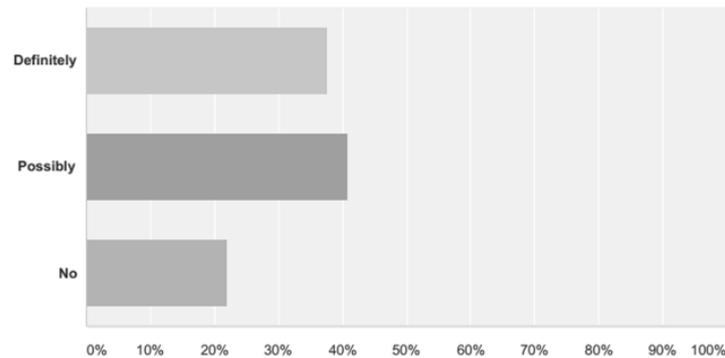


Figure 8: Results: 'Do you feel your association with this brand has increased opportunities for your business'

The breakdown of the results was as follows; 12 respondents (37%) thought the initiative had definitely increased opportunities, a small majority of 13 (41%) thought it was possible and 7 (22%) were adamant that it had not. 21, including 8 from the 'definitely category and all 7 from the 'no' category, elaborated their answers. It was possible for the researcher to compare their answers with their responses to the previous 2 questions that have been analysed in this section, revealing mixed results. Highlights will be discussed here but a full breakdown is viewable in question 5, Appendix 1.

Those who were positive overall about the brand were more likely to promote their association with the DCCoI on their own material though not all did so regularly or consistently. They were also just as likely to be either 'not sure' about how they became involved or to have been 'approached' as any other group. Some mentioned something specific which they saw results from, for example;

'I found 'Creative Island' last year in showcase really beneficial' Leather Design Studio B

Others seemed to see an overall advantage of a national brand with statements like;

'It's an umbrella brand with a stronger influence than I can create' Ceramicist E

'Iconic brand, people recognise it' Jeweller D

The businesses whose opinions were mostly negative about the impact of the branding initiative were most likely to have been approached by the DCCol about joining. Ironically, a majority of them also actively chose to not display their association with the DCCol on their own marketing materials. There were some common themes in why they felt the brand had failed to benefit them: Three respondents did not feel that they were particularly suitable clients to be represented by the brand;

'I don't think I was a good fit because I am not wholesaling work in Ireland', Basketmaker

'The provenance of work is important [and our products] can't be as successfully branded as Irish craft as some other products' Glass Studio A

Two respondents felt that the whole exercise was really just promotion for the DCCol *themselves*, and not effective marketing for the craft businesses represented. A further two respondents claimed that it is too difficult to measure any level of impact from it;

'There's nothing measurable... just having a label [on something] doesn't get it sold'
Fashion Accessories Studio B

For those who thought initiative had 'possibly' increased opportunities for their business - some felt that it was a 'balancing act' as to whether the opportunities created were 'worth it';

'Possibly...but I feel like the DCCol is moving in a different direction from what I do, they require people to jump through a lot of hoops' Ceramicist A

Several others shared the concern that it was too difficult to measure the impact from being involved but that it was a step in the right direction even so;

'I am not sure yet if being associated with the Designed & Made in Ireland' brand makes any significant difference but I certainly appreciate the intention.' Jeweller A

Interpretation of these survey findings has raised numerous concerns about the 'Designed & Made' branding initiative. It is clear that there are a minority of makers represented who do not feel they are suitable enterprises for the purpose of this initiative and while they might be look favourably on the idea of a national craft branding scheme, the present one is not performing for their needs. From the perspective of evaluating 'Designed & Made' as 'collective brand', this confusion over suitability and eligibility amongst makes indicates unclear criteria for participating from a brand management level as most of these makers were approached by the DCCoI themselves to take part.

While there is generally support from this group of businesses for the DCCoI to provide this kind of marketing and promotion assistance, results indicate that involvement with this DCCoI initiative is not held in much esteem by the majority of makers and there is not much 'prestige' or 'exclusivity' attached to it.

The primary purpose of a brand is to add value to a product and differentiate it from its competition (Randall, 1993) but the impact being involved with the 'Designed & Made' brand is difficult the craft enterprises to measure. It is possible that the un-typical relationship between the DCCoI's 'parent-brand' and the 'sub-brands' of the individual craft businesses contributes to this difficulty as the DCCoI is not tracking sales to measure performance as a commercial business would. The over-all performance of the brand may also be limited by the reluctance of makers to show their involvement with the DCCoI on their own marketing materials.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

The final question on the survey asked respondents to provide their thoughts on how the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' branding scheme could be improved. Twenty-five businesses submitted comments and suggestions providing a rich source of material to interpret for the purpose of providing recommendations. Their comments (which are available in appendix 1, question 9) were analysed with respect to both their previous answers and the author's secondary research. Results have highlighted issues relating to three broad themes: 'Strategic direction', 'Moderation and eligibility' and 'Funding and Finance'. Using these headings recommendations for improving the performance of the 'Design & Made in Ireland' brand will be put forward in this chapter.

5.1 Strategic Direction

'...this particular exercise in branding has been pretty peripheral as far as I'm concerned.'

Glass Studio A

Developing a brand is a strategic process that requires time, management, commitment and regular evaluation (Randel, 1993; de Chernatony, 2006; Design Council, 2013). While it is recognised that this initiative is just one of the DCCol's market development objectives, in today's crowded market a strong brand offers clear advantages of increased market visibility, and customer recognition (Randall, 1993; Dutta, 2012) and is a significant opportunity to raise both national and international awareness of Irish craft produce. Many respondents however felt that as stands this particular exercise is 'a bit directionless' (Fashion accessories studio B) and a missed opportunity as it seems to only be actively promoted and 'visible around Christmas time' (Leather design studio A). A suggestion offered to counter this seasonality was that a similar drive be planned in summer through gift shops and at airports, to take advantage of the tourist season. Since its initiation back in 2010, only ad hoc efforts appear to have been made to develop the brand and there were no targets for the projects listed in the DCCol's annual reports or strategic plans. It is possible that these targets exist in internal documents that the researcher did not have access to, but the evidence found in this study suggests that a

more comprehensive and visible strategic plan for the brand would boost maker confidence regarding its use and intention.

The majority of survey respondents tentatively agreed that the logo helps consumers to identify quality Irish craft but there was a lack of tangible evidence though which to evaluate its effectiveness;

'[At events I] have heard customers remark on the usefulness of this brand for those that want to buy genuine Irish craft. Other than that I have no evidence that the brand has had a significant impact on my business. I suppose it's better than nothing.' Woodturner

As it is a consumer focused campaign, for proper evaluation the next stage of research would focus on consumer perceptions of the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' brand. The last consumer perception study in the Irish craft sector was conducted in 2012 (Millward Brown) but did not ask specifically about the branding although it was rolled out in 2010. The relationship between the brand and the products sold under it is unconventional compared to other brand architecture structures. It is not possible for the DCCol to track sales performance and if it wishes to do so it must rely on retail partners to feedback such results. If the branding is purely just a promotional exercise, by developing a brand the DCCol is simply paying lip-service to commercial marketing methods without actually making a full commitment. Branding theorists have suggested that making a half-hearted attempt at brand building is worse than not trying at all as it will 'alienate some customers and dishearten many staff' (Randel, 1993, p110) and the lack of direction and unclear purpose of 'Designed & Made' appears to have distanced some clients:

'How can it be improved? Simply by following the original promise both to the maker and consumer that products are ACTUALLY designed and made in Ireland. This is often not the case; it means that as a maker I am less inclined to support an initiative which does not hold true to its own recommendations' Jeweller E

Many of the respondents who were 'unhappy' with the brand performance were also unhappy with the DCCol's shift in focus since its own re-branding from CCol in 2014. They feel that the DCCol no longer represents their interests as craft practitioners and is instead focusing on design to satisfy the requirements of their funder *Enterprise Ireland*. To consider this in branding terminology, it is possible that the expansion of the 'umbrella

brand' to include the design industry has stretched the brand too far from its initial values and purpose (Randel, 1993).

They are promoting themselves more than small businesses. It's all moving in a very different area, I am surprised it still says 'designed AND made' on the logo'
Jewellery Studio A

Perhaps one way to counter this distance that has developed between the organisation and the enterprises represented though the brand would be to position it with greater 'collective atmosphere' (Fashion accessories studio A*) and involve the businesses more in brand planning. A paper on sustainability and the craft industry suggested that often 'a "corporate approach" (where value is defined by an organisation) is at odds with the values of the majority of the artisan community' as group activity has traditionally been central to craft development (Cox & Bebbington, 2016, p3). This desire for more inclusion and transparency was echoed in a number of suggestions;

'I would love to see some planning with the crafts people, in partnership with us, and get more input from makers. I have never been asked to give feedback on my experience of various schemes. It's not very transparent on the plans or criteria of who's eligible for what and why certain people get selected and others don't.' Ceramicist A*

In summation, if 'Designed & Made in Ireland' is to function as a national craft brand identity more strategic direction needs to be decided on. Should this direction exist at an internal level, it needs to be communicated better for participants for them to find value in the project. While many felt it was a 'good idea' more focus, not just seasonal promotion is required to 'gain greater rewards' (Jeweller A). Positioning the brand as a collective mark might help raise the brands reputation but this creates issues of moderation and eligibility which will be discussed in the next section.

5.2 Moderation and eligibility

The issues of moderation and eligibility have been raised repeatedly at various stage of this study: Initially it was not clear if there was an application process to be listed on the 'Give Irish Craft Website', it was unclear how the 'Designed & Made' identity was used and

linked to other DCCoI projects or if involvement in one automatically associated the business with the brand.

If a brand is performing well, it should add value to a product, differentiate it from its competitors and clearly communicate its unique values (Randall, 1993). If this brand is designed to function as a certification mark and communicate the unique value of Irish craft, it leaves a lot to be desired. Many felt strongly that it is 'too open' - the only requirement for using the logo seems to be that the maker is stocked in one of the DCCoI retail partner's stores. Generally a certification mark will act as a guarantee to certain standards of quality of production (International Trade Centre et al. 2013) but with 'Design & Made' there are no rules applicable how the product is made, a fact that concerns some participants.

It needs to be sharply monitored and people who are importing and cheating should not be rewarded. Handmade should have a special addition tag to show proof that the maker is actually making in Ireland to reward talent not punish it. It needs to be fairly run.'

Mixed Media Jeweller B

Many respondents feel that introducing sharper and more defined eligibility criteria would add *more* exclusivity and would raise the reputation of the brand as a quality mark.

*'One of the problems is that it's open access and the brand is not very strongly protected. Vetted slightly maybe but... it's a bit ad hoc. I don't use the cards because anyone can (they're not selected against much quality criteria)'. Textiles accessories studio D**

At the theoretical level of research, the idea that the DCCoI had the authority to designate a quality mark raised issues. After all, as the 'national champion' they are obligated to represent makers operating at every level on the craft and design spectrum not just those producing commercial products. If that brand's values stand for 'quality, craftsmanship and authenticity.' (DCCoI, 2016) as the DCCoI claim, a clearer application and selection process needs to be implemented. One possibility for this is that they adapt the model for selecting participants used in '*Irish Craft Portfolio*' by appointing an independent jury to choose the enterprises represented by 'Designed & Made'. An annual application would be too time consuming for these small businesses but perhaps a 3 year entry period after which the business would be reviewed to make sure it was still up-holding the values and

quality standards for selection. If it passes, another 5 years membership of the 'brand' would be allocated. By making the brand more prestigious and exclusive, the initiative would be making an attempt to overcome the 'flat' structure of the craft market (MHM, 2012) and could kick-start more valuable subscription activity.

Among those contacted for the research it was clear, that a minority of respondents represented by the brand were not the most suitable 'fit'. Alarming, the majority of these businesses had been approached by the DCCol themselves to take part which indicates a lack of clarity over eligibility even at organisational level. There is no point in a brand representing the wrong sort of 'product' as it creates confusion and wastes resources (Randall, 1993); in this case the product is a craft business. Even some participants producing commercial products were no longer positioned to benefit from the scheme as it currently operates due to their own marketing practice;

'I don't actually know a lot of what it does. A lot is for retail only so doesn't affect me as I only sell direct.' Leather design studio A

'I haven't participated in any projects for the past few years. I no longer sell wholesale so that meant I was slightly off the DCCol's radar.' Jeweller B

More organisational moderation is required to make sure those being represented from the brand fit the right category of makers to benefit from their involvement. As has been mentioned, the DCCol has many different market development initiatives so perhaps by reducing the number of these and adopting a more 'streamlined approach' (Textiles Accessories Studio D*) in across just two categories, those producing artistic work, and those producing more commercial work the DCCol would make better use of their resources.

5.3 Funding and finance

Finally, it has been acknowledged that the DCCol are a public body, government funded through Enterprise Ireland. Like all public bodies they operate with a limited budget. A number of makers called for more funding for the organisation so they could continue to develop marketing and branding schemes;

'The government needs to back the DCCol more financially so that they can develop schemes such as the one you refer to' Mixed Media Jeweller A

'More marketing, more visibility, but this requires more funding.' Furniture Design Studio

There is a perception that developing a brand it takes a huge amount of financing however, simply calling for more funding seems like a lazy solution. The DCCol is already better funded than many other Craft development organisations, when the total DCCol expenditure is divided by Ireland's population, their spending equals 86 cent per person (DCCol, 2014). As the DCCol have already made significant steps in developing a brand with the resources they have so perhaps it can be made more effective by simply by strategic management, clearer communication and more collective appeal to the makers it has been designed to represent.

Conclusion

The limited amount of both academic and industrial research on marketing and branding within the craft sector had been referred to at several points throughout this study. This dissertation represents a new area of exploration within the field and was conducted with a pragmatic approach using the grounded theory methodology. A characteristic of grounded theory is that as an inductive approach, data collection occurs over time and 'findings and methods are always refined and negotiated' (Ke & Wenglensky, 2010). The phenomenon investigated was the development of a national craft brand identity, 'Designed & Made in Ireland' through the perspective of the craft enterprises represented by it, in an attempt to find the value and impact its creation has had on their businesses. However, this is just one perspective and scope exists to build upon the findings from the viewpoint of the DCCoI themselves, retail outlets and also through consumer perceptions. This conclusion still represents a beginning rather than an end but as four research aims were identified in the introduction, here they will be reasserted and reviewed to establish if this dissertation has provided a sufficient foundation on which future research could potentially build.

The first aim was to analyse the development of 'Designed & Made in Ireland' as a brand identity within the framework of the DCCoI's wider market development objectives. Using as much information as was publically available; the creation and history of the brand identity was explained in conjunction with the role and structure of the DCCoI. It was acknowledged that the idea of 'craft' is a contested concept the sector consists of a spectrum of practitioners operating to various capacities as both artists and enterprises with vastly different needs and desires. This fact that presents challenges for the work of national development bodies like the DCCoI. The study focus was on the brand's impact for businesses producing commercial craft products but developing a craft brand identity is just one DCCoI's tactic for developing the market for Irish craft and design and two initiatives *Showcase* and *Portfolio* were also outlined to provide context for the scope of the DCCoI's promotional work.

To develop a national craft brand was a suggestion offered in a market development report for craft in Scotland (HI-Arts *et al*, 2009). While initial enquiry suggested that the 'Designed & Made' logo was performing many of the functions of an established brand - differentiating products, adding value and asserting product quality (Randal, 2003), there were inconsistencies found in how the DCCoI referred to 'Designed & Made' in their own materials and no clear information available on who the 'brand' was designed to represent. To achieve the second research aim and investigate the initiative's suitability as a branding concept, branding theory from commercial marketing was explained offering definitions and structures for how a brand should perform and the value of a strong brand for an organisation. The idiosyncrasies of the craft market structure were then outlined drawing on work from academic Dr Ian Fillis: The craft market is characterised by a plethora of small and micro-enterprises, constrained by a reliance on wholesaling and a lack of 'subscription' activity (MHM, 2013). Concepts from branding theory were then related to the craft market and implications for this study considered. The theory suggested that developing a brand for Irish craft potentially offered a solution for advancing the visibility of craft in the market, and would help these small businesses compete against industrial manufactured goods.

As a research paradigm, pragmatism is not committed to any single philosophy, allowing the researcher to use mixed methodologies to draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative methods of enquiry (Creswell, 2014). To begin a pragmatic investigation into the impact of the 'Designed & Made' branding the use of a survey questionnaire was calculated to be the most appropriate method for data collection. Using a digital survey allowed a selected sample of craft enterprises operating across Ireland to contribute to the research. A mix of closed and open questions provided both baseline statistics of respondent's opinions on the brand and the role of the DCCoI in marketing and where comments were supplied, a rich source of qualitative data and practical suggestions. Overall, the findings indicated that this selection of craft enterprises valued the assistance of the DCCoI when it came to marketing for their products but as it currently operates this particular branding exercise can be best summed up in the words of one maker, as being 'pretty peripheral' (Glass Studio A). The results also revealed that there was a minority of businesses being represented whose business practice did not fit with the apparent

objectives of the brand. This finding indicated at organisational confusion over eligibility as many of these in the minority were approach to participate in the initiative by the DCCoI themselves.

The final research aim was to make recommendations for the direction of further research and possible future development of the initiative. In chapter 5 suggestions were put forward drawing on the data provided by survey respondents and the background research undertaken over the course of the study. There is undoubtedly great potential for the use of a national craft brand to help businesses over-come the limitations of their individually stretched resources but to improve and strengthen the performance of the existing brand more strategic direction for the project is required. Rather than being used as just a seasonal promotional tool if the DCCoI want to continue the brands development there needs to be more clarity about the brands values and objectives. These objectives also need to be communicated better to the businesses represented by the brand and measurable evidence of its impact needs provided for them to find value in the scheme. On the theme of 'moderation and eligibility' the DCCoI needs to implement clearer guidelines and advantages for being represented by the 'Designed & Made in Ireland' brand. More restrictions would make the project more exclusive and more valuable to participants and create greater competition in the market. There are businesses represented currently which are not benefiting from their involvement and this both wastes resources and confuses the brand's objectives. There is a perception that building a strong brand takes a huge amount of resources (Randall, 1993) however, the DCCoI seems to have created the beginning of a brand using relatively few, although some suggested calling for more funding to enhance the 'Designed & Made' initiative, it seems reasonable to suggest that by more strategic management of the existing resources this unique endeavour has great potential to grow the reputation and appreciation of Irish craft products.

Appendix 1: Survey Questions and Answers

1. Which term most accurately describes your job description:

3	22 (71%)	2	2	2	
Craft practitioner	Designer-maker	Designer	Artist	Other	(Founder and Creative Director; Designer – manufacturer)

NOTES

Majority define themselves as designer makers

2. How long has your business been in operation?

2	7	12	8	3	
less than 2 years	Less than 5 years	Less than 10 years	More than 10 years	More than 20 years	

62% have been in business between 5 and 20 years

In order of prevalence, please list the methods by which you market your products: (1 being the most common, 5 the least)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Score
Wholesale	64.29% 18	17.86% 5	0.00% 0	14.29% 4	3.57% 1	28	4.25
Direct website/studio sales	22.22% 6	33.33% 9	22.22% 6	3.70% 1	18.52% 5	27	3.37
Retail	15.00% 3	35.00% 7	20.00% 4	20.00% 4	10.00% 2	20	3.25
Commissions	22.73% 5	13.64% 3	31.82% 7	4.55% 1	27.27% 6	22	3.00
To Order	0.00% 0	21.05% 4	36.84% 7	36.84% 7	5.26% 1	19	2.74

Wholesale marketing followed by direct sales is the most common marketing method.

3. Which DCCoI support schemes have you availed of during the last 5 years?

(Please tick all that apply)

8 (25%)	15 (46%)	3 (9%)	23 (72%)	11 (34%)
Irish Craft Portfolio	Showcase	Future Makers	Creative Island	Mentoring

72% have participated in Creative Island reinforcing links between both

6 (18%) **Other:** Job-bridge intern (x2), FUSE clinics (x2); Export support at: Tent London, *initiatives.*
 NY Now, Maison & Objéct Paris; Stand support and exhibiting outside Ireland. None at
 all.

Section 2: The 'Design & Made in Ireland' brand

4. How did you become involved with the 'Designed & Made' campaign?

6 (18%) I Applied	14 (44%) I was approached	13 (40%) I'm not sure	1 (0.3%) I wasn't aware of it	<i>The high level of those approached or unsure raises questions about eligibility</i>
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4. I display my association with the DCCol on my own marketing material/in store/online

6 (19%) Yes	12 (37%) No	14 (43%) Sometimes
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5. Do you feel your association with this brand has increased opportunities for your business?

Definitely 12 (3%) <i>8 elaborated below</i>	Possibly 13 (40%) <i>6 elaborated below</i>	No 7 (21%) <i>7 elaborated below</i>
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Why/Why Not: (responses to Q's 4, 5, & 6 are displayed sequentially in brackets for context). 21
 Responses in total.

- 'The sign is now known and people understand that the product is actually produced here in Ireland'. (*I'm not sure - Yes – DEFINITELY*)
 _26. Textiles Accessories Studio E
- 'Combination of not actively capitalising on the association and perhaps also being less craft and more design'. (*I was Approached – Sometimes – NO*)
 _30. Furniture Design Studio
- 'There have been opportunities created but they have their own pros and cons (it's a balancing act)' – (*I'm not sure – no – POSSIBLY*)
 _9. Ceramicist B

- 'I haven't measured it so have no way of being sure of the impact'. (*I was approached – no – POSSIBLY*)
_21. Glass Studio B
- 'Yes probably, but it's hard to measure the actual impact'. (*I was approached/not sure – sometimes – DEFINITELY*)
_15. Leather Design Studio A
- 'There's nothing measurable.... just having a label doesn't get it sold.' (*I was approached – No – NO*)
_17. Fashion accessories studio B *
- 'Possibly...but I feel that the DCCoI is moving in a different direction from what I do, they require people to jump through a lot of hoops...'. (*I was approached – No – POSSIBLY*)
_8. Ceramicist A*
- 'Like I said Irish Design 2015 really helped us but we're not really helped by Designed & Made... it's an Irish consumer campaign (*we're not so much in the same target market*)' (*I applied/I'm not sure – No – POSSIBLY*)
_19. Textiles accessories studio D*
- 'I found Creative Island last year in Showcase really beneficial' (*I was approached – yes – DEFINITELY*).
_16. Leather design studio B
- 'Iconic brand, people recognise it... its competitive' (*I was approached – sometimes – DEFINITELY*)
_7. Jeweller D
- 'They (the DCCoI) market *themselves* very well but it doesn't affect us – as we were already established. (*I'm not sure – no – NO*)
_1. Jewellery Studio A*
- 'I never display any association with the DCCoI so hard to know' (*I was approached – NO –*

NO)

_13. Textiles accessories studio A*

- 'It's an umbrella brand with a stronger influence than I can create... It pushes Irish craft nationally & internationally. (*I was approached - Yes – DEFINITELY*)

_12. Ceramicist E

- 'Amazing initiative to be associated with.' (*I Applied - YES- DEFINITELY*)

_2. Jewellery studio B

- 'Products were used for the year of craft advert in 2011' (*I Applied – No – DEFINITELY*)

_4. Jeweller B.

- 'As a new business it really helped gain brand recognition, being supported by a company with an established reputation.' (*I'm not sure – sometimes - DEFINITELY*)

_6. Fashion accessories studio A*

- 'It does create more awareness but its less beneficial to me as not stocked in many Irish outlets' (*I was approached - Yes – POSSIBLY*)

_10. Ceramicist C*

- 'I don't think it was a good fit for me because I'm not wholesaling work in Ireland.' (*I was Approached – No – NO*)

_25. Basketmaker

- 'Whereas the provenance of the work seems important to the buyers at Showcase Ireland in particular, (our work) ...can't be as successfully branded as Irish craft as some other products'. (*I wasn't aware of it – No – NO*)

_20. Glass Studio A.

- 'Coming from fine art - sculpture, I've only returned to my roots in jewellery design to set up the business just over two years now - it is perhaps too early to analyse the opportunities of being associated with this brand presents. I do know that it is important to have a support structure and that one is not working in isolation. My intention has been primarily to get on

the DCCOI radar so I have applied to for relevant opportunities available and I am still finding my place in a highly competitive market. I'm not sure yet, if being associated with the 'Designed and Made in Ireland' brand makes any significant difference but I certainly appreciate the intention.' (*I'm not sure – sometimes – POSSIBLY*)

_ 1. Jeweller A.

- 'They don't have a good enough website. Regular consumers don't know about it, it's not marketed effectively and you only hear it promoted about Christmas time. It's a missed opportunity' (*I was approached – No – NO*)

_5. Jeweller C

6. Which of the following words would you associate with the 'Designed and Made in Ireland' brand: (*please tick all that apply& provide additional if desired*)

27 (84%)	7 (21%)	8 (25%)	6 (19%)	2 (6%)
Quality	Prestige	Commercial	Exclusive	Competitive
13 (40%)	6 Other			
Unique	Design, tradition, heritage, best of hand craft, Pride, Craftsmanship Irish (x3), Lost (on regular consumers)			

7. Please rate your responses to the following statements:

(*mark an X in relevant box*)

Response to the statements was overwhelmingly positive

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>As a small business, marketing and branding my products takes a lot of resources</i>	15 46%	15 46%	1 3%	1 3%	0
<i>Support from the DCCOI has been</i>	6 19%	20 63%	4 13%	1 3%	1 3%

<i>important is establishing my business</i>					
<i>The 'Designed and Made in Ireland' logo makes it easy for consumers to recognise quality Irish craft</i>	9 28%	15 46%	4 13%	4 13%	0
<i>It is important that organisations like the DCCol undertake this sort of activity</i>	16 50%	14 43%	2 6%	0	0
<i>An 'umbrella/collective' brand like this in theory has greater reach and influence than any single craft business working alone</i>	12 38%	16 50%	4 12%	0	0
<i>A commercial branding scheme like this is suitable for marketing craft products</i>	6 19%	25 78%	1 3%	0	0
<i>Being a part of this initiative has raised my reputation</i>	4 12%	16 50%	8 25%	1 3%	3 9%

In your opinion, are there any areas where this scheme could be developed or improved?

(25 Responses - again for context answers for questions 6, 5 & 4 are displayed in brackets.)

1. The government needs to back the DCCoI more **financially** so that they can develop schemes such as the one you refer to. This is only one of the wide varieties of approaches the DCCoI take to develop their clients.
_27. Mixed Media Jeweller A (Sometimes, possibly – I'm not sure)
2. More marketing, more visibility, but this **requires more funding**.
_30. Furniture Design Studio (Sometimes, No. Approached)
3. How can it be improved? Simply by following the **original promise both to the maker and consumer**, that products are ACTUALLY designed and made in Ireland. As this is often not the case, it means that as a maker I am less inclined to support an initiative which does not hold true to its own recommendations. It cannot be developed properly if it isn't true!
_Jeweller E (Sometimes, possibly – Applied)
4. It needs to be **sharply monitored** and people who are importing and cheating should not be rewarded. **Handmade should have a special addition tag** to show proof that the maker is actually making reward talent not punish it. It needs to be **fairly run**.
_28. Mixed Media Jeweller B (sometimes, possibly – I applied)
5. It's **less personal** when it's a big collective brand like that, I think that makes it lose something
_ Ceramicist B* (No, possibly – I'm not sure)
6. Membership fee,
_22. Stonemasons (Sometimes, definitely – I applied)
7. DCCoI are doing a **good job** with this. We need **more** support to market overseas. Very practically this means money to help attend the relevant shows *[rest of comment deleted to protect anonymity]*

_ 21. Glass Studio B (No, Possibly – I was approached)

8. How successful it is depends a lot on how they **curate things**. If they put **more into it**, they might get more out of it.....Regrettably its only visible around at **Christmas time**. I don't actually know a lot of what it does. A lot is for retail only so doesn't affect me as I only sell direct.

_Leather design studio A (sometimes, definitely – I was approached)

9. It's very difficult to measure and it's just another label, I don't believe it gets products sold. Perhaps a tourist driven initiative at airports/duty free. As it is right now, **it's a bit directionless**

_ 17. Fashion accessories studio B (No, No – approached)

10. I would love to see some planning with the crafts people, in partnership with us, and get more input from makers. I have **never been asked to give feedback** on experience of various schemes. **It's not very transparent** on the plans or criteria of **who is eligible** for what and why certain people get selected and other don't. Can feel a bit 'square-peg round hole' like I'm trying to change myself into something that they want me to be if I want to take part.

_8. Ceramicist A* (No, Possibly- approached)

11. **Implemented more - not a bad idea**. One of the problems is that it's **open access** and the brand is not very strongly protected. Vetted slightly but... it's a bit ad hoc. They 'brand' the events more and the 'Designed and Made in Ireland is just an adverb. I don't use the cards because anyone can (they're not **selected against much quality criteria**). It would be better if, instead of having multiple schemes if they did **less but with more focus** (streamlined operations)...2 top level projects the commercial and the artistic, then future makers and then anyone who's a hobbyist etc could be represented by the guilds...

_19. Textiles accessories studio D (No, possibly- applied/I'm not sure)

12. Generally - a bit more training for jewellery (that's accessible).About the brand - I don't know, I would need more time to think about it. In general the DCCol is a **fantastic resource** and I would encourage anyone starting a craft business to register with them.

- _ 7. Jeweller D (sometimes, definitely - approached)
13. They are **promoting themselves** more than small businesses.
It's all moving in a very different area, I am surprised it still says 'designed AND made' on the logo. Yes it's a good brand/image – as it does good work in terms of **raising the image** but does it actually help people make a living? I don't know.
_Jewellery Studio A (No, No – not sure)
14. More support in rural areas (outside of Dublin & Kilkenny) - make **craft the focus again**, instead of focusing on design because design is more commercial - more work needed to make craft businesses more sustainable rather than trying to make craft businesses like designers.
_Textiles accessories studio A* (No, No - approached)
15. It could be **more hands on** for the small craft businesses involved and help with **cutting costs** (ie they have insurance scheme, which is great) could they do the same for package, shipping, printing (boxes cost a lot..)
_12. Ceramicist E (yes, definitely- approached)
16. Keep going, it's amazing as it is!
_2. Jewellery Studio B (yes, definitely - applied)
17. At the moment I can't really say- **I haven't participated in any projects for the past few years**. I no longer sell wholesale so that meant I was slightly off the DCCol's radar.
_Jeweller B (No, definitely – applied)
18. From a personal perspective - **more group meetings** with potential members. (There's one at showcase but hard to get to it when you are *doing* showcase). 2-3 meetings a year with everyone involved would be useful in terms of connecting with other people and generating a more collective atmosphere.
_Fashion accessories studio A* (sometimes, definitely – I'm not sure)
19. Having a **specific campaign** for one of pieces/ sculptural work.

_Ceramicist D -(Sometimes, Possibly – approached)

20. **It's very seasonal** , Christmas – it's only pushed then. Could possibly take advantage of tourist season in summer too.

_Ceramicist C (Yes, Possibly – approached)

21. I'm **unaware** of any customers finding me via the DCCOI website, I display the "Designed and Made" promotional material at the Christmas Craft Fair and have **heard customers remark on the usefulness of this brand for those that want to buy genuine Irish craft**. Other than that I have **no evidence** that the brand has had a significant impact on my business. I **suppose it's better than nothing**.

_23. Woodturner (sometimes, possibly – I'm not sure)

22. I'm not sure that marketing is the most important thing that the DCCOI should be putting money into – I'd prefer to see **more support for quality enhancement**. For example they used to provide a craft bursary - that's gone now.

_ Basketmaker (No, No - approached)

23. I was only **dimly aware** of this campaign. DCCOI has been very helpful in supporting my practice in other ways, especially regarding exhibition and export opportunities, **but this particular exercise in branding has been pretty peripheral as far as I'm concerned**.

_20 Glass Studio A (no, no, - I wasn't aware)

24. Ireland is a small country with an even smaller audience and it is towards an international market we **need to focus this umbrella branding in order to gain greater rewards**. From my experience of 20 years in the creative industry in Ireland, I know very few of my peer group who can make a living solely from their craft/art and often supplement it with other income sources. I believe we need more solid opportunities where we can apply for **funding support** as a craft practitioner, (like the Arts Council funding strands), to help us develop our **work rather than solely PR/branding strategies**.

_Jeweller A (sometimes, possibly – I'm not sure)

25. The whole thing. They need to hire a PR company and **put the funds** in. They need to explain

to people what the brand means. **No one understands what it means** - that stuff is ACTUALLY made in Ireland. The big companies and retailers don't care as long as it's making a profit. The DCCol say they are doing all this work but don't want to here if it's not actually doing any good, they would never produce negative research if something's not working... they **don't want to hear any result that's negative.**

_ Jeweller C* (No, No - approached)

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