LAYERS OF BRANDING: THE BRANDING OF CITY AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS IN COLUMBUS, OHIO.

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

In a postmodern society, consumers make choices based on the products, organizations, and places and suit their emotional needs. Such an environment has brought the practice of branding, typically associated with private corporations, into the public sector. Cities like Columbus, Ohio are an example of one of these nontraditional practitioners of branding.

A brand is defined as “a mixture of attributes, tangible and intangible... which, if if managed properly, creates value and influence.” (“BrandChannel Glossary,” n.d). Cities are unique in that they are the sum of so many smaller brands This requires a unique brand assessment approach to get at these tangible and intangible attributes. The approach used in this thesis compares organizational brands within a city and the city brand itself in the context of arts and culture, using Columbus Ohio as a case study. It seeks to answer the following question: How do the brands of Columbus Arts Organizations interact with the arts and cultural brand of the city?

This study builds a conceptual framework that takes the shape of a layers model to compare brands of individual arts organizations in Columbus with the city brand’s treatment of arts and culture. A set of “Emotional Drivers” (Gobé, 2008) are used as indicators for cross comparison. It is found that the brands of

arts organizations and the brand of the city do have a reciprocal relationship. However it is also found that the model applied does not fully address all of the nuances of these brands. However, the conceptual framework serves as a platform for potential practical application in the future. Additionally, this thesis contributes to a growing collection of case studies on city branding.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis in loving memory of Truman: a good listener and a good friend.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Research Question 3

Purpose and Relevence 3

Conceptual Framework and Methods 4

Limitations 5

Expected Outcomes 6

Chapter 2: Literature Review 7

Literature on Branding 7

Literature on Arts Organizations and Branding 17

Literature on Place Branding 24

Conclusion 34

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Methodology 36

A Model for Determining Brand Identity of the Case Studies 36

Data Analysis 39

Chapter 4: Case Studies 45

Background of the Columbus Branding Campaign 45

Case Study 1: The City of Columbus 52

Case Study 2: Columbus Museum of Art 60

Case Study 3: CATCO Theater 68

Case Study 4: Columbus Jazz Arts Group Columbus 74
Case Study 5: The Wexner Center for the Arts 80
Chapter 5: Findings 90
Columbus City brand and the Arts 90
Comparing the City brand to the Organizational Brands 91
Conclusion 95
Chapter 6: Analysis 96
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Conceptual Framework 96
Recommendations for Future Research 100
Bibliography 104
Appendix A 109
Coding Table 109

List of Figures

Figure 1: Two Way Street Model (brand image and brand identity) *13*
Figure 2: The Five Primary Emotional Drivers *14*
Figure 3: Key Ingredients for Organizational Presence *19*
Figure 4: Competitive Identity Hexagon *25*
Figure 5: City Image Communication *28*
Figure 6: Cultural Development Strategies *33*
Figure 7: Layers of Branding *35*
Figure 8: Niche Fulcrum *38*
Figure 9: Flexibility Fulcrum *39*
Figure 10: Clarity Fulcrum *39*
Figure 11: Emotional Driver Translations and Coding Reference *42*
Figure 12: Comparison of of Emotional Driver Findings *92*
Figure 13: The Two Way Street Revisited *102*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Branding is a common practice in the corporate world. More than just marketing, branding takes into account a mixture of tangible and intangible attributes, engineering an identity meant to yield value and influence (“Brandchannel Glossary,” n.d.). Brands are applied with varying degrees of success to every consumer product on the market. Interestingly, more and more public organizations have begun to adopt this practice typically associated with the private sector. Though branding may be no more relevant today than it has always been for public entities, it seems that in recent years this sphere is becoming more aware of the importance of solidifying their identities.

The branding of a city is an example of this phenomenon. City governments are among the non-traditional practitioners of branding. Many factors, including the rise of globalization, have helped city branding find a place on the city policy agendas. In the marketplace of cities, there is heavy competition to attract and retain business, organizations and an people to supply

a talented workforce, not to mention competition for tourism. While city brands are very durable once they are established (Anholt, 2009, p. 210), their complexity makes them difficult to engineer. A city is the product of the collective identities of all of the businesses, organizations, and communities within it. There must be a certain amount of agreement among these smaller identities, and between those identities and the larger identity of the city, for the place brand to be viable.

These smaller identities within a city can be lumped into streams: the geographical brand of the city, the political brand of the city, the economic brand of the city, and so on. The brands layer upon one another within those streams to produce an aggregate brand. In this thesis, I am looking at the cultural brand of a city, which I will be viewing as a product of the arts organizations of the city.

Columbus Ohio provides an interesting arena to examine the relationship between organization and city brands. It is a city that has struggled to establish a recognizable image, cultural or otherwise. It is a second tier city (Markusen, 2004) in terms of arts and culture, meaning that it is a large city, but not a major destination for museums and performing arts, as New York and Los Angeles are. Still, Columbus is home to a vibrant arts scene with plenty of cultural amenities and ample community support and participation. The arts environment and culture are often compared to that of Austin, Texas. However, where Austin has been able to solidify its image as the Live Music Capital of the World, Columbus has not yet established such a brand. It is still considered a “flyover” city to non-Ohioans.

Research Question

The question I will examine in this thesis is as follows: How do the brands of Columbus arts organizations interact with the cultural brand of the city? Sub questions include: What is a brand? What is the cultural brand that the city of Columbus is projecting? What is/are the brand(s) that arts organizations in Columbus project? Why is branding an important practice for both parties?

Purpose and Relevence

If brands layer upon one another within places and within their respective streams, then looking at relationships between the layers should yield information about the validity, traction, and overall strength of these brands. This study is founded on two assumptions. The first assumption is that good branding is important to both places and organizations. The second is that the brand of a place and the brands of its collective organizations *should* reinforce one another. The "*should*" implies that a reciprocal relationship between these two will be mutually beneficial, strengthening the image of each. If this is the case, then it holds true that the cultural brand of the city of Columbus *should* accurately reflect the brands of its arts organizations, and vice versa. This study intends to show whether or not they do reciprocate.

General literature on branding is plentiful and literature on place branding is growing rapidly, but there is a "remarkable paucity of real case histories to get one's teeth into, and surprisingly little work that is of direct practical application," (Anholt, 2002, pg. 230). The primary purpose of this study is to offer a model for examining the relationship between these layers in city branding. The

intent such a model is to build something that might be a practical assessment tool, not only for the city of Columbus, but to other cities as well, even to other streams that contribute to a city brand such as the political brand or the economic brand. By applying this model to the city of Columbus as a case study, I am testing the appropriateness of my model as well as contributing to the general collection of city branding case studies.

This is an especially relevant time to be assessing the brand of Columbus because in the summer of 2011, the city actually began implementation of a new branding campaign. Using concepts “Open” and “Smart” as it’s pillars, the new branding campaign was planned by a collaboration of governmental and quasi-governmental actors. The city’s bicentennial, celebrated throughout 2012, is one reason that allows for city image to find a place on the policy agenda. On a national and global level, an increasingly mobile society also helps frame the window of opportunity. With this new brand, Columbus wishes to engineer a lasting image, positioning itself in the city marketplace after unsuccessful attempts in years past. The city is pushing these essences of “Open” and “Smart” to be embraced by many industries and sectors, including arts and culture.

Conceptual Framework and Methods

The review of literature for this thesis spans general branding, arts organization branding and place branding. Brand components and assessment models are identified in these three categories of literature. Commonalities and linkages between the categories are also identified, informing the conceptual framework utilized in this thesis. A layers model is proposed and it is suggested

that, within the context of the arts, organizational brands layer upon another to inform the cultural city brand. It is also proposed that both arts organizations and cities have 3 common channels of brand communication. These channels can be assessed through determining their niche, flexibility, and clarity. Marc Gobé's emotional drivers (2007) are translated into the context of cities and arts organizations, respectively, and are used as qualitative indicators in assessment.

This thesis applies a model inspired by this conceptual framework to the case study of Columbus Ohio's cultural brand. Five sub-cases are used to illustrate the whole. One case is the arts and cultural brand of the city itself. The other four cases are a purposive sample of arts organizations in Columbus, including theater, music, visual, and multi-arts organizations. For each case, the niche, flexibility, and clarity are assessed via the common channels of brand communication. The emotional drivers are used to compare across organizations and from organization to city.

Limitations

A few limitations become apparent through my methods and application to the case studies. Firstly, the models is fitted to each case using my personal assessment. A more thorough case study might also utilize interviews and focus groups to provide a check of my interpretations. A limited and non-random sample presents limitations for the validity of the study, but the use of a purposive sample mitigates this to some extent.

It should also be noted that there is a limited scope of branding being examined in this thesis. Organizational brands are certainly not the only

components of a city's cultural brand. Individual artists, patrons, and educational institutions are among many other pieces to the brand puzzle. For the sake of feasibility, This study limits itself to organizations and the city itself.

Expected Outcomes

I anticipate that there will be an alignment between the city brands and organizational brands in Columbus. I expect that the new branding campaign is representative of the existing brands of arts organizations. Furthermore, I expect that they would reciprocate by furthering the alignment of their individual brands, and ultimately their aggregate brand, to that of the city of Columbus.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Literature from which my thesis derives its conceptual bases can be broadly categorized by literature on branding (in general), literature on nonprofit and arts organization branding, and literature on place branding. Within these, subtopics emerge– what is a brand, why is branding important, and how can we recognize a brand. These are discussed with respect to their specific contexts (place, organizational, general) but some overlap naturally occurs. These categories of literature show a layering effect. From branding products and services to branding organizations to branding cities, the subject increases in complexity for each consecutive level.

Literature on Branding

Much of the existing literature on branding is focused on commercial product branding. Many branding best practices can be illustrated by the success stories of corporate firms such as Coca-Cola. However, this does not mean that the same principals cannot be applied to arts organizations and places. The public and nonprofit sectors constantly borrow practices from the corporate world and vice versa (Master, 2004), including marketing practices. There are some that might say that public and nonprofit entities are fundamentally different that

corporate entities in the value that they provide and should therefore have their own set of managerial practices, but for the purposes of this study, am considering the broader literature on branding to be applicable to these sectors.

What is a brand?

Definitions

Though brand is a buzzword that you cannot go a day without hearing, the definition will likely vary depending on whom you ask. Even the American Marketing Association provides multiple definitions in their online dictionary. They first define "brand" in light of its legal meaning – "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" – in other words, a trademark ("American Marketing Association Dictionary," n.d.). This definition is limited to the empirical assets of a brand, but the American Marketing Association also endorses a broader definition borrowed from Wikipedia:

> "A brand is a customer experience represented by a collection of images and ideas… a brand often includes an explicit logo, fonts, color schemes, symbols, and sound which may be developed to represent implicit values, ideas, and even personality." (as cited by the "American Marketing Association Dictionary," n.d.)

Here we see some of the more intangible qualities of a brand being embraced with the acknowledgement of the "customer experience" as well as the "implicit values and ideas."

It seems that that “branding” has come a long way from its beginnings of marking sheep and cattle. It has evolved into a rather ambiguous concept that has multiple levels of usage and understanding. Simon Anholt addresses these levels in an article on place branding. Anholt (2005) asserts that there exist a popular definition, a simple definition, and an advanced definition of branding. The popular definition inaccurately lumps it with “all modern selling activities,” making it synonymous with advertising, marketing, PR, and sales (p. 116). The simple definition is similar to that of the American Marketing Association in that it encompasses the visual aspects: name, slogan, and graphics (p. 117).

The advanced definition takes into account the visual elements, “but goes on to cover a wide area of corporate strategy, consumer and stakeholder motivation and behavior, internal and external communications, ethics and purpose.” (p. 117) The advanced definition positions branding as a theoretical concept “which can of course be briefly described but not exhaustively defined except through a study of its practice and literature.” (p. 117)

BrandChannel.com, an extension of the global firm InterBrand, aggregates branding news in addition to providing an extensive research database and glossary. Their definition of brand is the most digestible one I have come across. According to this glossary: “A brand is a mixture of attributes, tangible and intangible... which, if if managed properly, creates value and influence.” (“BrandChannel Glossary,” n.d).

This last definition packs a lot into a few words, and a grasp of Anholt's levels of understanding as well as the American Marketing Association's definitions are useful in interpreting it. Below is a dissection of the Brand Channel definition:

- "A Mixture of Attributes": The tangible attributes can refer to the "name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature." The intangible attributes can refer to the "implicit values, ideas, and… personality," that those features embody as well as the "customer experience" ("American Marketing Association dictionary," n.d.) that they produce.
- "If Managed Properly": This suggests that the there is a strategy involved in creating and maintaining a brand. Perhaps "management" even includes elements of consumer psychology, communications, ethics, and purpose. Extrapolating this statement opens the definition up to Anholt's advanced understanding.
- "Creates Value and Influence": This statement briefs why branding is important to those who practice it. The idea of value will be explored later on in this literature review.

I chose to use the definition provided by BrandChannel.com as my standard because is simple enough to be repeatable and understandable on a basic level. At the same time, it is just vague enough to be extrapolated in such a way that it might accommodate various levels of understanding. It should be noted that a portion of this definition was omitted. This is due to the fact that it

referenced trademarks, bringing to the table a legal connotation which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Branding v. Marketing

In Anholt's simple definition, we saw that branding is often wrongly interpreted as being synonymous with marketing. Distinguishing these two can supplement the definition of brand and further our understanding of its practice. James McNamara, president of a New York based arts branding firm, makes the distinction with the analogy: "branding is to marketing as strategy is to tactics" (McNamara, 2011a). Marketing is a vehicle by which the brand can be communicated, but the two are not interchangeable.

Connecting this idea with the American Marketing Association's notion of a "consumer experience," one's impression of a brand aggregates impressions from a variety of touchpoints associated with the brand. Touchpoints are any point of consumer interaction. These include, but are not limited to: impressions from marketing and advertising; experiences in buildings and facilities; interactions with employees; as well as the products and services themselves. According to McNamara (2011b), "branding is the practice of aligning those impressions to ensure that they form [a] consistent and unified message." The tangible products of marketing – brochures, logos, advertisements, etc. – are all touchpoints, but they are not the only touchpoints. Similarly, design (the graphic identity) is not equivalent to branding either, as McNamara argues in another article. Design is, however, another touchpoint and design strategy should be in alignment with the larger brand strategy.

A Two Way Street

Branding is always a two way street. A brand is both giving – the identity that is projected – and receiving – the image that is interpreted by the audience. To better understand the relationship, we must distinguish identity from image.

On the giving end, the company or organization sets out to engineer an image through a variety of touchpoints, in order to influence the brand that is received. This is the brand identity. Brandchannel defines this as “the outward expression of the brand.”

On the receiving end, a brand can be though of as “essentially something in a person’s mind – a set of memory patterns that link various emotions, experiences and attributes to a particular brand.” (Vilponnen, 6) This is the brand image – “a mirror reflection (though perhaps inaccurate) of the brand personality or product being” (American Marketing Association Dictionary, n.d.). “For users this is based on practical experience of the product or service concerned (informed impressions) and how well this meets expectations; for non-users it is based almost entirely upon uninformed impressions, attitudes and beliefs (“Brandchannel Glossary,” n.d.).

The giving and receiving are in constant banter back and forth, as Figure 1 illustrates. Branding takes a U-turn when the brand identity meets the consumer and becomes the brand image. Image U-turns back to the branded entity once again, signifying that public perceptions and feedback are an important influence upon the identity.

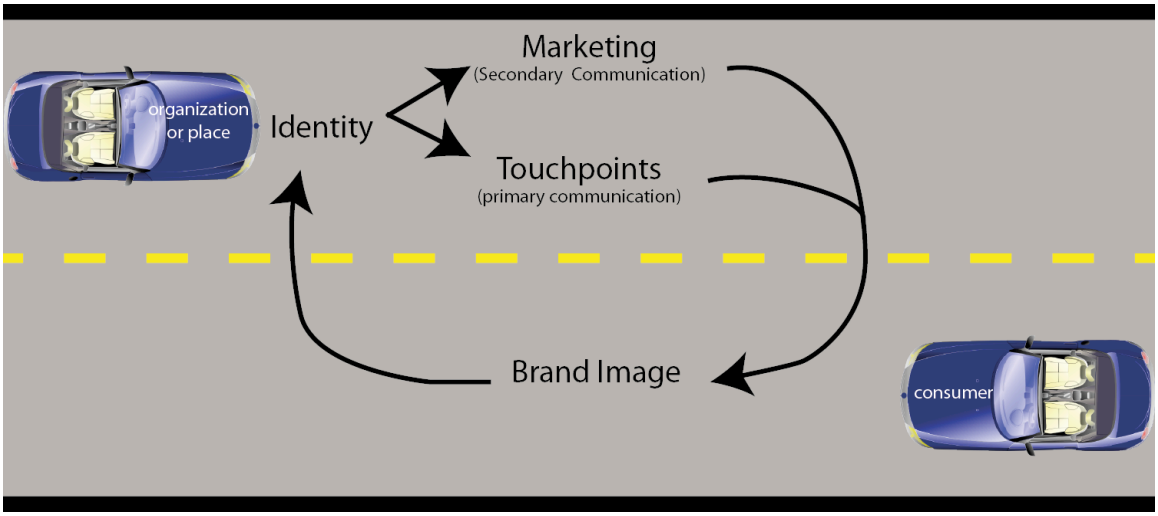


Figure 1: Two Way Street Model (brand image and brand identity)

Branding Models

One of the most important features of the literature on brand building is what they are missing: a uniform model. To illustrate, one can perform a Google image search for “brand strategy” and be presented with dozens, maybe even hundreds, of different models.

Francisco Guzmán (2005) provides a thorough literature review of the variety of different brand building models that have emerged in the past two decades. Guzmán points out that before the 1990s, branding was reactionary and viewed as a step in the marketing process (p.2) Now, branding is practiced holistically and strategically. This has resulted in a boom of strategic branding models. Guzmán credits this switch in practice in part to an increase in the recognition of the economic value a brand can add.

The models that Guzmán examines owe their variety to the different lenses under which they were conceived. Some models are economically driven and revolve around brand equity. For example, Keller (1993) offers a pyramid model

assessing the value a brand value for the consumer. Other models, such as Urde's Brand Orientation model (1999) are more concerned with positioning a brand within a competitive marketplace.

Marc Gobé, in his book, *BrandJam* (2007), uses a model that categorizes brands into 5 types based on the "emotional driver" it is intended to stimulate. These categories (figure 2), provide indicators that can be referenced when evaluating a brand essence. Each driver is an umbrella of consumer aspirations. Rather than positioning or equity, the Emotional Drivers model focuses on the consumer experience. Where other models examine the implications of branding, this model helps us identify what a brand is actually *saying* (Gobé 73)

Emotional Driver	**Citizenship**	**Freedom**	**Status**	**Harmony**	**Trust**
Consumer Aspiration	"love of the world"	"love the thrill"	"love of class"	"love of tribe"	"love of ethics"
Emotional Promise	**Engagement**	**Escape**	**Glamour**	**Conviviality**	**Security**
Consumer Motivation	**Doing good** Sustainability Justice equality humanity	**Breaking Out** Stimulation Survival Risk change	**Shine** Recognition Redictability Craft pleasure	**Sharing Joy** Connection Celebration Renewal family	**Stewardship** Knowledge Solutions Heritage support

Figure 2: The Five Primary Emotional Drivers (adapted from Gobé, 2007, p.73)

Outside of academia, branding firms add a variety of brand-building models to the mix. These models are typically less theoretical. Chute Gerdeman (2011), a Columbus based company specializing in retail design, uses a concentric circles model when creating a brand strategy with their clients. At the

core of the circle is the brand essence, a simple statement of 2 or 3 words which sum up the brand. The next tier circle contains words that describe the essence further and the final tier contains words that support the essence and description. This model is referred to in every step of working with the client when they build the retail environment. This is a very simple model that takes into account market position and brand assets.

Ologie, another Columbus based company, helps their clients build a framework for their brand. Using a pyramid model (Ologie, 2011), they begin at the top with the core essence of the brand (similar to Chute Gerdeman) and move down through the brand personality (descriptive words, also like Chute Gerdeman), then the message, then market position. At the base of the pyramid, the target customer gives relevance to tiers above it. Ologie takes a narrative approach to brand building, asserting that telling a brand *story* is important.

Branding firm models are more tools for their clients to understand their brand in terms of its core components. These two models hint at implementation strategy, but acknowledge that it varies based on the needs of the client. The key takeaway here is that there is no one formula that is guaranteed to build the ideal brand. However, the frameworks that are most relevant to my research are Gobé'emotional drivers and the essence-based models.

The Importance of Branding Today

Marc Gobé, in addition to categorizing brand types by emotion, provides a plausible explanation as to why branding has been such a hot topic in recent years. He points towards a shift in society. In the middle of the 20th century, we

began to shift from a modernist perspective to a postmodern one. Elitism and dogmatism controlled the marketplace in the industrial age, “which celebrated technology and science above pleasure and visions,” (Gobé, 2007 p. 9) The experience of the consumer was little acknowledged. However, where modernist ideals once reigned, individualism and choice have taken over. In terms of brand design, this means that the emotional component, the individual connections we feel with a brand, is increasingly important. Today, we consume not based on the only option available, but based on which option suits our emotional needs. This puts power into the hands of the consumer, necessitating differentiation among competing products.

Gobé’s connects well with the notion that branding is a two way street and the existence of a brand image separate from a brand identity. It also provides some an explanation for the many brand models that have emerged with a focus on the consumer.

Brand Value

As we saw in the BrandChannel definition, creating value is the desired result of the practice of branding. This is also referred to as brand equity. The full version of BrandChannel’s definition of brand continues actually goes on to address value further, stating that it “has different interpretations: from a marketing or consumer perspective it is the promise and delivery of an experience; from a business perspective it is the security of future earnings; from a legal perspective it is a separable piece of intellectual property,” (BrandChannel Glossary, n.d.). For the purposes of this thesis, I will not delve into the legal

value. Nor will I explore the business value, though it is worth noting the resistance encountered when applying a hard and fast cost-benefit approach to brand building. However, the consumer experience value is more relevant. The promise to the consumer, though it can manifest itself economically, relates back to the aspirations and motivations found in the Emotional Drivers model.

Literature on Arts Organizations and Branding

While the literature on corporate branding and marketing is abundant (perhaps overwhelmingly so), the literature on marketing arts organizations is considerably smaller. Smaller yet is the pool of literature on *branding* arts organizations specifically. Throughout this section, I supplement with literature that was originally intended for corporate and nonprofit purposes where the concepts are transferable.

Branding organizations is the next layer of complexity. Guzman (2005) points out that in there was a shift from simply branding products to branding entire organizations in the mid 1990s. Hatch and Schultz (2003, via Guzman, 2005) cite many distinctions between product and organizational brand including the fact that organizations have a much broader temporal base than products. Where products tend to live in the present with a sales oriented agenda, organizations live in the past, the present and the future (p. 1045).

What is an arts organization brand?

There appears to exist a tension between the act of branding and the ethos of arts, which typically embraces creation for the sake of aesthetics, whether or not it satisfies a consumer. Branding, often lumped with marketing,

implies the existence of a market to be satisfied (Lee, 2005, p. 298). We exist in a consumer-oriented paradigm today – it is commonly accepted that the role of organizations is not merely to provide for the consumer, but to provide to their exact specifications. For arts organizations, this might imply the risk of compromising the autonomy of the makers and the art itself.

However, we must remember that marketing is different than branding. Marketing is one set of tactics in a brand strategy. Marketing for an arts organization is deliberate and utilizes a limited set of tools, such as a website, signs, and seasonal mailings. Branding includes these deliberate measures, but also accounts for the summation of its tangible and intangible assets. These might include mission and vision, building and facilities, collections and exhibitions, the staff members, public programs, etc. (McNamara, 2011, and McClellen, et al, 1999).

Branding becomes more palatable when it is framed in terms of communication of the mission – not in opposition to the artistic ethos, but helping outsiders to recognize its presence. Branding from the mission perspective allows for the inclusion of elements from Anholt's advanced definition of branding, such as ethics, purpose, and stakeholder motivations. In Branding for Non Profits, Holland defines the organization brand as that which "promotes the identity and underlying values of a unique culture by communicating the messages, products, and services created by that culture… [it] creates expectations and makes promises your audiences," (Holland, 2006, p. 5)

The Experience

By differentiating marketing from branding, we can see that branding holistically takes into account a whole host of touchpoints associated with the arts organization. Lee argues that this extended definition of the "products" branded provides another way to relieve the tension produced by the arts existing in a consumer-driven paradigm (Lee, 2005, p. 297). Rather than marketing or branding the art itself, the experience with that organization is branded. This necessitates the consideration of those peripheral things beyond the "core products," (Lee, 2005). The brand is not only the permanent collection, but can also be influenced by a conversation with a docent, the lighting, and the accessibility from public transportation. The experience is the sum total of those touchpoints. In the arts, it is important to note that the experience is prone to change over time, due to rotating exhibits and seasonal performances.

The model of Key Ingredients for Organizational Presence (figure 3) set forth by McClellan, et al. (1999) might also serve to dissect the experience. Persistent presence is defined as the "external manifestation of an organization's foundation," (p. 169). It is the consistent public awareness that results from the strategic development of the artistic product, seasons and performances, facilities and signage, personalities (people), and validation (p. 170). The last ingredient will be discussed further in the

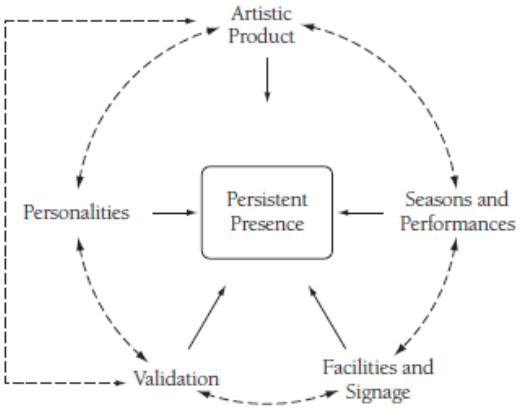


Figure 3: Key Ingredients for Organizational Presence (McClellen, et al, 1999)

next section, but the first four in particular are important players in building the experience offered by the organization.

Co-branding and brand extension are also becoming increasingly popular in the arts, according to d'Astous and Colbert (2007). Co-branding refers to two or more arts organizations joining forces to produce a product, for example, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and Ballet Met present *Sleeping Beauty*. This can be a mutually beneficial arrangement, but it is also sometimes an opportunity for a weaker brand to feed off of a stronger one. Brand extension uses the pre-existing brand on new products, for example a coffee mug with the MoMA logo. These strategies enhance and/or shape the experience through synthesis of two or more existing experiences, sometimes mixing the familiar with the unfamiliar. For both, congruence is key. The authenticity of the experience is dependent upon the final product (be it a joint performance or a coffee mug) being relevant to the activities of the arts organization(s).

Two Way Street for Arts Organizations

The two way street from general branding still holds for arts organizations. The observations set forth by McClellan et al. in their piece on persistent presence connects well with this idea. Persistent presence, like brand identity is built from the inside out via those five ingredients. It manifests itself in the form of public awareness and public perceptions, like brand image.

Brand Identity of Arts Organizations

The brand identity is portrayed through marketing and through the touchpoints controlled by the organization. Marketing, which would be found

under signage in “Facilities and Signage,” is where you will encounter much of the visual brand identity. What is probably more important, though, to identity building is strategic alignment of those elements that create the experience for the consumer. Facilities, seasons and performances, the artistic product, and the people involved with the organization all create opportunities for touchpoints. Some of these might be weighted differently from one organization to the next. Though the Bilbao Guggenheim may house quality exhibitions, the Frank Gehry building makes it a destination. For organizations with now home facility (or a shared facility) more of an emphasis might be placed on brand building through the artistic product.

Brand Image of Arts Organizations

“Although name awareness can be achieved momentarily through aggressive advertising, perceived quality cannot,” (Caldwell, 2000, p.32) The experience that is engineered via the brand identity is then evaluated by the public. This is where validation comes into play, along with public perception. Validation occurs on the professional level (for example, validation by art critics) and on the more immediate level of the average audience. Professional validation can help encourage validation from the rest of the audience, particularly in smaller communities (McClellen et al, 1999, p. 175). Both kinds of validation can influence a public perception in a positive way and lack there of can influence it negatively. Perception feeds into the overall reputation of the organization, a function that is fluid with social change and passage of time (as cited in McClellen, et al, 2000, p. 177). To continue on the final U-turn on the two

way street, arts organization should constantly evaluate their brand image as they strategize their brand identity.

Unique Circumstances for Arts Organizations

Arts organizations operate under a unique set of circumstances that can make branding a challenge. Many arts organizations, particularly in the performing arts, have constrained availability of their products (Preece and Wiggins Johnson, 2011, 19). An organization may only offer programming for a season or at sporadic times during the year. For the visual arts, rotating exhibitions pose a similar problem, particularly in galleries where there is no permanent collection. When the core products are constantly changing, it is hard to establish an enduring brand. This reiterates the importance of considering those unchanging peripheral products that Lee highlighted as components of the brand. Constrained availability or rotation of the core products can also result in the public failing to associate a performance or an exhibition with the presenting organization (McClellen, et al, 1999). This is part of the reason many arts organizations have difficulty establishing a persistent presence.

However, this does not have to be a problem. As Carol Scott points out in an article on museum branding, but if the brand identity is strong, the organization “should be able to promote their changing products… linked to the essential core elements and attributes associated with the long-term purpose of the museum.”

Arts organizations also generally suffer from lack of resources due to the market failure in which they exist. Many organizations do not have the money or

personnel to keep a marketing department or even a marketing director. Marketing responsibilities are often spread among various people with different job titles, which can risk fragmenting the message (Holland, 2006). Too many cooks in the kitchen can dilute the brand soup.

Why is Branding Important for Arts Organizations?

Branding is important for arts organizations partly because branding as a whole has become increasingly important today, as we saw with the general literature on branding. Additionally, arts organizations are in greater competititon today than they ever were. Scott (2000) notes that arts organizations might start to think about branding themselves based on their own attributes, but also based "attributes associated with an ideal leisure experience," (p. 37). Perhaps this take the form of a "family fun" museum, or "cocktails in the gallery." In addition to competition with other leisure, arts organizations are also in competition with the massive ammounts of *other* art organizations (p.39). In this saturated culture market, organizations must strive to differentiate themselves, lest they become redundant.

The Aggregate of Arts Organization Brands

As we look at branding in terms of a layers model and in the context of the arts, we can start to fill in gaps in the model. In the space between the arts organization layer and the city layer, we can place the aggregate brand of the arts organizations. As we will see in the next section, city brands are the sum of their sub-brands. Similarly, a number of arts organizations existing within a geographic proximity can produce a brand that is essentially the aggregate of the

individual organization brands. Municipal arts councils can sometimes play a role in harmonizing messages for a consistent brand identity, often liaising between organizations and city management. Close proximity of organizations in cultural districts, such as theater districts and gallery districts, can make the aggregate brand of organizations that much more visible.

Literature on Place Branding

Cities are the top tier, in terms of complexity, of the layers that I explore. Places are even more organic and multi-faceted than organizations given their size alone, not to mention the vast variety or people, organizations, and smaller places they are composed of. A city "cannot be reduced to a product" due to the fact that they are defined by *all* of the following: their geography, their built environment, their social communities, their economies, and their polity. (Bianchini and Ghiliardi, 2007, p. 281)

What is a City Brand?

It could be said that the deliberate act of place branding – be it of cities, regions, or nations – has been around since the time flags were carried into battle or flown over castles. However, place branding, including city branding, has become a popular area of study (at least with that terminology) only in the past 10 years or so. To simply define "city brand," we need only plug "city" into any accepted definition of brand in place of product, service, or corporation. However, the complexities of a city require a more in depth understanding of where a city brand comes from and how it works. Most of the literature affirms at least one of three key principals of city branding:

1. City brands are the sum of their parts
2. City brands are a two way street
3. City brands develop over a long time

These three themes are not the only truths of place branding, but keeping them in mind gives us legs to stand on as we navigate the many layers of a city.

Cities are the Sum of Their Parts

To restate Bianchini and Ghilardi, cities can be defined by their geography, built environment, social community, economy, and polity. Cities are the images of all of these things existing in geographic proximity, comprising the local and external images of a city. They can be communicated, among many things, via the media, tourism marketing, as well as stereotypes and conventional wisdom (Bianchini and Ghiliardi, 2007).

Simon Anholt (2009) uses a different set of attributes, which in total he calls “competitive identity,” that describe how places differentiate themselves in a global marketplace. Anholt’s “competitive identity” consists of six channels through which places can communicate their brand identity and by which outsiders deduce a brand image. The channels consist of tourism (promotion and the experiences of tourists), brands (locally produced products and services), government policy, investment

Figure 4: Competitive Identity Hexagon (Anholt, 2009)

(attract and retain strategies for businesses and a workforce), cultural activities, and the inhabitants of the place themselves. If all of these points on the competitive identity hexagon align so that they reinforce a single, clear, believable message then the place is on the right track to "building and maintaining a positive internal and external reputation," (p. 209). There are many ducks to keep in a row – many varied, perhaps conflicting stories to align. In a later editorial, Anholt compares place branding to branding practices of corporations encompassing many product brands such as Proctor & Gamble. Because a city might be home to both an NFL team and a world-class art museum, cities must practice brand *portfolio* management (Anholt, 2005) . Similarly, Guzmán (2005) notes that cultural brands (cultures tied to geographic locations) are not comprised of one product, "a whole host of products or brands that are tied together." Treatment of the brand as a whole is important in order to achieve consistency in the messages from these various sources (Kavaratzis, 2004, p. 71)

From these observations, we can infer that places are the sum of their parts. Part of this equation no doubt includes the collective brands of the various individual business and organizations.

City Brands are a Two Way Street

Just like product and organization brands, city brands involve both giving a brand identity and receiving a brand image. Cities almost always have government departments or other organizations whose sole function is the market the city externally. Their job is to build upon, shape, or even change

whatever images the recipient has already formed about a place (Hankinson, 2004) for the purposes of attracting tourism, new businesses, and residents. However, you do not need a marketing department to have a city brand. The identity can be projected by a variety of actors, including the city government, local business, local nonprofits, and individual residents.

Kavaratzis (2004) provides a model of city brand communication somewhat similar to my two-way street model. The downward facing arrows in the model note a dissemination of the brand identity via primary and secondary communication. Here, secondary communication refers to deliberate branding that takes the form of traditional advertising and marketing (logos, media promotion, etc.). Primary communication results from a city's actions that are not specifically intended for marketing. Included in primary communication are urban design and planning (landscape and infrastructure), public-private partnerships (structure) and actions of leadership (behavior). These are typically less deliberate, but may be incidental components of a larger branding strategy.

Kavaratzis's tertiary communication brings in the receiving component. It is the perceptions of the city, influenced by those primary and secondary communications, but not controlled them and therefore not controlled by those deliberately disseminating the message. Both Kavaratzis and Bianchini et. al explore the idea of an imagined community, which is, in essence, the brand image. Bianchini calls it a mindscape, which "exists between the physical landscape of a city and people's visual and cultural perceptions of it." Kavaratzis borrows the term "internal city" which considers more the subjective nature of city

images and how it is “received by the mind according to each individual’s experiences and priorities.”

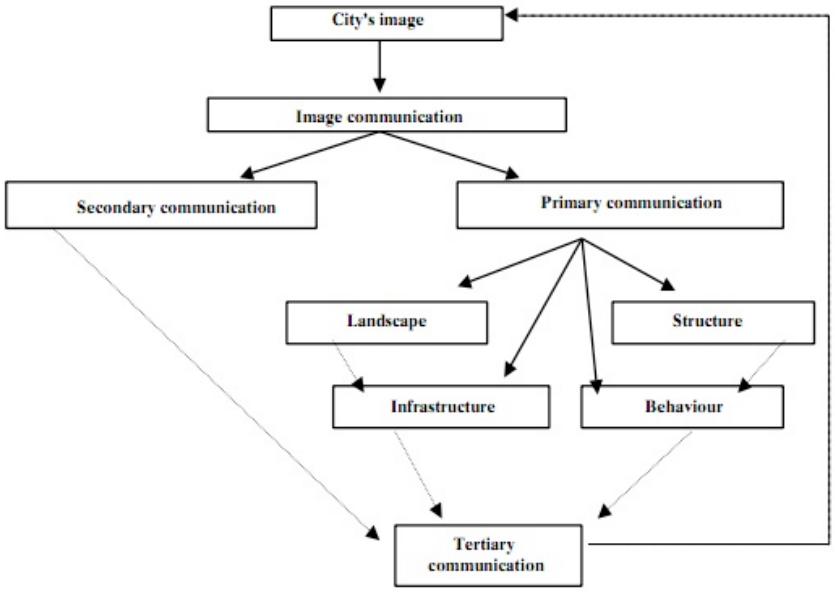


Figure 5: City Image Communication (Kavaratzis, 2004)

The two-way street necessitates that city brands have substance behind them in order for them to be believable. is a Any message projected via the brand identity must genuinely embody the city for it to be received positively. Kotler provides a hypothetical example in Marketing Places:

> *Suppose East St. Louis, Illinois produces a campaign to attract tourists to “Beautiful and Historic East St. Louis.” However, arriving tourists immediately encounter piles of uncollected trash, scores of homeless people, x-rated movie theaters, and open drug sales on the main streets. Fearing for their personal safety, the tourists cut short their visit, return home, and tell friends to avoid East St. Louis at all costs. Consequently,*

East St. Louis's promotion campaign serves only to accelerate the rate at which people learn how undesirable the place is as a tourist attraction. (Kotler, et al, 1993, p. 99)

Bringing this back to Kavaratzis, secondary communication should reflect primary communication in order for tertiary communication to be positive and reinforcing. The images that are instilled in an individual's mind as a result of secondary communications are sometimes referred to as induced (Hankinson, 2004, p. 7) images. However, they can only be successful in inducing that image if it is a genuine reflection of what the city really is.

City Brands Develop Over a Long Time

Previously I cited Hatch and Schultz, who noted that product brands and corporate brands are inherently different in temporal nature. Cities are even one step beyond corporations in this respect. Most American large cities have existed for hundreds of years. Sometimes considered living organisms, cities are constantly evolving and changing (Abrumrad, 2010). This allows city brands to develop over a long period of time.

An individual will form his or her brand image of a place, whether or not they have been there, "gradually throughout their lives as a consequence of many different inputs and influences," (Anholt, 2009, p. 210) including Kavaratzi's primary and secondary communications. Collectively, these brand images grow very powerful, becoming "deeply rooted in the cultures of populations and seldom change very much or very quickly." Hankinson refers to these images that develop naturally over the course of time as organic images, noting that they are

reflective of political, economic, and social histories as well as cultural heritage (p. 7). Organic images can be positive or negative. For example, the history of political corruption and mob violence, not to mention the questionable practices of the meatpacking industry, caused Chicago to develop a negative organic image that was long lasting.

The durability of city brands is both good and bad. On one hand, a good image can thrive even through fleeting national scandal. On the other hand, a negative or otherwise unfavorable image will be tough to change when it has already been established. Hankinson's use of the word "organic" is fitting. City images can change, just like Chicago's image has risen from the ashes. However, it takes a lot of time and effort image is a fitting word: they can change, but it takes a lot of time and effort on the part of primary and secondary communications.

The Importance of City Branding

A commonly accepted reason for the recent popularity of city branding is the rise of globalization and an emerging marketplace for geographic places. Anholt (2009) frequently cites this factor, noting that world is now a single market meaning that a city must now "compete with every other for its share of the world's consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international sporting and cultural events, and for the attention and respect of the international media, other governments, and people of other [places]," (p. 206). At the core of a city's participation in this competition is the desire to increase the quality of life

for residents. Attracting the right people, organizations, and events will ideally mean more money for the city, more jobs, and more amenities.

One of the incidentals of globalization is an increasingly mobile society, due to technological advancements and shifts in social attitudes. People rarely spend their entire careers in the same place these days. “Place has become the central organizing unit of our time, taking on many of the functions that used to be played by firms and other organizations,” (Florida, 2002, p. 6). Once, people once moved to wherever the job was, regardless of location. Now, many people are more inclined to settle somewhere based on what that location has to offer them (Florida, 2002, p.96).

This new attitude among the workforce (particularly the young workforce) can be especially important to second-tier cities. These are large and boast a variety of cultural amenities, but they cannot not compare in these qualities to super cities like LA and New York City (Markusen, 2004, p.5). Examples are Portland, and Nashville, and Columbus. They are livable and well-rounded, but in order to compete for residents, they must distinguish themselves further.

City branding is not strictly an attract-and-retain strategy. It is also important in building and maintaining relationships with other places in globalized world. City branding is not typically the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks about city policy. Typically of an implicit nature, policy makers have a tendency to dismiss its importance (Anholt, 2005, 119). However, the cultivation and successful communication of a city brand to the outside world can be considered an exercise in the soft power of cultural diplomacy.

The Role of Arts and Culture in City Branding

Because, as Bianchini and Ghilardi (2007) observed, cities are defined by many things, they can have many sub-brands. For example, cities can have a geographical brand (like San Francisco's hills and bay), an economic brand (like Silicon Valley), or, like my research concerns, an arts and culture brand.

Arts organizations and cultural districts can shape the image of a place, by making them a tourist destination (Caldwell, 2000, p. 33). The interplay between the place and organization layers might even be seen as co-branding. A strong city brand can benefit an arts organization (The Metropolitan Museum of Art in *New York*) just as a strong arts organization brand can benefit a city (The *Metropolitan Museum of Art* in New York).

In the United States, where there is no cultural ministry, cultural planning tends to be decentralized. However, many municipalities employ strategic cultural planning. Carl Grodach and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris offer a typology guide for approaches to cultural development. Entrepreneurial strategies highlight economic growth that can be attributed to cultural development, typically focusing on the downtown and flagship cultural organizations. Creative Class strategies, particularly popular since the Richard Florida book was published in 2002, have an "attract and retain" bent, focusing on quality of life amenities like entertainment districts. Progressive strategies employ a bottom-up approach with education and awareness for the public, often through community arts programs.

Strategy Type	Goals	Types of Cultural Projects and Programs	Geographic Focus	Target Audiences
Entrepreneurial	Economic growth through tourism, city image Catalyze private sector investments	Flagship cultural projects Spectacular events Promotional activities	Downtown, "prime city areas"	Tourists and Conventioneers Affluent residents and suburbanites
Creative Class	Economic growth through quality of life amenities Attract new residents/ employees in the "creative economy"	Arts and entertainment districts Collaboration between arts and private sector	Central city and historic urban neighborhoods	Prospective and existing residents Young urban professionals and "knowledge-based" workers
Progressive	Community development Arts education and access Local cultural production	Community arts centers Arts education programs	Inner-city neighborhoods Underserved neighborhoods	Underserved residential populations

Figure 6: Cultural Development Strategies (Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris)

The Devil's Advocate on City Branding

Given that the brands of place are contingent on so many pieces, it's worth questioning the effectiveness or even the point of city branding campaigns. Anholt (2005) observes that the offerings of places are often so abundant and diverse that a single essence encompassing all of those offerings is bound to be vague to the point of blandness (p.118). In the blog, Technology and the City (2010), the author agrees, stating that cities would rather be known for everything than for a single category of attributes. There are few examples where a city has built a brand around a specific category of activities, like Nashville and its country music. This begs us to ask: are cities just too big of a beast to brand?

Regardless of whether this is the case or not, cities will continue to try to engineer their image. The one constant is that it is a creative process, no

formula or process that is guaranteed to yield success (Bianchini and Ghiliardi, 2007).

Conclusion

I explore the literature on branding through layers – products (found within general branding), organizations, and places. From the bottom up, they increase in complexity as they build upon whatever is below them on the layers pyramid. The brands of places build on top of organizations, which build upon brands of products. There are spaces that can be filled in on this model, such as the arts and cultural brand of a place, sandwiched between the top two layers. From the organization up, we can call it the "aggregate identity of the organizations." From the city down, "cultural district planning," might fit into this space.

The two-way-street model, which applies to each layer, supplements our understanding of the individual parts of the layer pyramid. It helps us differentiate marketing from branding, shows us the elements that comprise and influence a brand, and illustrates the dynamic relationship between the branded entity and the consumer.

For this thesis, I will be exploring the interplay between those top two layers, organization and city, including the aggregate identity component. Branding practices in these layers have very similar purposes and features. They brand to attract and retain residents (for cities) and audiences (arts organizations), they brand to sum their parts, and their brands emerge out of both deliberate and incidental action. The words "experience" and "emotion" have appeared repeatedly in this literature review. The experience of the consumer,

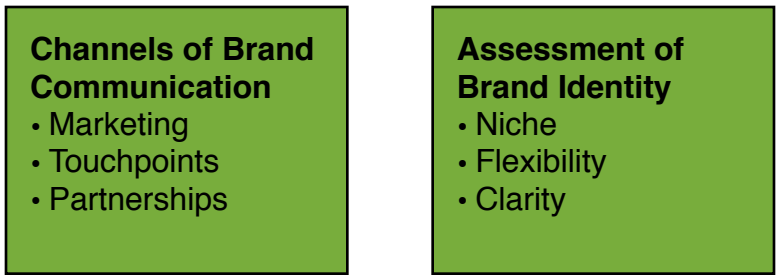
and the emotions that correspond with that experience, are particularly relevant in the context of the arts. Emotion will become especially important moving into my conceptual framework.

Figure 7: Layers of Branding

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Methodology

In the previous chapter, I used the existing literature on branding to shape the pyramid model and the Two Way Street model. While these illustrate the components of a brand and relationships at different levels of branding, they do not evaluate those relationships. In this chapter, I will discuss the conceptual framework, which is informed from this review of literature. I will also discuss my method of data analysis, which, in turn, is informed by my conceptual framework. Together, they show how I will navigate the space between the organization layer and the city layer of the pyramid model

A Model for Determining Brand Identity of the Case Studies



Channels of Brand Communication

Before we examine the relationships between layers, we have to know what we are looking for. Anholt, Bianchini and Ghiliardi, and Kavaratzis all point to the fact brands can be communicated through a variety of channels. In the

Two Way Street model, we consolidated these channels as Marketing and Touchpoints. Partnerships and co-branding were also discussed. Programming that results from a partnership between organizations (or between cities and other entities) would fall under touchpoints. The partnership itself, however, is a different animal and for the purposes of this study, we will consider the existence of that relationship to be a channel. These channels can be found in each layer of the pyramid.

Assessment of Brand Identity

There are different qualities of the brand identity that can be assessed when we look at what is communicated through these channels. Here, I will call them niche, flexibility, and clarity. It is easiest to think of these as fulcrums, or a sliding scale.

Niche

Niche of the brand identity is all about the content of the message: how they position themselves and their purpose. If a brand serves to identify an organization or place, then these identifying factors are what we seek out to find the niche. For an arts organization, this may be their niche within their artform. For example, an organization expresses it's niche when it positions itself as a *presenter* of *contemporary American* dance, rather than just a dance company.

As a fulcrum, niche can slide along the scale of being integrated or fragmented. For an arts organization to be integrated, the specific artform must be very clear, as well as its function within that artform. A fragmented brand will not have a clear artform and/or function within that artform. Multi-arts

organizations can be integrated as long as it it clear across all channels that they do not focus on only one artform. For both cities and arts organizations, partnerships should be appropriate to the intentions of the entity for an integrated niche.

Asking the “what”and “why” questions is a good way to begin identifying the niche and to determine which of Gobe's emotional drivers are embedded within the message.

Figure 8: Niche Fulcrum

Flexibility

Some brand identities use the same brand formula through each and every touchpoint while others might tweak their message to reach different types of audiences. For example, a botanical garden might brightly color their logo in a brochure for kids birthday parties while using muted colors on the logo for a brochure about wedding receptions. As a fulcrum, the flexibility assessment can be either uniform or customizable. A uniform brand will have repeated use of words and images across channels while a customizable brand with vary key words and images across channels.

It is important to remember that neither end of the spectrum is good or bad. It is just the approach used to reach the audience. A uniform brand may be very recognizable, but only to a small segment, while a customizable brand may reach a broad audience but yield a confusing message overall.

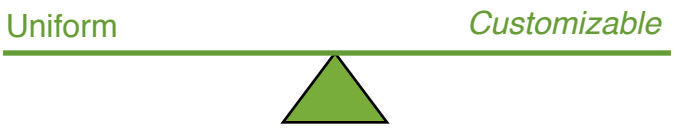


Figure 9: Flexibility Fulcrum

Clarity

Clarity is different from consistency. Consistency has to do with repeated use of words or images, but clarity reads between the lines to the embedded emotional drivers. However, consistency in the emotional drivers across touchpoints can yield clarity, as well as a prioritization of emotional drivers within a message. According to Gobe, a brand is strongest when it uses and prioritizes three or fewer emotional drivers. Brands can be focused or unfocused on the clarity fulcrum. Focused brands will use three or fewer emotional drivers that are prioritized and complementary, while an unfocused brand with have more than three or conflicting emotional drivers.

Bringing this back to the pyramid model, each layer contains the channels through which the brand identity can be communicated and means by which it can be assessed. Later in this chapter, I will explain how these assessments are applied.

Figure 10: Clarity Fulcrum

Data Analysis

Five cases will be examined and then compared for this thesis. Four of the case studies are arts organizations located within the city of Columbus. The fifth

case is the city of Columbus itself. The framework detailed above helps to put the analyses in a common language that can be compared not only across organizations, but also from the organizational level to the municipal level. The cases involve qualitative analysis of the channels of brand communication through the lenses of niche, flexibility, and clarity.

Selection of Cases

I am using Columbus as a case study to examine the relationship between organizational and city branding. I chose this location because I have easy access to the touchpoints I will be examining as well as to individuals that can provide me with insight into the organizations I will be looking at. One of my cases is already chosen for me. I will be using the branding campaign being implemented on the municipal level as my city branding case study. On the organizational level, there are many options to choose from. Columbus is home to a range of large and small arts organizations of a variety of disciplines. For this study, it makes sense for me to be picking from the larger arts organizations, as these are the ones that are likely to have a deeper, longer lasting connection with the city. The Columbus Cultural Leadership Consortium (CLC) is made up of 16 “anchor” institutions in the city. They originally joined forces in 2006, creating a collective voice to influence policy and strategy. From these 16, I chose one organization from each of the categories of visual art, performing arts, music, and multi-arts:

The Columbus Museum of Art- chosen to represent the visual arts because it is a flagship institution that has been around for over a century.

Jazz Arts Group – Chosen because of the information available and the organization's active public presence.

CatCo – chosen because it is the city's professional equity theater company in existence for over 25 years.

The Wexner Center for the Arts- chosen because it is a world renowned contemporary art center that not only exhibits visual art, but also is houses quality performing arts facilities.

Using the Emotional Drivers

Gobé's emotional drivers are a key tool in my case study assessments, but they were written to address a broader scope of branding than I am addressing in this thesis. In order to use them effectively, the drivers must be translated into language that is applicable to arts organizations and to cities respectively. The table below illustrates these interpretations and serves as my coding reference for extracting the embedded drivers. These interpretations are concepts to be applied in the case studies. The examples of indicators that follow are not exhaustive, but rather provide a starting point for analysis.

City	Gobé's Emotional Driver	Organization
Municipal Support for the Arts	*Citizenship*	**Public Value**
Choice	*Freedom*	**Creativity**
Quality of Life	*Status*	**Artistic Excellence**

Community	*Harmony*	**Community**
Heritage	*Trust*	**Reputation**

Figure 11: Emotional Driver Translations and Coding Reference

Citizenship on the city level can be found in direct municipal support for the arts. Public art projects are arts-specific events initiated or sponsored by the municipality are examples of indicators for this driver. On the organizational level, Citizenship manifests itself as public value. It is difficult to specify indicators for this because the value that the organization provides will vary with the goals and constituencies of that organization. In general, though, public value in this case is indicated in a brand when it emphasizes benefits to society. This is a limited view of public value as it only considers the "instrumental benefits" (economic, cognitive, behavioral and attitudinal, health, and social) and not the "intrinsic benefits" (McCarthy, 2005). However, this limited definition works within the context of the *Citizenship* driver because it considers those benefits that directly build better citizens and a better society. An example of *Citizenship* branding might be found in the images in language of a music education program that emphasized building social and teamwork skills, which are outcomes that can ultimately provide public benefit. Other examples would include organizations whose branding channels emphasized their work with at risk youth or other underserved populations.

On the city level, *Freedom* can be interpreted as choice. In other words a wide variety of cultural offerings covering all artforms and accessible to all

different audience segments (highbrow, lowbrow; children, adults; etc.). Collages and montages of the menu of options are indicative of *Freedom*. Within an arts organization, Freedom can include the variety of offerings, but also manifests itself as creativity and innovation. Imagery that that shows the creative process, hands-on engagement, or audience participation indicates *Freedom*.

Status is all about quality for both city and organization. Quality of life overall is an indicator of status. This can be a product of the quality of public facilities, institutions, etc. in the city. When a city advertises that are or have the "best" of something (best museum, best ice cream, etc.), they are indicating *Status*. Within an organization, *Status* means artistic excellence. When a traditional "highbrow" artistic experience is emphasized, *Status* is clear. However, artistic excellence is not limited to "high" culture and can be found wherever validation (McClellen et al, 1999) is indicated. Certifications, rankings, and phrases such as "world class" are cues. An emphasis on the quality of the audience experience, such as pleasure, thought provoking, or otherwise emotionally moving experiences, are more indicators for *Status*.

The *Harmony* emotional driver can be translated as Community for both city and organization. For the city, this means accessibility to all audience segments. Festival imagery and family-friendly event imagery in particular evoke this driver because they can illustrate the cohesion of a diverse population. For arts organizations, programming that welcomes a wide variety of audiences and partnerships with other community organizations can show *Harmony*.

Trust typically implies historical precedent. For a city, *Trust* is Heritage and can be found in historic architecture, celebrations of ethnic populations, and conservation of natural geographical features. For arts organizations, Trust is Reputation, though this should not be confused with status. Reputation includes validation, but like Heritage, has more of a historical basis. Architecture, years of operation, and advertisement of past programming can indicate Trust. An aura of transparency can also indicate trust for both city and organization.

Analysis of Cases

For each case, I determine the niche, flexibility, and clarity of the brand, based on what is being communicated through the channels of marketing, touchpoints, and partnerships. I begin by assessing their niche. A coding table (Appendix A) is used as a tool in this process, with columns for the various channels (multiple columns are used for the various touchpoints). Within each column, I record key elements of that channel along with my interpretation. The emotional driver translations are used throughout as a reference tool. Each channel is labeled with the emotional driver(s) that is (are) most fitting to the data. Niche is determined by assessing the worksheet vertically, up and down the data in the columns. Flexibility and clarity can be assessed by looking at the data horizontally across the coding table, noticing patterns and/or differences from column to column. Once niche, flexibility, and clarity are determined for each case, they can be compared from organization to city.

Chapter 4: Case Studies

In the previous chapter, a model is proposed for distilling the brands of individual organizations and places. In this chapter, that model will be applied to the selected cases.

Background of the Columbus Branding Campaign

A New York Times article published in the summer of 2010 stated loud and clear the brand image woes that Columbus had (or has) been suffering from.

> "*What Columbus does not have, to the despair of its leaders, is an image. As home to major research centers, it has long outgrown its 1960s self-concept as a cow town, and its distinction as the birthplace of the Wendy's hamburger chain does not quite do the trick these days. The city lacks a shorthand way to sell itself — a signature like the Big Apple or an intriguing tagline like Austin's "Live Music Capital of the World."* (Eckholm, 2010)

A variety of campaigns and slogans attempting to encompass Columbus's image have tried and failed, including both government driven messages and grassroots led messages. In recent history, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce created a campaign geared at attracting young professionals to the

region with the tagline “Columbus. The Best of Everything,” (Live Work Play Columbus website, 2008). The website for the campaign still remains, but the message gained little traction.

In terms of a distinct cultural brand, the issue is the same. The Creative Columbus Report, conducted by the Columbus College of Art and Design, points out that the city has a great story to tell in terms of its creative scene, but it is not actually being told. The arts had a brief moment in the sun when the city was declared the “Indie Art Capital of the World” in late 2007. A group of “70 local artists and creative types,” banded together to come up with the slogan independent of the city government any larger municipal organization. The buzz generated by this declaration was significant, but short lived.

Window of Opportunity

A number of global and local factors created the window of opportunity for the branding campaign most recently adopted by the city of Columbus. Firstly, as we saw in in the review of literature, globalization and our increasingly mobile society make it important for cities to distinguish themselves in the market of places. This is recognized by city leaders in Columbus including Doug Kridler, CEO of the Columbus Foundation, who remarked at a panel discussion: “If we’re not focused on place, then we start out behind some other cities.”

More on the local level, the upcoming bicentennial gives Columbus a celebratory reason to cultivate our brand. Preparations for the year-long series celebrations in 2012 have coincided with the planning for the most recent city branding campaign. In addition, Mayor Michael B. Coleman has just begun his

final term, dubbed a legacy term, during which he will want to leave a lasting impact. The Mayor has, on many occasions, noted the importance of spreading the Columbus story. At the same panel discussion mentioned earlier, Mayor Coleman made the following remarks on some of the cultural initiatives planned the bicentennial: “I view it as a time where we can not only a time where we can poke out our chest and add a little swagger… about the greatness of our city, but I think it’s also the launching pad for the future.”

These three streams – a mobile society, the bicentennial, and the legacy term of our mayor – have come together at complimentary times, culminating in a policy Kingdon-style policy window of opportunity. The combination both labels the lack of city image as a “problem” and provides a chance to do something about it.

Developing the Current Branding Campaign

In 2008, a new brand for the city began to be researched. Implementation of the brand began in mid 2011, just prior to the bicentennial year. This chronology is a composite of observations of internal documents used in the planning process.

2008: The Bicentennial Commission and Ologie

In January of 2008, a Citizen’s Summit was held, drawing over 1,500 citizens to discuss the strategy and shape of the 2012 bicentennial. Shortly before the summit, a Bicentennial Commission (later 200 Columbus) was appointed by Mayor Coleman. This commission included an image and marketing focus group. The Citizen’s Summit allowed the attendees to share their

stories of Columbus. The Bicentennial Commission then held focus groups with local businesses and institutions to get their input.

The Bicentennial Commission then hired a local branding firm, Ologie, to distill a brand essence for the city. Ologie typically works on brand research and strategy formation for their clients. They use a process that embraces the narrative quality of a brand and create a framework that the client can adopt to tell their story. In their first rounds of research, they developed two "complementary visions for the image of our city." These were: *comfortable place to live* and a *progressive, vibrant city*.

2009: The Unprecedented Collaboration

In late 2009, a team of new stakeholders became engaged in the project. Six more governmental and Quasi-governmental entities joined in the effort that the Image and Marketing focus group was undertaking. The Bicentennial Commission also changed its name, morphing into *200 Columbus*. Official actors now included the following:

- **Experience Columbus**. This quasi-governmental agency has historically handled Columbus's external marketing, that is, tourism marketing geared towards other states and cities. Their involvement with this project marks a shift in their focus to both internal and external marketing.
- **The Greater Columbus Sports Commission** (quasigovernmental) works to market local sports and create partnerships that bring sporting events to Columbus.

• **The City of Columbus**: The mayor's office.

• **The Columbus Chamber of Commerce** has an economic development focus aimed at attracting new businesses as well as retaining and growing existing ones.

• **200 Columbus**, formerly the Bicentennial Commission, became a quasigovernmental nonprofit. They are planning the bicentennial with the aid of the city/event planning company *ACP Visioning and Planning*, soliciting private funds to do so.

• **Columbus 2020** is a public-private partnership that is working to develop an economic development strategy as a branch of *The Columbus Region*.

• **The Columbus Partnership** is also a public-private partnership working to develop economic strategy. The difference being that it is led by representatives of some of the city's largest businesses.

Collectively, this team has been called "Unprecedented Collaboration" because never before have all of these actors come together for a city image project. This engagement of new stakeholders marks a shift in the scope of the project. That the initiative began within the image and marketing focus group within the bicentennial commission makes it appear that the brand was being cultivated for the sake of the bicentennial. However, the inclusion of parties with broader interests opened the project up to branding for the sake of the city as a whole. Columbus 2020, is a particularly important collaborator in this regard, given that their agenda reaches beyond the end of the current mayoral administration and into the next eight years.The Unprecedented Collaboration

continued their work with Ologie to refine the essence framework in order to account for this. What they produced was a dual essence for the city: *Open and Smart*. In this case, *Open* refers to "open minded," but *Open* also joins *Smart* to mean "open for business." The expanded essence reads:

> "Columbus is a city with an open minded approach to life and business. It's a smart city with a progressive attitude, where people are free to go out on a limb. Where diversity isn't just a state of being, but a state of mind. It's made real through people, businesses, and neighborhoods – every day. Because we share the philosophy that Columbus is open to all, we are always taking risks, always thinking big, and always open to new ideas."

It should be noted that there are other actors in the city not officially included by the Unprecedented Collaboration that have been active in the branding process. I have already mentioned ACP Visioning and Planning and their work with 200 Columbus logistically planning the bicentennial. In addition, the Columbus Foundation has produced a few videos that illustrate the Open and Smart message.

2010 – Today: Involving Fahlgren and Individual Organizations

The unprecedented collaboration then hired the marketing and communications company, Fahlgren Mortine. Whereas Ologie's role was to make a framework for the brand, Fahlgren was brought on to implement that brand into a marketing strategy and marketing materials. At this point, the endeavor changes its name from "The Columbus Image Project" to "Building the Columbus

Brand." Fahlgren's most visible contribution to date has been the **US** logo. The US is a bit of typography representing the last two letters of Columbus. It has been incorporated into the logos of the Unprecedented Collaboration. It is a versatile image and Fahlgren is encouraging it to be applied to the logos of any organization or institution with Columbus in the title. In addition, Fahlgren has designed new website templates for the Unprecedented Collaboration, providing additional graphical unity. They are also designing the marketing materials for the bicentennial.

A website was launched by the city in to encourage individual organizations to adopt the US logo as well as to aid them in graphic standards and verbiage. On this website, www.brandcolumbus.com, a "quick pitch" is provided which may serve as the equivalent of a mission or vision statement for the city:

> "We are a community of possibilities and many achievements that are second to none. We are a smart and open-minded city with a progressive attitude, where people are free to be themselves and follow their passion. We believe diversity isn't just a state of being but a state of mind, made real through people, businesses and neighborhoods every day. Because we share the philosophy that Columbus is open to all, we are always taking risks, always thinking big and always open to new ideas."

The goals of the image program include local goals – building community pride, building momentum for the Columbus Story (the expanded essence above), and driving economic development ; and external goals – driving

regional economic development and elevating the awareness and perception of Columbus.

Case Study 1: The City of Columbus

Niche: Touchpoints

Mission

While the "quick pitch" quoted above stands in as a mission statement for the whole city, the Brand Columbus website also has a statement on arts and culture, which better serves the specific purposes of this study.

> *Columbus also features world-class cultural attractions such as the Wexner Center for the Arts, the Columbus Museum of Art and Thurber House, as well as unique entertainment options like Shadowbox Live, Available Light Theatre and MadLab Theatre and Gallery. The Short North Arts District distinguishes Columbus as a vibrant arts city and hosts the popular Gallery Hop and HighBall Halloween events that attract thousands of people. Our homegrown culinary options are unique, diverse and accessible to all. (Brand Columbus website, 2012)*

This statement captures both *Status* and *Harmony* effectively. It begins by listing some of the established and recognizable arts organizations in the city, using the powerful description of "world-class." It then begins to branch out to the smaller, more grassroots offerings. "Accessible to all" and "thousands of people" are phrases that suggest a sense of community awareness. The specific mention

of the food scene is notable for the Midwest, not usually known for its culinary preeminence.

To restate, Open and Smart are the tenants that guide the city brand. While these can be broadly interpreted from application to application, they generally imply *Harmony* and *Status*, respectively. *Freedom* can also also be reasonably inferred. Applying these tenants to the statement above, we can see that it begins with “Smart” and finishes with “Open.”

Facility

Arts programming, including the Bicentennial programming, occurs at a variety of places around the city. Four facilities in particular seem to reoccur in marketing and as programming venues: The Wexner Center for the Arts, the Ohio Theater, the Columbus Commons, and the Bicentennial Park.

Images of the Wexner Center for the Arts and the Ohio theater are both used repeatedly (detailed further in Marketing), perhaps for contrast. Two outdoor stages were built concurrently with the implementation of the new city brand. The Columbus Commons, a large park downtown built on the site of a demolished shopping mall, opened an enormous stage for both local musicians and national touring acts. Patrons to these concerts, most of which are free and open to the public, bring blankets and sit on the grass to enjoy the performances. Outdoor films are also projected in this park. A few blocks away, a smaller stage is situated in the recently opened (as of 2011) Bicentennial Park. Like the stage at the Commons, programming is mostly free and open to the public, and includes music, dance and performing arts. Also within the Bicentennial Park, a set of

large contemporary metal sculptures serve as fountains. Hundreds of children can be seen playing in the fountains on a hot day. The central location of these two venues and their openness to the community imply *Harmony*. The variety found in all four facilities implies *Freedom*.

Websites

The websites that I surveyed were those of the "Unprecedented Collaboration." I discounted the Greater Columbus Sports Commission website because it did not have any specific mention of the arts. Most of these websites had a similar look and user interface. The design is minimalist, using different combinations of red, white, black, and blue in uncluttered color blocks with sans serif font. The tab icon (a small image that appears next to the name of the site on the browser tab) for all websites contains the "US" logo. The website for Experience Columbus was the outlier, a bit busier with more patterns, colors, and softer shapes.

Each website treated the arts in a different way. Experience Columbus lumped the arts with information on culture. This was primarily focused on ethnic diversity, although it did show imagery of family arts events. The only mention of the arts on the Chamber of Commerce website was in the young professionals sections, which positioned the arts scene as an attract and retain tool. Columbus 2020 included a brief section on the arts, emphasizing the variety of choices and events available. The Columbus Partnership mentioned the emotional qualities of the arts, and their power to solidify communities and build pride.

The 200 Columbus website contained the most content related to the arts of all the other sites. On the opening page, a video banner includes imagery of jazz performance and a Gallery Hop in the Short North Arts District. An event database includes dozens of arts-related events occurring throughout the bicentennial year. There is a separate page for arts initiatives, which will be discussed further in the next section. These are not just events, but year-long projects that showcase the best of the arts in the city.

The design of the sites does not seem to draw upon any driver, but unity in design across the websites suggests *Harmony*. As a whole, the content generally refers to variety and choice, signaling *Freedom*.

Programming

The city-wide arts programming associated with the new brand has been bicentennial related. There is an exhaustive list of events on the Bicentennial website, but for simplicity's sake I used the abbreviated list in the print version of the Official Bicentennial Guide, current as of December 2011 (Hawe, et al, 120). Over a third of the 57 listings were arts-based events.This number does not include those larger events, like the Dublin Irish Festival, in which the arts have a presence. Traditional and "high" arts made up the majority of those arts events. History and heritage were major themes. For example, *Columbus Views*, at the Columbus Museum of Art, exhibited depictions of the city throughout the years by artists such as George Bellows. There was also a large proportion of jazz events in these listings.

Among the programming not found in that abbreviated listing is Finding Time, a year-long series of public art projects. This is a National Endowment for the Arts sponsored program that installs temporary art throughout the downtown area. International, national, and local artists are represented, their works exploring the “physical and philosophical measurements of time,” (Columbus Public Art website, 2012). Most projects utilize the built environment of the city, such as buildings, bridges and the public transportation system.

For two weeks in the fall of the bicentennial year, a series of events celebrating art and technology will take place called idUS. Workshops and exhibits will showcase innovation and design include a “maker faire,” a mini offshoot of a national event that features do-it-yourself industrial and technological art.

The bicentennial celebration also included a music contest. Local bands were encouraged to submit songs about the city, which were then curated into a cd.

The arts programming that is concurrent with the new brand covers a variety of drivers. *Trust* can be found in the exhibitions that showcase history and heritage. *Citizenship* is found in the public art initiative. The innovative culture to be celebrated in the idUS event captures *Freedom* in the creative sense. Overall, though, *Freedom* is implicit in the sheer variety of options. *Status* is another common thread. In this year of celebration, Columbus is focused on showing the very *best* it has to offer across all artforms, from architecture to ice cream.

Niche: Marketing

Marketing Materials

Like the programming sample, I also paired down the sample of of marketing materials examined for simplicity. I examined a series of rack cards, The Official Bicentennial Guide, and a video. These items are representative in design and content of marketing materials produced by the city.

Rack cards are postcard-sized cards printed on glossy, heavy paper. They are distributed as advertisements across the city. There are four different cards, one for each season. The back of the card contains a list of major bicentennial events for that season. The front is divided into three different photographs and includes the word “Columbus” with the “US” emphasized. The photographs include scenes of the city and events. Those that depict the arts are of music and dance performance. All are action-oriented, including one image of a lively crowd at a rock concert. The active imagery and variety of event listings suggest *Freedom*.

The Official Bicentennial guide is a special interest publication, available for purchase on news stands throughout the city. It contains profiles of people and places that are unique to Columbus— some famous, some lesser known. Imagery of the city includes a variety of architectual landmarks, ranging from the traditional opulence of the Ohio Theater to contemporary designs of the Wexner Center for the Arts. Visual artist, Aminah Robinson and jazz musician Bobby Floyd are profiled, as are a few entrepreneurial culinary artists such as Jeni Britton Bauer. There is additional emphasis on jazz in imagery throughout. This

catalog showcases the standout attractions, signaling *Status*. A versatile representation also signals *Freedom*.

A video produced by Experience Columbus, using the tagline “Check US out,” features video clips of scenes around the city. It runs through descriptive words such as “prestigioUS” and “harmonioUS,” and active imagery of community gatherings and cityscapes. The arts are represented by clips of concerts at a variety of venues, large and small. Fashion and multicultural arts are also represented. A statement by the Chicago Tribune is included, positioning Columbus as “an artsy, edgy destination.” Variety and community are key in this video, suggesting *Freedom* and *Harmony*.

Logo

The Columbus logo contains the name of the city in simple sans serif. The last two letters are in contrasting color with a five pointed star over the “U.” The official logo colors include variations of red, black, white and grey. The “US” can be interpreted as a symbol of community pride or *Harmony*. The star might conjure associations with *Citizenship* and *Trust*.

According to the Brand Columbus website, “the Columbus logo is flexible enough for almost any company, organization or group to use,” (Brand Columbus website, 2012) The city invites organizations and businesses to incorporate this logo into their own logo and offers brand guidelines to assure uniformity. This open-source approach suggests *Harmony*.

Niche: Partnerships

The “Unprecedented Collaboration” are the obvious partners, and their government affiliations suggest *Citizenship*. However, the list of participants in the branding effort includes dozens, perhaps even hundreds of public, private, and government organizations. Open source tools are provided to any local entity that wishes to incorporate the brand. This inclusiveness suggests openness, a sense of community and *Harmony*.

Flexibility: Touchpoints, Marketing, and Partnerships

The Columbus brand is customizable by design. Loose guidelines and open source tools invite sub-municipal actors to adapt the message to meet their needs. The words “Open” and “Smart” are ambiguous enough to convey a variety of meanings. However, the arts and cultural brand projected by the city itself actually appears to be uniform. Throughout the touchpoints, marketing and partnerships, choice and variety are emphasized, consistently referencing the *Freedom* driver. The city appears to be reaching out to a variety of audiences, but to all at the same time through every channel with the idea that there is something for everyone.

Clarity: Touchpoints, Marketing, and Partnerships

The aggregate of the channels embraces the “something for everyone” mentality. The three major drivers present in the brand are prioritized: *Freedom* is first, *Status* second, *Harmony* third. This prioritization would appear to yield a focused message. However, the “Open” and “Smart” essences used for the whole city do not necessarily imply these drivers, nor their order. The brand for the city as a whole and the city brand for arts and culture, though they may not

be in direct opposition, are not perfectly congruent. This makes the brand unclear.

Case Study 2: Columbus Museum of Art

Established in 1878, the Columbus Museum of Art is Ohio's oldest art museum. Formerly called the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, the collection was housed in the mansion of Francis Sessions in its early years. In 1932, a new facility was built in its place. It is still considered one of Columbus's flagship cultural organizations.

Niche: Touchpoints

Mission Statement

> *Columbus Museum of Art's mission is to create great experiences with great art for everyone. Whether we are presenting an exhibition, designing an art-making activity, serving a lunch, or giving directions to a visitor, we are guided by a belief in advocacy, quality, community, integrity, and creativity. We believe that art speaks to each and every one of us in different ways. Art inspires. Art challenges. Art thinks.*

There are several components to this mission statement. It begins with a succinct statement of an action oriented goal and goes on to give examples of activities that move towards that goal. It finishes with with a set of values and assumptions about the audience experience: art speaks, inspires, challenges, and thinks. Key words and phrases include "experiences," "everyone," "community" and "each and every one of us."

Harmony as the primary emotional driver in this mission statement. Twice it makes reference to the fact that the museum is open to all people. Though it respects the individual experience, the fact that it welcomes everyone implies that it is both family friendly and can be experienced as a community. This reinforced by the specific mention of community as a core value.

Second to the *Harmony* emotional driver might be *Freedom*, with mention of "creativity," "challenges" and "thinks" evoking intellectual stimulation. Acknowledgement of the individual experience also implies *Freedom.*

Facility

The architecture of the Columbus Museum of Art is traditional for an institution of it's type and is on the national register of historic places. The exterior, though not particularly ornate, is designed to make an grand statement, with its large archways. It is elevated so that from street level you have to look up a long wide set of steps. High ceilings and a large atrium on the interior also evoke a sense of stateliness. This is broken up somewhat by the bright walls and salon-style hanging of artwork find in some of the galleries, but overall, the dignified presence of the facility brings emotional driver *Trust* to mind.

A unique feature of the museum is the Center for Creativity. Located on the ground floor of the museum, this grouping of interactive spaces is a departure from the traditional museum. The Wonder Room, an interactive space somewhat resembling a science center, is one of the many spaces particularly well-suited for families and students. For more mature visitors there is an auditorium and a computer lab.

Website

The Columbus Museum of Art website has a clean layout that is simple but and easily navigable, but packed with information and photos. The theme colors are black, white, and red, the same colors in the logo. On the homepage, a rotating banner showcases a selection of the current programming. Two of the five banners concern children's programming and the rest highlight the collection and current exhibits.

Banner: photos of children, classical works and contemporary photography (variety) (2 out of 5 are for children's workshops/activities).

On the top of the page, there is a navigation bar that takes the user to information about visitation, exhibitions, the center for creativity, the permanent collection, educational resources and ways to support the museum. At the end of this navigation bar, there is a tool to help the user customize his or her use of the website. Similar to the way a docent might tailor a tour to suit the dynamic of a particular group, this feature tailors can tailor the experience to an art enthusiast, student, first time visitor, student, teacher, or family. Choosing one of these options will open a page with points of interest and activities suited to that type of visitor. The events page is also color-coded to mark the types of programming by target audience.

The highlight of this website is accessibility, not only in terms of the navigability, but also that it can suit a variety of audiences, from the first time museum goers to connoisseurs. This accessibility implies the *Freedom* driver.

Programming

The permanent collection is a mixture of periods and styles. It has a strong showing of of 19th and 20th century American art through the early modern period, but it also includes a few contemporary pieces (a Dan Flavin florescent light piece, for example), and photography. Within the permanent exhibits, there are interactive elements. One room asks visitors to answer an opinion question (for example, “which artwork do you think best represents X”) by casting their vote in jars using tokens. In another room, themed Love and War, visitors can record their own personal stories in a video booth.

It is difficult to summarize the rest of the programming given the broad scope of activities and events. School group tours and children’s workshops are frequently emphasized. However, the museum also hosts activities such as lectures, artist talks, and an art book club. A Game Show night once a month provides youthful interactive fun for adult audience. The museum also houses the amenities to serve as a venue for an array of events including the Columbus chapter of Pecha Kucha and TEDx Columbus’s Universitas program, both of which emphasize community and conversation surrounding contemporary issues and innovations. *Freedom* is implicit in the shear variety of choices, but *Harmony* is also present with the emphasis on programming accessible to all audiences.

Niche: Marketing

Paper Marketing Materials

Four out of the seven pamphlets available at the time of data collection were geared towards children and families. These included information about birthday parties, field trips, Boy/Girl Scout activities, and family visits. All were

brightly colored and contained action photos of children participating in hands-on activities. The words “make,” “explore,” “learn,” and “creativity” were used frequently.

The other three brochures included a map, membership information, and information specific to one of their current exhibitions, which happened to be about Caravaggio. The latter two had high-brow undertones. The colors were muted and dark and the imagery depicted some of the more historically significant pieces associated with the museum. The map contains a mixture of this traditional imagery as well as action-oriented photos, like those found in the pamphlets for children and families. It suggests that the museum can be enjoyed in a variety of ways by a variety of audiences, frequently using the words “everyone,” “conversation,” and “community.” Collectively, these marketing materials embrace *Harmony*. However, there is a definite divide between the two types. *Freedom* can be found in the family friendly a brochures while *Status* can be found the membership and Caravaggio documents

Logo

The museum’s logo consists of it’s initials, lowercase, in a clean, sans serif font. the “a” for art is set against an lively background resembling brushstrokes or a scribble of red pastel. This is where the eye is immediately drawn too and it seems to connote action, perhaps *Freedom*.

cma
columbus museum of art

Niche: Partnerships

The size and scope of programming at the Columbus Museum of Art makes the number and range of partnerships not at all surprising. Partnerships range in size and include public, private, and nonprofit entites.

A new garden on the Museum grounds demonstrates a partnership between Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks. Also on the municipal level, a monthly series throughout 2012 featuring local artists has been a collaboration of 200Columbus in celebration of the bicentennial. A Caravaggio exhibition also celebrated the bicentennial, and was loosely in honor of Columbus's sister city relationship with Genoa, Italy. On the private level, The Ohio State University's Schoenbaum Family Center partners with CMA for children's programming.

The Museum also partners with other nonprofit organizations, large and small. TEDxColumbus, a local branch of the international TEDx organization, holds Universitas at the museum. This event is something of a micro think tank, encouraging discussion and creative problem solving of a range of social and community issues. CMA finds natural partnerships with local cultural organizations such as Thurber House, with whom they jointly established a graphic artist residency. Very small arts organizations can also find opportunities to collaborate, often informally, by helping produce programs such as Game Show.

The Museum's partnerships tend to be local and community oriented. Even the international collaboration with the sister city program is married with

the local bicentennial celebration. This smaller scale, community-minded approach evokes *Harmony.*

Flexibility: Touchpoints, Marketing, and Partnerships

The mission statement, facility, website, and programming all have elements that make it clear that the Columbus Museum of Art is reaching out to a very broad audience. The facility is a mix between a traditional, stately environment appreciated by seasoned museum-goers; and the hands-on interactive environment enjoyed by families and first time visitors. Similarly, programming is available for all types of patrons. The website reflects this with it's customizable option and color coding to distinguish between target audiences. The mission statement clearly embraces this variety with words like "everyone," and "community."

Though the Museum is reaching to a wide audience, and though the experience can be customized to suit different types of patrons, they tend to use the same formula across the touchpoints. Creation and interaction are present throughout. Harmony and Freedom are a common theme, with only a few outliers. For these reasons, the touchpoints are conveying a uniform message.

Like the touchpoints, the marketing materials convey Freedom and Harmony pretty consistently. However, There clear differences in the paper marketing materials between the brochures focused children's activities and the brochures geared towards donors and patrons of the high-brow exhibits. The former use action-based imagery and fun, bright shapes and colors. The latter use a muted color scheme and imagery from the permanent collection. The logo

combines both traditional elements (font) and the playful touch of the red background of the “a”. The museum’s marketing falls somewhere in the middle of the flexibility spectrum.

The museums partnership encompass a broad range of actors, which is fitting given the broad audience that the museum is intending to reach. An consistent emphasis on community and implication of the *Harmony* driver, however, make for a uniform message in the area of partnerships.

Clarity: Touchpoints, Marketing, and Partnerships

All the touchpoints seem to be successfully engineering a patron experience that hits upon the Harmony and Freedom as emotional drivers. There is a consistent use of . Though there is not a clear hierarchy of these two drivers, as Gobé would say is preferable for a clear message, they are used in a complementary way, making them all but seamless. From the hands on experiences to the local artist showcases, the touchpoints are conveying a message that is not only focused, but also in line with their mission statement.

The marketing materials, though not perfectly uniform, have a consistent use of language and imagery, respective to their audiences. Collectively, like the touchpoints these also convey the Harmony and Freedom in a symbiotic fashion. The marketing is focused, but with a slight lean towards the center of the fulcrum given the imperfect uniformity.

Partnerships are many and varied, but they all come back to community and Harmony. Partnerships are focused.

Case Study 3: CATCO Theater

The Contemporary American Theater Company (CATCO), is Columbus Ohio's only professional Actor's Equity Association theater, comprised of artists from central Ohio and the Midwest. Founded in 1985, it became a nonprofit in 1986 and an Actor's Equity member in 1995. Financial difficulties from 1999 to 2003 led CATCO to seek a partnership with the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA). (CATCO website, 2011) CATCO also joined forces with Phoenix Children's Theater in 2009 (Grossberg, 2009). Although these three organizations are in close partnership, I am only focusing on CATCO for this research.

Niche: Touchpoints

Mission Statement

> Theatre is a shared experience that illuminates the mysteries of our humanity. Its magic has the power to transform us whether on stage, in the classroom, or in our diverse communities. CATCO-Phoenix creates theatre that delights, challenges, and transports.

The CATCO mission statement uses language that communicates a transcendental experience for both audience and performer, illustrated by the words "illuminate," "magic," "transform," and "transport." The quality of experience implied in these words connote the *Status* driver, but *Freedom* is also present. The suggestion that this is a shared experience that goes beyond the boundaries of the theater itself and into the community implies *Harmony*.

Facility

Performances take place in the Vern Riffe Center, which is in the heart of downtown Columbus directly across from the Capitol Building. The building is home to government offices on the upper floors, but also an art gallery (the Riffe Gallery, operated by the Ohio Arts Council) and four theaters. Three of these theaters are relatively small, venues called Studios One, Two, and Three, the largest accommodating 227 guests, the smallest accommodating 60. These studios, managed by CAPA, are no-frills contemporary spaces. The intimacy of these theaters and their proximity to the city center give them a sense of *Harmony*.

One show of the 2011-2012 season was performed at the Southern theater, the oldest still-operating theater in Columbus. This is an opulent venue with a gold-vaulted ceiling and an elegantly framed stage. This theater embodies *Status*, but it is not typically used by CATCO.

Website

The graphic background, consistent throughout the website, is theater lights, softly out of focus against a dark blue field. The light and dark create a chiaroscuro effect that seems ethereal, perhaps mysterious.

The website is simply laid out. It is informative, but very interactive. The navigation bar at the top takes the user to information about the company itself, including the history, as well as about the seasons, support opportunities. There is also information about how community members can get involved by volunteering, auditioning, or even submitting a play. A blog is present on the

website, including photographs, videos, and historical backgrounds of the performances, but it is updated infrequently. On several of the landing pages, a series of similar graphics show an actor mid-performance. The text on top states “Theater is” followed by “illuminating,” “inspiring,” “outrageous,” or “hilarious.” Oddly there is no mission statement page.

The strengths of this website are in its visual presence. They communicate a quality of experience that connotes *Status*. However, it seems to be embodying an alternative version of *Status* by balancing it with an innovative, contemporary feel that connotes *Freedom*.

Programming

CATCO’s programming essentially consists of it’s performances. Though the mission statement refers to the classroom, acting classes are only offered through the Phoenix Theater for Children presently. The company currently produces six shows a season (Fall to Summer), including literary adaptations (ie: Truman Capote’s *A Christmas Memory*) , better known classics (i.e.: A Midsummer Night’s Dream), and first time productions from local playwrites. The artists of CATCO are natives of Central Ohio or the surrounding states. Almost all of the productions have an element of comedy and many claim to explore the emotional tug-of-war between hilarity and drama. CATCO’s programming creative and adventurous, open to exploring even the little known or unknown corners of contemporary theater. These qualities indicate *Freedom*.

Niche: Marketing

Paper Marketing Materials

The only pamphlet available at the time of data collection was a catalog with the posters of all of the season's shows, including those produced by the Phoenix Theater for Children. All of the posters were bright, simple illustrations resembling cut paper collages. The color scheme for each poster was limited — a muted palette with one or two "popped" colors — and color schemes from poster to poster flow easily.

The posters are visually consistent beyond color scheme. Each contains a background of a large colored circle that frames the logo for that show. The circle becomes a symbolic object in some of the images, for example as a sun or as the halo of a lightbulb. The CATCO script is above these logos. The "O" in each script takes on the theme of the show — in the poster for a play set in the Cold War, it becomes a nuclear symbol. These playfulness of these unique posters implies *Freedom*.

Logo

The most commonly used logo is simply the CATCO script: the acronym in lowercase, rounded, sans serif font with a chunky solid fill. The logo is sometimes put into the phrase "CATCO is theatre," with the "is" set on an angle inside a circle, reminiscent of the circle backgrounds on the posters. The logo is often set before a bright colorfield, often orange. Like the posters, the logo implies *Freedom* through its playful simplicity.

Niche: Partnerships

Financial difficulties from 1999 to 2003 led CATCO to seek a shared services model with the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA). CAPA, a larger organization, is a presenter of touring shows, not a theater company, and manages several venues in the downtown area. CAPA's organizational capacity allows it to serve administrative functions for a handful of local arts organizations, including CATCO. In the words of CAPA, the intent of such partnership is to allow partner arts organizations "to focus on their missions and the artistic quality of their work," (CAPA website). The two remain separate nonprofits but the partnership provides management and support in the areas of finance, marketing, ticketing, graphic design and development.

The Phoenix Theater for Children actually represents a merger rather than a partnership. The collaboration had a similar motivation to the CAPA partnership — pooling resources for financial sustainability — and occurred following the 2008 recession. Phoenix programming is advertised on CATCO's website and there is little delineation made between the two organizations. Even the program guide is split in half between CATCO and Phoenix.

CATCO also partners with the service industry. The Sheraton hotel is the preferred hotel of the theater. Season ticket holders can receive a discount on meals at Dine Originals establishments, a consortium of locally owned and operated restaurants. All CATCO partnerships have an element of community mindedness, or *Harmony*. *Status* is also present, however, as CATCO is able to benefit from the prestige and recognition that comes with CAPA.

Flexibility: Touchpoints, Marketing, Partnerships

The touchpoints and marketing draw upon different qualities for each performance (“hilarious,” “inspiring,” etc), but each season viewed as a whole can be seen as reaching out to a generic audience for contemporary theater. This aesthetic is reinforced by the studio-style venues and . Other than programming changes from show to show, the touchpoints, marketing, and partnerships highlight a single set of attributes they project in the touchpoints and therefore have a uniform brand message in these channels.

Clarity: Touchpoints, Marketing and Partnerships

There is consistency in language across the marketing and touchpoints, which is reinforced by the imagery. The idea that “theater is illuminating,” a tenant of the mission, is especially pervasive in the chiaroscuro of the website and photographs. The circle theme is carried throughout the visual message. Graphically, the CATCO brand is consistent.

The clarity of the message gets a bit muddled in the partnerships. CAPA is an established brand in the city, and CATCO can benefit from the association with the name. However, CAPA has a different niche, popular productions and those with a higher production quality. Those not familiar with the history of the collaboration may be confused by the partnership.

From channel to channel the emotional drivers change. It comes down to a trio of Harmony (3 instances), Freedom (5 instances), and Status (4 instances). It does not seem reasonable to weight the channels or the drivers within them. Therefore, I do not see a clear ranking of emotional drivers. While the brand may be consistent, it is unfocused.

Case Study 4: Columbus Jazz Arts Group Columbus

The Jazz Arts Group serves multiple functions as an organization. They are a performance group, a music academy, a presenter, and an arts service organization. The former two are their core activities. Founded in 1973, the JAG is the nation's longest standing nonprofit organization dedicated to the art of Jazz. They began as a performance group, but gradually began to expand their activities as they gained popularity over the years, particularly in local schools. The performance group changed their name to the Columbus Jazz Orchestra (CJO) in the 1990s to differentiate themselves in what had become a multi-function organization (Jazz Arts Group History, 2012).

Niche: Touchpoints

Mission

> The mission of the Jazz Arts Group is to advance and celebrate the art of jazz through performance and education.

This is the simplest, most concise mission statement of any of the organizations in this study. This is especially interesting for an organization that serves such a broad range of functions. The primary functions of performance and education are made clear. In its brevity, an openness to interpretation or "Freedom," is indicated. This driver is enhanced by the use of the word "celebrate."

Facility

The Jazz Arts Group administrative offices are located in the Short North, an arts district within the city, but performances occur at a variety of venues, particularly downtown. CJO is the primary tenant of the Southern Theater (referenced above as an occasional venue for CATCO). This historic venue, constructed in the 1890s and rennovated 100 years later, is luxurious and stately.

Across town, CJO performs regularly at the Lincoln Theater. This venue was constructed circa the origins of the Jazz artform. Its Art-Deco styling and Egyptian theme are reminiscent of that era. It seats nearly one thousand people, but has an intimate feel.

The Capitol Theater is the third major venue that CJO regularly performs at. It is one of the four performance spaces in the Vern Riffe Center (the other three being the studio spaces utilized by CATCO). The size and seating arrangements are similar to Lincoln and Souther, but, constructed in 1989, it is the most modern of the venues. These three main venues are are relatively formal with an aura of prestige and *Status*.

CJO also turns the Columbus Zoo into a performance venue during the summer, in addition to a number of public spaces around town, such as the Topiary Park. The open air setting and casual atmosphere are an alternative to their usual theater performances. These venues are unique and introduce jazz to audiences who might not be keen to attend a theater performance. The education arm of JAG uses local schools as a facility, but they also have a facility for their Jazz Arts Academy that occupies the third floor of the Lincoln Theater.

Bringing the artform out into the community, specifically into schools, suggests that there is a public value to the artform, therefore connotating *Citizenship*.

Website

The website is accented with bright colors and neons contrasted with black and white. A variety of patterns and textures overlap to create visual eccentricity. Most pages are text heavy rather than photo heavy, but photos used throughout the website are typically action based involving the playing of instruments or singing.

A rotating banner on the home page highlights upcoming performances and series. Event dates and information are found in these banner pages and in sub pages of the site (those for the performing , presenting, and education arms, respectively) but the calendar that amalgamates all of their programming is difficult to find, hidden near the bottom of the home page. Information appears to be scattered, making the site a bit difficult to navigate. However, the bright colors and playful photography that take center stage in the website clearly resonate with *Freedom*.

Programming

The Programming of the Jazz Arts Group's programming mainly consists of performances and educational opportunities. Concerts are performed by the Columbus Jazz Orchestra and the Youth Jazz Orchestra at the various locations detailed above, from semi-formal to casual. A range of pieces are played, from masters like Miles Davis, to contemporary/popular pieces, sometimes featuring musicians from local rock bands in the mix. PBJ and Jazz is a summer concert

series designed to introduce Jazz to children and families and Jazzoo, another series, brings Jazz to families and adults in an unlikely setting. On the presenting end, JAG brings nationally known acts to Columbus, not only to perform, but also to host workshops.

JAG provides educational opportunities for school age children in the form of field trips to performances, in-school assemblies, and classroom projects. Outside of school, a variety of classes are offered, from instrument instruction to post-production, at the Jazz Arts Academy above the Lincoln Theater. These classes are mostly geared toward children and teenagers. Students of the Jazz Arts Academy can further their practice by participating in workshops, an ensemble, or the Youth Jazz Orchestra.

The artform itself, spontaneous by nature, is inherently associated with the *Freedom* driver, and the performances are reflective of that. Harmony can be found in accessibility to youth, families, and first-time audiences. Status is also found within programming, given the quality of programming and educational opportunities striving to train excellent jazz musicians.

Niche: Marketing

Paper Marketing Materials

The paper marketing materials of the Jazz Arts Group are very similar to the website. Much of the same imagery and design found in the paper marketing is used in the rolling banner images on the homepage, showcasing programs and series such PBJ and Jazz. The variety of programming is represented by the paper marketing materials, which, coupled with the vibrant design suggest

Freedom. There is one outlier among the marketing materials, advertising a jazz and dance series in coordination with the Bicentennial. The colors and photos are more dramatic, showing dancers in motion under stage lights. These active images, however, still connote *Freedom*.

Logo

For angled bars at varying heights provide the the background for the word “jazz” in capital serif font. The letters on the bars are at various heights as well, reminiscent of the eclectic nature of jazz music itself. Next to this symbol, the rest of the name is completed. JAG just recently added the word “Columbus” to its logo, and now uses the official Columbus font and star endorsed by the city. The logo is typically a loud color (often magenta or chartreuse) or over a bright colorfield. The level changes and color scheme suggest *Freedom*.

Niche: Partnerships

The Jazz Arts group has many partnerships with arts-based and non-arts local organizations. Partnerships with venues are a given, such as the Columbus Zoo, the Topiary park, and the theaters. They collaborate with other local performing and multi-arts organizations such as the King Arts Complex, BalletMet, and the Columbus Gay Men’s Chorus. A partnership with WOSU, the local public radio station, allows performances to be broadcast live. Collaborators in the arts are typically with larger, established organizations.

JAG has also formed partnerships in programming with non-arts community organizations such as the Godman Guild, the Salvation Army, and the

Mid-Ohio Foodbank. These partnerships are intended to “provide creative interaction and civic benefit,” according to the organization itself (JAG History, 2012) For example, for some performances, attendees are encouraged to bring donations for the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. Civic benefit is especially evident as these partnerships typically serve a charity or support function. Th

The sheer number of partnerships, all of which are local organizations, communicates a strong sense of community and *Harmony*. That partnerships with arts organizations are typically with those established institutions *Status* is suggested. Those that are specifically intended for civic benefit indicate the *Citizenship* driver.

Flexibility: Touchpoints, Marketing, and Partnerships

This organization serves several functions, and therefore reaches out to a broad audience. Like the Columbus Museum of Art, they aim to make the artform accessible to all segments of the population. In programming and partnerships in particular, it appears that different means are used to reach these different segments. For children and youth, education is emphasized; for novice audiences, unique venues (like the Zoo or the Topiary Park) provide an enjoyable introduction to the artform; and for seasoned audiences, the stately theaters and presentation of renowned artists. The Jazz Arts Group uses a customizable message.

Clarity: Touchpoints, Marketing and Partnerships

The Jazz Arts group takes on a lot for an organization of its size. The mission is open ended enough that it allows them to do this, but it does cause

one to question their priorities. *Freedom* and *Status* come up repeatedly throughout the touchpoints and marketing, but neither appears to take precedence of the other. The mix of partnerships adds to the confusion — a great deal of the partnerships have nothing to do with music and do not necessarily seem to reinforce the mission. Overall, the brand feels unfocused.

Case Study 5: The Wexner Center for the Arts

The Wexner Center for the Arts (The Wex) is a unique institution established by Leslie Wexner, CEO of Limited Brands, to be a “research laboratory for the arts.” Since its opening in 1989, it has become a notable presenter of visual art, performing art, and film. Though it deals in multiple artforms, it reigns in its scope by only dealing with contemporary works. Located on The Ohio State University campus, it is not entirely managed or governed by the institution, but maintains a close working relationship.

Niche: Touchpoints

Mission

> The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural

> experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time.
>
> In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

This is the longest and most explicit of the mission statements I am examining. The relationship with the Ohio State University is made clear from the start. Although The Wex is not governed by the University, they are co-branded intrinsically, drawing upon the mission of the University. The statement is saturated with creativity and *Freedom*-rich language. “Laboratory,” “exploration,” “experimentation,” “test,” and “innovation” all speak to this driver. These words, also draw heavily on the relationship between art and science, perhaps another nod to the academic environment.

Facility

The structure, built in 1989, is located on the East end of the Oval, the landmark green space on the University campus. An armory, which was demolished after being damaged by a fire in the 1950s, once stood on the site. The facility is a contemporary departure from the more traditional arts facilities in the area, but it still pays homage to the city in unique details. The architects reference the armory structure via fragmented brick towers. A white steel grid carries throughout the interior and the exterior of the structure. On the outside that grid forms a sculptural representation of the layout of the city streets.

According to the American Institute of Architects, the building "screams at the artists who exhibit and perform within it, pushing them to experiment with their work. It shrieks at visitors, challenging basic assumptions of what architecture should be," (Kamin, 1993).

An organization dealing in multiple forms of art necessitates a variety of facilities to accommodate those forms. The Wex contains white-walled gallery space, a black-box for music, theater, and other performing arts, and a film/video theater, and a technology center including a post-production video facility. Multiple levels, half levels, stairs, and ramps add interesting transitions between spaces. OSU's Mershon Auditorium is a stone's through away, and though not officially a part of The Wex, serves as a partner facility. The airy, transcendental feel of the facility and the variety of artforms it supports suggests *Freedom*.

Website

The Wex color codes their website according to their four categories of programming (detailed below). Bright orange, blue, green, and pink pop against a black background. Items are organized in a gridded fashion, reminiscent of the grids in the architecture. Within that gridded structure, subtle gradations in color add depth. The type is all clean sans serif, similar to the logo. A rotating banner on the homepage showcases upcoming events with dramatic photography, typically of live subjects.

Navigating through the website, one is continually linked back to the events calendar, which seems to be the backbone of the website and is also

color coded according to programming type. However, there is also ample information about visiting, membership, and volunteering, as well as information about the architecture and history. Continual references to OSU make the link between the institutions clear, but the website is not under the OSU url (like, for example, the OSU Urban Arts Space), nor is the OSU logo used anywhere. Unlike the other organizations in my cases, the Wex website features an online shop containing books, housewares, accessories, and Apple products. This shop, along with videos, a blog, and a banner on the homepage showing their Twitter feed, add an element of interactivity.

In short, vivid colors and navigability suggest *Freedom*, while dramatic imagery, references to OSU, and the quality of items in their online store suggest *Status*.

Programming

Programming at the Wex is categorized into 4 groups: exhibitions, performances, film/video, and public programs. From its opening and through today, The Wex has represented a mix of artists, including “contemporary icons, younger but already well established choices, and artists who [are] just beginning to build their reputations,” (Bremner, 67). Most programming is geared towards adults, specifically those who have at least a familiarity with contemporary art, if not a refined aesthetic.

Exhibitions take place in the traditional white walled spaces, can also creep into the lobby, the cafe, and even the exterior of the building, playing off of

the architecture. All of the artwork exhibited is contemporary, with a strong representation of sculpture, installation, and non-traditional mediums.

Performances are dominated by musical acts. The Next@Wex music series brings in up-and-coming indie performers. The Wex provides a venue that is a departure from the bars, festivals, and basement-style venues where these bands normally perform. The black box is a quiet, transcendental space where no alcohol is served and side conversations from the audience are at a minimum. The Next@Wex shows usually draw a younger audience. Other musical acts, including a recent jazz series, and contemporary theatrical pieces are also performed at the Wex.

Films screened span a broad range of genres and include old works, and new works. Well known, emerging, and lesser known directors from around the world are represented. Patrons can catch an independent documentary the day after viewing a popular Hollywood film like *The Royal Tenenbaums*. Films are screened in The Wexner Center for the Arts and also at the Gateway Film Center a few blocks away. Currently, one of the film series includes a variety of films with degrees of connectivity to the city of Columbus, in celebration of the Bicentennial. Films often include a pre or post-film events, such food and drink tastings or panel discussions.

Public programs include artist talks and tours of the visual arts exhibits. There are relatively few programs for children and families, but a series of events called GenWex, including panel discussions and tastings, caters to young

professionals. In the spring and late summer, local farmers participate in a small market just outside the building.

In addition to these four categories of programming, the Wex also provides residencies for visual, film/video, and performing artists. Recipients of these residencies have included established artists, such as Twyla Tharp and Lorna Simpson, along with lesser-known artists. In short, throughout the programming, we see that the Wex has the *Status* to bring in the famous names, but the *Freedom* to take risks by supporting up-and-comers.

Niche: Marketing

Marketing Materials

The paper marketing materials have a very similar look and feel to the website. They contain bright colors against a black background with sans serif text. Color blocks have subtle gradients, but sharp edges that mimic the grid theme. Flyers are text heavy, and any blank space is filled with active, sometimes even busy, photographs. These photographs play off of the color themes of the programming (orange, blue, green, pink) and often bleed into the colors of the background or other photographs. Like the website, the design of the marketing materials suggests *Freedom*.

The most broadly distributed paper marketing is the calendar, It is produced once every two months in large format on matte paper. There is little photography of the facility or patrons in these. It is dominated by large stills and publicity photos of upcoming films, exhibits, and visiting artists. Sponsor and partner logos are understated at the bottom of the pages, but the OSU logo is

nowhere to be seen. Presence of logos and dramatic photography (again, like the website) suggest *Status*.

Logo

There have been many

versions of the Wex logo in the past two decades. Most of these mimicked the architecture of the building. The most recent logo is simply the name of the institution in clean, sans serif font, all lowercase. It bears a similarity to the Limited Brands logo, which is also just the name, in a similar font. Occasionally, a logo that looks like overlapping windows is used. Upon close inspection, one can find the letters “L,” “W,” “E,” and “X” in the overlapping lines.

It is difficult to pinpoint a driver for the logo. However, it might be said that because the name speaks for itself in the logo most commonly used, *Status* is implied.

Niche: Partnerships

OSU and Limited brands are the two most obvious partners of the Wexner Center for the Arts. The Wex is officially a part of OSU, but it appears to maintain an arms-length distance from the University. The Wex mission is clearly complimentary to the OSU mission and a significant portion of its funding comes from the Wexner Center Foundation, which is a branch of the OSU Board of Trustees. However the OSU logo does not appear in their marketing OSU logo and colors are not present. Limited Brands are a major sponsor of the Wex and while they may not be a formal partner in programming or administration, the common link to Leslie Wexner confirms their relationship. Limited Brands is an

umbrella to six semi-luxury retail brands including *Victoria's Secret* and *Bath and Body Works*.

In retail, the Wexner Center for the Arts has cultivated two interesting partnerships. The Wex shop is an authorized Apple retailer. Over the years, this family of luxury products has developed an innovative interface and a distinct brand that values user-friendliness, contemporary design, and adaptability to a mobile lifestyle. Younger generations, and design-oriented individuals are particularly drawn to this brand. Across from the store, a café operates during breakfast and lunch hours. Different tenants have operated out of this space over the years, but the most recent is Heirloom, whose tagline reads "*Seasonal Ingredients. Creatively Prepared*." Heirloom keeps with the local food trend which has been sweeping the nation, often sourcing its produce from a garden on the Wex property. Prices are mid-range and customers are typically students, faculty, and patrons of the Wexner Center for the Arts.

These partnerships all circulate *Status*. The Wex complements the OSU mission in terms of excellence of research and innovation, supporting its goal to "be among the World's truly great universities." (The Ohio State University Vision Statement, 2012). Apple and Limited Brands are both on the luxury spectrum of products and Heirloom, though newly established, prides itself in the quality of its craft.

Flexibility: Touchpoints, Marketing, and Partnerships

Though the Wexner Center for the arts has wide variety of programming and a multitude of partnerships, the notions of exploration, innovation, and

experimentation are found throughout the touchpoints, marketing, and partnerships. These essences are stated in the mission and are found in the unique architecture, the contemporary design of the marketing materials, and the programming that represents both established and lesser known artist and works. Altogether, the Wex appears to using this formula to reach out to a specific segment of the population— those with a sophisticated palate or at least a familiarity with the contemporary art world. The Wex uses a uniform message.

Clarity: Touchpoints, Marketing, and Partnerships

The Wexner Center for the Arts is not a highbrow institution in the customary sense, as a symphony or ballet company might be, but it does give off a similar aura. The work that is presented is nontraditional, but much of it represents the cutting edge of the contemporary art world. The significant corporate and institutional backing, coupled with the cutting edge programming that this backing allows for, has built a reputation that provides a safety net for "riskier" exhibitions and programs. Therefore, when the Wex presents those lesser known artists and works, it is more of a trendsetter than a risk-taker.

Status and *Freedom* are consistent throughout the channels of brand communication, and like the Jazz Arts Group, there is no clear hierarchy. Typically, this would yield an unfocused brand, but the Wex seems to be breaking the mold, melding two drivers into one focused message. It is not entirely clear why this should work for one organization and not the other. The Wexner Center for the Arts may just represent a new breed of highbrow institution. The only point

of confusion here lies within the partnerships. There is clearly a relationship with OSU, but this does not come across in marketing materials.

Chapter 5: Findings

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between branding on the municipal level and the organizational level. Through the review of literature, brand components were identified across different levels. Through the conceptual framework, models were presented for distilling the brand essences and comparing brands on the organizational and city level. In the previous chapter, the conceptual framework was applied to the cases, and in this chapter, city and organizational brands will be compared.

Columbus City brand and the Arts

The brand that the city is implementing uses the dual essences of Open and Smart, which connote Gobé's emotional drivers *Harmony* and *Status*, respectively. Smart takes into account a culture of innovation and the large research centers that Columbus is home to. Open refers to open minded and open for business. In other words, a community that is diverse, accepting of different lifestyles, and supportive of entrepreneurship. These are qualities that the branding efforts have emphasized overall, and the essences are flexible enough to be adapted to different circumstances.

The brand takes a bit of a different angle when it comes to the arts. The essence of Open might be applicable to the city's treatment of the cultural brand,

but Smart does not appear to have a clear place. Throughout the marketing, partnerships, and touchpoints, *Freedom* is actually the emotional driver that is most consistent throughout. The variety of artforms that can be experienced in the city, as well as the opportunities to actively participate (as an audience, in festivals, etc.) are the crux of the cultural brand.

Comparing the City brand to the Organizational Brands

Below is a table of the emotional drivers that were found in the case studies. They are listed in order of precedence. The overall drivers were narrowed to the single most pervasive driver, except in the cases of the Jazz Arts Group and the Wexner Center for the Arts where I determined they had equal weight.

	City	CMA	CATCO	JAG	Wex
Overall	Freedom	Freedom	Freedom	Freedom/ Status	Freedom/ Status
Mission	Freedom, Harmony, Status	Harmony, Freedom	Status, Freedom, Harmony	Freedom	Freedom
Facility	Harmony, Freedom	Trust, Freedom	Harmony	Status, Citizenship	Freedom
Website	Harmony, Freedom	Freedom	Status, Freedom	Freedom	Freedom, Status
Programming	Freedom, Status, Trust, Citizenship	Freedom, Harmony	Freedom	Freedom, Status	Freedom, Status

	City	CMA	CATCO	JAG	Wex
Marketing Materials	Freedom, Status, Harmony	Harmony, Freedom, Status	Freedom	Freedom	Freedom, Status
Logo	Harmony, Citizenship, Trust	Freedom	Freedom	Freedom,	Status
Partnerships	Harmony, Citizenship	Harmony	Harmony, Status	Harmony, Status, Citizenship	Status

Figure 12: Comparison of of Emotional Driver Findings

Columbus and the Columbus Museum of Art

It was concluded that the city and the Columbus Museum of Art both engage *Freedom* as their primary emotional driver. Both entities emphasize variety and accessibility to all audiences. The CMA also emphasizes an interactive environment, which contributes to this *Freedom*, but this is not a quality that comes across as clearly in the city branding.

The CMA has been implementing programming that corresponds with the bicentennial. Given that the bicentennial celebration and the new city brand are so closely linked, we can assume that the CMA's reinforcement of the Bicentennial extends to reinforcement of the city brand. This alignment implies a reciprocal relationship between organization and city and may account for similarities in brand attributes.

Columbus and the Contemporary American Theater Company

CATCO and the city both employ the same primary emotional driver, but they draw upon different qualities to get to get there. CATCO's sense of *Freedom*

comes from the experience itself, the transcendental nature of the artform and their programming, rather than the variety of experiences.

CATCO is the only organization in this study that did not appear to have any connection with the bicentennial celebration. The alignment of the drivers does not necessarily mean a reciprocal brand relationship between organization and city. Because CATCO's use of *Freedom* is based on the experience itself and the city uses it more to refer to choice, I conclude that the brands do not align in this instance.

Columbus and the Jazz Arts Group

The Jazz Arts Group was the first organization (arts or non-arts) to incorporate the "US" typography into their logo. They used the city brand without asking or working with the city to do so, but this is just the kind of initiative that the city is hoping to elicit from organizations by making the graphic branding materials open source.

This organizational/city brand alignment goes beyond just graphics, to the emotional drivers. JAG embodies an equal balance of Freedom and Status. Freedom is implicit in the artform itself as well as the variety of programming and accessibility to a wide range of audiences. The latter emphases are very in tune (no pun intended) with the city brand's treatment of the arts. There appears to be a very strong reciprocity between JAG and the city when it comes to branding. This relationship is reinforced by a multitude of jazz-related Bicentennial programs, as well as the jazz imagery in the Bicentennial marketing materials.

Columbus and the Wexner Center for the Arts

Like the Jazz Arts Group, the Wexner Center for the Arts embodies an equal balance of *Status* and *Freedom* in their brand. They are a world-class institution associated with a major university. However, they also thrive off of risk-taking with innovative works and mediums, and unknown artists. The Wex has a limited and clearly defined niche, but the variety within that niche is impressive, showing an alignment with the city brand.

The Wex is an organization that actually shows more alignment with the city brand as a whole than the city brand's treatment of art and culture. "Open" is clear in their representation of experimental works as well as the range of artists and works (better and lesser known). The Wex's use of the *Status* driver implies Smart, with their emphases on innovation and experimentation. There is certainly a reciprocal relationship with the city brand and the Wex brand, but in a more holistic way than the other arts organizations in this study.

Columbus and the aggregate of arts organizations

As an aggregate, these organizations show an alignment with the
The use of *Freedom* is marked across all the organizations and collectively, they exemplify the breadth and variety of artistic experiences that the city implies can be had. However, it should be noted that not all instances of Freedom within the organization are the same type of Freedom embraced by the city. There is just as much creative freedom evident within the aggregate as there is freedom of choice. For this reason, there may not be as much of an alignment between the aggregate and the city as the emotional driver labels would suggest.

Conclusion

Certain organizations have a more reciprocal relationship with the city brand than others. As evidence by these cases, the ones that do reciprocate have a direct affiliation with the Bicentennial celebrations regarding programming. As a whole, the organizations and city point to the same driver, but it is not consistently for the same reasons.

The “Open” and “Smart” essences could be refined more regarding the arts for the city. As of now, choice, the *Freedom* driver, is emphasized. This is not much of a departure from “Columbus: the best of everything” slogan that has been used in years past. In fact, it is essentially the same message. The channels of communication to date have, collectively, only really highlighted the breadth and variety of options rather than what is particularly “Open” or “Smart” about them. Perhaps the bigger issue here is that the city brand for arts and culture does not seem to be aligning with the city brand itself.

Chapter 6: Analysis

Chapter Five showed the results of applying the conceptual framework, detailed in Chapter Three, to the five cases. This Chapter serves to reassess this model after its application. I will address its strengths and weaknesses of the model as well as provide recommendations for further research.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Conceptual Framework

This purpose of the conceptual framework was to provide a tool for answering my research question: “How do the brands of Columbus arts organizations interact with the brand of the city?” The assumption was made that that organizational brands and place brands layer upon one another. These layers have common channels of brand communication – marketing, touchpoints, and partnerships – which can be assessed by determining their niche, flexibility and clarity. Gobe’s emotional drivers provided a means to determine niche, and a common language across layers.

Appropriate Timing

At the time that I formulated my research question, I was not aware of the new city brand that was to be implemented in conjunction with the Bicentennial. It was a happy accident that my research coincided with its implementation. Not only did the timing ensure ample data for my cases, but it also presented an

opportunity for my findings to be considered in practice, beyond just contributing to the general field of branding knowledge.

On the other hand, the fact that my research was completed in the middle of the bicentennial means that the information available was incomplete. New marketing materials, partnerships, and programming is continually introduced throughout the year

Missing pieces

This study acknowledges that the aggregate brand of arts organizations is a middle piece between the individual organizational brands and the city brand. This study only uses the four organizations in the case studies to develop a sense of the aggregate brand. I chose these cases as a purposive sample. Their collective function as a representative sample is questionable.

Flexibility and Clarity

When determining the tools that would be used to assess the brands, I felt it was important to account for more than simply the essence of the message itself. The inclusion of Flexibility and Clarity provided additional dimension to the brand assessment. However, Niche was the tool that proved most useful for assessing brand relations between organization and place. The addition of Flexibility and Clarity may have been superfluous for the purposes of addressing the research question. However, they did function as summaries for each individual case study as well as thought exercises to help lead to the findings.

Further refinement of this conceptual framework might yield a way to better use these tools in cross-comparison. They might even serve to weight the

niche of their respective organizations in a larger comparative group (for example, clear brands could be weighted more than unclear brands in a larger pool of organizations).

Application of the Emotional Drivers

Gobe's Emotional Drivers helped to operationalize otherwise fuzzy and intangible concepts while also providing a common language to use in comparison. They were developed to be applicable to all kinds of brands, from toothpaste to car companies. However, in this study were looking at a narrow set of brands. Brands that center around the arts specifically may be more inclined to connote certain emotional drivers, such as *Freedom*, given that the arts are inextricably linked to the notion of creativity. This was particularly evident in the case of the Jazz Arts Group, where the *Freedom* driver was inherent in the artform itself. Other emotional drivers might be inherent in certain channels of brand communication. For example, partnerships may always be indicative of *Harmony* at least to some extent.

Additionally, it became apparent as I applied the drivers to each case that the indicators for each driver were not fleshed out as well as they could have been. A more extensive list of examples may have provided more structure going into the case studies. This is especially problematic for public value, for which I struggled to identify clear indicators in the context of the arts. The absence of the *Citizenship* driver in arts organizations may have been in part due to my failure to fully refine it as an indicator before performing the case studies. However, the absence of Citizenship could also be attributable to they way arts organizations

tend to treat public value. In this study, a limited definition of public value, only the instrumental benefits, was used. Arts organizations typically focus on the intrinsic benefits of the arts, shying away from the idea that their work might service any other ends than those which were originally intended. Therefore, an arts organization brand will likely not reflect those instrumental benefits which have been designated to indicate *Citizenship*.

Subcategories of those drivers may have also been better defined. For example, freedom of choice and creative freedom could have been treated as distinct drivers.

Successes and Failures Applying Drivers to Individual Cases

The Columbus Museum of Art and CATCO were both fairly simple cases that easily lent themselves to the emotional drivers model. I did, however, run into trouble when applying this model to the Jazz Arts Group and the Wexner Center for the Arts. Both of these are organizations with an impressive breadth of programming. In addition, both organizations embodied two primary emotional drivers instead of one. This is a challenge I was not expecting. For the Jazz Arts Group, this seemed to be a product of simply having a lot going on. One explanation might be that the organization experienced rapid growth in a short amount of time and focus was lost in an effort to keep up. Another explanation, though a less plausible one, might be that they are deliberately trying to marry disparate experiences and emotions to challenge current and potential audiences. The latter would be congruent with the artform of jazz itself.

The Wexner Center for the Arts has the same emotional driver duality, but also appears to be something of a different animal. The duality actually appears to be calculated, rather than a result of an unfocused branding approach. This, once more, calls into question the applicability of the emotional drivers to arts organizations as well as the conditions for brand clarity which were set forth in the conceptual framework (particularly prioritization of emotional drivers). It is not yet clear why the dual drivers seem to work for this organization. The only explanation I can offer is that the Wex has the clout to position itself as a trendsetter. Moreover, it does so in a world where contemporary and experimental forms of art are as highly praised as they've ever been in their own time. They have the ability to break the mold in their programming as well as on a more holistic level that extends to their branding.

Recommendations for Future Research

Using this study as a baseline

The Bicentennial was a recurring issue throughout this research. It was not entirely clear whether the city brand was being created for the sake of the Bicentennial or for the sake of the city itself. The city image initiative began as a preparatory measure for the bicentennial. It then grew in scope with the engagement of stakeholders with broader agendas, for example Columbus 2020, whose strategic goals reach beyond the bicentennial and even beyond the current mayoral administration. Therefore, we can assume that the brand is for the city itself, but the Bicentennial serves as a jumping-off-point and vehicle for propagating it. If that is the case, then this study serves to establish the baseline

for the organization/city brand relationships. This baseline could then be used as a point of comparison for any changes in brand relationships over time. This study could be performed every two years until 2020 to yield measurements the city brand's impact.

As we saw from the review of literature, city brands develop over a long time. To understand the evolution of relationship between city and organizational relationships over time, a modified version of the two-way street model may be engaged. This iteration shows the cyclical influence that places and organizations can have on one another. The city of Columbus is projecting a brand that has been distilled from the opinions of thousands of residents,[1] presumably taking into account the organizations in question. The organizations can then interpret the city brand. They have the opportunity to utilize the resources provided by BrandColumus.com to modify their message. These organizational messages are then picked up once again by the city. The city can modify their message with these new developments, beginning the cycle over again. As more and more organizations begin to use these open source tools, the aggregate brand of arts organizations has the potential to yield significant changes.

[1] Nancy Kramer, A Way Forward, Destination Columbus event, June 18th 2012

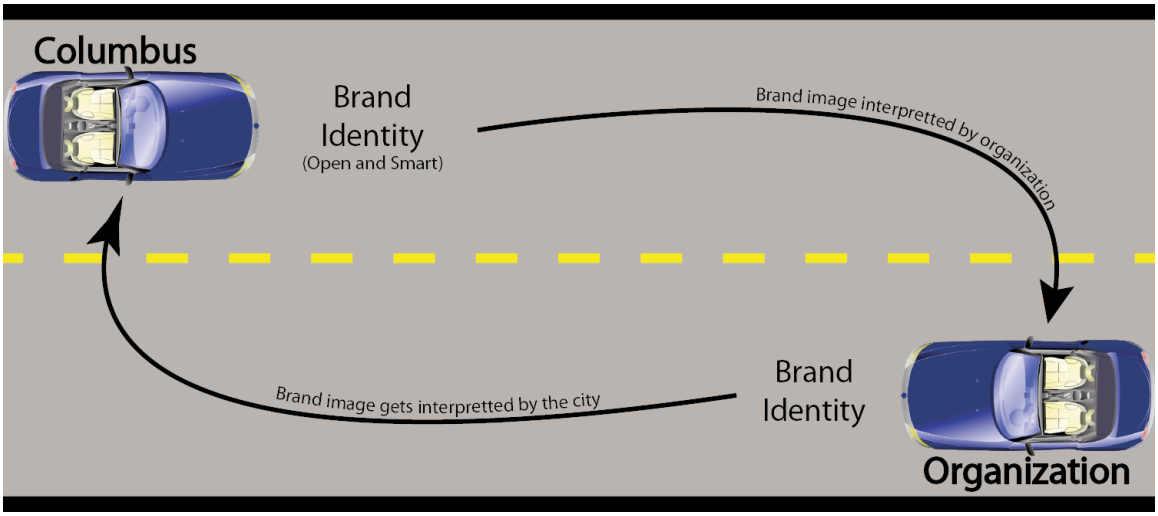


Figure 13: The Two Way Street Revisited

Possible Improvements to the Methods

In my organizational case studies, I attempted to first look at each one in isolation from the city and from the other organizations. However, given my familiarity with the city brand, I may have been predisposed to identifying certain characteristics and not others, subconsciously looking for agreement or reinforcement between the brands. Future application of this model should include focus groups, interviews, or some other means of avoiding bias.

Additionally, as was previously implied, the indicators of the Emotional Drivers should be more clearly defined in any subsequent use of this model. It may be impossible to ever have an exhaustive list of indicator criteria. However as the case studies were performed, more and more examples became clear, and one can hypothesize that with application to additional cases clearer criterial will emerge.

Conclusion

This thesis intended to find how the brands of Columbus arts organizations interact with the cultural brand of the city. I hypothesized that the organizational brand and the municipal brand would reinforce one another. This study found that they did in fact reinforce one another, according to the model developed in this thesis, but it also found that this may not be the whole story.

The crux of this study actually became the development of a model to assess the organizational and city brand relationships. The application to the city of Columbus served a dual purpose: to explore the research question and to test the model. The case studies showed that the model was just scratching the surface. Future versions of this study would require refinement of both the conceptual framework and the methods.

In spite of the fact that the indicators used did not fully account for important nuances, the model did reveal that while both the organization and city layers appear to be concluding the same indicator, they arrived there for different reasons. In other words, though I can make them fit together with this model, there is still an obvious disconnect between these two branding layers in the city of Columbus.

There is no “right” formula for engineering a city brand (Bianchini and Ghiliardi, 2007) and there may be no “right” formula for assessing them either. However, this thesis provides a conceptual framework to serve as a platform for potential practical application in the future. In addition, it contributes to a growing collection of case studies on city branding.

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Appendix A

Coding Table

Organization: _____

Mission	Facility	Website	Programming	Marketing Materials	Logo	Partnerships
Driver:	Driver:	Driver:	Driver:	Driver:	Driver:	Driver: