

# MPR Presentation at the 2007 ICOM General Conference

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## Searching for identity - a brand building process

- Introduction

In Norway and also in some other European countries we can identify a process where museums merge into larger units. In Norway this process is stimulated by the government.

The main target for this consolidation is a more efficient use of the available resources, as services can be combined among the museums that merge into a common unit.

We would like to discuss which consequences such consolidations can have for brand management in the museum field, and also have a look into different options for brand architecture. The perspective of this discussion is the audience, how to manage your brands in your communicational work.

As a case study, we will use the museum where we both work, the Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo. We have initiated a project which aims to clarify the identity and brand equity of the museum – to search for our identity so to speak.

An important issue in this project is to define the relationship between the main museum and two units that are run by the museum. Today, we would like to present to you the brand management studies behind our discussions, as well as discuss with you how to find a solution to suit our needs.

- Important issue

To strategically brand, market and lead your museum it is vital to have an insight into the various consequences of different courses of action. In merging different museums into a new unit, the competitive situation might alter as regards to how your target audience(s) perceives the new unit. Will for example the target audience of both former museums still perceive that they are important to the new unit?

- Introduction to Brand architecture

As a direct consequence of mergers or consolidations the museum marketer acquires several different brands as opposed to the one they originally managed. The *function or purpose* of brands is, simply put, to *identify* the product/service offered to the target audience and to *differentiate* it from potential competitors.

The collection of different brands in an organization is called a *brand portfolio* and how you strategically manage them is your *brand portfolio strategy*. In order to manage them you need *structurally organize* them as regards to each other. What, if any will be your *family brand*? Will you manage and market each brand separately or all under the same umbrella? How will you differentiate the different products? This structural organization of your brand portfolio is your *brand architecture*.

- Models of Brand Architecture

There are different ways of organising the brand portfolio into brand architecture. The point of variation is mainly in the relationship between the family brand and a diverse choice of sub-brands. In the following, I will try to explain four typical models of organizing the brand architecture. They all have different relationships between family brand and sub-brand.

Monolithic structure	Dual Branding structure		Differentiated structure
<b>Branded House</b>	<b>Subbrands</b>	<b>Endorsed Brands</b>	<b>House of Brands</b>
One brand for all products	Family and subbrand together	Subbrand as the most visible	Each brand has separate identity
Example: DnB NOR Bank DnB NOR Eiendom	Example: VW Golf	Example: Fanta – a product of the Coca-Cola Company	Example: VW-corporation, owning VW, Skoda, Audi.

### Pros and cons of the different models of Brand architecture illustrated with examples from museums

A museum consisting of different units will be driven into a discussion of how to organize the brand portfolio. There are advantages and disadvantages with each different structure, and we will point out some of them in the following.

Firstly, I will have a look into the branded house strategy. If this model is chosen for a group of museums, every member museum of the group will carry the same name and branding. An example is the Norwegian National Museum of Art, Design and Architecture. This museum was established through a consolidation of four art and design museums in Oslo. The new structure was totally rebranded under a new name.

There are certainly great advantages with this strategy. The audience can easier learn and recognise one common brand. This saves huge costs in marketing, since only one message needs to be distributed. The museum group can also run common marketing campaigns, and the visitor will easily understand that the campaign is valid for all units of the group. As a consequence, the big common brand will get a higher standing than separate brands for each small member of the group. The branded house strategy can also be an advantage inside the museum organisation. The consolidation of different units might not be easy for the employees, as reorganisation can often make people reluctant to changes. A rebranding under a common name can make it easier to implement new and common procedures and targets for the new organisation.

On the other hand, a house of brands strategy, though it might be expensive gives a better way of capitalizing on the brand equity of the already existing brand. This is often the chosen

strategy for products that are dissimilar, are located in different geographical places or have different values. Other advantages are that:

- The museum/unit is free to create a unique position
- The museum can easier target their audience in marketing campaigns
- The audience can easier perceive the product as differentiated

All in all, a house of brands will make it easier for the target audience to find relevant information.

Sponsorship is another area where this strategy can give added value. It is easier to keep the museums/units separate as sponsorship subjects when they have distinct and separate identities. This will make it possible to capitalize even further on the brand equities.

Several providers of goods use this strategy to market goods of different quality and price range.

## **Example on a branding issue**

### **Norsk Folkemuseum**

#### **- See Norway in a day!**

The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History shows traditional Norwegian culture and history. **The Open-Air Museum** features 155 authentic buildings from different national regions, i.e. Gol Stave Church, from the 13th century. Guided tours, folk music and dancing, demonstration of traditional arts and crafts, baking of "lefse".

But we also have indoor collections, the Old City, contemporary exhibits and research. It's a large and complex museum.

**The Ibsen Museum** consists of two major parts: A comprehensive exhibit featuring the playwright Ibsen's life and work, and Ibsen's private home, where he lived the last 11 years of his life.

The museum is in the centre of Oslo, right by the Royal Castle.

Thematically and geographically the Ibsen Museum differs quite a lot from Norsk Folkemuseum. The target audience groups are often different as well, being an author's home and attracting a different kind of scholars and visitors.

### **The Royal Farm**

#### **- The name of fairy tales**

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- A modern and an historical farmyard for visitors
- Cultivated fields and grazing lands
- The King's Forest

- An important recreational area for all of Oslo’s population
- Old and well-known
- Used to be run by the Royal Family

The Royal Farm has a brand equity that is quite unparalleled. Norwegian literature is full of stories about the Royal Farm, it’s a part of daily language in popular sayings, and it has the “fame and glory” –value of royalty. It is also an important recreational area that all of Oslo population knows about.

Conclusion

So to conclude our discussion,  
***What to choose:***

- *Branded house strategy?*  
 Every museum of a group carries the same name and branding
- *House of brands strategy?*  
 Each museum has it’s own name and branding

**Reviewing the options**

- **analyzing the situation**
  - and making a choice....

<b>Branded House</b>	<b>Sub- Brand</b>	<b>Endorsed Brand</b>	<b>House of Brands</b>
Family brand on all products	Family brand added with sub-brand	Family brand as support	<b>Separate brand on each product</b>

We have landed on a compromise – to try to ensure both the brand equities and unique identities of the different museums/units as well as capitalize on the strengths of the family brand.

We have chosen:  
**Endorsed Brand Strategy**

The family brand is only used to be a discreet guaranty of quality.

This:

- gives freedom to the units
- gives value when there is strong *brand equity*

-the family brand is still recognizable to the public

Exactly how we will show this to the public is still not decided entirely. For the Ibsen Museum the NF lion is already incorporated in the logo. The Royal Farm still does not have a good logo solution, but we are working on it.

We hope that the choices we have made for our brand architecture will prove to be optimal for our visitors and for us in achieving our goals!

Thank you!