MANAGING DESIGN FOR SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL PRODUCTS AND BRANDS

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ABSTRACT
This paper discusses the way design is currently managed in the cultural industries, with a focus on museums and their products. Design management encompasses various aspects, such as the integration of the design process in the management of cultural projects, the harmonious collaboration between designers, cultural managers and curators, and the use of design as an additional resource for generating value for the cultural organisation and the public. The museum case study introduced in the present paper was conducted in order to achieve the following objectives:
To understand how project managers, curators, and marketing experts think about design, incorporate it in their work, and approach its management.
To suggest ways to improve design management, develop better exhibitions, and in general, create more successful cultural products and brands.
Finally, the paper introduces several principles that work to enhance understanding about the impact of design. This set of principles -- here dubbed the 'Cultural Product Design Framework' -- is essentially a design-thinking and management tool for maximising all the benefits that design can bring to cultural organisations.
Key words: design management, museums practice, cultural brands

MANAGING DESIGN FOR SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL PRODUCTS AND BRANDS INTRODUCTION

Introduction to design management and its cultural applications
Design management is a well-established area of knowledge, predominantly cultivated by design and business schools. It aims to better integrate management into design, examine the elements that these disciplines share in common, and determine how they can generate mutually beneficial developments. As a professional field, design management responds to the need for more productive synergies between the sectors of project management, strategy, innovation, marketing, and other business domains wherein product, service, communication, web, graphic, interior, or fashion design prove relevant. In the most simple terms, design management is described as the 'business side of design' (DMI, 2013), as it impacts general organisational success and seeks to optimise the design of products and services that improve quality of life and generate value for both the users and the corporations that serve them.

Furthermore, the discipline of design management looks into the results that design can yield for business success and, conversely, what management can do for design. For example, it examines how management decisions impact design quality; helps managers to understand how designers work, think, and create; and ultimately, shows how managers can be led and encouraged to generate value both for costumers and internally, at different levels of the organisation. Among these levels is the strategic, where design serves to express a well-defined brand through the coordination of various brand elements visualised in design outputs, as discussed below.
Within the cultural industries, design management applies to many areas of the organisation. For example, it plays a role in the coordination and development of various design outputs in order to yield brand consistency, seeing as many diverse elements of design ultimately contribute to the cultural product. In the case of a museum

exhibition, the relevant design domains include interior design (for the displays and the use of spaces), graphic design (for leaflets and other printed communications), web design (for online information and contact with users), interaction design (for multimedia displays), and more. From a management perspective, we may suggest that the way those design areas are managed and used in tandem finally shapes the museum's offer and impacts how it will be perceived and experienced by visitors. As it informs the user experience, it also affects how the public will think and feel about the exhibition and, ultimately, the museum altogether. Thus, the way in which these design domains are combined influences the brand and the public's interaction therewith. The design of experience is informed by carefully considering the 'moments of engagement between people and brands, and the memories these moments create' (Ardil, 2004:1).

Furthermore, design plays an important role in museums as core organisations of the cultural industries, by determining what an exhibition will be, feel, and look like. Here, design management is responsible for evaluating how curators' and managers' decisions influence the way design generates value. Usually, when the curators begin to plan an exhibition, they define its central concept and identify various related tangible (design) aspects, such as how the artefacts will be arranged, how people will navigate the space, how the lighting scheme will be designed, etc. Some crucial management questions that this initial stage yields may include: When do curators and project managers bring designers into the process of planning and organising the exhibition? Is it at the early stages, or only at the mid-to-late stages, once a clear idea of how the exhibition should look like or be has already been established? The role that designers play in the ultimate product will depend upon the moment in which they become involved in the process. If they are introduced early on, they become co-creators of both the exhibition's concept and aesthetics. If they are introduced in later stages, their role will be to merely execute the curators' ideas, which is not always possible to do within tight time constrains or with strict parameters for coordination with relevant brand elements. This management conundrum revolves around the process of developing the exhibition and controlling the use of human recourses, time, budgets, etc. How design is managed as part of a project reflects beliefs about design and organisational cultures that surround decision-making in the museum context. For these reasons, and from a managerial perspective, the present research was conducted to answer two central questions: how museum management impacts design, and how design is managed in the context of specific projects.

Introduction to the objectives of the research and museum case study
This paper discusses the way design is currently managed in the cultural industries, with a focus on museums, and their products and brands. In the context of the museum, a cultural product refers to an exhibition, multimedia production, digital archive, learning programme, community engagement activity, event, book series, or any other output produced by the organisation. A museum brand can be either the exhibition or the museum itself. Most often, several brands will co-exist simultaneously, depending on the brand architecture or on the shape of the hierarchy the museum wishes to establish (Pitsaki, 2008:112). Moving from top to bottom in a brand hierarchy, we find the corporate brand (the museum), the product brand (the exhibition), and the artist or exhibit brand (e.g. a specific painting or work relevant enough to constitute a focus of the museum's marketing communications). This paper focuses specifically on two different levels in which brands operate: the corporate and the product level.

Furthermore, in the context of the present research, and through a museum case study, the paper presents a review of the use of design and identifies core areas for improvement.
The case study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:
To understand how project managers, curators, and marketing experts think about design, incorporate it in their work, and approach its management.
To suggest ways to improve design management, develop better exhibitions, and in general, create more successful cultural products and brands.
Finally, the paper introduces several principles that work to enhance understanding about the impact of design. This set of principles -- here dubbed the 'Cultural Product Design Framework' -- is essentially a design-thinking and management tool for maximising all of the benefits that design can bring to cultural organisations.

METHODOLOGY

In her previous research, the author established the fundamentals for the development of the Cultural Product Design Framework, by conducting a literature review of design theory, design management, cultural marketing, and management, and developing unique parallels and concepts that applied to all these fields. A series of

logical considerations and observations were then established in order to describe the ways in which cultural organisations can benefit by using design knowledge and design thinking. These included: a) Since design is the central process of the development of any product, cultural product development (i.e., that of exhibitions, multimedia productions, digital archives, book series and others) could also be described from the perspective of the discipline of design; b) If cultural products could be understood as 'experiences' or 'services', then the incorporation of design disciplines such as 'service design' and 'experience design' could be used to decisively yield or improve them. When we buy a book, we buy moments of reading, and when we visit an exhibition we seek out an experience; essentially, intangible, perceived benefits. In this case, what exactly do we mean by 'experience' and 'service design'? 'The design of services or experiences involves the design of both tangible and intangible aspects; design creates scenarios and acts as a 'platform' upon which services will be delivered or experiences will be deliberated through the use of material structures' (Pitsaki, 2010: 15). In any museum, the creation of objects and environments can be seen as a mere means for an acquired cultural experience.
Previous research by the author examined the meaning of cultural products as experiences and introduced an integrative concept equally applicable to the fields of design and cultural management. A *cultural product* can be defined as any product that arises out of a creative and/or intellectual act (Colbert & Cuadrado, 2003:17) and is then exhibited or reproduced in multiple copies and offered to concrete markets or audiences. This is a general definition that may be adapted to suit both organisational profit and non-profit contexts, and broadened so as to include a marketing perspective, wherein a product is defined as a set of benefits (Colbert, 2011:270)(Colbert, 2009:7)(Colbert & Cuadrado, 2003:45) that the consumer perceives through purchase and consumption.
According to this description, and as demonstrated by prior research, a cultural product is actually a set of both tangible and intangible benefits perceived by an individual who reads a book, sees a film, or visits an art exhibition. 'On one hand, a large part of what is perceived through attending a painting exhibition is tangible: the paintings, the exhibit catalogues, the museum building, the interiors and exhibition displays. On the other hand, a painting exhibit is in itself an intangible product, because it involves the entire experience valued as a benefit; in other words, a sum total of the visit itself, the museum environment, the originality of the work, the entertainment provided, and the knowledge acquired through the act of seeing this exhibition, among other factors. If the product is understood as the total set of benefits provided, then the role of design in product development is to prefigure these benefits and make them perceptible, through the creation of scenarios, platforms, settings, and environmental components that act as vehicles for the overall experience' (Pitsaki, 2010:16). The design of a cultural product, then, must be carried out in a manner that carefully considers when, where, and how it will be offered to, and consumed by, the public.
The theoretical and conceptual aspects of the Cultural Product Design Framework have been tested in the publishing industry; the museum case study described in the present paper represents yet a further area of its application.

Description of the museum case study
Over the course of the past academic year, the author conducted an analysis of the current standing of the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM). TWAM is a major regional museum and archives site in North-East England, and is funded jointly by the five local authorities in Tyne and Wear, Newcastle University, and the UK Department of Culture Media and Sports. TWAM oversees 12 museums, galleries, and archaeological sites, as well as their associated collections and joint archives. The sites altogether receive 1.5 million visitors per year.
The study involved personal interviews with two senior managers, a project manager and curator, a designer, a project manager, the director of marketing, and a PhD candidate who had been conducting research at the organisation for two years. Participants were asked to discuss their background and experience, how they interpreted the concept of 'design', and explain how it could add value to what they do. With respect to management specifically, they were asked to describe the way design was managed in specific cases; to evaluate what went well and which areas needed improvement in these specific instances; to suggest improvements within the context of the specific projects; and to comment on the role that branding played in the process of cultural product development.

The interviews where semi-structured and incorporated the conclusions yielded by previous research, as well as select elements of the Cultural Product Design Framework. Specifically, the indicative structure of the interviews included questions such as:
What does design mean to you?
How does design affect your current job?
What are some specific examples of projects and the management of design therein?
How does design impact curators' work?

What problems have you noticed in the way design is managed and impacts the projects you've worked on?
What management improvements would you suggest?
How is design linked to strategic aspects of your institution? (e.g. the brand concept, and the missions of the museum)
How central is the value of design to the brand at both the project and corporate level?
How can design serve or affect the role the museum plays?
What are the visitors' expectations and how can design be used to fulfil them?
Later, participants were given a list of ideas and concepts linked to the Cultural Product Design Framework and asked to comment on them. This part of the interview was conducted as a brainstorming session, recorded with a digital pen that allows the interviewer to add sonic elements to his/her notes.

Finally, participants were asked to provide any kind of related data, such as cultural reports and bibliographies, as well as confidential documents like project management plans, project audits, meeting minutes, or vision statements. The data collected during the interviews was then analysed and contrasted with previous findings. The insights and points of view shared by TWAM employees ultimately led to valuable conclusions about the way design is understood, managed, and evaluated by professionals in the museum service industry.

THE CASE STUDY FINDINGS

Below are recorded some of the thoughts of the participants interviewed:
Manager A. Background in history, archives and museums studies. Current post: Principal learning and community officer for the twelve museums overseen by TWAM. She agrees that: 'Design could be involved in the development of events for schools and community groups. It could help to improve the materials that we use for workshops (graphic design); design adds professionalism and makes everything more appealing. Web design has become crucial in what we do and how we engage people. There is a swift need in the way museums learn about people's interests. Our office's role is to co-design the museums' offers with communities. Therefore, user-centred methods that are regularly applied in design fields could help us to know what local communities need. Design methods can lead to mind-maps, team activities, and very creative ways of first capturing the 'the need', and later the value, that a particular project generated. Further application of design-thinking in what we do would allow museums to be more reflective about their practices and their methods for engaging audiences. Museum visitors expect to acquire knowledge and have enjoyable experiences. Design could make these experiences more inspirational for people. A heavier focus on design would mean a greater focus on experiences that are developed more holistically'.

Manager B & Curator. Background in marine sciences and geology exhibitions curatorship. Current post: Museum director and creative vision leader. She noted: 'We recently went through a complete renovation of the museum, for which we outsourced the design services to London-based agencies. There are projects that we can only carry out working with internal designers, because that allows for better planning of the work and more effective exchange of ideas. However, internal designers can easily get used to a venue, whilst in many cases, it's preferable to bring in a new, fresh approach. I believe that designers play an important role in the curatorial process, because they actually execute the ideas we want to get across, and they help us develop the narratives we hope to tell through the exhibited collections. I like getting designers involved from the initial concept stage. Since they are professionals with expertise in new technologies and ideas, it wouldn't do to simply tell them "I want this or that". Instead, there should be an "I want – somehow – to achieve this" approach. Designers can explore a question and tell us what we might do differently. Innovation can happen "when the sky is the limit" and designers can help in that by suggesting innovative ways to access objects. Every organisation has certain pre-set principles, but instead of telling every story an object could possibly have, we should try to tell the story that matches our particular organisational principles (i.e. the principles of the corporate brand). Museums should help people to understand their place in the world, and design is integral to how they access and experience the museum's cultural offerings. Design also serves as a bridge between what the curator intends to share and how people experience it, or engage in a dialogue with it. This has become very obvious in interaction design. In answer to the question "are curators designers?" I would say that most curators don't think they are actually designing, but most of them are doing so without even realising it. They meet the designers half-way in what is to be created, although design is integral to their concept. Design can be the product (how the exhibition feels and looks), the concept (a theoretical idea) and the action (the actual activity of what is going to be developed, what we are going to do in a specific context or exhibition)'.

Curator B). Background in history, museums studies and contemporary collections curator. Current post: curator and project manager. She noted that 'Design means many different things to me: 2D graphics, 3D displays and products, branding and logos, the specific atmosphere you create in a determined space, and the entire experience of the exhibition altogether, the meaning of what is displayed, the messages that the visitors perceive and what they generally derive, the quality of information and how accessible it is, the notion of breaking cultural barriers. Design is absolutely crucial to our work as curators; if it goes wrong, all our efforts could be wasted or completely compromised. Meetings with designers should take place in order to achieve good understanding. We need to engage with them closely, and ideally, they should grasp very quickly what we are trying to achieve and what our main idea is. In this process, it would be very helpful to have a space where we could display and visualise key elements such as objects, stories, interactive. It would be great to be able to share those kinds of concepts with the entire team, in a space or room where everyone can come, observe, and interact with. Designers could help in this and it would be very beneficial from a management point of view to ensure successful exhibitions; most often, we don't realise how something will actually look until we see a prototype, ideally one that's made to scale'.

Designer. Background in graphic design. Current post: general exhibition and display design for all TWAM venues. He said: 'The main teams that are involved in design internally are the Curatorial (History) and Design & Technical teams. The latter is responsible for the design of displays and exhibitions and is comprised of its Principle Officer (design manager), one Project Coordinator, four full / part-time Designers (three 2D and one 3D / specialist) and four Technicians. The Principle Officer oversees all the activities of both Design and Technical teams, and the 3D designer is typically responsible for the individual projects in which he/she is involved. Freedom in what we do and how a display should look is something that I always look for. Freedom is translated into the responsibility that we have for each project. In terms of design management, it is important to be given enough notice, know all the budget constraints, work on a technically precise brief and against realistic expectations contrasted with our workload and time availability. Management needs to be consistent across the various projects that we work on simultaneously. Consistency also has to do with the budgets allocated to different projects; in these times of austerity and diminishing returns, low budgets can have a significant impact on the quality and scope of the design, often forcing the Designers to be ever more creative following the age-old axiom 'doing more with less'. Finally, when the museum has to work with external agencies, a strong tie with internal design teams is always beneficial'.

Project Manager . Background in world culture and art. Current post: museum project manager who assists in exhibitions, community engagement initiatives, and learning programmes. She said: 'In the context of the specific exhibition, design underpins the entire process at all levels of the project. It is a kind of framework that helps to define the theme and various aspects of what we want to achieve. It also has to do with practical issues, like bringing in the designers and giving them a brief about how the exhibition should look. In our most recent project, designers came in towards the end of the process, mainly due to budget limitations. Design encapsulates the creativity that should be brought into the process early. Design makes things relevant, appealing, and fresh to the audience. It suggests something unique and brings about a context that encourages people to get involved. Visitors expect to get inspired and become enthusiastic about their experience. In that sense, design should challenge, respond to, and surprise visitors, suggesting a meaningful journey and making them want to be part of it'.

Director of marketing. Background in media studies and communications journalism. Currently serves marketing and communications manager for the 12 museums overseen by TWAM. She manages communications in all print and digital and spaces. She also oversees public relations and branding. She said that "design is about yielding aesthetically pleasing, easily accessible, and useful outputs for the audience. Design reflects the values of the brand and essentially materialises them for specifically targeted groups. It also helps to make the offer interesting, by encouraging people to be part of the brand, lending consistency, enhancing brand recognition, and allowing people to develop positive associations with it. As an example of how this affects my work, take the recent capital development and renovation undergone by one of our museums. Initially we built our design approach by contacting marketing research firms in order to define who the target audience was and consult on the image we should reflect. The design services were outsourced and that brought about creativity and many ideas about the visitors' experience. However, because projects develop very quickly, it would have been easier had our external designers been closer to the site and employed as part of the team. I would like to see design better integrated in our project planning; it would be good to have more in-house designers with broader design management experience (we currently have only one, and three graphic designers)".

Researcher. Background in cultural geography and cultural heritage management. Currently a Phd researcher of organizational understandings of community engagement. She spend a year in TWAM, researching public engagement and community participation. She said: "It seems to me that often when people in museums say 'design', they are mostly referring to the design team. But more generally, design for me means taking something from the collaborative, brainstorming stages to the end result. In that sense, people involved in the project often talk about design but not necessarily with the designers, as they most often come in at the final stages of the project – this is what I observed. Usually, [within an exhibition process] there needs to be a mid-stage visualisation of the ideas because this is when we realise many things. Design is integral to how we tell stories and how we interpret things, and it becomes even more relevant when we use technology because it enables people to more directly interact with exhibits or archives. Design is connected to the museum's essential role in the sense that it engenders a dialogue about identity, and allows people to reflect on and feel proud of an effective exhibition. Design shapes the exhibition by playing a role in people's emotions and empathetic faculties. In terms of how things happen in museums, at times it seems that collaboration with designers is not always very smooth, either when taking place in-house or brought in externally [because they are so often brought in at the end of the process]".

The interviews cited above capture the main ideas derived from the conclusions drawn from the research overall. This connection is often explicit and easy for the reader to perceive. In those cases in which it is not so clear, we must keep in mind that much more data was collected, analysed, and contrasted with relevant literature and the author's previous research. We must also recall that this research assumes a management perspective and was conducted to answer two main questions: how museum management impacts design, and how design is managed in the context of specific projects. Therefore, each aspect of its analysis was considered with regard to management-related elements such as resource implementation, process, and the various ways in which design, branding, and strategy is incorporated in specific projects.
Finally, for the sake of clarity, our conclusions will focus only on exhibition-related projects. Still, these findings apply just as well to other museum products, such as educational programming or events.

CONCLUSIONS

In answer to the question, 'What does design mean to you?', professionals agreed that there are fundamentally three general notions of design and its interpretation.

Design is the process of putting ideas into practice and giving concrete physical form to curators' concepts and exploration of stories, history, information, etc.

The case study showed that most often, designers are seen as those who bring the curators' ideas to life. This perspective is well explored in diverse publications, among them, Mary Anne Staniszewski's (2001) *The Power Of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, which examines the process of installation design as an important medium for cultural practice, as opposed to the traditional notion of artwork autonomy.
From a design management perspective, it is important to consider that the successful physical materialisation of curators' ideas also depends on various external factors, such as the way their collaboration develops with the designers involved in the project; the way the entire process is managed; the resources made available to them; and the kinds of foundations laid down for success. These responsibilities fall under the project management team and directly impact the quality of the final outcome. Monroe, significantly, puts design into context when he asserts that 'design does not exist in a vacuum, but first within, and governed by, management'[1]. The more effectively designers are managed, the greater the forms that dictate the cultural experience will be.

Design refers to the process, the product that it generates, as well as all that it evokes in its wake.

There is the notion that design is simply the way things look; in other words, the physical and visually-perceived output of the abovementioned collaborative process. Within the scope of this notion, interviewees agreed that design a) makes the museum's products and projects more attractive and likable to the public; b) adds an aura of professionalism and innovation to the institution; c) engages people and enhances their experience in the space of the museum. Therefore, design is a catalyst for visitor satisfaction, and a driver for success.

1 This is an important point because it helps to establish the role of design as an 'integral component' of the cultural product (Berridge, G, 2007: 96) (Pitsaki, 2010:20).

SESSION D2
TRADITION AND AUTHENTICITY

Design is commonly seen as the creative touch that improves aesthetic quality and makes things more attractive. Here we adopt the notion that design is something physical, such as a display, a space, or a website. In this sense, if we say 'this exhibition is well-designed,' we mean that everything that it encompasses is aesthetically pleasant; we refer to the presence of likable surroundings and effective communication materials such as leaflets, posters, etc. Innovative and beautifully-presented design outputs add value and increase the public's appreciation of the museum and the exhibition. Mihae Jung (2005) described a study that aimed to 'identify comprehensive determinants of exhibition service quality as perceived by attendees. Dimensions of exhibition service quality were constructed and identified around six aspects of exhibition service quality: display management, contents, registration, access, display layout and function, exhibition and display attractiveness'.

Additionally[2], and from a very different perspective, design is sometimes seen by museum professionals as something non-physical; as a framework for clarity and purpose during the project. In that sense, a 'well-designed exhibition' is one in which complex factors were considered thoroughly and were brought together coherently around a specific focus.

Design is the planning and coordination of various aspects of the project that lead to better targeted exhibitions, programmes, and other cultural products. In that sense, design adds focus and contributes to the development of a better offer and identity or shared vision among the stakeholders of the museum and the contributors to the project (brand identity management). Design fosters the creation of holistically developed cultural products. From this point of view, design can also be a driver for strategic innovation.

Design as project focus. Design in the context of an exhibition or other cultural product refers to the way main elements such as the artefacts and the artists' intentions are put in place to meet specific targets, such as the nature of engagement sought from the audience. In this sense, design may be understood as a series of planned actions and project components that will underpin and tie together the entire process of development of an exhibition. In other words, it serves as the focus around which action is taken in order to achieve certain aims. For example, if the main purpose of an exhibition is educational, then the exhibits, the information given about them, the target audiences selected, and the messages communicated to them via marketing initiatives and promotions, will all be focused on achieving and emphasising this educational aim. On the contrary, if the main purpose of the exhibition is simply a great experience and the visitors' enjoyable interaction with the museum or with their families, the very same exhibit discussed in the previous example would be made available and presented to people in a very different way (e.g. through games that don't necessary involve learning).

Design as coordination factor. Design incorporates diverse disciplines and their respective outputs (e.g. interiors, displays, information, service, and experience design) and aligns them with the goals of the exhibition. Design integrates the work of historians, writers, curators, managers, and the entire project team. Design is the culmination of the work and the physical manifestation of this collaboration. In addition, it protects the brand by insuring parity in the way interdisciplinary[3] perspectives connect to the brand at the exhibition and museum level. 'Branding' here can refer to a series of principles and values that the museum has established, and which underpins the institution's offer (exhibitions, programmes, or events). Corporate values trickle down onto any project, and design acts as the glue that binds all the elements that yield a certain desired identity for the project (e.g. the identity of an educational programme, as per the abovementioned example).

This identity will come across through visuals, the aesthetics of the space and the process of navigating it, what people see and do at each stage of their journey through the museum, the messages they receive, and finally, how they engage with all these. Their satisfaction and connection to the museum's vision through the specific exhibition will generate the perceptions and the experiences that define the museum as a relevant brand in people's minds. A brand is set of identities carefully crafted and shared. It is 'a perceptual entity that is rooted in reality, but it also reflects the perceptions and perhaps even the idiosyncrasies of its consumers' (Keller, 2003:3). F. Colbert emphasises the importance of brand positioning for contemporary organisational strategic success when he says, 'Three challenges must be faced by current performing arts and heritage organisations: the

2 A fundamental difference between the three notions of design emerges when we look at the individuals actually performing the design in each case. In the first, design is carried out by the designers in conjunction with curators; in the second, the designers are given exclusive responsibility; and in the third, it is a non-designer who has the overall responsibility of the project (e.g. the project manager).

3 'Cultural Product Design is always seen as an interdisciplinary process, carried out by different professionals, depending on the demands of the project and the structure of the organisation' (Pitsaki, 2007:439)

positioning of their "brand"; the quality of their service to the clientele; and the information technology expected by more savvy consumers' (Colbert, 2009). Design plays a major role in all three challenges by defining the brand, enabling the development of carefully crafted services (holistic approach to museum experiences), and by improving the systems through which we access the cultural product (e.g., the use of interactive design, web systems, online promotions, etc.).
With respect to the notion of design, this time in relation to its role within museums, the interviewees agreed that:

Design is a central, integral, and inseparable component of the cultural product and brand, as well as its public perception; design is therefore crucial to their work and to the museum or exhibition, as it facilitates a dialogue with the audience and helps to build a long-lasting bond between the organisation and its public (which also contributes to branding).

The idea of design as an integral part of any exhibition has immense implications for the way it should be managed and how contributors should think about it, in the context of a specific project. Design is crucial because it plays a role in the exhibition, the way in which it was created, and how it ultimately looks and feels to people. Design is integral to what is communicated to visitors and how they will interpret them. In that sense, design enables meaning (Pitsaki, 2010a:15) and therefore becomes a 'maker of culture' and a 'cultural intermediary' (Press & Cooper, 2003:6). Design determines a specific interaction with the artefacts, and shapes the visitor's overall experience.
Scott C (2007:174) argues that deeply satisfying experiences in museums, such as 'captivity, pleasure, the creation of social bonds and expression of communal meaning' (Holden, 2004, 2006) are relevant to museum branding. Furthermore, design is an important strategic factor that should be considered carefully in the management of the museum brand.

The way an exhibition or museum programme is designed and branded should be subordinate to the corporate brand. In any museum, there is a hierarchy of brands that can be established and managed, moving from the corporate brand to a specific venue, exhibition, or programme. Design then becomes a strategic tool.

It was previously mentioned that design facilitates a dialogue with the audience and allows the public to build a bond with the organisation. Of course, these bonds and long-lasting relationships are the objective of any brand management process. All branding techniques and strategies aim to engage the customers in what the organisation does and what principles it stands for (Pitsaki, 2010 b). Brand management aims to teach people what is important or unique about the company or the product. 'To brand a product, it is necessary to teach consumers "who" the products is as well as what the product does and why they should care' (Keller, 2003:3). Along with the various experiences that people will have with the museum brand, the messages emitted should be coherent, repeated frequently, and associated with a positive experience. A brand strategy must also consider the ways in which any brand relates to other brands, how it fits into the corporate brand or general strategy, how it developed over time, and what it can bring to the existing brand's ecosystem (Keller, 2003) (Pitsaki, 2011:108). Through steady contact with the long-term audience, the museum builds trust and interest in what it does, beyond the parameters of any one exhibition. Because design creates and shapes this perception, the way we manage design will have a direct impact on the brand, both now and in the future. Therefore, every curator or project manager should consider how the specific exhibition connects to the museum's overall brand, and should carefully incorporate the elements that make the exhibition part of a clear vision, as previously defined by the organisation. In other words, the brand should become an integral part of the exhibition, and design can make their connection more explicit. 'Museums with strong brand identities should be able to promote their changing products (exhibitions and programs) linked to the essential core elements and attributes associated with the long-term purpose of the museum' (Scott, 2000:38). From a similar perspective, Astous A., Colbert F., and Fournier M (2007) suggest that 'whatever strategy is chosen, the new product should be congruent with the arts organisation's activities and should be of low complexity'.

At the strategic level, designs connects to brand values, identities, core elements, and the way these are expressed in the focus of the project (design as coordination factor), and the output itself (design as the visualisation of messages, intentions, ideas). The strategic role of design involves the creation of products and services that consumers find valuable and wish to acquire or experience. To this end, there are several differentiation factors that come across through design interventions (aesthetic, functional, and communicative) that prevent competitors from imitating or substituting the original products. In that sense, design is a strategic

resource that can shape an organisational or product identity. Furthermore, it provides tacit guidelines that shape employees' behaviour and ensure coherence throughout the organisation's total offer (Rieple, Pitsaki 2011:2). The abovementioned strategic approach to design applies to most corporate and business sectors, and can be contrasted with applications that are likely to be more pertinent to the cultural sectors. For example, the use of design as a strategic element in cultural practice could 'foster an holistic approach to cultural product development' (Pitsaki, 2010a:21); in other words, 'design strategy is a way of looking at the problem holistically' (Cooper & Evans, 2011)(Pitsaki & Rieple, 2013).
Our research was conducted to determine whether the strategic role of design was demonstrable in the cultural industries. In conclusion, we found that:

Design is not always managed in a way that reflects its strategic importance. A better model for design management is needed in order to bring about an industry-wide reassessment of the way design is seen and used. Design is an indispensible part of what the organisation does and stands for.

Some areas of managing design in the context of museums are more problematic. For example, in certain circumstances, budgets for design services are rather low; generally speaking, if an organisation doesn't spend money on a specific service, it indicates a lack of appreciation of that service. In addition, designers are sometimes kept at bay during the concept development stages, and are brought into the project too late to effectively manifest the curators' ideas. In this case, we must assume that curators have the necessary skills to introduce the idea in depth, and in a way so that it will be easily and accurately grasped by designers. Designers are creative professionals from a different disciplinary tradition; they think in a specific way, speak their own language, and most importantly, have very specialised technical knowledge. If they are not treated as active contributors to the exhibition's original concept, they need to be told in an appropriate manner what to do and what the exhibition's principal aims are. Of course, this does not always happen. Sometimes, mostly in small projects, a line is drawn between the designers' charge, and that the curators. How designers are informed, what methods are used to communicate project's needs, and how team members interact with one another all have a significant impact on the quality of design outputs and the ease of contributors' collaboration. At other times, mostly in larger projects, design is outsourced to external agencies located hundreds of miles away from the museum and the curatorial team. Direct communication and frequent face-to-face meetings between the design agency and the curatorial team are necessary and should be carefully planned. If design is not overseen with awareness, and treated as a highly relevant aspect of the museum's work, let alone absolutely central to the museum's offer, tension arises among designers, and curators or managers, and failure in some aspects of the project will become inevitable. In these cases, a more open mentality is needed about what design is and how it can contribute to the generation of value. Raising awareness about design, its role within the organisation, and how designers think, all take effort. In addition, when design-thinking is explicitly brought into project management, it can work as an asset that meaningfully benefits the curators' practice.

From a project management and design management efficiency perspective, we can attempt to better understand the impact of curators' design-thinking skills on overall product quality. From the early stages of an exhibition, curators' visualisations become a tool for thought and therefore shapes the final outcome. If designers are not active in these early stages, then curators alone must have the visual, technical, technological, and materials knowledge that will allow them to arrive at the best possible definition of the concept. In addition, they should speak the designers' language and understand their work to such an extent so as to ensure proper communications and appropriate specifications for their ideas later on in the project. This will also allow the designers to manifest the central notion in a short amount of time, without the need for a deeper understanding of the project and its origins. Similarly, we may question the designers' skills and make sure they have the ability to understand the central idea the curators wish to express, as well as how to provide a good design solution. Both sides of the designer-curator relationship will intuitively develop the skills necessary for successful practice over the course of their careers, through the experience they gain from various projects. However, management could foster efficiency earlier on in their career paths, and should consider their long-term development, too. Therefore, our research leads us to suggest that:

Design knowledge could, and should, transcend the boundaries of the design disciplines, because it affects how the project managers and curators first envision the exhibition (think visually), set up the 'exhibition problem', give the brief to designers, collaborate with them, and manage design budgets and resources.

The interviews showed that although design is actually integral to a curator's work, curators don't necessarily think of themselves as designers. They do not accept that what they do is actually design. However, what they do does fall under the scope of design, and significantly shapes designers' work, for they generate the concepts that will ultimately be physically represented.

Another dimension of the project wherein design is shaped by non-designers is in the decisions made by managers and museum executives. Curators and designers often work on concepts and ideas that will later be shared with senior managers and possibly altered. This is because senior managers have responsibility over many institution-wide aspects of the organisation. With respect to the examples discussed earlier, they are extremely familiar with the principles that underpin any action in the museum and how it can apply to smaller areas, like exhibition decisions. These principles or values might not have been taken explicitly into account by the curators and designers. Therefore, the course of their approach to the exhibition can change. The successful implementation of branding (or of marketing in general) 'requires the skilful coordination of all parties involved and the participation of all corporate sectors' (Colbert, 2011:271). Another possibility is that senior managers are at the periphery of any project and don't share a very deep understanding of its core concepts. If the essence and main aspects of the curators' and designers' ideas are not properly communicated to managers, they could easily mishandle the project. Finally, in some cases, senior managers simply don't have the necessary knowledge or time to properly evaluate a project and make the right decisions for it; curators and designers may then accept that their work is strongly affected by high-level management decisions that trickle down and push the project towards a direction that they didn't plan for or anticipate.

Summary of the Cultural Product Design Framework Principles

The findings discussed above are the most relevant conclusions of the present research that could be summarised in a set of principles that expand upon the Cultural Product Design Framework. The aim of the framework is to highlight a number of simple aspects and to bring about innovation and enhanced value for museums and other cultural institutions. The principles recommended are the following:

When design, seen as both process and product (output), is put into the heart of the project, it fosters innovation and enhances customer satisfaction.
As a focus for a project and its specific aims, design works as the essential link between the expression of the stakeholders' policies, the organisation's mission, the goals of the specific project at hand, the needs of the audience, and the experience that the former will ultimately have.
Design serves as a bridge between products and corporate cultural brands.
Design is integral to the cultural offer and the work of the team, which in the context of the cultural industries, will most commonly be an interdisciplinary team (made up of various design disciplines or non-design professionals).
A design-driven approach to project management can emphasise the interdisciplinary nature of any cultural product and facilitate the project's management by strengthening the collaboration of the various professionals involved (e.g. curators, designers, historians, etc.).

(Principles partly yielded from previous research)
The design of better cultural experiences calls for a holistic approach to product development and the elements that surround it (e.g., how a particular exhibition will be combined with other museum events, how navigation through the space will influence perception, and how one exhibition relates to another, as well as to the museum as a whole).

Design in cultural environments always presupposes the coexistence and coordination of various different design specialties (e.g. in the case of an exhibit, the architecture, interior design, displays design, graphic design for communications, websites or multimedia productions design, etc.). The way these elements are combined builds the brand and, in broader terms, improves the cultural experience overall.
Design knowledge and design-thinking, when made available to non-designers, benefits the development of cultural products and enables a need-driven, user-centred approached to them (e.g. exhibitions that are defined by the needs of the audience rather than simply by what is available to the archives of the museum).

One last question to address is how and when these principles should be applied in order to bring about a practical philosophy that shows that design is relevant, integral, and central to the functions and offerings of the cultural industries. They could initially be used to assess how design is currently managed in an organisation. Asking the question, 'Does this principle apply to what we do?' can yield an effective evaluation of the way design

is managed in practice and what kind of value it adds. Furthermore, it allows for an evaluation of brand strength and consistency, the methods the organisation uses to innovate, and how it connects overall strategy to its everyday projects. Institutions can engage in the following thought experiment to help yield effective results: Try to apply one or some of the principles to an already completed project, as though you were going to run the project again. Simulate the process step by step, applying each principle, and imagine what would be different, and what this difference would result in. It is quite possible that the method would lead to a very different output; for example, taking a different approach to curating the already completed exhibition. Evaluate your initial attempt and determine where or how you think your original aims might have been better achieved (that is, before or after the application of the principles?).

Of course, the main application of the framework is to enhance and emphasise the role and importance of design, and to improve cultural practices by situating them within a design-thinking scheme. Putting the principles into practice can help to bridge the gaps between museum work, cultural product design, and the meaningful and rewarding experience of the audiences that partake in them. The development and expression of these principles, as well as the Cultural Product Design Framework, it is an ongoing project with multiple layers and many different areas to explore. If you have any comments, information, or feedback to share, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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