Many high-technology companies are focused on activities related to their core products in order to create competitive advantage. However, other products such as accessories are potentially important parts of these companies’ product portfolios as they offer benefits such as high profit margins and value adding effects on the core products. During the spring of 2015, Friberg (2015) conducted a study to examine which factors affect the efficiency of marketing communication of accessories in high-technology companies.

Introduction
Axis Communications is the world leader in network surveillance and has been driving the industry forward ever since they launched the world’s first network camera in 1996. However, Axis’ business environment is changing and they are challenged by an increasing number of competitors. The intensifying competition puts new demands on Axis as their premium priced products are challenged by low-price alternatives. Axis have realized that they need to increase their market orientation and offer end-to-end solutions that truly satisfy the needs of their customers in order to stay relevant and remain world leaders. This requires a broad product portfolio that enables solutions to the customers’ unique problems, and a big part of the product portfolio is accessories. But how should Axis work with the marketing of accessories, and what are the areas that affect the efficiency of the marketing communication of accessories?

Purpose
The purpose of this research is to develop a framework that underlines the areas that high-technology companies can work with in order to improve their marketing communication of accessories. The research questions are:

• Q1: What are the areas that affect the efficiency of the marketing communication of accessories at Axis?
• Q2: How can Axis work to improve their marketing communication efforts for accessories?
• Q3: How can other high tech companies learn from Axis to improve their own marketing communication of accessories?
• Q4: What is the rationale for focusing on accessory marketing efforts with a holistic view?

Methodology
The project was conducted as a case study in combination with explorative and problem-solving approaches for the different research questions. The case study is a qualitative study based on interviews with 18 different stakeholders with insight to the marketing communication and sales of accessories at Axis.

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework is structured in two parts - Holistic Marketing and Adjacent Research Areas. The Holistic Marketing part is based on a framework described by Sheth and Sisodia (2006) that recognize that marketing is often conducted in fragments, instead of looking at the whole picture. The concept of holistic marketing stresses that “everything matters” and that decisions in one marketing
area affect other areas as well. It is about the activities, processes and programs that together build the marketing efforts of a company. Furthermore, the framework addresses the four marketing areas: Integrated marketing, Relationship marketing, Internal marketing and Performance marketing.

The framework is complemented by the second part - Adjacent Research Areas - that discusses subjects closely related to the holistic marketing concept. Cross-selling theory was examined as well as the roles of knowledge management and change management.

**Results**

Using the holistic approach as a starting point, a number of areas were concluded to affect the marketing communication of accessories at Axis. These areas are illustrated in figure 1. The framework is not fully generalizable - as only one firm has been examined - but the it can still work as a starting point for other companies that want to improve their accessory marketing performance. The main benefit of the framework is that it mixes conventional knowledge from different research areas with lessons from the case study and results in an easily understandable tool that can be used as an inspiration even for companies that are different from Axis.

Furthermore, Axis was analyzed upon the basis of the developed framework. This was done both to validate the usefulness of the framework, but also to provide Axis with a concrete call-to-action plan. It resulted in a large number of recommendations, somewhat evenly distributed over the different areas of the framework, which proves that the framework can generate results and that the chosen areas are relevant to investigate. Even so, it does not prove that this is the best or only way to investigate accessory marketing communication, as this would require further research.

The rationale for examining the marketing communication of accessories is based on understanding a couple of characteristics of accessories. It was evident from the case study that accessories were under prioritized in every part of the organization, which makes an increased focus an end in itself. In addition to this it was clear that the communication of accessories should be performed in different ways than other products to improve the efficiency of the communication and make it more effective. This calls for more reflection and attention on how to communicate the accessories.

The question whether the holistic approach to accessory marketing is appropriate was also addressed. As areas of improvement were found in a broad spectrum of categories - affecting each other in many ways - the relevance of the holistic approach was validated. By applying a more narrow approach, the underlying reasons for the identified problems would probably never have been addressed.
Conclusions
Existing literature offers little guidance for high-technology companies who wishes to improve their marketing communication of accessories. This study shows that there are good reasons for companies to evaluate their work, and that is why a new framework has been proposed with the intention to work as an inspiration and guidance for the companies who wants to improve their marketing communication of accessories. Furthermore, a call-to-action plan has been created for Axis, which contains concrete measures and improvement areas that has been identified on the basis of the framework during the study.

The research should be complemented by additional case studies to ensure the generalizability, but it is obvious from this study that the topic is highly relevant and that it would be interesting to examine it further.

References