

Millions of people each day use Swedish brands – without knowing that they are Swedish.



Three Swedish brands: Ericsson, Volvo and H&M.

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Every day millions of people across the globe use Swedish products, work with Swedish companies or shop at Swedish global chains. Still, people are often not aware that these brands are Swedish.

Jack Yan, a New Zealand-based brand expert and author of Nation Branding, recently told The Swedish Wire that Swedish companies could [take better advantage](#) of their national inheritance in order to intensify brand identity and boost sales.

In a move to help companies cash in on their nation's values a new branding concept -- Brands of Sweden -- was launched this week with the aim to promote the brand identity of Sweden and Swedish companies internationally.

The concept, created by the Swedish Institute, will first be used in conjunction with the royal wedding and the City of Stockholm's "Love Stockholm 2010" event.

"This is a way for companies to tell the world that they are Swedish. But it's also in our interest to make clear that these strong brands are Swedish", Olle Wästberg, Director General of the Swedish Institute, said.

Jack Yan believes that the lack of pride in the Swedish brand has to do with "the Jante Law" (Jantelagen), a typical Scandinavian pattern of group behaviour that negatively portrays and

New branding concept promotes Swedish firms

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criticizes success and achievement as unworthy and inappropriate.

That's partly right, said Olle Wästberg. But he also explains that Swedish companies sometimes simply don't want to promote themselves as Swedish. For example, many Swedish pharmaceutical companies operating in the United States want to be perceived as "an American brand in America", he explains.

But on most markets it's a great advantage for companies to use its Swedishness. The country is often perceived as a "mental place" rather than a geographical, based on strong values such as environmentally friendliness, equality and of being non-corrupt. With a highly skilled labor force the country is also seen as front-runner in a number of growing industries, such as green technology, life science and information technology.

Sweden's Minister for Trade Ewa Björling believes that companies and Sweden as a whole have a great deal to gain from working together.

"Swedish companies play an important role in the work of enhancing the image of Sweden around the world. This initiative will further enhance the valuable collaboration between the business community and official promotion of Sweden," she said in a statement.