Brand as a Strategic Asset for Cultural Organisations: A Proposal for the Forthcoming Cultural Institution of Pafos

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Abstract Cultural organizations nowadays open up to be more outgoing, a fact that forces them to adopt marketing and consequently to brand themselves in order to gain ground and be capable of accomplishing their mission to the society. In this manner the paper outlines how, branding acts as a benefit to the function and the mission of a cultural organization. Accordingly, the paper examines the notion of branding as a strategic asset for a forthcoming cultural organization in Pafos, Cyprus, by inspecting the given situation and by proposes research and further steps. More specifically, the paper evaluates the assets and the branding inheritance of the forthcoming body, as they derive from the merge of the local cultural infrastructure of the town and suggests ways on how to establish a brand that will add the value of the organization. In this manner, the paper stresses the synergies may emerge, and discusses the managerial implications and the limitations rise mainly by the unspecified instructional framework and the lack specific order and authority.

Keywords Culture · Cultural organisation · Branding · Strategic asset

1 Introduction

After the benchmark/target of Pafos 2017 and the considerably successful term of Pafos as a Cultural Capital of Europe, Municipality of Pafos is intending to coordinate and merge the city's entire cultural infrastructure into a newly established cultural institution. This paper presents the importance of branding in the whole project of founding and introducing a new cultural body. More specifically, by considering the cultural settings of the city and Pafos 2017 success story, together

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with its interrelated branding inheritance as a strategic asset and by discussing relevant issues, the paper suggests the projection of a suitable strategy. The vital managerial implication of the proposed project derives from the fact the projected organisation does not have yet a clarified institutional framework in order to facilitate any suggested strategy. Currently, we have the defunct organisation of Pafos 2017, which however carries an effective brand, the "Pafos Aphrodite Festival Organisation", which has expertise in organising large scaled concerts and Operas and finally we have all the facilities and the venues, which are currently under the administration of the municipality and are going to be transferred to the new organisation. The new/projected organisation is going to take under its umbrella all the above assets. In this manner, the paper suggests a unique and comprehensive strategy and a solid brand that could act as facilitator of the projected unification. The challenge derives from the fact that "Paphos 2017" an institution that made its circle, carries a branding heritage that mast be transferred and reflected by the new brand.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The paper examines the notion of branding as a Strategic Asset for a forthcoming cultural organisation in Pafos, Cyprus, it has been considered as essential to clarify a set of more transparent aims and objectives that supports the accomplishment of the proposed aim.

- To examine the given situation and outline the nature and the implications of the brand that is required.
- To measure the Branding Inherence that is likely to be transferred to the organisation.
- To propose research further steps in order to facilitate and implement the accomplishment of the proposed Brand.

2 Literature Review

The success of a certain organisation of every nature is not simply the result of the correct strategy. Instead, the success of an organisation is the result of applying a strategy that is flexible enough to respond to changing situations [1–4], as well as adapting to the changing environment [5–8]. Consequently, a successful strategy is the one, which could be competitive even under a changing 'competitive structure' [9–11]. Therefore, the 'competitive structure' of a certain industry, in our case the public provision of culture, along with the 'strategic assets' of an organisation, formulates 'the competitive advantage' of the specific organisation.

Consequently, the section evaluates 'brand' as a 'marketing asset' and as a 'value' creator, by clarifying the meaning of the term 'brand', by investigating the

'structure of branding' and by analysing its attribute as a creator of consuming preference ("...branding is the 'DNA' of 'competitive strategy'") [12, 13]. Accordingly, a successful brand can operate as a powerful marketing asset and as a source of barriers to new market entries. In this respect, an organisation with an individual and distinctive 'branding image' should be capable of sustaining its 'competitive advantage', even after the entry of powerful competitors [14]. The particular statement may imply the significance of the role of 'branding' within the overall strategic approach of a company. This may suggest that 'brand' is one of the major facilitators of a company's corporate strategy. However, at the same time the competitive strategy of an organisation, even if we are talking about nonprofit organizations, as is the specific case, is one of the first things that is reflected by the brand of the specific organisation.

Product is something that is made in a factory and can be quickly outdated; a brand is something that is bought by a customer [1]. Moreover, somebody could argue that a successful brand is timeless. The existence of a successful 'brand' goes beyond the 'life cycles' of the products under the specific 'brand' and gives a permanent sense of 'value' to the organisation, which exploits it.

In the case of a changing 'operational environment', as it happens with the given case, if the forthcoming organisation aims to build and to successfully exploit a brand, it should be capable of building a basic understanding of this brand. Accordingly, the organisation might need to thoroughly clarify the meaning of 'effective brand management'. 'Effective brand management' is the device that gains the preference of the consumer. Moreover, as it has already been argued, "branding is the 'DNA' of 'competitive strategy'" [15]. Consequently, 'brand' is something that reflects the mission and the purpose of an organisation and it gives a sense of identity and distinctiveness to the particular organisation. Furthermore, it can be said that brands work by facilitating and making more effective the consumer process in the sense that the existence of well-defined and well-structured brands enable the customer to recognize the set of attributes that are offered by the products and the services of an organisation. Moreover, it might be easy for someone to understand that brand is not simply a matter of communication, but instead is something that gives a sense of identity to the organisation. Accordingly, 'Brand' is something that must be considered in the very early stages of the planning process, and is related to several organisational dimensions, activities and functions (see Fig. 1). Therefore, in the specific case of the new organisation, the effective and efficient application the specific illustration, it is likely to obtain the establishment of a solid identity and thus of a strategic asset.

Fig. 1 The dimensions and the associated functions of brand strategy

2.1 The Value of Branding Assets in Changing Operational Environments

It might be useful to consider defying 'strategic change' and examining the ways in which a 'branding inheritance', i.e. an existing brand could assist in that direction. In this respect we will try to give a definition by bearing in mind the individualities and the distinctiveness of such an organisation. In a similar manner, Mintzberg [3, 4] tried to define 'strategic change' by focusing his research in identifying various definitions of the term 'change in strategy', which are classified along two fundamental dimensions. The first dimension [5] through which strategic change is defined makes a distinction between conceptualizing strategies. Firstly, conceptualizing strategy in terms of a position that is reflected in the choice of product/market domains or competitive advantages through which firms define their relationship to the environment. Secondly in terms of a perspective that is reflected in the integrated sets of ideas through which problems are marked and understood and from which decisions are taken [6]. On the one hand, those who defined 'strategy' as a 'position' look outward to situate the organisation in its 'external environment'. On the other hand, those who defined 'strategy' as 'perspective' look inwards in an effort to understand the collective mind, or in other words the culture of an organisation, which formulates the organisations continuing relationship with its environment [2–4, 16].

2.2 *Cultural Organisations, Branding and Urban Living*

The previous sections made an attempt of analysing and emphasizing the essence of branding as a facilitator of strategy and as a strategic asset, by viewing literature relevant to the general notions of branding, however in order to connect the concept of branding with the notion of culture and in relation with cultural activities, it might be necessary to make an insight view upon the application of branding for cultural purposes, as this has been reported by relevant literature [17–19]. Accordingly, another issue that derives from the scope of the paper is the discussion of challenges, potential and problems of urban living [20]. Moreover, the notion of "City Imaging" refers to the ways that certain cities are branded and marketed. It assumes that urban illustrations could be altered to support tourism and attract businesses and in-demand workers to one city in preference to another (See Fig. 1). In this sense a successful and thorough brand of the local principal cultural organisation, might establish an effective branding appeal for the wider Urban Living of the Town.

Synergies Synergy derives from the Greek word synergos which means working together [21]. Juga [22] identifies synergism as the co-operative action of discrete agencies in such a way that the total effect is greater than the sum of the effects taken independently. Synergy results from the process of making better use of resources, including physical assets such as manufacturing facilities, and invisible property such as brand name, customer knowledge, technological expertise and corporate culture. When the organisation exploits its unique resources, it achieves synergy [22].

3 The Current Situation and the Targeted Project

Currently, especially after the defunct of the Cultural Organisation "Pafos 2017", the landscape within the wider spectrum of cultural facilities and cultural functions in Pafos is complicated and the various facilities are remaining under a moderate use, in contrast with the year 2017, where all the facilities were included under the umbrella of "Pafos 2017" and they accommodated its various actions and activities. Moreover, "Pafos 2017" managed to establish a solid and recognizable brand image which could be inherited by the new organisation, and with a suitable strategy it could stay alive and it could be reflected in the brand of the new organization. Another organisation that is about to be a part of the new merge is "Pafos Aphrodite Festival Organisation" which is currently active and operates since 1998 as an independent organisation with major stakeholder the municipality of Pafos and minor stakeholders the rest of the local municipalities. "Pafos Aphrodite Festival Organisation" is the organizing body of the annual Opera festival that it takes place every. The specific organisation will inherit the asset of a well-established and prestigious cultural event to the new organisation (see Fig. 1). As it has already been mentioned, the challenge derives from the fact that "Paphos 2017" an

institution that made its circle, carries a branding heritage that mast be transferred and reflected by the new brand.

3.1 The New Organisation and the New Strategy

Finally, the new organisation is about to inherit the authority, the management and the operation of all the major venues of the municipality, including few new projects that have been built as a result of Pafos 2017 insistent, as the new landmarked "Markidion Municipal theater", The Unified Cultural halls of "Palia Electriki" and "Attikon", and the Space of "Chani tou Iimpraim", spaces that where renewed and converted to cultural venues of high standards and cult status. Accordingly, it is clarified that the planned organisation could be benefited by the synergies that might arise as a result of the merge of its inherited assets. As it has already been mentioned in an earlier section, synergies occur with the connection of different assets and in the specific case the potential synergy might come though the unification of "Pafos Aphrodite Festival Organisation" ability in organising events, with the positive image of "Pafos 2017" and the Economies of Scale of the Municipality as administrator of a wide range of cultural facilities, in an effective way, following the example of previous cases, such as the case of Montreal 1976, and avoiding examples such as that of Athens 2004 and Rio 2016 [23, 24]. In this manner the new strategy should facilitate the unification of the assets and manage to communicate the existence of a solid and unique organisation, with joined aims and objectives and thus a unique branding and a unique marketing mix and promotional tools (Website, Social Media etc.)

The Recommended Brand Accordingly, the new organisation, as it is suggested and by the vital scope of the paper, needs a strong and suitable branding entity to act as the communicator and the facilitator of those synergies and thus to operate as a strategic asset that will facilitate the integration of the values of all the participating elements. Currently we have the heritage of the sold brand of "Pafos 2017", the brand of "Pafos Aphrodite Festival Organisation", together with the cultural heritage of the town. Therefore, and as it is recommended and by the central aim of the project, the new brand must reflect all those elements and should reflect a unique image and a solid Strategic asset for the new organisation. Accordingly, some research is recommended, in order enforce the thorough and the comprehensive facilitating of the recommended strategy and the suggested brand.

4 Suggested Methodology

The current section refers to the research methods of the project and establishes some researchable objectives that reflect the basic scope of the thesis. In this respect, it uses the researchable objectives derived from the paper as a basis for the research design of the project [20]. Defines research design as: "...a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing needed information." In order to facilitate and accomplish the aims of the paper as they have been stressed in the previous sections, it has been considered as essential to deploy some methodology and certain research tools, which could create some evidence for the essence of Branding as a strategic asset for the forthcoming organisation. In a similar manner the application of methodology will assist to the evaluation of the existing strategic asset, for example the value of "Pafos 2017", as a component of the suggested brand.

4.1 Research Tools

Before proceeding to the selection of the appropriate research methods, it might be necessary to clarify the type of research conducted. Accordingly, there are four different perspectives (purpose, process, logic and outcome) under which one could classify the type of a given research [25]. Firstly, specific research could be classified according to its purpose. Furthermore, research could be classified as 'exploratory', 'descriptive', 'analytical' or 'predictive'. Secondly, specific research could be classified according to its process. Research could be classified either as 'quantitative' or 'qualitative'. However, in order to enforce the scope of the specific section, within this particular section we will try to clarify the type of research [20, 25, 26]. Consequently, if we consider the proposed objectives, we may conclude that the objectives might need to be approached with a mixture of 'descriptive', 'analytical' and 'predictive' research. Predictive research goes further than explanatory research. The latter establishes an explanation for what is happening in a particular situation, whereas the former forecasts the likelihood of a similar situation occurring elsewhere [25]. Therefore, the nature of the project, suggests the deployment of some qualitative research, which could lead to some outcomes concerning the appreciation and the perceptions of people that are related and are interested in the potential outcome and the potential entity of the suggested organisation.

Focus Groups Given that the scope of the proposed project suggests the use of qualitative research, we could consider the use of Focus Group. "...focus groups provide insight into how people think and provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied..." [27]. The specific method suits to the scope of the project since it supports the gaining of more thorough and comprehensive qualitative data. Focus groups involve group interaction between members of the target population during focus groups may encourage participants to make connections to

various concepts through the discussions that may not occur during individual interviews.

4.2 Research Measures

After formulating the researchable objectives of the project, it might be necessary to clarify the constructs of the major research variables [20]. In this sense the current section makes detailed reference to the researchable measures of the project. Accordingly, in order to accurately assess the two tested objectives, it was necessary to make a careful selection of the researchable measures (variables). In other words, as it is reflected by the proposed objectives, the proposed research involved the measurement of the following major variables: 'The existing Branding Assets', 'The desired Projected Brand' and 'The Brand Essence in the spectrum of Cultural functions'.

5 Recommendations and Limitations

The nature of the project as a proposal involves several limitations and managerial complications, mainly derived from the fact that we do not have the order and the authority to proceed to a more thorough analysis of the given situation in relation to the suggest aims and objectives, as well as the proposed methodology. Another limitation that arises is the fact that the institutional framework of the new organisation remains unspecified, thus is not secure to make assumptions or any time. However, as a further step, will follow a formal presentation of the proposal against the think tank which is dedicated by the municipality, in order to discuss and develop the idea of the new organisation. In this manner, we could proceed to a more comprehensive methodology, which may lead to a desirable and effective research. Moreover, it is suggested that any future step should follow the clarification of the institutional framework of the projected entity. In addition, it is recommended to proceed to a Swot analysis in relation to the projected organisation, as well as to consider the economic dimension and the economic figures that the new organisation is likely to inherit.

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