



Museum Management Training at the Fine Arts Zanabazar Museum

UNESCO-Zanabazar Museum National Training Workshop – Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 8- 23 October 2007

BACKGROUND READING MATERIALS

Marketing

Paal Mork

Head of Communications and Marketing, Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo

During recent decades, museums have put a greater emphasis on attracting the visitors' attention, and marketing has therefore become an essential museum management tool for museums in a growing number of countries. Important reasons are that in many countries government financial support has been reduced, while the competition for people's leisure time is tougher. Society in general is also faced by an increasing flow of information, and getting visibility is more challenging than ever.

Museums that focus on the audience in all aspects of their operations have a greater potential to gain popularity and new visitors. Communicating with the audience is not a one-way process. The truly successful museum will not only communicate its mission to its audience, it will also receive feedback from the audience and then use this information to adapt the needs and wants of the audience in its development programmes.

I believe that museums in many parts of the world, particularly those in developing countries, have a great potential for increasing visitors numbers if more emphasis is put on a marketing orientation. In a more stabilised political situation, we can assume that more travellers with cultural interests will find their way to what have been over recent decades politically troubled regions and countries of the world, such as the Middle East and countries like Afghanistan or Iraq. "My clients are thirsty for the knowledge that Iraq has", Geoff Hann of Hinterland Travel says, while museums in Iraq or other countries that have recently suffered conflict will probably also have a potential to be meeting places for friends and families. In the longer term they might also be venues for reconciliation between divided communities, as is now happening in post-conflict Northern Ireland. But this all requires a positive attitude towards marketing and audience services.

This chapter provides an introduction to the key topics of modern museum marketing. I will start with the marketing mix, then describe the strategic planning process and end up with a brief introduction to brand-building.

1. Introduction to marketing

A common mistake both in business life and in museums is to regard marketing solely as the process of promotion and sale. "Selling is only the tip of the marketing iceberg", the famous

Professor in Marketing, Philip Kotler (2003, p. 9) says. Modern marketing is characterised as the holistic process, ranging from designing the product, segmenting the market, managing the promotion and finally researching the customer's satisfaction. A commonly used definition is that of the American Marketing Association (1985): "Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create the exchanges processes that satisfy individual and organizational objectives" (Lancaster 2002, p.3).

Production orientation

In the early days of industrialisation, manufacturers were focussed on making the best possible products. In a general shortage of goods, the customer would buy them without requiring special products and certain design. Henry Ford said about his Model T car that, "you can have any colour you want; as long as it is black!" (Lancaster 2002, p.7). No one even thought of asking for a clear blue metallic one with cream leather interiors!

Sales orientation

During the 1950s and 1960s, markets became filled up with most industrial products and the sales rates decreased. The orientation was then shifted towards the sale of the products. The production went on as before, and to assure that the products were sold, sales strategies were developed to convince customers to buy even more goods.

Marketing orientation

With a marketing orientation the customer becomes the main focus. Instead of making products to sell, the manufacturer considers the needs and wants of the customers and makes products to satisfy them. Production is based on needs of the market. Marketing orientation not only includes a process of promoting products to the customer, but also a communication and research to find the needs of the customer. This orientation characterises most modern marketing. The development is reflected in the international travel industry. In the 1970s and 1980s, tourists were satisfied by being loaded on huge charter aircrafts and guided around in common groups or they sat on a beach with thousands of others. However, nowadays the trend is very much towards independently tailored tours and unique experiences.

Societal marketing concept

A further development is also emerging, called the societal marketing concept. This argues that production should also take care of the environment and social needs. As the French oil company Total puts it: "Civil Society expects companies, especially the biggest ones, to manage the environmental impact of their operations and industrial risk, as well as to plan for and manage their direct and indirect social and societal impacts, wherever they are located". (Desmarest 2003, p.2)

The current orientation of museums in relation to marketing theory and practice

Many museums are still production oriented. In such cases the choice of exhibitions is decided by the curators alone, based on their personal interests and topics of research. The facilities for visitor services have probably been neglected, since the senior curators may never visit these areas anyway and almost certainly rarely encounter the ordinary visitors to the museum. Typically, the museum programmes are built around long-term plans where only internal factors are taken into consideration.

And when, as a consequence, the management sees visitors disappearing, they hire a marketing manager to promote the old exhibitions in accordance with the sales orientation approach. But very often, the true problem is lack of attractive exhibitions and other visitor facilities. Simply intensifying the promotion and sales efforts can hardly solve that problem: you need to have a relevant and worthwhile "product" to sell first. A successful museum is one that integrates marketing fully into the strategic planning and budgeting process. All audienceoriented efforts are then done with the visitor

in mind, and visitors' wants, needs and behaviours are regularly researched and new programmes developed in accordance to them.

For example, the Norwegian Broadcasting Company was the only authorised TV channel in Norway until 1991. The company was production oriented and the producers decided what programs they wanted to make and when to broadcast them. After deregulation, the company had to adapt to a situation of competition, and started producing and transmitting programmes based on viewer ratings, changing over to the principle of marketing orientation. As a consequence, the company remains the most popular TV channel in Norway despite all the new competition.

The marketing mix

The marketing orientation depends on a set of key variables in the process from product design to sale. These variables are called the marketing mix, and a common way of sorting them out is based on E. Jerome McCharly's "4Ps of Marketing": Product, Price, Promotion and Place (Kotler 2003, p.6). The 4Ps emphasises that everything from shaping the product to the promotion is marketing.

4Ps of marketing			
Product	Price	Promotion	Place

Product

The product is the object or services the customer wants or needs and it is the essential part of the marketing mix. If the product is not needed or wanted no other efforts will make it sell. From the point of view of the general visitor the museum's "products" in these terms are mainly the main galleries, the special exhibitions and the other parts of the museum open to the public. But for other visitors this also means the research facilities, the service areas and places to meet friends and relatives, such as a museum restaurant or cafe. All of these areas have to meet the visitor's satisfaction, because if the museum is not attractive, it will not gain and maintain popularity even if you offer free admission and spend a fortune on advertising. This was the big mistake of those who tried in the past to build marketing success from the production and sales orientation approaches to marketing. The same mistake has been made in many museums around the world. The exhibitions were "production" based, and not made to satisfy the needs and interests of visitors: in these circumstances promotional activities could not save the museum. Through surveys and interviews with focus groups, the audience can make an impact in the early phase of the exhibition planning and development, and the resulting exhibitions will then be much more related to the audience's preferences.

Price

In the product industry, price is an important tool to win competition and gain profit. For museums, price is a widely used tool to encourage certain target groups. The entrance fee should not be the same for every visitor. If the museum wants to make profit in the travel industry, it can be smart to offer the tour operators reduced prices.

Sponsors and donors are happy to receive free tickets for employees and important contacts. Maybe it would be an idea to cooperate with other museums to launch a common ticket valid for different museums? In Europe a strategy of free entrance to museums is gaining popularity. The idea is to encourage groups that normally do not visit museums or cannot afford a museum visit to come.

Promotion

The need for promotional activities can vary a lot. A museum showing unique treasures known to most of the world can have a steady flow of visitors with hardly any promotion, while the

neighbouring museum with less attractive collections have to struggle for every visitor. The promotional activities are described in detail later in this chapter.

Place

For the product orientated industry, the placing and the distribution of the products are essential. An advertised product that is not in stock will make the customer disappointed. Most museums have a fixed location, and “place” is rarely the same as distribution. “Place” in museum marketing terms is commonly characterised as the visitor’s transportation to the museum. If the museum is placed way out of town with poor transport connections or in an area that is not considered as safe, it could be an idea to organize transport from a downtown location for the visitors. In very different circumstances both the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and the Zuider Zee Museum in the Netherlands provide visitor parking away from the museum, with free transport, by tramway and by boat respectively, to the museum itself. Museum bus services (or even museum ferry boats in Amsterdam) that stop at the city’s museums are common around the world. If the museum receives educational or tour bus groups, bus parking is needed. It is a good idea to offer travelling exhibitions, so that even people from smaller cities and towns or other regions can appreciate the museum collections.

2. Strategic market planning

The marketing mix needs to become part of the museum’s philosophy and long-term goals in a strategic plan. The strategic plan points out an overall management structure for all activities of the museum. It defines the mission and describes how and by which objectives the mission shall be accomplished. The plan will of course also deal with topics that are not related to marketing, like collection management and research, but I will not discuss these matters here. The strategic plan has to be continuously evaluated and adapted to changing circumstances. An audience-oriented museum will direct the targets in the strategic plan towards the preferences of the public, and the plan will be market-oriented. As a supplement to the strategic plan, the museum can develop a separate marketing plan and plans for other activities.

Marketing-related issues of the strategic plan	
Mission and vision	The purpose and ideas of the organisation
Situation analysis	Internal and external factors analysed in relation to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
Objectives	The organisation’s main targets for the coming period
Market segmentation	The division of recipients in target groups
Promotion	The efforts of informing the market
Control	A final analysis of all objectives in relation to their achievement

Mission and Vision

“Mission” describes the purpose of the organisation. The main objectives of museums, to collect, conserve, study and communicate, are often listed on equal level and without any strong priorities. A general and describing mission, formulated in the early days of the museum, will not encourage the museum to further development. If the museum wants to specialise in a certain field, or move towards a marketing orientation, a reformulation of the mission can be required. Through a reformulation process, the management can see and understand more clearly what the objectives and future challenges of the museum are.

“Vision” reflects the primary priorities of the museum. It describes or summaries the ideal situation that the organisation wants to become. A vision could for example be that a museum wants to be the most comprehensive museum on national modern art, or the best facilitated place to experience national archaeological treasures.

Situation analysis

Every museum's success is depending on a set of internal and external factors. In the strategic planning process it is essential to know the limitations and possibilities both inside the organisation and in the world around. These factors can be sorted out in a "SWOT" analysis, analyzing the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats facing the museum and the environment.

Internal factors Strengths and weaknesses	External factors Opportunities and threats
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Internal factors

In the SWOT analysis all internal factors are analysed in relation to whether they represent a strength or a weakness to the organisation. Internal factors can be such as the competence of the staff, the quality of the collections, the financial situation, the museum site or the condition of the museum buildings. A museum will always have certain strengths and weaknesses. It is important not to let the weaknesses overwhelm the planning process. Some weaknesses can even be turned into strengths. The looting of the Museum in Baghdad in the 2003 conflict initially weakened even further a museum that had already been in very serious difficulties for more than a decade due to the national and international economic and political situation. However, the events of the spring of 2003 gave the museum a unique international promotional position: the situation can be turned into a strength, since the whole world heard about the museum and its severe problems.

External factors

Using the SWOT analysis techniques, external factors are analysed in relation to which Opportunities and Threats they represent for the museum. External factors are of course the visitors, but also possible cooperation partners, and not to forget the competitors: other museums, heritage sites, different leisure activities including sports facilities, as well as – increasingly - leisure-orientated retail shopping facilities. The political situation, governmental regulations and also the macro environment, like political upheavals, demographic shifts and economic cycles are all external factors. All these factors should be analysed and divided in groups that represent opportunities for the museum on the one hand and threats on the other. Examples of current threats for museums serving international visitors in the Middle East are political unstable situations and regulations of the tourist market due to religious regulations. If tour operators could overcome these limitations and offer tours to the region, this would represent great opportunities for these museums.

Objectives

The objectives are the specified targets set for the museum during a certain period. They are one of the most important and also one of the most practical parts of the museum's strategic plan. Concrete targets are easy to understand, follow and measure. There are numerous examples of museums that have failed in setting up their key objectives. The result can likely be that the curators are planning an exhibition in a hall scheduled for total renovation while the marketing department is running a different campaign.

While the mission describes the overall aims of the organisation, the objectives describe how to accomplish the mission. And while the vision describes the ideal situation the organisation is stretching out for, the objectives break it down to realistic and time limited efforts. Objectives should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related (Lancaster 2002, p. 239). The strategic plan must contain realistic objectives for the whole organisation. And when the plan is evaluated after a given period, the attainment of each objective is measured. A museum where the vision is to become the best place to experience and understand national archaeological treasures, could have the following key objectives in a five-year period:

Five year plan for launching new offerings

- Year 1 Market research and Planning Process
- Year 2 Create funds for the new development
- Year 3 Build a centre to encompass the new facilities
- Year 4 Develop the new facilities
- Year 5 Launch the new offerings

Market segmentation

No museum can be everything to everyone. Some offerings will suit some people better than others. In the strategic plan, the audiences should be broken down to specified target groups. This is called market segmentation and provides an understanding of whom the offerings are made to suit. Market segmentation is introduced here and will be discussed further below.

Promotional activities

If the strategic plan is followed up with a marketing plan, the promotional activities might only be briefly introduced in the strategic plan. The promotional activities are discussed in detail below.

Evaluation

After a defined period, the strategic plan is evaluated. The objectives must be analysed to see if they are achieved or not. Maybe external or internal factors have changed, and the course has to be adjusted. The strategic plan should include a set of success criterions, and after a certain period their fulfilment is analysed. To ease the evaluation, the objects of the strategic plan have to be measurable. "The visitors' services will be improved", is rarely a good objective, since it is difficult to control if the visitors' services are sufficiently improved. Quantitative data like visitors numbers and economical status are easy to control. Qualitative data can be more of a problem. A good idea is to break the objectives down to controllable tasks, such as: "The visitors' service will be improved by introducing a new information system". The audiences' judgements must also be researched. It is of little use to see visitors' numbers rise or fall if you do not know why. Opinions can be measured by surveys where visitors are interviewed or are asked to fill in a questionnaire. Surveys should also include non-visitors to find out why they are reluctant to visit the museum. (See also the Visitor Services chapter)

3. Target groups

Forgetting about the often very diverse population of the city, region or country served (with its wide range of ages, education and ethnicity) is a common problem in planning the exhibitions and other public programmes of museums. As has already been suggested, exhibition topics often seem to be based on the fields where the curators have their expertise and special interests, and not on what is most attractive for the audiences. The curators who claim they will make an exhibition for "everyone" are probably only aiming it at themselves and their closest colleagues.

All offerings have to be made with certain target groups in mind. A text for well-educated adults will not be readable for children. A European tourist will probably not understand texts which are only in Arabic. And while tour groups may only spend 20 minutes in a museum, individual visitors may spend hours. It is important to bear in mind that target groups are not only the visitors who come through the museum door. It is just as much the government or regional authorities that fund the museum, potential sponsors, donors and cooperating partners.

Market segmentation

Segmentation of markets can be done in several ways. The museum should develop the segmentation that is best suited to distinguish between the different variables of the potential audiences. Some common ways of segmentation are described below (Kotler 1998:125).

Geographical segmentation

Some museums mainly cater for local visitors, others receive many international travellers. A museum focusing on local visitors should put the emphasis in a changing programme, to achieve repeat visitation. A museum that attracts travellers can permanently exhibit some must-see attractions, since most guests are first time and perhaps even once-in-a-lifetime visitors.

Demographic segmentation

People of different ages have different priorities at the museum. By diversifying the audiences in variables like age, sex, family constellation, occupation education and social class, target groups can be sorted out on a demographic basis.

Organisational segmentation

As mentioned above, the cooperating partners of the museum are also target groups and should be segmented on an organisational level. They can be segmented in types of organisations, like governmental organisations, authorities, research partners, sponsors, donors etc. But they can also be sorted in accordance to their support of the museum.

Market segmentation

Geographical segmentation

Segmentation in accordance to the visitors place of origin.

Demographic segmentation

Segmentation in accordance to the visitors age, sex, education etc.

Psychographic segmentation

Segmentation in accordance to the visitors social class, lifestyle, personality etc.

Organisational segmentation

Segmentation in accordance to organizations connection to the museum.

Target audiences

Some target groups can be especially worth considering for museums that want to develop their marketing approach. Below I have suggested a range of such groups together with ideas for approaching them.

Families

Many museums around the world are putting greater emphasis on the family market. Parents are happy to educate and entertain their children through a museum visit, and they can all enjoy common experiences. Museums are also well suited areas to meet other family members and relatives for a day off. But it is a market of strong competition. Families

can meet in parks, where they do not have to pay entry to the museum, or they can go to more entertainment-oriented offers. To reach for the family market, museums must be made to suit the family needs.

First of all, the museum has to be open on the national or religious rest days, when families have leisure time, for example Fridays in Muslim countries, Saturdays and Sundays in most other countries of the world, as well as during the local school holidays. It is also an idea to arrange family programmes like storytelling or guided tours for children on these days and during school holidays. However, more extensive adaptations should be made to suit family groups: looking at the exhibited objects is only one of the reasons for families to visit the museum. Just as much, they are there to meet others and share experiences, so good informal meeting facilities are needed to attract this market. A good café is also a very frequent request, though family groups also look for areas where they can just sit down, relax and have a chat. Special rooms or spaces where children can engage in creative play or make copies of the museum objects have been a great success in many museums.

To reach the family market, advertisements of the special family programmes would probably be the best channel. But I would believe that most museums cannot pay for extensive newspaper advertisements. If the museum offers guided tours to schoolchildren, the calendar of family events can be distributed to the children, and maybe the local newspaper will cover family events, encouraging families to come for the next show. Another possibility is to build a good relationship to important members of certain families and mail out information to them.

The travel industry

The Arab countries and the Middle East have many remains of very early stages of the western civilisation. Such a broad choice of unique cultural treasures offers an excellent opportunity to gain profit from tourism. Egypt has taken the full advantage of this market for more than a century, and the tourism industry is today a considerable source of income. Other countries of the region have for various reasons not put the same efforts in this market. This will also influence the museums. If the government gives tourism more attention, it is easier for museums to gain more visitors from this segment. With a stable political situation and acceptance from religious forces to open up more areas to foreigners, museums will probably have a great potential to attract more tourists. The travel industry is a stable source of income to many museums, and hopefully this can be the future situation in more countries.

Tour groups have special requirements. Most tour organisers want their groups to visit the most famous treasures in the shortest possible time, other organizers want to go in depth and the groups spend much time on certain topics. The Norsk Folkemuseum in Norway distinguishes the offers for tour groups in accordance to the time available for the visit. If the group has 20 minutes available, the tourists can see the main attraction, a 12th century wooden church. With 45 minutes, the tourists can join a more comprehensive guided tour, and with 90 minutes they can even enjoy storytelling, folk dancing and a snack.

To be successful in the travel market, it is vital to provide the tour operators with sufficient information about the museum. Geoff Hann has many years of experience with organising tours to the Middle East. I asked him about museums in Iraq, and he said that the problem is that nobody knows where they are. One good idea might be that all museums in the same country cooperate to produce a handbook for the travel industry. This could contain a description of the museum, main sights, opening hours and service facilities. Distributed to tour operators that are eager to initiate tours to the region, this would benefit all parties. But the museum can start initiatives today if you wish to start by sending information to travel guide publishers and to tour operators that arrange tours to the region. This information can contain general information about the museum, press releases and personal letters to inform about tourist related offerings.

Pilgrims

Pilgrims are a special kind of tour group and number some tens of millions a year worldwide, but is a potential market which tends to be neglected by museums. Also, while most categories of tourists quickly vanish when security and safety are threatened, the flow of pilgrims is probably more stable. Even at the height of the armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s, more than a hundred thousand pilgrims a year continued to travel right through the middle of the war zone to visit the recently established shrine to the Virgin Mary at Medjugorje, Herzegovina. Museums in locations receiving significant numbers of pilgrims should treat these as potential museum visitors, and special offers could be made in cooperation with tour operators making arrangements for pilgrims.

Schools and colleges

School classes are frequently seen in museums all over the world, and a museum visit is often regarded as part of the education. For the museum, it is vital to have a professional approach to the school system. Educational programmes should be developed in accordance to the school plans, and classes should be invited regularly. It is no doubt that a person that has a positive childhood experience from the museum is more likely to visit the museum as an adult. Also, through the school children, information about the museum's events can be distributed to their families. It is quite common for children who visit a museum or a particular exhibition as a school visit to return a few days later bringing their family and friends. (See the Museum Education chapter)

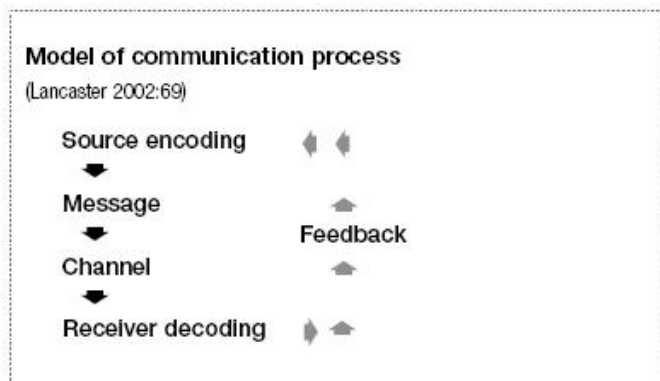
Sponsors

Sponsors are private companies that offer the museum funds or services and expect something of equivalent value in return, in contrast with philanthropists who support the museum as an act of good will. The museum's obligations to the sponsor can be anything from a connection to national values to a reception in the exhibition hall.

In recent years, we have seen a flourishing private industry establishing in markets that earlier has been neglected due to various conflicts. An example is the growing corporate industry of former Soviet republics. A way for global companies to receive local recognition is to offer sponsorships to local organisations.

According to the societal marketing orientation as mentioned above, international companies that establish in new markets will probably be interested in securing social, environmental and even cultural values. A market of potential cultural sponsorships will occur. Museums should continuously analyse these opportunities and follow up all establishments of companies that traditionally have supported cultural activities.

The best way to approach a market of potential sponsors is to make personal contacts. The museum should thoroughly analyse the profile of potential sponsors, and provide them with distinctive and attractive offers of sponsorship and the benefits available in return, based on their individual needs.



4. Promotion

Promotion is the distribution of information about the museum's offerings to the audiences. It is important to bear in mind that this is a communication process that requires action both by sender and receiver. While the museum is sending a message through a chosen channel, the receiver must actively accept to receive it and act upon it. The traditional communications mix consists of advertising, public relations,

direct marketing and different ways of sales. I would like to add the Internet as a certain form of communication.

Advertising

Advertising is a paid published message in the commercial media – newspapers, magazines, radio and television - controlled by whoever pays for it. The advertisement has to create interest by a broad audience to justify the paid amount. There are different types of advertising. Imagebuilding advertising promotes often only the name and trademark of a company. Product advertising is promoting an exhibition or another general offer at the museum. Classified advertising attracts the audience to a certain event. I would believe that most museums (unless they have a good sponsor)

are most acquainted to product and classified advertisements. These advertisements encourage the audiences to immediate action.

The Advertising Objectives

(Kotler 1998:222)

The Target:	Who must we reach?
The position:	What are the offering's merits and its point of difference from competitive offerings?
Response desired:	What audience response is being sought?
Time horizon:	By what period should objectives be achieved?

To convince the recipient, the advertisement needs what marketing experts call a "Unique Selling Proposition" (Kotler 2003, p.310): an offer that is attractive enough to draw the recipient's attention. According to marketing theory, only one message can be

transferred effectively at one time, so it must be so strong that the recipient remembers the product or service advertised and prefers it to other competitive offerings. Therefore, if an event is advertised, it is better to promote one main happening, rather than try listing all the museum's activities.

According to the DAGMAR marketing model (Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results) (Lancaster 2002, p.74) the recipient is passing through the following steps before the aim of the advertisement is accomplished:

- From unawareness to awareness
- To comprehension
- To conviction
- To action

These steps also require different kinds of advertising. At the first stage the audience is unaware of the museum. Image-building advertising or other ways of promotion is necessary to give the audiences knowledge about the museum. At the level of comprehension the museum is known, and product advertising is used to promote certain advantages to stimulate the audience's preferences for the museum. At the level of conviction, the recipient has a positive attitude towards the museum; he only needs a reason for the visit, like a certain event, an exhibition or a family programme. If all levels are successfully fulfilled, the recipient might go to action, the desired result of the advertisement.

Public relations

Modern public relations is a sophisticated process where the aim is to build up knowledge and attitudes. It is defined as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its public (Lancaster 2002, p.82). The use of public relation in the communications mix requires a free and independent press. If the press is dominated by a certain view or meanings are controlled, the general theories of public relation might not suggest suitable methods.

The impact of professional public relations on the corporate industry has increased through the recent years. Today most companies have communications managers on top management level that handle all press-related issues. These managers have an image of being honest, informative and available 24 hours a day. Their mission is to develop a positive personality of the company, so that even crisis can be handled in the most positive way.

For museums, public relations is a channel of growing importance. While advertising is ideal for promoting a certain event, public relations is excellent for imagebuilding. A great advantage of public relations is the high credibility. While most people are sceptical to what is said in an advertisement, they believe in what is written in the newspaper. And it is cost effective, as the museum only pays distribution costs. While many museums cannot afford to advertise, they can still receive newspaper

coverage. But the competition for coverage is hard, and the editorial boards have become more reluctant to what they accept as a good story.

Addressing the press

A public relation effort in its simplest way starts with sending a message to the press. Unless it is really big news, it will probably get no attention at all. Professional public relations efforts are needed. The list below can give some useful ideas to help the message come through.

Public relation efforts should be part of well-planned campaigns. A newspaper article can call on people's attention or provide background information, but opening hours and special offers are better filled in through advertising, posters or direct marketing. Public relations efforts should be selective. Big stories require big campaigns. Small stories should not be paid the same attention.

Press releases can be distributed broadly to inform the press, but a good relation to certain journalists is better built up by providing them with exclusive information. Press releases should be short (maximum one page), well formulated and the important issues mentioned first. All releases must include a date and contact details for the PR manager.

Be available. Be prepared to provide any information at any time, and send out information regularly. Plan the send-outs to suit the deadline of the most important media. The beginning of the week is the best time to suggest new stories.

Suggest different angles to different media. Newspapers, TV and radio are different in form and need distinctive presentations of the information. The museum needs to have talkative experts ready for interviews and provide well-formulated background material. Remember that not all experts perform well on TV and that lots of information can soon be too much for a journalist with a tight deadline.

Do not give up easily, but realise when enough is enough. A letter, fax or e-mail might not result in action. If the story is good, always follow up by phone calls. If you are turned down, try to suggest another angle. But do not start arguing. That will cause trouble next time you make contact.

Direct marketing

Direct marketing are the promotion efforts that are directed towards a specified group or even specified individuals. While advertisements and public relations hit broad and uncontrolled, direct marketing is controlled and directed toward specific targets.

Direct marketing typically involves sending letters out to museum friends, other contacts, visitors and potential donors, and generally depends heavily on a database for storing and categorising information about target groups. To encourage important and influential people to spread knowledge about the museum is also a sort of direct marketing.

Mail-outs are probably the most common sort of direct marketing. According to a survey among performing arts presenters, direct mail was considered the most effectual way of promotion (Kotler 1998, p.248). A museum can customise this channel, so that different groups receive different offers. School children are invited to the school programmes, while repeat visitors receive the calendar of events.

Organised direct mail operations can be initiated with the mail-out of invitations to new exhibitions. Build up a comprehensive database of important persons in companies, politics, the local government and the authorities. Even if they do not come to the opening show, they observe that

the museum is active. Then information about shows and events can be distributed to selected categories. Finally certain individual bodies can be invited to support the museum.

Personal contacts can be a vital promotional channel for museums. In a country where the access to a free press makes advertising and public relations difficult, it can be of great importance to stay in contact with certain “ambassadors” that encourage people to visit and support the museum. Such important persons can be politicians, top managers of companies, local authorities and family leaders. Build up a good relationship by inviting them to special events, offer special service at the museum and keep them updated with mail-outs of information.

The database for direct marketing is not a simple list of names and addresses. It should be categorised based on certain criteria, like type of organisation, visitor preferences, contributions to the museum, geography and so on. The database is easily stored and made accessible through a computer programme.

The Internet

The Internet, and particularly the World Wide Web and e-mail, is a unique channel for communicating with the audience. Enormous amounts of easy accessible information can be distributed at a minimal cost. The Internet is international and largely independent of local and national regulations, particularly if a museum’s website is on a foreign server. Even a very simple website can be interactive, with the audience and the museum having a two-way communication. A website is easy to construct and publish: a high-school student and a global company use basically the same methods for publishing. Internet services have developed very quickly since they were opened up for free use by general users in 1993, and will probably play a much more comprehensive role in the future.

To receive international recognition for a museum’s website, it is a good idea to join the international top level domain for museums, “dot museum” (.museum). The domain is supported by ICOM, and on-line registration is at <http://www.musedoma.museum>.

However, the Internet also has its limitations. While advertisements and direct marketing reaches out to the public, such as all readers of a newspaper or all watching a television programme, the public has to actively look for the information on a website. However, subject to any legal restrictions such as privacy rights, e-mail can be a very effective medium for circulating information to interested people who agree to the inclusion of their email address on a museum mailing list.

It is said that the ideal selling situation is the seller on a market who cries out his offerings to the huge crowd visiting the market. Compared with the Internet, this seller cries out his offerings in a virtual office. But the office building is several hundred stories high, and each floor has thousands of offices. The chance that someone pops in at the office to hear the offerings is fairly limited. To make sure that visitors find the way to the website, over the past few years all kinds of search directories have been offering to list a museum’s website as a paid service. The problem is to distinguish the good services from those who are only in it for the easy cash, and in fact the latest developments in Web search engine technology make such services less necessary.

All together it is becoming vital to be visible on the Internet, even if this is nothing more than a simple page with basic visitor information plus an e-mail address. For tourists, particularly those from abroad, a check on the Internet is often the first step in holiday planning. If the museum is visible on the Web, it is more likely to receive attention. Though Internet provision is extremely variable across the developing world, access and affordability are increasing all the time. Even if it is not possible to provide an Internet service immediately, it is important to have a strategy for the museum’s website development, and to get the museum on the Web as soon as possible.

5. Building a Museum “Brand”

Quite simply explained, a brand is just the name of a product. But the brand is also something more than a label, a name or a special package. The brand creates a worldwide recognition of a certain product. A brand associates the product with certain values in addition to the product itself. A Mercedes is not just a car, it has a profile of luxury, and you anticipate you can drive it through snowstorms or through the desert and arrive safely on the other side. Most people associate a set of common meanings with large global brands. These meanings will also be connected to the people that use the brands. If you drive a Mercedes, people assume you are rich and well situated. Brand equity is the term used for the brand meanings, and they can be of enormous value for the manufacturer. They form an important part of the profile of the manufacturer and their range of products. But the manufacturer can never fully control the values of the brand. The consumers will inevitably create their own meanings. Coca-Cola is in a way identified as an American icon, and whatever the USA does is likely to have an influence on the image of the company, whether they like it or not. Brand-building has been an essential business strategy in the corporate world for a long time. In the recent years it has also become an important issue in the cultural sector and non-profit organisations.

Controlling the brand equity

Building a strong brand for a museum can be seen as a process of four steps. The process start with the least desired position, where the audience hardly know about the museum. On top is the most desired position, where the museum has a huge group of loyal contributors, who not only use the museum themselves, but recommend it to others. The following description is based on David Lane Keller’s model of Customer-Based Brand Equity (2003. p.75). It is a tool for building strong brands based on the customer’s point of view.

The museum brand building process	
1 Identification	The audiences identify the museum, the name and the type of museum.
2 Meaning	Exhibition and visitors profiles and general attitudes will form the audience’s meaning about the museum.
3 Response	Visitors will make judgements, and develop certain feelings about the museum.
4 Relationship	Some visitors recommend the museum to others, work as volunteers and maybe let the museum become a part of their lifestyle.

This process has to be followed step by step, and the museum can only rise to a higher level when the steps underneath are achieved. You can not expect the audience to have an opinion about the museum without knowing of its existence, and you can not expect the audience to become loyal visitors without having positive feelings about the museum.

Identification

First the audience must know about the museum, the name and what kind of museum it is. Every day you can see the labels of internationally known brands in different situations. In international sport events, certain logos are posted all over the sport arena and even on the players. This is to assure that people keep the name of the company in mind at all times. I do not mean that your museum should buy the sponsor rights of an international sport event. But to strengthen the identification of the museum, you should make sure that the audience has the museum in mind as often as possible, and in as many different situations as possible.

When they want to visit a museum, your museum is the one they think of. When they want to study or meet friends and relatives, your museum is a nice place to do it. To achieve this situation, the identification of the museum has to be carefully built up. If it is a new museum, a name and a logo

that identifies the museum must be created. If it is an existing museum, the main objectives can be promoted in a slogan. Many museums have had their name and logo for a long time, like the British Museum. To change it can be a risk. A well identified brand is a great advantage in the brandbuilding process. Many large companies have failed in an attempt to launch a new brand. If the museum already has a well-known brand name, it might be better to put new content to it than to change it. This can be achieved by adding a good slogan. The Boston Museum of Science added the slogan "It's alive" to illustrate their new profile (Kotler 1998, p.261)

Meaning

Secondly, the audience must know certain features connected to the museum, such as exhibition and research profiles, visitors services, pricing policies etc. At this level the visitors will even make their own meanings about the museum, based on experiences and user profiles.

The basis for these features will be the exhibition profiles and the research topics. A museum of modern art can focus on experimental and maybe provocative modern art and attract visitors that prefer such challenges. Or it can focus on broadly accepted and wellknown artists, to attract huge audiences. Other features include the level of service. A family-focussed museum must have facilities for children. A research-focussed museum needs facilities where researchers can study the collections of the museum. The museum will also be measured on its reliability and stability. The museum must be open when it promises to be, and the objects must be exhibited in an accessible and attractive way. All members of the staff are ambassadors for the meanings, and must reflect the desired level of service.

All these features are tools to create meanings of the museum. But the visitors will also create their own meanings, a general attitude of the museum. In general marketing, these meanings are based on who the users of a product are, in which situation the product is used and the personality and history of the manufacturer. These meanings are formed by the identification and features mentioned above, but also of the general opinion and personal experiences.

Such meanings are clearly seen in the modern car industry. Volvo has had safety as their main profile and their loyal customers appreciated it. But in peoples minds, the safe, somewhat heavy and maybe slow car was by no means regarded as exciting. Volvo is now changing its attitude towards a more sporty orientation. The car is still profiled as safe, but it is also loaded with horsepower and a great sound system. Probably this is a way to reform people's opinions and to attract more excitementand leisure-oriented families.

The user profile is also essential for the brand-building of museums. If the museum has a profile of high-level research, school children might not dare to contact the museum. And if the general opinion is that the museum only shows dull old exhibitions, it will probably not be chosen for a Friday tour with the family. Museums that are personalised with exciting offers and good service are more likely to receive attention.

Response

If you manage to create a general meaning of the museum, you can expect the audience to judge the museum and create certain feelings about it. While the brand meanings are more connected to the general features and comprehension of a product or service, the brand response is more related to the manufacturer's specific level of quality, uniqueness and the customers' considerations and their personal feelings.

To reach the third level of the brand-building model, the museum must express a trustworthy level of quality. The exhibitions and publications of research results must be scientifically correct, and all staff must be well skilled. It is essential that the audience trust the statements of the museum. The

museum will then be treated with respect and receive strong recognition. But it is not enough to offer high quality. The museum must also have an active approach towards the audience, so that they consider using the museum. On the contrary, the museum might end up in a passive situation, where it is highly recognised, but sparsely visited.

To achieve the desired situation, the museum needs some kind of superiority – something that is unique and attractive. It can be some unique treasures, exhibitions based on excellent research, or simply the best café in town. The visitors will also develop certain feelings about the museum. Feelings and experiences are highly used in modern marketing. As the quality and design of products are less differentiated, the feelings that arise by using a certain brand have become essential. Cultural treasures can create very strong feelings. Just imagine the tourist who has travelled through insecure areas to experience the walls of Babylon or the pilgrim who finally encounters the mosques of Kerbala. If the museum manages to implement strong feelings about some key objects, they can serve as icons for the museum.

Relationship

The highest and most desired level of brand-building is to have a group of loyal visitors that visit the museum regularly, recommend the museum to others and support the museum both economically and by voluntary work. They might even let the museum become a part of their lifestyle. In modern corporate marketing, more emphasis is directed towards this group. It is considered as five times more demanding to gain a new customer than to keep an existing one. Many museums have already operated for years in this segment with their friends associations. The museum friends pay an annual amount to show their loyalty and they might support the museum with extra funding and voluntary work. If the museum has this kind of loyal visitors, you should take good care of them and encourage them. They are your most valuable visitors. They know the brand and what it stands for.

(from: *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, p.161-176, UNESCO 2006)