BRAND AUDIT FOR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS (BACI)– MODEL AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION*

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ABSTRACT

The Importance of a concept of brand management for cultural institutions increased in research and practice due to the fights for cultural and economic existence of museums, opera houses, theatres etc. A strong brand can influence positively the visitor's number and loyalty. In practice you can find two main problems: (1) The management of a culture brand is often realized without solid brand controlling, (2) cultural managers have often a sketchy and tactical view on their Hence the goal of this paper is the development of a tool for the holistic evaluation of the brand management of cultural institutions. The benefit of such an approach is two-fold: development of a tool for the measurement of the brand management of a single cultural institution and a framework for a better, more holistic understanding of the complexity of brand management for cultural Institutions.

Keywords: brand audit, cultural brand management, marketing audit

Area: Product and brand management

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1. Motivation and research goal

Museums, opera houses, theatres etc. are fighting for their cultural and economic existence because of financial bottlenecks in the public sector, increasing competition with other cultural institutions as well as leisure activities and decreasing visitor numbers (e.g., Deutscher Bühnenverein 2012; EGMUS 2013; Kolb 2005). One approach for increasing the loyalty of visitors and for attracting new visitors is the creation of a strong brand. In the last decade, a lot of cultural managers have discovered the concept of brand management for cultural institutions and some success stories have been published (e.g., K20K21: Böhmer 2008; Tate: Philips/O'Reilly 2007; The Sydney opera House: Colbert 2003). Moreover, cultural and arts management researchers have developed conceptual ideas and conducted some empirical research on this topic. Nevertheless, the practical implementation of the brand concept is characterized by two main pitfalls: Most cultural institutions manage their brands without a solid brand controlling (e.g., Baumgarth 2009). In many cases, cultural institutions conducted visitor surveys about the demographic profile of their visitors and their satisfaction on a regular basis. Information about non-visitors, the brand equity or a deep insight of the visitor's needs or motivations is missing. Furthermore, a lot of cultural managers have a sketchy and limited view on brands. A lot of cultural managers reduce brands to a brand logo, a simple communication task such as the development of a flyer, a new poster or other tactical instruments (e.g., Baumgarth 2009; Prokop 2003). To sum up, the understanding of a brand concept by cultural managers is often too superficial and in many cases, the brand management of cultural institutions is a 'blind flight' without any information.
Hence, the goal of this paper is to develop a tool for the holistic evaluation of the brand management of cultural institutions. The benefit of such an approach is two-fold: The development of a tool for the measurement of the brand management of a single cultural institution and a framework for a better, more holistic understanding of the complexity of brand management for museums, opera houses etc.

2. Literature review

The brand concept is a relatively new approach for the cultural management sphere. Only some conceptual (e.g., Scott, 2000) and empirical papers (e.g., Baumgarth, 2009; Camarero, Garrido and Vicente, 2010) have analyzed the brand management in the cultural sector. Most of these papers deal with the general relevance of brands for cultural institutions (Caldwell, 2000), practical guidelines for the brand management (Wallace, 2006) or the effects of art and cultural brands on the visitor (Caldwell, 2002; Caldwell and Coshall, 2002; Dreyer and Slabbert 2012). Only few papers have mentioned the relevance of brand controlling for art and cultural institutions (Scott, 2000). Hence the informational foundation of brand management in the context of cultural brands is a research gap.
The general literature on brand management (de Chernatony, 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2008) has developed a lot of approaches for controlling of brands like brand image measurements (e.g., Cian 2011; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003), brand equity models (e.g., Salinas, 2009) or KPI systems (e.g., Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer and Reibstein, 2009). However, these tools and approaches only focus on selected parts of the whole brand management. Only a few attempts have tried to measure and evaluate the whole brand management (Evans, Bridson and Rentschler, 2011; Keller, 2000, 2008). Such a holistic view can be supported by the conduction of a brand audit. Based on the definition of a marketing audit by Kotler/Gregor/Rodgers (1977), a brand audit can be defined as a **comprehensive**, **systematic**, **independent**,

and **periodic examination** of the brand with a view in order to determining problem areas and opportunities and recommending a plan of action to improve the brand performance.
Up-to-now, only a few researchers have formulated ideas about brand audits. More fruitful for the development of a brand audit for cultural institutions is the literature on marketing audits (general or cultural institutions). Table 1 summarizes the existing approaches for marketing and brand audits.

SOURCE	TYPE	FRAMEWORK	PROCESS & ORGANIZATION	OUTPUT
Kotler (1977)	M	5 internal marketing dimensions	Scoring model	index and rating
Kotler et al (1977, 1989)	M	6 internal and external marketing dimensions	Independence of the auditors audit team; audit workshop after the conduction of the audit; derivation of specific recommendations; open audit process	n/a.
Berry et al. (1991)	M	6 internal service and marketing dimensions	Standardized process	index
Wilson (2002)	M	28 internal and external marketing dimensions	Independence of the auditors; open audit process	n/a.
Chevalier/ Mazzalovo (2008)	CM	3 internal and external dimensions	3 Steps: snapshot, verification, diagnosis	n/a
Kotler et al. (2008)	CM	6 internal and external marketing dimensions	Catalog of central questions	n/a.
Kolb (2005)	CM	9 external dimensions	Checklist	n/a.
Rump (2008)	CM	5 dimensions of museums by the visitor 's perspective	Standardized rating sheet; 'expert' visitor as the auditor	Bar charts; 'stars' symbols
Youker (2010)	CM	Program of the cultural institution	External auditors; open audit process; combination of qualitative and quantitative information; scoring model	Comparison with defined standards
Birnkraut (2011)	CM	General discussion of different methods for the evaluation of cultural management		
Keller (2000)	BA	10 internal brand dimensions	Scoring model (without weights)	n/a.
Homburg/Richter (2003)	BA	4 internal dimensions	Scoring model (without weights)	Spider diagram
Jenner (2005)	BA	4 internal and external brand dimensions	Audit team (internal and external experts)	n/a.
Wheeler (2006)	BA	4 dimensions	n/a.	audit room, presentation
Keller (2008)	BA	2 internal and external brand dimensions	Qualitative evaluation	n/a.
Olins (2008)	BA	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.
Bekmeier-Feuerhahn Sikkenga (2008)	CBA	3 internal brand dimensions	Empirical weighting	Profile diagram
Baumgarth (2009)	CBA	4 internal brand dimensions	Empirical weighting	Profile diagram
Baumgarth (2011)	CBA	12 internal and external brand dimensions	Scoring model; team of external auditors; audit workshop after the conduction of the audit; standardized framework, but flexible evaluation process	Spider diagram

M: Marketing Audit; CM: Marketing Audit for Cultural Institutions; BA: Brand Audit; CBA: Brand Audit for Cultural Institutions; n/a: not applicable

Tab. 1: Overview of marketing and brand audits

3. Model development
The development of a brand audit for cultural institutions (BACI) can be divided into three interrelated parts: a framework about the dimensions of the brand audit, recommendations for the conduction of a brand audit (process and organization) and an output of a brand audit.
(1) BACI framework
The BACI framework considers three broad categories of the brand concept. The first category, the so-called **brand facilitating factors**, includes those factors, which are critical for the development and the maintenance of the cultural brand, but do not directly affect the strength of the brand. This category is the fundament of a strong brand and is invisible for the visitor. This category considers six dimensions (brand orientation, positioning, brand strategy, brand organization, internal brand management, brand tools).
The second category refers to the **brand touchpoints**, which covers all direct contact points between the visitor and a cultural brand. This category also includes six dimensions (branding, pivotal and additional services, communication, participation opportunities, shop & catering, brand leveraging).
The third category, the so-called **brand performance**, measures the effect of the brand on the visitor and is divided in three dimensions (brand strength by visitors, brand strength by the general public, number of visitors). Each dimension is characterized by different items (see Appendix 1). In total, the model considers 3 categories, 15 dimensions and 83 items, wherein two categories (facilitating factors, brand touchpoints) can be specified as brand inventory and the third dimension (brand performance) can be coined brand payoffs. Figure 1 summarizes the brand framework of BACI.

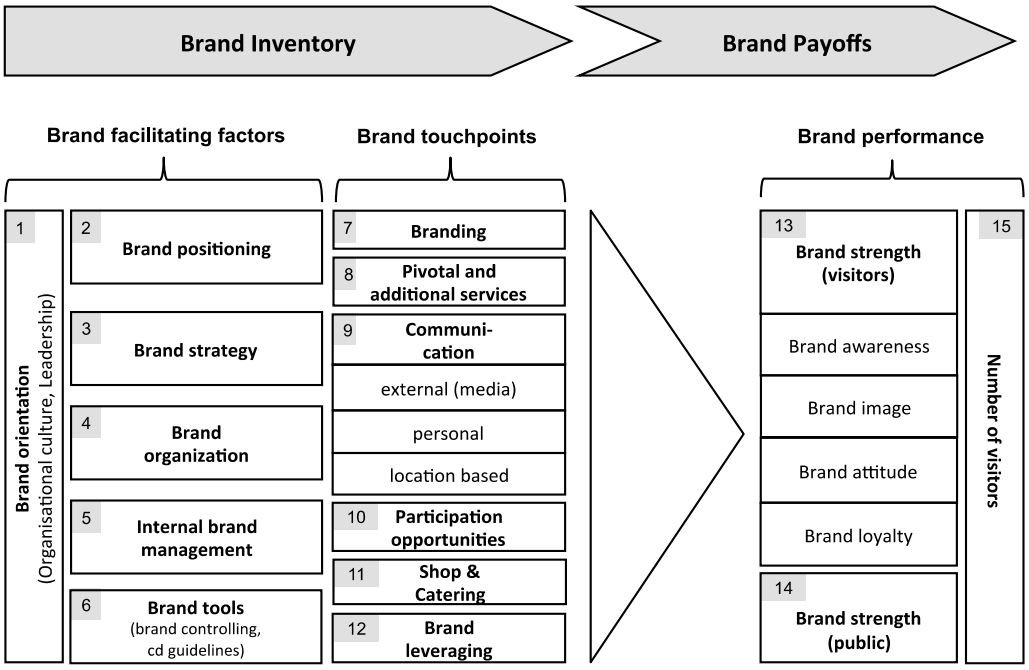

Fig. 1: BACI framework
(2) Process & Organization of BACI
Before the first application of BACI, the framework was validated by an expert survey. 18 experts from cultural institutions (C-level) and from the cultural management science evaluated the completeness and the comprehensibility of the framework and determined the importance of the 3 categories and the 15 dimensions (Davidson 2005, p. 105 ff.). The average of the importance judgements served as a **standardized input** for each BACI.
The practical application of BACI was based on a **mix-method-approach**. BACI recommends for the evaluation by the audit team concrete and different sources of each item. In a concrete BACI project, the brand audit team selected some of the recommended sources. Moreover, BACI considers more than one source for each item evaluation. This recommendation is similar to the **concept of triangulation** in qualitative studies like case study research (Yin 2009, p. 114 ff.). The audit team (3-5 persons) combined different sources like **secondary research** (e.g., homepage, style guides, marketing material), **own observations** (field visits) and **interviews**

(guided interviews with the director, marketing and HR). If data about the visitor's and employee's view on the cultural institution were missing, additional **surveys** (quantitative) with employees and visitors were conducted. Using a **scoring model**, the audit team discussed the final assessments. Each item was evaluated by a five-point-scale (1: negative evaluation; 5: positive evaluation). Similar to a content analysis, all scale points are characterized by **anchor examples**. A last part of the evaluation sheet is a column for the protocol of the considered sources and the reasons for the evaluation. Table 2 shows an excerpt of the complete evaluation sheet.

	Cultural institution	5 (positive)	4	3	2	1 (negative)	sources & justification
...							
Dimension 3: Brand strategy							
Fortification of the corporate brand	*... offers all products and services with a strong and clear link to the corporate brand of the cultural institution.*	*All products and services show a clear link to the corporate brand.*	*Most products and services show a clear link to the corporate brand.*	*Temporary offers (e.g., special exhibition) show only a moderate link to the corporate brand.*	*Most products and services show only a moderate link to the corporate brand.*	*All products and services operate more or less with independent product brands.*	
...							

Tab. 2: Excerpt of the BACI evaluation sheet

In a next step with the aid of an EXCEL routine, the scores for 15 dimensions and the overall BACI index were calculated. The calculation of each dimension score is based on a mean of all items (all items have the same importance). The **BACI index** is the sum of the multiplication of the dimension scores and the importance weights derived from the expert survey.

In a final step, a **workshop** (results, ideas for the improvement of the cultural brand) with each single institution was organized. 4-8 weeks after the workshop, the audit team contacted the institution and asked about the implementation of some of the recommendations. Figure 2 summarizes the whole BACI process.

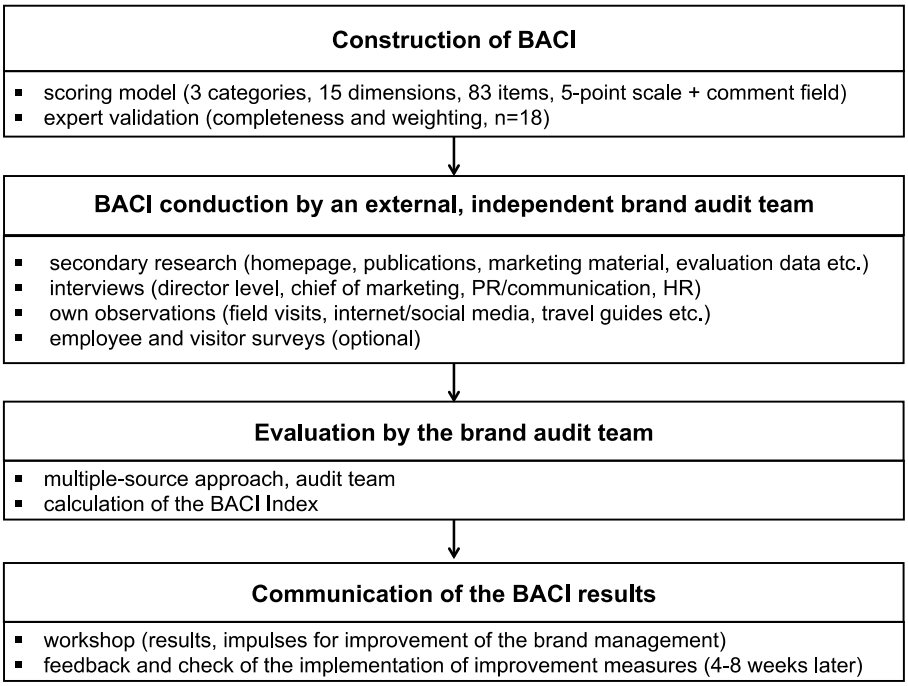

Fig. 2: BACI process

(3) Output
For the presentation and discussion, the calculated values for the 15 dimensions, 3 categories and the BACI index were converted in a %-logic and in a pie chart (the size of every single piece corresponded with the given importance derived from the expert survey). For a clearer communication of the BACI results, the dimension scores and the overall BACI score are visualized by a **'traffic light' metaphor** (see Figure 3).

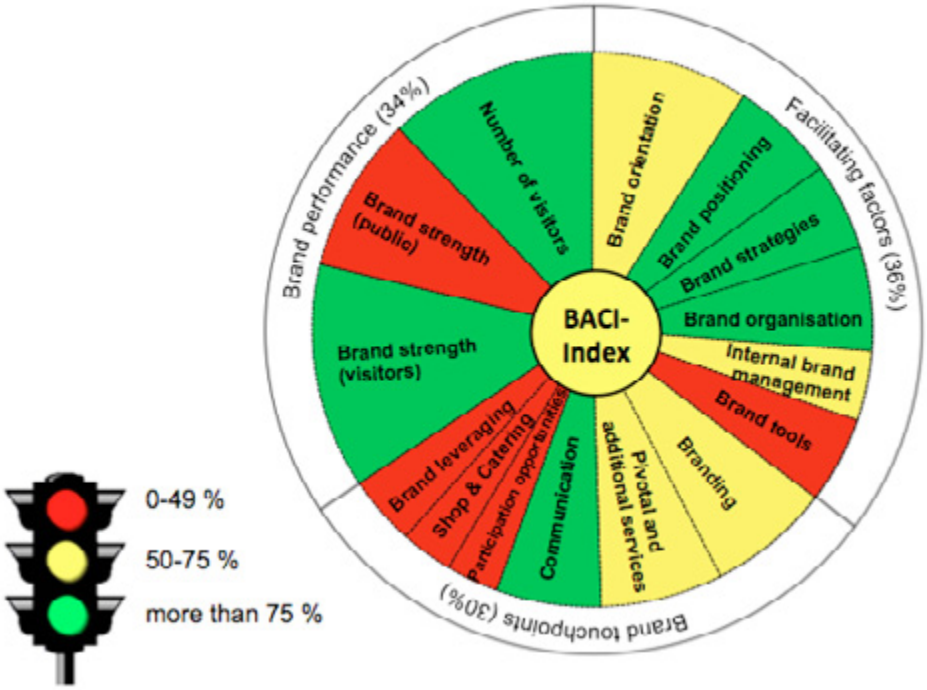

Fig. 3: BACI output (example)

4. Practical application and quality assurance measure
Up to now, BACI was realized for six cultural institutions in Germany. Results for four museums, one theatre and one vaudeville theatre are available. The implementation of the results in three institutions through a workshop found positive resonance.
In order to control the quality of the process and particular the evaluation, two of the six BACIs were conducted by two independent audit teams. Both teams collected the information together and hence both teams evaluated the cultural institutions on the same database. But both audit teams evaluated the single items and calculated the scores separately. This procedure is similar to the concept of **intercoder reliability** in the context of content analysis (e.g., Riffe/Lacy/Fico 2005, p. 141 ff.; Krippendorff 2004, p.211 ff.). Table 3 summarizes the number of deviances of the two BACIs between the two teams.

Differences between the two BACI teams	BACI 1	BACI 2
0	64%	59%
1	32%	31%
2	4%	3%
3	0%	8%

Tab. 3: BACI evaluation by two independent brand audit teams

In 96% and 90% respectively of all evaluations the two teams scored the two institutions identical or only with a difference of one scale point. Also a comparison of the overall BACI index underpins the robustness of the evaluation procedure. The differences between the two teams were very small (BACI 1: 83,61 % - 76,62 % = 6,99 %; BACI 2: 39,71 – 36,88 = 2,83%). All in all, the reliability of the BACI reaches a satisfactory level.

5. Conclusion

The framework of a brand audit for cultural institutions (BACI) allows a **holistic view** on brand management in the art and cultural context (dimensions, process & organization, output). It is usable and tested as a tool for single institutions for the evaluation and improvement of their brand management. The tool is also able to clarify the necessity to interpret brands not longer as a logo or a simple communication vehicle for cultural managers, but as a philosophy and a holistic approach for the management of a cultural institution. Therefore, BACI can serve as a **teaching tool** for the education of (junior) cultural managers (similar Madden, 2007) at universities and in training programs.

However, BACI is not free from limitations, and these provide some ideas for further research. Firstly, BACI is like any other application of a scoring model based on a subjective methodology. The selection of the 15 dimensions and the 83 items, the weightings by the experts as well as the interpretation and final assessment by the audit team are influenced by a subjective view. It is recommended to consider numerous and a more diverse panel of experts for the validation of the importance scheme (e.g., Davidson 2005, p.105 ff.). However, the conduction of two audits by independent teams underpins the reliability of the evaluations.

Another problem to be acknowledged is the low diversity of the sample of considered cultural institutions (4 museums, 1 theater and 1 vaudeville; all institutions are located in Berlin, Germany). In future applications, BACI should be carried out for numerous and heterogeneous sample of cultural institutions (e.g., festivals, literature etc. and others regions).

Furthermore, the high effort (time, money) for the conduction of the BACI as well as the fear of an evaluation by an external audit team are potential barriers for the area-wide implementation of BACI in many cultural institutions. Future research could try to reduce the number of items and the complexity of the framework. Such a procedure could reduce the effort for the single cultural institutions. This argument is important because a lot of cultural institutions are working with a lack of budget (time, money). Another idea is the development of a **'Self Service BACI'** (anonymous online tool). Such a tool could reduce the investment for the cultural institution and guarantee the anonymity of the audit process and its result. Furthermore, an online BACI could support the research team by collecting data and could be the basis for a rigorous validity test of the tool (e.g., combination of BACI results with 'objective' performance indicators like the number of visitors or the development of this figure over time). A prototype of a 'Self Service BACI' in two languages (English, German) is implemented on the project homepage www.mo-kultur.de and can be used by every cultural institutions without charge.

Finally, BACI has the challenge to striking a balance between the standardization of the process and the tool and specific situations of single institutions (size, category, data availability). Therefore, in the preparation phase of a BACI the audit team should develop a short portrait of the cultural institution and discuss with the responsible management the specific characteristics of the cultural institution.

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APPENDIX: DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS OF BACI

DIMENSIONS		ITEMS
Brand Orientation	Corporate Culture	Mutual brand understanding of all employees
		Brand commitment
		Extra role behaviour
		Open corporate culture
	Leadership	Leadership style (transformational leadership)
		Internal communication
		Branding know how of the leader
		Clear and reasoned decisions
		Constancy
Brand positioning		Clear fixation of the brand positioning
Relevance for the visitor		
Authenticity		
Differentiation		
Sustainability		
Brand strategy		Fortification of the corporate brand
Consistency of brand extensions		
Up-to-dateness and variety		
Brand organization		Existence of a organizational entity with a responsibility for the brand management
Branding know how of the brand manager		
Coordination of 'friends scheme'		
Coordination of voluntary employees		
Cooperation with marketing service companies		
Internal brand management		Brand related training of the staff
Brand related training of external staff		
Internal communication		
Cooperation of marketing and HR		
Brand oriented selection of personnel		
Brand tools	Brand controlling and market research	Existence and amount of brand controlling
		Timeless of data
		Existence of standardized data
		Visitor insights
	Corporate Design guidelines	Existence and amount
		Usability
		Implementation
Branding	Name	Recognition and recall value
		Differentiation
		Support of the brand positioning
	Logo	Recognition and recall value
		Differentiation
		Support of the brand positioning
		Reproducibility
	Building	Recognition and recall value
		Differentiation
		Support of the brand positioning

SESSION F2
BRAND MANAGEMENT

Strategic Marketing

DIMENSIONS		ITEMS
Pivotal and additional services Positive experiences		Interaction
Communication	External media	Integration in form
		Integration in content
		Integration in time (constancy)
		Amount of classical communication
		Amount of non-classical communication
		Amount and quality of internet communication
		Amount and quality of social media
	Personal communication	Friendliness and competence
		Uniform and recognizable appearance
	Location based communication	Interior design
		Guidance system within the building
		Guidance system outside the building
Participation opportunities Communication of the friends scheme Participation via social media		Activity of the friends scheme
Shop & Catering	Shop	Brand related product portfolio
		Attractiveness of the shop
		Souvenirs and merchandising
		Online shop
	Catering	Brand related catering
		Attractiveness of the catering
Brand leveraging Cooperation with other (commercial) brands Incentive systems Cultural sponsoring Networks		Cooperation with other cultural institutions
Brand strength (visitors) Brand image Brand attitude Brand loyalty		Brand awareness
Brand strength (public) Evaluation by travel guides Presence in digital media Evaluation by digital media		Presence in travel guides
Number of visitors Development in the last year		Absolute number