Danish Museums and Corporate Communication

- A national study

Anna Karina Kjeldsen, mag.art
The Strategic Museum

› Cross-disciplinary research project between Center for Corporate Communication & Center for Museology, Aarhus University, Denmark.

› Collaboration between researchers from art history, archeology, museology, corporate communication & management- and media studies.
The study – a few facts

First step for The Strategic Museum:
› To conduct a national study including all Danish museums.
› To establish an overview, define tendencies and point to directions for further research.

› Quantitative study, survey (web based).
› All Danish museums (art history, cultural heritage, natural history).
› Questions on practice and understanding of corporate communication.
Research question and aim

How are the Danish museums applying and understanding corporate communications – and how strategic are they?

- response rate: 56.66%
How we define corporate communication

› Holistic approach: Integrating communicational and organizational practices into one united strategy.
› Strategic platform: Mission, vision and values.
› Stakeholder orientation and focus.
› Integration of internal and external communication to support and fulfill the strategy.
› Dialogue and pro-activity.
Who are the respondents?

- Art museum: 25%
- Cultural heritage museum: 77%
- Natural history museum: 8%
- Other: 8%
Who are the respondents?

- 22% 0 - 3 full-time employees
- 35% 4 - 10 full-time employees
- 23% 11 - 20 full-time employees
- 18% 21 < full-time employees
Who in the organization replied?

- **Management**: 86.90%
- **Communications manager, management**: 2.50%
- **Communications manager, curator**: 0.80%
- **Curator**: 3.30%
- **Other**: 4.90%
How strategic are the Danish museums?

Strategic index
Theoretically defined parameters for corporate communication
Findings – how strategic are the Danish museums?

- Weak strategic approach: 47.80%
- Moderate strategic approach: 29.20%
- Strong strategic approach: 23%
Self image

Identity
Relation to society
Findings – self image

The museums’ professional core values:
› Disseminate our cultural heritage: 83 %.
› Preserve our cultural heritage: 75 %.

The museums’ relation to society:
› Influence society: 39 %.
› Mirror society: 31%.

The museums’ market orientation and social tasks:
› Help profile Denmark internationally: 33 %.
› Create the framework for socializing: 23 %.
Competition

Who are our competitors? What is our position in the market?
Findings - competition

Narrow perception of the market/competition:
› Not competing with other leisure activities (e.g. sports and shopping).
› Only competing with other museums and cultural institutions.
› Displaying a low/weak awareness of own ability to influence the market.

Relation to other museums:
› Colleagues: 65%.
› Competitors: 6%.
Stakeholders

Who are the important stakeholders?
Findings – which stakeholders?

- Employees: 47%
- Other museums: 50%
- Media: 18%
- Corporations: 25%
- Sponsors: 12%
- Public authorities: 22%
- Politicians: 32%
- Local community: 28%
- Users: 53%
Findings – what stakeholder approach?

› The museums primarily focus on the stakeholder groups that they have already established relations to.
› The museums’ effort to connect with new stakeholder groups has low priority.
› The museums display a reactive, rather than proactive, approach to stakeholders.
Who is communicating the museum?

Internal stakeholders
Findings – internal stakeholders

Who is communicating the museum?

› Management: 62%.
› Educators: 35%.
› Communications managers: 33%.
› Tour guides: 18%.
› Front personel: 14%.
› Board/council: 4%.
› Volunteers: 3%.
Strategy

Mission, vision and values
Self image
Findings – strategic platform

- Has your museum formulated a vision?
- Has your museum formulated a mission?
- Has your museum formulated its core values?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>5,80%</td>
<td>4,20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>89,80%</td>
<td>6,80%</td>
<td>3,40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>14,70%</td>
<td>10,30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yes  | No   | Do not know

Has your museum formulated a vision?
Has your museum formulated a mission?
Has your museum formulated its core values?
Strategy

Who is involved in the formulation of the strategy?
Findings - strategy

Who participates?

Internally:

› Management: 72 %.
› Board/council: 35 %.
› Curators: 35 %.
› Communications managers: 22 %.
› Front personel: 11 %.
› Volunteers: 6 %.

Externally:

› Users: 0,9 %.
› Sponsors: 0,9 %.
› Business partners: 0%.
Findings - strategy

Where is the mission and vision communicated?

› In management communication: 35%
  › Helps our employees understand the goals for the museum: 36%

› In marketing communication: 15%
  › Incorporated in all communication with stakeholders: 13%

› In educational communication: 30%.
Findings - strategy

To whom is the mission and vision communicated, and when?

› To political (financial) stakeholders: 55 %.
› To employees: 54 %.
› To other museums: 18 %.
› In the exhibitions: 24 %.
› In our marketing: 21 %.
Three levels of strategy

**Strategic level**
Formulation of strategy, goals and values.
(Why are we here, what is it that we want, where do we go from here?).

**Tactic level**
Coordination and planning of strategy.
(Who is doing what, when and why?).

**Operational level**
Practical communications work: marketing, articles, press, catalogues, educational activities etc.
Findings – the role of the communications manager

29 % has an in house communications manager who:

**Strategic level**
› Formulates the museum’s core strategy: 18 %.
› Is involved in the formulation of the core strategy: 22 %.

**Tactic level**
› Aligns all communication activities with the core strategy: 32 %.

**Practical level**
› Makes material for educational activities: 44 %.
› Handles contact to the press (press releases etc.): 58 %.
Communication approach
Findings – perception of corporate communication

- Corporate communication is integrated in all that we do.
- We work with corporate communication on a management level.
- We work strategically with isolated parts of our communication, each time with a new strategy.
- We do not work with corporate communication.

![Bar chart showing different perceptions of corporate communication. The strong strategic approach is the highest, followed by the moderate strategic approach, and then the weak strategic approach.](chart.png)
Findings – what does it take?

- Managerial competencies
- Communicational competencies
- Financial resources
- Curatorial competencies

Weak strategic approach:
- Managerial competencies: 22%
- Communicational competencies: 32%
- Financial resources: 39%
- Curatorial competencies: 32%

Moderate strategic approach:
- Managerial competencies: 58%
- Communicational competencies: 69%
- Financial resources: 55%
- Curatorial competencies: 39%

Strong strategic approach:
- Managerial competencies: 85%
- Communicational competencies: 58%
- Financial resources: 85%
- Curatorial competencies: 73%
Findings – perception of communication

The Danish museums:

› Tend not to include neither design and restaurant, nor (org)culture and the museum experience in their perception of corporate communication.

› Display a functionalistic understanding of communication. (One-way transmission of knowledge and information.)

› Primarily see corporate communication as a management activity, secondarily as educational or marketing activities.

› Do not display an integration of internal and external communication activities

› Do not have a strong flow between the three levels of strategy.

› Do not focus on communication as a tool to foresee, prevent and handle crisis.
Which factors affect the strategic approach?
Does size matter…?

- 0 - 3 full time: 58%
- 4 - 10 full time: 52%
- 11 - 20 full time: 41%
- 21 + full time: 35%

Weak strategic approach:
- 0 - 3 full time: 25%
- 4 - 10 full time: 21%
- 11 - 20 full time: 41%
- 21 + full time: 35%

Moderate strategic approach:
- 0 - 3 full time: 17%
- 4 - 10 full time: 26%
- 11 - 20 full time: 19%
- 21 + full time: 30%

Strong strategic approach:
- 0 - 3 full time: 41%
- 4 - 10 full time: 41%
- 11 - 20 full time: 26%
- 21 + full time: 30%
Does subject category matter?

- **Art museums**
  - Weak strategic approach: 38%
  - Moderate strategic approach: 33%
  - Strong strategic approach: 29%

- **Cultural heritage museums**
  - Weak strategic approach: 54%
  - Moderate strategic approach: 31%
  - Strong strategic approach: 15%
Does educational background matter?

![Graph showing level of strategic...](chart.png)
Implications for future research

**Ongoing and future research projects from *The Strategic Museum***:

› Institutionalization of corporate communication in Danish museums - how do the Danish museums react to corporate communication (qualitative research).

› Corporate communication within city museums: roles and perceptions.

› Management types and practices in the Danish museums: The Danish Museum Management Barometer.

› Sponsorship and how it affects the museums.
Thank you!

Contact information:
Anna Karina Kjeldsen:
annakk@asb.dk

The Strategic Museum: