

BRANDING MUSIC FINLAND

Creating a new brand identity
from two existing brands

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Abstract <p>During 2012, Music Export Finland and the Finnish Music Information Center Fimic merged into Music Finland. The strategy for the new organization was finished in November 2012, and during the strategy process, this research was conducted to support the building of Music Finland's brand identity, which will be based on two existing brands. Although brands are often seen as marketing tools and as a part of the strategy of commercial companies, their function among associations is to reduce risks of customers as well as to clarify the existence and messages of the organization.</p> <p>The research focused on determining the values, objectives, strategies and services of Music Finland, and how these affect the new brand identity. In addition, the expectations of the customers of the background organizations and brand images and cultures of the background organizations were researched in order to have an understanding on the preconditions of Music Finland's brand identity. Theories of brand management, especially those focusing on the strategic building of brand identity, were used as a basis.</p> <p>For the empirical part, two staff members of Music Finland were interviewed, both from different background organizations. In addition, two customers were interviewed; one who was a customer of Music Export Finland and the other a customer of both background organizations. The results of the study show that the building of Music Finland's brand identity is strongly affected by different brand identities and especially cultures of the background organizations. The organization itself and especially its staff are highlighted as a starting point for building the brand identity. In order to build a brand, the image of which will correspond with its identity, Music Finland needs to focus on clearly and coherently defining the brand identity and communicating it to the staff, as well as recruiting the right staff that contributes to the brand identity.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Music Export Finland ja Suomalaisen Musiikin Tiedotuskeskus Fimic yhdistyivät vuoden 2012 aikana Music Finland ry:ksi. Music Finlandin strategia valmistui marraskuussa 2012, ja tämä opinnäytetyö tehtiin strategian ohessa tukemaan Music Finlandin brändi-identiteetin rakentamista kahden olemassaolevan brändin pohjalta. Vaikka brändit usein nähdään markkinoinnin työkaluna ja mielletään osaksi kaupallisten organisaatioiden strategiaa, niillä on merkitys myös yhdistystoiminnassa asiakkaiden riskien vähentäjänä ja organisaation olemassaolon tarkoituksen ja viestien selkeyttäjänä.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyössä pyrittiin selvittämään millaisille arvoille, tavoitteille, strategioille ja palveluille Music Finlandin brändi-identiteetti pohjautuu, millaisia odotuksia taustaorganisaatioiden asiakkailta on Music Finlandin suhteen, ja miten taustaorganisaatioiden brändi-imagot ja kulttuurit vaikuttavat Music Finlandin brändi-identiteetin luomiseen. Teoreettisena pohjana käytettiin brändijohtamisen teorioita, ja erityisesti niitä, jotka painottuivat brändi-identiteetin strategiseen rakentamiseen.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyötä varten haastateltiin kahta Music Finlandin henkilökunnan edustajaa, jotka tulivat kumpikin eri taustaorganisaatiosta. Tämän lisäksi haastateltiin kahta asiakasta, joista toinen oli ollut Music Export Finlandin asiakas, ja toinen kummankin taustaorganisaation asiakas. Tutkimustuloksista käy ilmi, että Music Finlandin brändi-identiteetin rakentamiseen vaikuttavat vahvasti taustaorganisaatioiden erilaiset brändi-identiteetit ja erityisesti kulttuurit. Brändi-identiteetin rakentamisen lähtökohtana korostuu itse organisaatio, ja erityisesti sen henkilökunta. Rakentaakseen brändin, minkä imago tulee vastaamaan identiteettiä, Music Finlandin tulee kiinnittää huomiota brändi-identiteetin erityisen tarkkaan ja yhtenäiseen määrittelyyn ja sen viestimiseen henkilökunnalle, kuten myös oikean, brändi-identiteetin mukaisen henkilökunnan rekrytoimiseen.</p>		
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1 INTRODUCTION

“Making promises and keeping them is a great way to build a brand.” (Godin 2008).

Branding has been around for centuries, but too often it is considered to be simply a part of a company’s marketing strategy. Many organizations do not see brands as their priority, since brand management is costly with no short-term profits, and some consider brand building important only after the organization grows big (Aaker 1996). The general opinion of branding experts is that companies do not pay enough attention to or even understand the importance of brand management.

One of the most widely used definitions for the purpose of a brand is for it to distinguish one organization’s products from those of its competitors (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong 2004; Keller, Apéria & Georgson 2008). This definition fails to communicate the real importance of a brand, which is not to simply distinguish the goods from those of competitors, but also make the consumer choose those goods over those of competitors. Only then will there be brand value for that consumer. (Godin 2009.) The importance of brand elements such as the brand name or logo is generally over-emphasized when brand management should focus on the company’s strategy and vision (Kapferer 2004). Aaker (1996) sees a brand as a long-term strategic asset that should be managed, and Kapferer (2004, 3) agrees by emphasizing the role of a company’s business model in brand building.

Although studies on branding are numerous, branding of non-profit organizations is rarely a topic of these studies. However, the purpose of a brand as stated by Godin (2009) also applies in case of non-profit organizations, since they want consumers to choose them over others. The term “non-profit organization”, especially in branding literature, often refers to charity organizations, but these are naturally not the only types of non-profit organizations that should utilize branding. This study focuses on the brand building of Music Finland, an organization extensively promoting Finnish music abroad as well as increasing its visibility and use and growing its export revenues. It was founded in October 2011 and it unifies the functions of Music Export Finland (Musex) and the Finnish Music Information Center Fimic. Through its founding

organizations, Music Finland represents the whole Finnish music industry. Although Music Finland is a non-profit organization, its objectives are largely business-oriented.

In the case of Music Finland, the function of a strong brand is to create value for Finnish music industry professionals. This research focuses on building Music Finland's brand identity, which Aaker (1996, 68) sees as the driver of brand associations; one of the four dimensions he has defined for building brand equity. The concrete merging of Musex and Fimic has taken place during 2012, and Music Finland has just recently finalized its strategy and, as a result, is now planning the composition of its services.

Regarding branding in this phase, the only relevant aspect to focus on is brand identity. Music Finland is facing a unique challenge of building a completely new brand from two existing brands with different cultures as well as existing staff and customers. This study outlines the challenges and opportunities in building the brand identity as well as defines the aspects that need to be taken into consideration when starting a brand identity building process. Since the main purpose of Music Finland's branding activities is not to create competitive advantage, certain other facets of creating brand equity, such as brand positioning and identity implementation are outside the scope of this research.

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study focused on researching the factors affecting the creation of Music Finland's brand identity. Music Finland is a merger of two equal organizations, the organizational cultures, functions and brand images of which are very different from each other. Brand identities as well as brand images of Musex and Fimic were studied in order to form a comprehensive understanding of the building blocks of Music Finland's brand identity. In addition, the future expectations of Music Finland's employees and clients were examined in order to set guidelines for the brand identity building process. By studying Music Finland's brand identity this thesis also drew some guidelines for the future branding process.

Branding is seldom seen as a significant part of a strategy of a non-profit organization. Therefore, this research also focused on justifying the importance of building a brand identity for a non-profit organization. This is emphasized in the case of Music Finland, which despite its non-profit nature aims to create commercial value not for the organization itself but its clients. Music Finland wishes to be a known partner for the Finnish music industry companies; therefore, the importance of careful brand building in reaching this aim was researched.

Concrete research questions that this study aims to answer are the following:

1. What are the basic values, objectives, strategies and services of Music Finland, based on which the organization's brand identity will be built?
2. What expectations do customers have regarding Music Finland, and how will this affect the building of Music Finland's brand identity?
3. How will different brand identities, brand images and organizational cultures of Musex and Fimic affect Music Finland's brand identity?

The scope of this research was narrowed down to the concept of brand identity. In brand management theories, defining brand identity is considered to be one of the first and most important steps in a company's brand building activities. Music Finland is at the moment in a phase where it needs to concentrate on building its brand after

defining its mission and vision and creating its strategy. As already stated, brand management consists of many other aspects in addition to brand identity. However, at this point examining the building of brand identity was considered the most relevant.

Literature on branding can be roughly divided in two disciplines. Some authors concentrate on the strategic aspects of branding while others concentrate mainly on visual communication. While the importance of visual communication of a brand identity in the brand's contact points with its interest groups is recognized, this study takes a more holistic view of a brand as an important part of a company's strategy. Therefore, the focus was only on the strategic importance of brand identity, and the brand's visual identity was not researched.

This study utilizes theories about strategic brand management and building strong brands. Theories of three leading authors on this field are presented, and they are all emphasized differently with the aim of finding the best practices for building a strong brand identity for Music Finland. Four interviews were conducted in order to form a holistic understanding on the past experiences and expectations of the organization's leaders as well as existing customers. It should also be noted that since the author of this study works at Music Finland, some statements are not based on literature or interviews, but daily observations made within the organization.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction to branding

3.1.1 What is a brand?

Originally the word “brand” derives from a mark burned on the skin of cattle, which identified the animal’s owner in case it was stolen. In ancient Greece, brands were used as symbols in amphoras, identifying the manufacturer of olive oil and wine and building reputation for them. (Kapferer 2004, 11.)

Kotler et al. (2004) define brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.” They state that a brand’s purpose is to add value to the product by providing a guarantee of quality. (p. 549.) They tie branding strongly to products, whereas Keller et al. (2008) note that also services, people, places and organizations among others can be brands. The difference between a product and a brand is that a brand is a product or service that has dimensions that differentiate it from other products designed to satisfy the same need. (p. 3.)

Kapferer (2004), instead of defining branding points out aspects of it that many narrow definitions fail to notice. Brands start with a product or service, which is identified by a name and other symbols. (pp. 9-13.) He presents this idea in the following triangle (see Figure 1), and summarizes that “a brand is a shared desirable and exclusive idea embodied in products, services, places and/or experiences” (Kapferer 2004, 13).

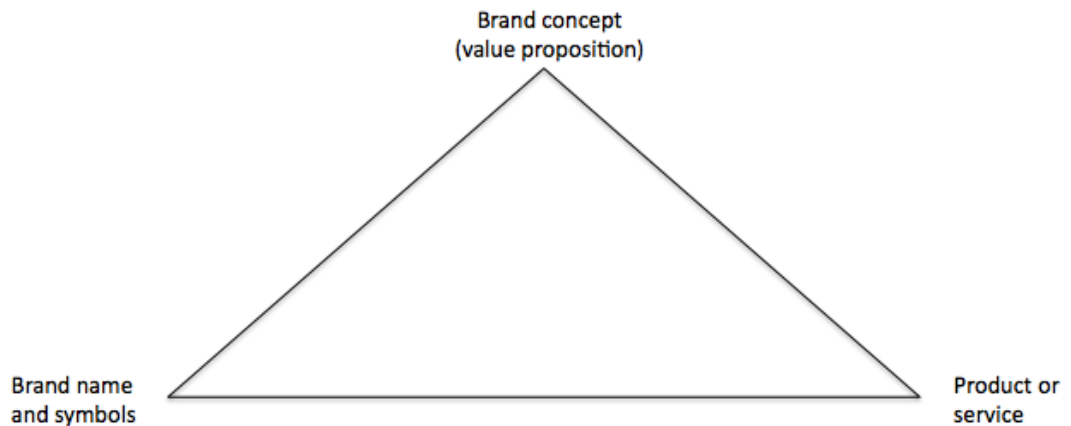


FIGURE 1. The brand system. (Kapferer, 2004)

The idea that Kapferer (2004) mentions in his definition is the top of the triangle: the value proposition provided by the brand concept. This concept is “a unique set of attributes (both tangible and intangible) that constitute the value proposition of the brand”. (p. 12.) These attributes are benefits that add value, and which the company chooses by creating their brand identity and positioning. Kapferer emphasizes that brands are seen as conditional assets, and each tip of the triangle is needed to build a brand. (Ibid.)

Brand experts seem to be strongly divided in two disciplines. Some see a brand mainly as brand elements such as the name and the logo, while others have a very holistic view of a brand and its role in a company’s overall strategy. In this study, the term brand includes the three aspects presented by Kapferer: name and symbols, services and products and the brand concept. As brand identity is part of the brand concept, the emphasis on this study was there, although services and name were studied wherever seen necessary.

3.1.2 Why branding?

The benefits of branding are widely recognized. Brands benefit the company by creating value to the customer by reducing risk through trust and, thus, easing the customer’s buying process. If there is no risk, the benefit provided by the brand disap-

pears; therefore, in markets where risks are nearly nonexistent, branding plays a very minor role. (Kapferer, 2004.) For the customer, brands are a guarantee of quality and they increase efficiency and simplify decision-making through brand recognition (Kotler et al. 2004, 549). Keller et al. (2008) agree and point out that favorable past experiences with a brand act as catalysts for repeated purchase. In addition to functional benefits, some brands offer emotional benefits and might act as devices for reflecting the customer's personality. (pp. 7-8.)

Branded companies find it easier to gain funding, since investors are willing to pay a higher price for the reduction of risk, and a well-known brand can more easily enter new markets. A strong brand also increases the results of a company's advertising, as it has been shown that brand recognition and awareness increase the chances of people noticing and remembering the brand's advertisements. Brands offer companies tangible benefits such as legal protection through patents, trademarks, copyrights and designs, through which brands create financial value. (Kapferer 2004.) The promise of quality that a brand offers consumers leads to repeated purchase, which creates barriers of entry for competitors (Keller et al. 2008).

A brand is something that resides in the minds of consumers, and whenever consumers need to make a choice, they benefit from brands. Therefore, a company should become a brand whenever its consumers have a chance to choose. (Keller et al. 2008, 9.)

3.2 Music Finland and the background organizations

The decision to merge Musex's and Fimic's operations was made in October 2011. In February 2012 the two organizations moved to the same offices, and since May 2012 the organizations have been communicating as Music Finland. Throughout 2012 Music Finland has been building its strategy, which was presented to the organization's clients and interest groups in September 2012.

Music Export Finland was founded as an export organization in 2005 and its main objective was to help Finnish music industry in growing their export revenues. The or-

ganization's values were quality, profitability, speed, co-operation and courage. It worked in three areas: International marketing communications, internal marketing communications for Finnish professionals and coordination of financial support for music export. (Music Export Finland, 2011.)

The Finnish Music Information Center Fimic was an expert organization, the task of which was to promote and increase the awareness and availability of Finnish music, as well as to create interest in its use both in Finland and abroad. It was founded in 1963, and it focused on realizing its objectives through comprehensive expert services, active and actual PR and goal-directed and targeted promotions. (Fimic, 2012.)

Music Finland's mission is to "increase the vitality and advance the international success of Finnish music" (Music Finland, 2012). It aims to reach this by

- producing information and being a platform for discussion
- increasing preconditions and competitiveness
- increasing the awareness about and visibility of Finnish music
- increasing music exports and building international success stories

Concretely, these roles will be fulfilled through a wide array of services that Music Finland offers its Finnish clients, which include Finnish music industry companies, associations, artists, orchestras and composers. These services consist of for example export trips to trade fairs, financial support for companies and artists, international export and showcase productions, sheet music library, publications, seminars and workshops as well as Music Finland's own promotional channels such as direct mailing, newsletters and social media.

3.3 Building and managing a brand

3.3.1 How to build a strong brand?

Different branding theories focus on different aspects when considering what makes a strong brand. Kapferer (2004) emphasizes the role of the organization's business model and criticizes that the focus is too often on the brand name, logo, advertising or brand image, when it should be on brand identity. Keller et al.'s (2008) theory on building a strong brand consists of four steps, which include creating brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses and, through these, brand relationships. This study focuses on the first step, which is creating brand identity. Creating brand identity requires creating brand salience with customers. The objective is to create deep brand awareness, which includes the customers recalling and recognizing the brand. This should lead to repeated purchases of the brand as well as thinking of the brand in cases where it could be consumed. (Keller et al. 2008, 56-58.)

Aaker (1996) sees that strong brands are built through creating brand equity. The several aspects that according to him affect brand equity are explained later in this study.

3.3.2 Why manage brands?

As any other aspect in an organization, a brand needs to be managed. Brand management has traditionally been the responsibility of the organization's marketing department but this view is changing. Brand management has changed from simple communication to marketing and finally to concerns of CEOs and general managers. The financial, accounting, technical and legal departments of organizations are involved in brand management as well. (Kapferer 2004, 78-79.) Advertising is not the only aspect that creates brand awareness. Namely, also other touch points such as word of mouth and personal interaction with the brand must be managed. Having brand management as a priority of higher management level ensures that all these aspects of brand building are covered. (Kotler et al. 2004, 567.)

In 2000 Aaker and Joachimsthaler presented a brand leadership model, which was strategic and leaned on the organization's vision, as opposed to the traditional brand

management model, which they saw as tactical and reactive. They state that the “brand strategy should be influenced by the business strategy and should reflect the same strategic vision and corporate culture.” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 7.)

In addition, the new approach includes the role of the brand in the organization’s long-term strategy instead of requiring short-term results that are usually expected to be delivered in the classic brand management model (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 8). The brand leadership model focuses on building assets that deliver profits in long-term. The problem is that this is not easy to justify, since long-term investments might even decrease profits in the short run, and long-term profits are difficult to measure. However, the company executives should understand the effects that long-term investments on intangible assets have on the company’s competitive advantage, which ultimately leads to profitability. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 14.)

3.4 Sources of brand equity

The concept of brand equity gained attention in the 1980s. Like brand, also brand equity can be defined in several ways. Keller et al. (2008, 34) note that brand equity is related to outcomes that arise from marketing a product or service because of its brand. Aaker’s (1996, 7-8) understanding of brand equity goes beyond marketing activities, as he defines brand equity as “a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm’s customers”. These assets are categorized as

1. Brand awareness
2. Brand loyalty
3. Perceived quality
4. Brand associations.

Managing brand equity requires enhancing the assets by investing in them. Each of the assets create value in several different ways, whether directly to the organization

or through creating value to the customer. (Ibid.) Aaker's model emphasizes the role of the customer in how the organization's brand equity grows. This model also outlines that brand identity is the driver for brand associations, therefore being a fundamental part of creating brand equity (Aaker 1996, 25).

3.5 Business-to-business branding

What distinguishes Music Finland from many other service companies is that its services are not directed to regular consumers, but to Finnish music industry professionals. In addition, in promoting its clients and Finnish music, Music Finland aims to reach international professionals and media interested in working with Finnish music or promoting it in their own territories. Music Finland's brand identity is strongly influenced by the organization's functions in Finland, since that is where the resource, Finnish music comes from. Therefore, this study concentrates mainly on managing the brand from the viewpoint of the organization's Finnish clients.

The fact that well-known brands reduce risks is especially recognized in business-to-business settings, where avoiding risks is maximized by dealing with brands with which the company already has favorable past experiences (Keller et al. 2008, 8). The main goal in business-to-business branding is to ensure that the company has a positive image and reputation, and a strong brand assures the clients they can make substantial investments in the company. In business-to-business branding, roles of individual employees as representatives of the brand are emphasized, as dealing with services directed to companies involves many people communicating directly with each other in several touch points. (Keller et al. 2008, 12-14.)

Traditional business buying models presented by Kotler et al. (2005) focus on analyzing big purchase decisions involving complex buying centers. These complex processes seldom apply to the clients of Music Finland as such, since the companies as well as the purchases are rather small; therefore, deeper analyses of these buying models were left out of this study. However, it is recognized that the purchase decisions in business-to-business environment are affected not only by economic but also emo-

tional factors. As Godin (2008) states it, "Business to business marketing is just marketing to consumers who happen to have a corporation to pay for what they buy." The decisions on using Music Finland's services are made by individual people with emotional factors affecting them.

3.6 Brand identity

Brand identity, just like a person's identity, "provides direction, purpose and meaning for the brand" (Aaker 1996, 68). In Aaker's brand equity model, brand identity is a driver for brand associations, one of the sources of brand equity. He defines brand identity as "a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members." (Ibid.)

Often when talking about brand identity, it is seen as a logo, design or packaging. Alina Wheeler (2003, 4) defines brand identity as "the visual and verbal expression of a brand", and continues that the identity supports the brand. This is very contradictory to what most brand strategists think. Brand identity is the meaning of the brand reflecting the organization's values, whereas the brand's visual identity, which consists of brand elements such as logo or design, is a tool for expressing brand identity. The great importance of a brand's visual identity in awaking brand recognition and recall is recognized, but at the moment for Music Finland, its visual brand identity is less important than its strategic brand identity. As Wheeler (2003, 9) states, creating a strong visual brand identity is important when a new company wants to communicate clearly that it is a merger of two equals, but this is beyond the scope of this study.

This study and the analysis for building the brand identity of Music Finland utilized Aaker's (1996) brand identity planning model. This model was chosen as the main theory applied as it provides a very comprehensive basis for building a strong brand identity. In addition, Kapferer's (2004) brand identity prism was used to supplement Aaker's views.

3.6.1 How brand identity differs from brand image

Brand image is how the brand is now perceived by customers and others, whereas brand identity is how the organization wants the brand to be perceived (Aaker 1996, 69-70). Aaker (ibid.) describes a brand image trap, where the organization's brand image becomes the identity, leading to customers deciding what the organization is. Brand image concentrates on the past, whereas brand identity is forward-looking, reflecting the associations that the organization wants its brand to have in the future. Brand image is also tactical rather than strategic, like brand identity, which should also reflect the organization's strategy. (Ibid.)

Keller et al. (2008) remind that brand image might vary substantially depending on the receiver of brand messages as well as the market segment. A brand identity needs to be managed in order for customers to have a brand image that the company desires them to have. (p. 48.) Keller et al. (2008, 52) argue that brand image is born from strong, favorable and unique brand associations, which according to Aaker (1996) are driven by brand identity.

Image is a receiver's interpretation of the sender's messages about the brand's identity. These messages need to be decoded and interpreted, and this interpretation is disturbed by noise and competition, often making the real brand image different from the desired. (Kapferer 2004, 98-99). Since in a brand management process brand image comes after creating brand identity, it was only covered in this study when researching how the existing images of Musex and Fimic had affected the building of Music Finland's brand identity.

3.6.2 Aaker's brand identity planning model

Aaker's (1996) brand identity planning model (see Figure 2) includes four brand identity perspectives that companies should consider when planning their identity. These are "brand as product", "brand as organization", "brand as person" and "brand as symbol". These perspectives lead the company to define its core identity and extended identity. In addition, the model analyses the brand's value proposition as well as its credibility and brand-customer relationship. (Aaker 1996, 78-79.) After the

brand identity system Aaker introduces a brand identity implementation system; however, as Music Finland is still in the stage of building its brand identity, implementing the identity was left out of this study.

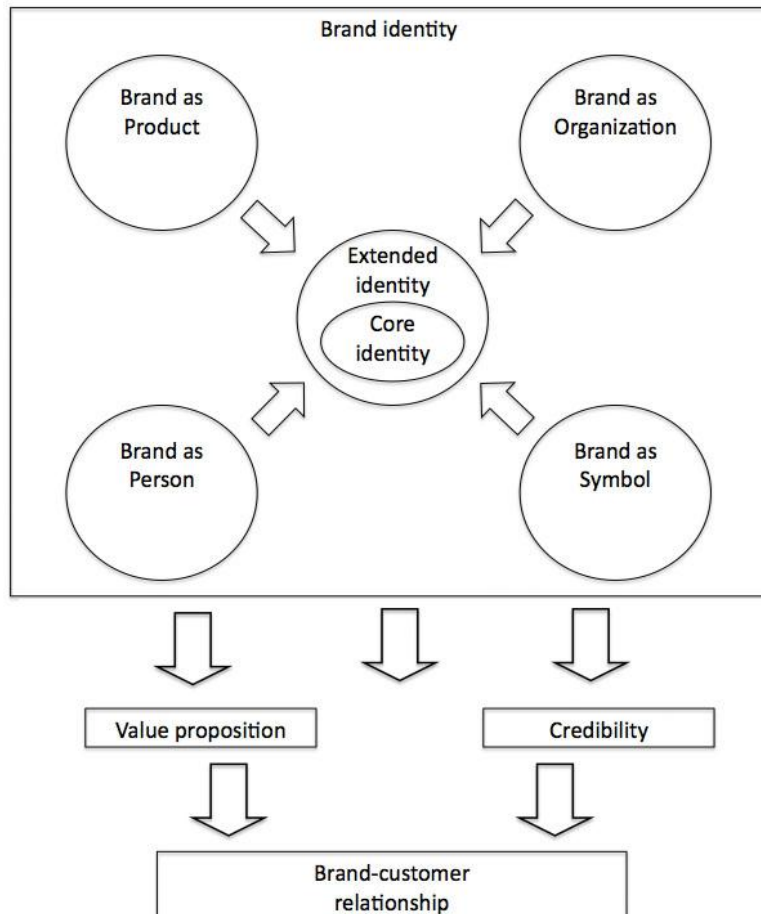


FIGURE 2. Brand identity system, adapted from Aaker's brand identity planning model (1996).

Core identity and extended identity

Aaker (1996, 85) defines core identity as the “timeless essence of the brand” and that, which remains regardless of the market or service offered. It is essential to the success of the brand that its core identity is recognized and that it remains consistent over time. It reflects the soul of the brand as well as its fundamental values and core competencies. Aaker states that the “core identity should include elements that make the brand both unique and valuable. Thus the core identity should usually con-

tribute to the value proposition and to the brand's basis for credibility." (Aaker 1996, 87.)

Elements in a brand's extended identity do not provide the basis for brand identity, but add structure around the core identity to complete it, making it possible for the brand to perform its functions and communications. More elements in an identity can also make the brand easier for the customer to relate to. A brand's personality attributes are often part of the extended identity. (Aaker 1996, 87-88.) In order to present a consistent and strong identity, the identity elements should be organized in cohesive and meaningful groups (Aaker 1996, 92).

Brand as product

As Music Finland does not sell products, excluding sheet music, this section discusses the role of services in brand identity. The quality of services affects the customer's choices and experiences of the brand directly; therefore, they need to be considered as a major part of brand identity. The service needs to offer the user functional or emotional benefits but service attributes should not exclude other perspectives of the identity that add value to the brand. (Aaker 1996, 81.)

Services can be associated with the occasion of use, user or by linking them to a country or region. Relating brand to a country usually aims to point out the superiority of that country in the product class in question. (Aaker 1996, 81-82.)

Brand as organization

There are several aspects in an organization that affect the brand-customer relationship, and therefore need to be considered when building a brand identity. Relating organizational associations such as quality or innovativeness to brand-as-product perspectives can support purchase decisions, but there is also a risk of tarnishing the name of the whole organization with performance that does not meet the customers' expectations. The role of organizational associations in brand identity can vary substantially: for some companies the organization stays in the background whereas for some, organizational attributes are in the core identity. (Aaker 1996, 115-117.)

Brand-customer relationships should ideally be based on the organization's values and culture, and the people working in the organization are seen by customers as the representatives of these. Employees also hold skills that affect the brand-customer relationship; therefore the people working in the organization need to be seen as a crucial part of the brand identity. (Aaker 1996, 115-116.) Employees need to be motivated to accomplish the organization's values and goals. Including organizational associations that reflect these goals and values into brand identity makes it easier for the organization to communicate them to employees and other interest groups who need to feel connected to them. (Ibid.) Another factor largely affecting the building of Music Finland's brand identity is the role that the new organization will take in the Finnish music industry.

Brand as person and brand-customer relationship

Brand personality refers to human characteristics that can be related to the brand. A brand can be described by demographic, lifestyle or personality traits. (Aaker 1996, 141-142.) Brand personality is affected by almost everything that is related to the brand, and its primary drivers are product or service related attributes. Non-service-related characteristics that affect brand personality include, for example, the country of origin, company image, CEO, user imagery, sponsorships, age and symbol. (Aaker 1996, 145-147.)

Through brand personality, it is easier for brand strategists to understand how consumers perceive the brand, as personality reflects consumers' relationships and emotions better than simple attributes. Brand personality also provides texture in brand identity, helping to design the brand's communications. It guides practical decisions regarding promotions, personal brand-customer communications as well as events to attend. (Aaker 1996, 150-151.)

Brand personality, in addition to it being a vehicle for representing functional benefits, can create brand equity through the self-expression model. This is based on the assumption that for some people brands are ways to express their self-identity. Brands can provide meaning to people's lives and be used to express their personali-

ty and lifestyle, and they might act as the users' statements of who or where they would like to be. (Aaker 1996, 153-157.)

The second way that brand personality creates brand equity is the relationship basis model. This contains the relationship between the brand-as-person and the customer, seen similarly as a relationship between two people, as well as the brand personality, which brings depth into the relationship. It is also possible that the relationship is strictly based on functional benefits. For many, the important relationship with a brand is based on friendship and the elements that are evident in friendships. (Aaker 1996, 159-160.)

Often the focus in the relationship is on the customer, the brand being the passive part, where "attitudes and perceptions of the brand itself are hidden behind the closed doors of the organization" (Aaker 1996, 161). Aaker refers to a study conducted by Max Blackston, which proved the importance of also considering what the brand thinks of the user through asking what the brand would say to the user. This proved that despite the users having similar opinions of the brand's personality they saw their brand-relationship very differently. The reason was that brand personality was now characterized not only by the attributes but also by the way users felt about these attributes. (Aaker 1996, 161-163.) Another study contributing to Aaker's views of brand personality and brand-customer relationship is that of Susan Fournier indicating that the brand's true identity emerges in its actions and behavior (Aaker 1996, 165).

Brand as symbol

A symbol's purpose is to reinforce a brand's personality, as it can hold very strong associations. Thus, a strong symbol can enhance the brand's recognition and recall, which are keys in increasing brand awareness. The most common symbols include visual imagery, metaphors and brand heritage. (Aaker 1996, 84.) As the significance of recognition and recall of Music Finland's brand is rather small at this stage, especially among Finnish customers, brand-as-symbol aspects were left out of this study.

Value proposition

Aaker's definition of value proposition emphasizes the role of the brand benefits in creating customer relationships:

"A brand's value proposition is a statement of the functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits delivered by the brand that provide value to the customer. An effective value proposition should lead to a brand-customer relationship and drive purchase decisions." (Aaker 1996, 95.)

Functional benefits are related to service attributes that provide functional utilities to the customer. They are directly related to the users' experiences and purchase decisions. (Aaker 1996, 96.) Emotional benefits come from the positive feelings from using the brand. Strong brand identities often have feelings attached to the functional benefits that the brand offers. In addition to emotional benefits, strong brands provide self-expressive benefits by offering the customer a way to communicate their self-image through the use of the brand. The difference between emotional and self-expressive benefits may be subtle, but it is important to understand how self-expressive benefits refer to self rather than emotions, and to the act of using the service instead of the outcome. (Aaker 1996, 97-101.)

In addition to benefits, value proposition is affected by relative price. As Music Finland provides services where price is not the only determining factor, we should discuss costs, which include the price, time and other effort needed for using the services. Naturally, high costs reduce the value proposition although the benefits would be apparent. On the other hand, it needs to be considered carefully whether higher costs lead to higher quality. (Aaker 1996, 102.)

Credibility

The role of organizational associations is to provide credibility to the brand. A credible organization is an expert at making and selling its products or services. It is trustworthy regarding its communication, and its honesty provides a strong basis for customer relationships. A credible brand is also well liked, leading to fewer disagreements and easily accepted messages. (Aaker 1996, 134.)

3.6.3 Kapferer's brand identity prism

Kapferer (2004) sees that brand identity consists of six facets representing the brand's inner substance. These facets are interrelated, forming a coherent entity that is the brand's identity (ibid.).

Physique

A brand's physique represents its physical qualities that add tangible value. This is naturally the first step in creating a brand, and it is crucial, since a brand in order to attract users must offer material benefits. (Kapferer 2004, 107-108.)

Personality

A brand's character is built through its communications. It becomes evident through human personality traits used to describe the brand. (Kapferer 2004, 108.)

Culture

According to Kapferer (2004), every product or service of the brand derives from its culture. By culture, he refers to "the set of values feeding the brand's inspiration." (p. 108.) Culture is seen as the very core of the brand's identity. It has often been forgotten when concentrating too much on brand personality. Culture is strongly linked to aspects such as the organization's values and culture or country of origin. (Kapferer 2004, 108-109.)

Relationship

Especially in the service sector, brands are constantly amidst exchange between people. Relationship is the most important facet of the brand identity prism in determining the way in which the brand's actions identify it. (Kapferer 2004, 109-110.)

Reflection

Customer reflection refers to a type of customer associated with the brand. This is different from target, as reflection focuses on how the customer wishes to be seen as a result of using the brand. Advertising should focus on portraying the target group not as such but as they wish to be after using the brand. (Kapferer 2004, 110.)

Self-Image

Since reflection is how the user of the brand is seen from the outside, self-image addresses the feelings the users have about themselves as a result of using the brand. Self-image can be used to facilitate communication between two individuals who feel the same about a certain brand. (Kapferer 2004, 110-111.)

Kapferer's brand identity prism emphasizes the fact that a brand only exists when it is communicated. The prism shows that the sender (physique and personality) and the receiver (reflection and self-image) both play a role in building the brand identity, and culture and relationship are the facets building the communication between these two. (Kapferer 2004, 111.)

These two models provide a vast array of points to consider when building a strategic brand identity, as they focus on both internal and external aspects affecting it. Internally, they help the organization define the role of its products or services, staff, culture and brand name and symbols in building the identity. Externally, they provide a framework for evaluating the brand-customer relationships as well as the functional, emotional and self-expressional benefits derived from using the brand. The result of using these should be a coherently defined brand identity with clear touch points to manage.

4 METHOD

4.1 Overview of the research method and its liability

This research focuses on phenomena behind which were individual people's decisions, which are always affected by emotional and social factors. In order to form a very comprehensive understanding about the individuals' decisions affecting the brand of Music Finland, a qualitative methodology was selected. A qualitative methodology allows the researcher to build a holistic picture on complex and abstract issues with multiple dimensions (Creswell 1998). Furthermore, according to Glesne

and Peshkin, cited by Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2010, 23), a qualitative approach aims to form interpretations and understand the research participants on multiple levels.

As this research was a case study, the only way to gain sufficient information on the branding process in question was to conduct interviews with Music Finland's staff and customers. This was seen particularly useful as Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2010, 34) point out that during an interview the researcher interacts with the research participant, which enables the researcher to steer the data collection process to a certain direction during the interview. Moreover, this proved to be particularly important as new information arose throughout the interviews. Consequently, the semi-structured interview method was chosen, since it allowed the researcher to plan the questions beforehand but decide on their final form and order during the interview (see Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010, 47).

Klaus Mäkelä (1990, 43) points out that in qualitative research the researcher has to understand who or what the real object of the research is. Despite the fact that the object in this case was an organization, the study focuses on strategies and decisions made by individual people, as well as individual clients' views about the organization. Consequently, the results cannot be assumed to present organizational views, but views of individuals representing Music Finland or its client organizations.

As the interviewees selected from inside the organization were the ones leading the brand-building process, this study might present a rather reliable view on branding Music Finland as well as the organizational factors behind it. However, as the sample was rather small, especially with regard to the clients, the results of this study are only directional. It must be recognized that the researcher conducting the interviews worked, and also currently works, in the organization, which inevitably affected the reliability of the answers. In addition, some interviewees' lack of theoretical knowledge about branding forced the researcher to plan the questions rather strictly beforehand, where the risk of leading the interviewees or missing important aspects is always apparent.

4.2 Implementation

In order to form a thorough understanding about both organizations behind Music Finland, the interviewees chosen from the staff of Music Finland needed to come from different background organizations, as well as to have a long history there. Tuomo Tähtinen is the executive director of Music Finland, and has been working in Musex since 2008. Heli Lampi was the promotion manager of Fimic since 2008, and at the time of the interviews, continued as head of communications and promotion in Music Finland. Tähtinen has had the leading role in creating Music Finland's brand and Lampi will have a major role in leading the implementation of the brand strategy in the future together with Tähtinen. The purpose of Tähtinen and Lampi's interviews was to examine the stage in which the creation of Music Finland's brand identity was at the moment, as well as to define what the brand identity of the previous organizations was, and how their organizational cultures and previous functions affected or had been affecting the building of Music Finland's brand identity.

The first client interviewed for this research was Teemu Suominen, who is the founder of Metalheim, an agency and management company focused on metal music. He has been an active client of Musex, taking part in export projects as well as receiving funding for Metalheim's bands. His interview focused on examining the brand image of Musex as well as finding out his expectations regarding Music Finland. Another client interviewed was Tiina Vihtkari, who is the CEO of Sublime Music Agency, a company focusing on booking, management and productions of artists varying from jazz to a capella groups. Vihtkari is a long-term client of both Musex and Fimic; therefore her views on the differences of the organizations were seen valuable for this research.

4.3 Contents of the interviews

The interviews were conducted face-to-face in Music Finland's office and they were all recorded. In order to get all the relevant background information about Music Finland's current state, Heli Lampi and Tuomo Tähtinen were interviewed first. These

interviews focused first on researching the brand identities of Musex and Fimic on an abstract level as well as evaluating their current brand images. Next, the interviewees' views on the brand identities of Musex, Fimic and Music Finland were examined on a detailed level through aspects presented in the brand identity theories of Aaker and Kapferer.

Throughout the interviews, Lampi was asked to compare Fimic's and Music Finland's brand identities, as well as to present her views on how Fimic's brand identity affected that of Music Finland and how Music Finland's brand identity should be improved from that of Fimic. Tähtinen was presented with the same questions regarding Musex and Music Finland. In addition, the interviews examined the background of the interviewees as well as their opinions on why Music Finland is or is not a brand.

The interviews with Vihtkari and Suominen were rather similar by structure to the ones of Lampi and Tähtinen. However, the focus was on researching what their views on Musex's and Fimic's brand images were, as well as how Music Finland would be according to their desires, and how these would differ.

5 FINDINGS

5.1 Is Music Finland a brand?

According to Tähtinen, Music Finland is a brand, whether the organization wanted it or not. The organization has the chance to affect the development of the brand by strengthening its positive aspects, as well as to recognize the negative messages regarding the brand and react accordingly. Lampi saw that the purpose of Music Finland's brand is to make it clear in the customers' minds what the brand stands for.

Vihtkari noted that she still knew nothing about Music Finland, and questioned whether it actually existed yet. She was very interested in seeing what will happen after the two organizations' operations are merged, as well as knowing what Music Finland wants and what it will eventually aim for.

5.2 Brands of Musex and Fimic

5.2.1 Brand identity and image of Musex

As Musex was a small organization, according to Tähtinen every individual working in the organization had some role in creating its identity. Tähtinen was in charge of the previous communications reform of Musex in 2009, and afterwards had a major role in developing the organization's communications. He told that everything in the organization affected the way the brand became. However, he emphasized that the brand of Musex was very much associated with the organization's long-time director Paulina Ahokas and her strong personality.

Further, Tähtinen noted that Musex was a very young organization; therefore, its brand identity was difficult to define since it changed and developed rather much within a short timeframe. He continued that Musex was dynamic and fast, which he saw both positive and negative, and that Musex was very efficient since it accomplished much in a short time. Tähtinen said that Musex wanted to be the best, but not only within the music industry: it wanted to be the best export organization. Furthermore, Musex aimed to be seen as an organization that listens to the industry, is able to react and change fast, and is connected to creating success stories. According to Tähtinen, Musex wanted to take the role of a partner, enabler and networker.

According to Lampi, the brand image of Musex was fast and dynamic. Vihtkari added that although Musex was a young organization, still in a learning phase, it was able to accomplish much in a short time due to its energetic and forward-looking entrepreneurial attitude. She said that her image of Musex was mostly formed through the networks that she got through Musex as well as through the people who worked in the organization.

Suominen saw Musex as a very honest organization that supported music genuinely, and where the staff genuinely cared about exporting Finnish music instead of just seeing it as a political agenda. Further, he thought that supporting all genres equally and raising popular music as an equal form of art next to classical music were one of the strengths of Musex. According to him, Musex as a person was open, easy to

communicate with, and not bureaucratic, but a good friend for everyone. When asked how he formed his image of Musex, he answered that communicating with the staff had a major impact on it, as every honest and open person who worked for Musex reflected the way the organization worked and, thus, affected the image.

Vihtkari said that in the Finnish music industry there were complaints about Musex not doing anything: however, the reason was that the industry players were not willing to invest time and money in the operations that Musex supported. She reminded that Musex was doing valuable work and one did benefit from it and receive results when one was ready to invest and work, although reporting requirements set by financiers were hard.

5.2.2 Brand identity and image of Fimic

Lampi stated that Fimic wanted to be an objective and trustworthy specialist, and the role of a specialist was very much emphasized. She said that Fimic's values were courage and being dynamic and open, and as a person, Fimic was expert, active, easily approachable and trustworthy. When asked how she supposed that Fimic's brand identity was, she told that expertise was the dominant attribute, as it was strongly in Fimic's long history and purpose, and the desire to emphasize it was apparent. Lampi saw this as both positive and negative, as it may have caused Fimic to seem sometimes distant. She knew that to those not working closely with the organization, Fimic presented itself as slightly bureaucratic - however, the communications reform in 2010 tried to change this image actively.

Tähtinen told his associations regarding Fimic focused mainly on expertise. To him, Fimic presented itself more as a selective expert than a democratic customer servant. He saw that after the communications reform, the organization made clear and visible changes: the implementation of these was, however, likely unfinished as the merger happened. He concluded that perhaps due to this it remained slightly unclear to him to which direction Fimic was developing or wanted to develop from a brand perspective.

Vihtkari as well noted that Fimic was known to be expert-oriented. However, she saw Fimic as inflexible and looking more to the past when compared to other players in the industry looking forward. She saw Fimic's image as very subject-oriented and emphasized the importance of the cultural work that Fimic did regarding documentation of Finnish music. She believed that Fimic's reputation was rather old-fashioned, but that it was known for its expertise.

Tähtinen saw that the existing images of Musex and Fimic already affected Music Finland's image, as people always compare to history. He saw that the purpose of Music Finland's branding process was to utilize the existing images and choose actions that make people notice quickly that something is happening. Moreover, the actions being performed until the interviews had focused on matters that needed improving. Vihtkari hoped that Music Finland would start by focusing on every individual operation of both background organizations and one by one start building the new organization by clarifying which operations are still relevant and which should be discarded. In addition, she thought that the organization should carefully examine all possibilities of establishing new operations through chances arising from the merger.

5.3 Brand identity of Music Finland

5.3.1 Adding value through services

Lampi saw that Music Finland's services are the most important factor affecting its brand identity. According to her, the whole identity building process should start from the services and what the customer can receive from Music Finland, and it should not be based on associations but on realistic services. She thought that the main reasons for customers to attend business events through Music Finland are help in productions and financial support provided, as traveling alone to a trade fair might prove to be too troublesome. Furthermore, she saw Music Finland as an information provider regarding the events and emphasized that the organization naturally wants that customers receive more added value and synergistic benefits when attending under one umbrella organization.

Lampi evaluated that in addition to functional benefits regarding production and financial support, added value means visibility and new contacts. She hoped that in the future international players would see Music Finland as a guarantee of interesting, good quality music. Regarding emotional benefits, she saw that an organization's support, feedback and encouragement could be very reassuring for an unsure artist.

Tähtinen believed that for Musex's customers, quality equaled added value:

“Se että, et jos me pystytään olemassaolollamme tuottamaan asiakkaalle lisäarvoa ni silloin meidän toiminta on ollu laadukasta. Se voi olla... se voi olla tota, tietotaitoa, se voi olla verkostoja, se voi olla joku, joku tuotannollinen elementti jossain hankkeessa, esimerkiks... esimerkiks vaikkapa jos asiakas lähtee ulkomaille messu- tai johonkin ammattilaistapahtumaan, niin mitä se saa siitä irti kun me tuotetaan se osallistuminen versus kuin sillail et se menis sinne itse.” (Tähtinen 2012.)

“That, if we are able, because of our existence, to add value to the customer, then our operations have been valuable. It can be knowhow, it can be networks, it can be some production element in our project, for example if a client goes abroad on a trade fair or business event, that what he gets out of it when we produce the participation versus him going there by himself.” (Tähtinen 2012.)

He continued by saying that when a customer chooses to attend an event through Music Finland, the organization needs to be able to help that customer receive results and make sure that the customer meets contacts that are valuable for his business. Furthermore, in his opinion, for composers Music Finland needs to be able to provide more visibility and more use for their works – more than they would receive if Music Finland did not exist.

For Vihtkari, the reason to attend an event through Musex or Fimic was growing her networks and receiving new ideas. She emphasized that networking is also her very first priority with Music Finland, and wished that the organization would not “reach for the stars” but would perform smaller functions well instead and concentrate on receiving results realistically.

Suominen agreed that the added value from attending an event through Musex derived from it making networking and being at the event easier. In addition, he mentioned that going to an event as one group of Finns holds a special feeling, even

though the group consists of players from different fields of operation. According to him, knowing other Finnish participants and having a team spirit also eases networking at site. Suominen added that he valued the support he received from the employees of Musex, who were eager to introduce him to new people, and mentioned that meeting people through Musex always seemed natural. He wished that Music Finland would see the value in creating the team spirit among Finns, as it makes networking easier when people know each other better; thus, the participants would also obtain more results from international networking receptions.

5.3.2 Quality as a measure of success

According to Lampi, for Fimic's clients quality meant reliable and well-produced services and equality. She thought that also regarding Music Finland quality should rely on professional and comprehensive services. In order to ensure good quality of services, she mentioned that the staff needs to consist of professional experts, and the organization needs to communicate clearly what services are provided to whom, as well as to have a clear understanding on it internally.

According to Tähtinen, in order to deliver quality Music Finland needs to listen to the industry on what needs to be done, and understand it well enough to evaluate all works. He emphasized that Music Finland must more effectively evaluate the actions of the background organizations, repeat those, which have worked, and more actively omit factors that have not worked. He continued by saying that Music Finland needs to have enough resources to produce its services with quality, which according to him can be ensured through recruiting the right, motivated people and dividing their tasks well.

For Vihtkari, quality provided by Music Finland means personal help and support given to the customers once they are ready to devote to the business themselves. To reach the quality standards, she saw that Music Finland needs to ensure that the organization has good employees who know how to build the right international network around them, and who have a good understanding of all networks in every market area.

According to Suominen, quality means easiness in all operations. For him, easiness equals fluent communication instead of bureaucratic, and if it is bureaucratic, it is transparent. In addition, he emphasized openness and honesty as a measure of easiness, and said that an organization delivering with quality does what is agreed, but always provides a chance for negotiation and flexibility.

When asked about negative feedback on the quality of Fimic's services, Lampi evaluated that it was mostly related to inadequate communication, which caused misunderstandings and false expectations among customers. Tähtinen agreed that this was often also the reason for negative feedback received by Musex. He added that lack of resources lead to operations not being performed sufficiently well. Lack of resources was a topic of negative feedback for Vihtkari as well since it caused frustration when information reached the customers rather late and sometimes only one person was able to answer certain questions. Suominen on the other hand stated that he was never disappointed with Musex's services.

5.3.3 Music Finland as an organization

Tähtinen thought that the different organizational cultures of Musex and Fimic affect Music Finland's brand identity through its staff. As nearly everyone has a history in separate background organizations and they are used to working in a certain way, everyone brings part of the history to the identity. Whether it is positive or negative, he found it hard to evaluate; however, he saw that everyone has the attitude that they are in Music Finland to create something new.

Lampi saw that Fimic's value and uniqueness lay in its long history and the cultural work it performed especially regarding Finnish contemporary classical music. She called Fimic a cornerstone of Finnish music and noted that Fimic was sincere in advancing Finnish music. Moreover, she saw that Music Finland's value and uniqueness arise from its ability to bring together the unique and valuable histories of two different organizations and make it an entity that serves customers even better than the previous ones. She emphasized that export alone is not enough, but Music Finland needs to focus equally on influencing and advancement as well as building international co-productions and partnerships.

When asked whether stereotypes of Finland and the country's brand, which may affect Music Finland's image, should be part of Music Finland's brand identity, Tähtinen said that they could be used in communications and taken as part of the brand, but they do not need to affect the identity. He emphasized that the organization needs to create its own brand identity. Lampi thought that it should be considered on a case and culture basis whether emphasizing Finland as part of the brand works and continues that, although in some countries it is very beneficial, in some cases a Finland-brand or a governmental label could even be harmful.

Tähtinen saw that the customers' contact to the brand is closer in Music Finland than in an organization where there is a concrete product between the customer and an employee. Therefore, every action and message communicated externally affects the brand directly. In addition, the customers' expectations about the brand's ability to deliver quality are high since Music Finland's employees are expected to be experts. Tähtinen reminded that the brand of Music Finland is more vulnerable than many others, as customers continuously act with the brand's core. He saw that Music Finland's staff has been "amazingly dedicated" to delivering the organization's message positively.

Lampi saw that the employees are required to have a strong professional identity in order for them to see themselves as part of the organization's brand - however, for many it seems natural. She said that in addition to strong dedication, the employees are required to have a vast understanding of Finnish music, as no employee can define a single product or service he or she represents.

Vihtkari emphasized the importance of Music Finland's staff as the brand's representatives, and that the people working there are the "basis for everything, since in the end nothing else matters". For her, the most important factor was the staff's enthusiastic attitude in ensuring that their customers meet the right people, and that the industry works with Music Finland as a team.

Vihtkari hoped that regarding the internationalization of Finnish music Music Finland would take a more entrepreneurial stance and consider internationalization from a business-like perspective. She anticipated that this would cause contradictions in the

future, and therefore saw the need to emphasize that efficient advancing of artists' internationalization requires thinking in terms of business.

“Se fakta on kuitenkin se, et jos ei tehdä liiketoiminnan näkökulmasta ni silloin ei myöskään voida... ei voida niinku edistää artistien kansainvälistymistä, koska jostain se raha siihen tarvitaan, ja tukitoiminta on eri asia ku se että oikeesti niinku lähdetään kansainvälistymään niin että siitä tulee myöskin hyvää bisnestä.” (Vihtkari 2012.)

“The fact is that if things are not done from the viewpoint of business, then it is not possible to advance the artists' internationalization, because the money needs to come from somewhere, and coordinating financial support is different than really going international so that it also becomes a good business.” (Vihtkari 2012.)

5.3.4 Music Finland's personality and brand-customer relationships

According to Lampi, Music Finland as a person is very social, diplomatically skilled, good at influencing, not arrogant but not too humble, and a brave and good communicator with a good self-confidence. Tähtinen saw Music Finland as brave, knowing, broadminded, forward-looking and communicative. When describing Music Finland's ideal relationship with its clients, Lampi told that Music Finland is a facilitator, opener of doors, bridge-builder and background support. Tähtinen noted that Music Finland should emphasize that it aims to better answer the special needs of different customers or customer groups, and that the organization does not repeat its processes for the sake of repeating, but that actions are taken because they matter. He highlighted that in order to deliver added value, Music Finland needs to do what it promises. For Suominen, Music Finland's relationship with the clients should be easy and honest. As an example of this, he used the organization's Head of International, Sami Häikiö.

As Musex's and Fimic's services stressed different genres rather differently, Tähtinen reminded that the question about genres can be even explosive, and it affects Music Finland's brand identity immensely. He underlined that part of Music Finland's brand identity is supposed to be open-minded, take everyone into consideration and “have ears and eyes open everywhere”. As he saw it impossible to please everyone constantly, he reminded that Music Finland should serve everyone with different em-

phasis, which will ultimately lead to everyone being noticed in the long run. In his opinion Music Finland will be able to do this, and he saw that it begins with communicating clearly that the organization understands everyone.

Lampi saw the genre divide more as an internal challenge of the organization. Like Tähtinen, she said that the challenge lies in making all customer groups feel that Music Finland is for them. Lampi believed that it is not a big challenge, since the staff of Music Finland is rather heterogenic; however, it needs to be clear even in Music Finland's internal communication that all genres are equally represented.

Suominen on the other hand saw that genres were never emphasized in Musex's operations. For him, it seemed that metal music was supported a lot, but he acknowledged that as he works with metal music himself, it is the genre that he follows. He continued by admitting, that he has never paid attention on how much other music is supported.

Although customers are part of Music Finland's processes and they do affect the brand that Music Finland will become, according to Tähtinen they should not be part of the brand identity. He argued that under no conditions is there a need for Music Finland to become part of the customers' identity. In addition, it is not necessary for the customers to benefit from Music Finland's brand, as ultimately it cannot be beneficial to move forward with a state-funded organization in the frontline. Tähtinen continued that Music Finland has to move with the artists in the frontline, and it would be harmful to create an image that Finnish music is good because there is such a good organization supporting it. He concluded that Music Finland has to be able to serve the clients and raise them to the spotlight.

Lampi agreed by saying that Music Finland is not the main point, but Finnish music, and it has to be ahead of the organization. Ultimately, Music Finland is simply a tool, and the organization cannot send a message that there is no way of succeeding without Music Finland. She saw that for international professionals Music Finland can be a guarantee of interesting music but if the music is not good, Music Finland's presence will not make it better.

5.3.5 Music Finland's core identity

When Lampi and Tähtinen were asked what Music Finland's core identity is, they concentrated on describing Music Finland's most important principles. Tähtinen stated that Music Finland must help Finnish music succeed and be seen and heard internationally. Lampi mentioned that Music Finland equally represents all genres of music and all makers of Finnish music. She emphasized that music cannot be just a commodity, but it has an intrinsic value that needs to be treasured: Exporting music is not possible if the music is not good enough and artists and songwriters are not qualified enough. Therefore, according to Lampi the core is the quality of music.

For Lampi the starting point for building Music Finland's brand identity was within the content of the services it offers. Tähtinen on the other hand thought the starting point was the organization itself. He pointed out that the organization is where everything comes from, and services are just products on which an organization such as Music Finland should not be built. He said the identity is built for the organization, around which services and customer relationships will revolve.

Vihtkari as well saw that the brand identity should be built on the organization and its people, after which everything else follows. In her opinion, if Music Finland does not have the right employees who understand how the industry works, it is impossible to get good results on the projects that are implemented, and the customers find it hard to work with such team. Suominen agreed and pointed out that although services are the reason why the organization is approached first, what ultimately matters and what steers the brand image is the staff of the organization.

As Music Finland receives much of its funding from the state, it was questioned whether it affects the organization's brand identity. Lampi thought that although no entity wants to affect it intentionally, financiers needs to be considered as Music Finland's actions cannot contradict the way Finland wants to be seen internationally. Tähtinen saw that because of financiers, Music Finland sometimes has to adjust to possibilities instead of functioning based on actual needs. He added that Music Finland's owners naturally affect the brand identity, and affected it already by establishing the organization, but he does not see them as external to the organization. In ad-

dition, Tähtinen noted that the organization's assumptions on what is wanted from it affect its brand identity, and that the strength of the identity will be tested when the organization will face a crisis.

In order to implement these plans so that Music Finland's brand image would correspond to its identity, Lampi saw that everything needs to be well planned, as planning the operations affects the brand directly. Other important aspect is the staff, which needs to be considered not only when recruiting but also when dividing tasks. Lampi told that all employees need to have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and that they all reflect Music Finland's brand identity. In addition, everyone within the organization must have a clear understanding on what Music Finland's mission, vision and values are in order to understand what they are working for, why and how.

Tähtinen agreed that Music Finland must have the right employees who are motivated and able to do their work properly. The organization needs to have processes that do not impede operations, and it needs to communicate openly with the clients. In addition, Music Finland needs to be able to do the right things from the viewpoint of clients as well as the organization itself.

Tähtinen summed up that Music Finland's uniqueness and value lie within its effort to be better all the time, and its endeavors to benchmark and learn from other industries as well. He sees that in Finland, Music Finland has great opportunities and its staff understands the industry and music thoroughly.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Evaluating the results

Music Finland is a brand, which needs to be managed. Like Kapferer, most of the interviewees put the greatest emphasis on the brand concept (see Figure 1) in determining what makes a brand. Services were seen as a starting point, and with an organization such as Music Finland, name and symbol seemed to have very little significance.

Musex's brand identity was young, efficient, dynamic and fast, and it wanted to listen to the industry and be the best export organization in Finland. From its image, Musex was an honest and open partner and a good friend, as well as a networker who accomplished a lot with an energetic and entrepreneurial attitude. However, it was still in a learning phase and sometimes caused frustration with its last-minute announcements or actions that were not implemented properly due to lack of resources.

Fimic was an objective and trustworthy expert who valued courage and openness and was active and easy to approach. From its image, Fimic was an expert with a long history of doing important cultural work who sometimes, instead of looking forward, looked to the past and seemed rather bureaucratic, distant and old-fashioned.

It is likely that both internal and external opinions about the brand images of Musex and Fimic are highlighted due to the merger process; therefore, recognizing the brand image trap and not allowing these brand images automatically become the brand identity of Music Finland is crucial. It is a big challenge for the organization to ensure that the customers' brand images of Music Finland will correspond to the brand identity created by the organization. The brand images of both background organizations had negative aspects that contradicted the desired brand identities, and Music Finland must recognize the noise causing these and avoid them from becoming a part of Music Finland's brand image.

Brand identity consists of a set of brand associations, which represent what the brand stands for. These associations, since they are created by the organization, are

also promises to the customers. Every association becoming a part of Music Finland's identity should be clearly communicated to and understood by the staff, since they are promises that, in order to fulfill customers' expectations, need to be kept in every touch point.

Aaker's definition of the brand's core identity states that it consists of associations that make the brand unique and valuable and that the core identity should contribute to the value proposition. The following table presents the interviewees' views on these aspects.

TABLE 1. Elements of Music Finland's core identity

	Core identity	Uniqueness and value	Value proposition
Tähtinen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Music Finland helps Finnish music to be seen and heard internationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being better all the time - Benchmarking and learning from other industries - Staff understands the industry and music thoroughly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added value - Networks - Knowhow - Concrete additional business results - Visibility - Understanding of the industry
Lampi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Music Finland equally represents all genres of music and all makers of Finnish music - Advancing the quality of music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bringing together the histories of two different organizations - Serving customers better than the previous organizations - Equal focus on export, influencing and international co-operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help in productions - Financial support - New contacts - Visibility - Information - Support, feedback and encouragement - Well-produced services - Equality
Customers			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking - New ideas - Team spirit - Personal help and support - Easiness - Fluent communication - Transparency - Openness - Honesty - Keeping promises - Flexibility

The table shows that Lampi's and Tähtinen's understanding of Music Finland's core identity differ rather much from each other. Music Finland's mission is to "increase the vitality and advance the international success of Finnish music" (Music Finland, 2012), which together with Lampi's views on Music Finland's core identity leaves the

need to clearly define the boundaries of Music Finland advancing the quality of music and the music companies and artists doing it themselves.

This leads to an observation about Music Finland's culture. Kapferer refers to culture as a set of values out of which the brand derives from and sees culture at the very core of the identity. The culture of Music Finland is rather strongly divided into the culture of art and culture of business, which originates from Fimic's culture of altruistically advancing art and culture and Musex's culture of advancing business of the artists and music companies.

As representatives of music companies, the customers interviewed for this study clearly represent the culture of business. The role of Music Finland's business culture should now be examined in all other customer groups as well, after which it should be determined how both cultures will be integrated into Music Finland's identity. As the fact remains that art and business are often seen as opposed to each other, Music Finland's brand building should start from first determining the roles of both cultures in the brand identity and then uniting them to be a coherent identity where the cultures of art and business support each other. In addition, everyone within the organization needs to understand the importance of business for some customers as well as the importance of the intrinsic value of music. Music Finland's extended identity will surely have different associations that are communicated to different customer groups, but having a strong division in the core identity does not drive the unity that Music Finland aims for.

The results presented different views on whether Music Finland's brand identity should be based on services or the organization itself. Although services are the starting point, it seems that personal support and help provided by the staff as well as support in networking, emotional benefits and additional growth of business not concretely tied to any services are valued most by the customers. For them, the most important aspect in the organization is its staff, and the staff will largely define the brand image they will hold about Music Finland. Every individual employee is a representative of the brand, which emphasizes the role of the organization as the start-

ing point for creating the brand identity. Every customer will largely form their image of Music Finland based on the person from the staff they most communicate with.

Inadequate communication and lack of resources are the biggest issues in guaranteeing that Music Finland's brand identity will match its image; therefore, Music Finland will put much emphasis on recruiting the right people and keeping them motivated. In addition, Music Finland needs to be constantly aware of the emotional factors affecting their customers using their services, and that service attributes need to correlate with attributes related to Music Finland's brand identity. The customers' emphasis regarding quality is on easy, honest and transparent communication.

Brand-customer relationships are based on values and culture of the organization, which the staff represents. In case these are not shared and agreed upon throughout the organization, customers will always have a relationship with Musex or Fimic instead of Music Finland. As already stated, staff is such a crucial part of Music Finland's brand identity that although they would be motivated to accomplish the organization's culture and values, if they do not have a clear understanding of them they will be unable to communicate it correctly, and the customers' brand images will not correlate with the brand identity. In addition, there should be a consensus on whether the brand of Music Finland should be internally perceived as a merger of two brands or a completely new brand. Although the operations of the background organizations still exist, having the attitude of creating something totally new and not allowing the history to become a value prevents in part the brand identity trap. This will be supported with everyone in the organization having a clear and coherent understanding about the attributes that constitute to the brand's value proposition.

Music Finland's uniqueness should lie in its ability to understand the industry and produce services that are needed and add value. In the Finnish music industry, there were varied opinions on whether Musex actually could help their business or not. Music Finland is very likely to face these doubts as well, and it is the organization's challenge to communicate to the clients the role of Music Finland, and that customers who are willing to invest in their own business will receive support, both functional and emotional. It has been recognized that financiers have an influence on

whether Music Finland can act based on actual needs or if it has to adapt to possibilities, and this will naturally add some noise between the brand identity and brand image.

Another internal challenge for building Music Finland's brand identity is the division of genres that derives from Fimic being much focused on classical music and Musex being seen as a representative of popular music. This divide is, however, very well recognized by the staff, which is united in highly valuing equality. The focus will from now on be in planning the operations so that equality, not only in genres but also in different fields of business, will become an undeniable part of both Music Finland's identity and image.

Although Music Finland should always operate on the artists' conditions, for international music industry representatives Music Finland's brand can be a guarantee of quality, and the thought of Music Finland's brand helping the artists enter new markets should not be discarded. However, it is clear that as an organization whose task is to support Finnish music, the brand should never be ahead of those of Finnish companies and artists.

In order to assure a good, coherent brand identity and a corresponding image, Music Finland needs to focus on employing motivated experts with good networks and a clear and vast understanding of the industry and Finnish music. In addition, the organization's brand identity needs to be clearly defined on every aspect. The brand identity must then be communicated to the staff, and every touch point with the customers needs to be managed. The services that Music Finland offers should be well planned, and there needs to be enough resources to implement them accordingly. Above all, all of this needs to be communicated to the customers accordingly, so that they have an absolutely clear view on what Music Finland offers them.

6.2 Limitations

Interviewing both clients and staff gave a rather comprehensive picture on the differences of the two organizations and led to discovering a vast array of wishes and challenges facing Music Finland. Although views on branding and the understanding of related concepts naturally varied among the interviewees, the interview questions were clear enough to examine thoroughly all relevant factors affecting the brand identity of Music Finland. It was clearly easier to get comprehensive answers for questions that focused on values, benefits and feelings behind the brand rather than direct questions about branding.

A major shortcoming regarding the reliability of the interviews was that both clients interviewed were very strongly business-oriented, although a major segment of Fimic's clients were artists, such as composers or musicians. In addition, many of Musex's clients were artists participating in projects through their own artist companies, and their views might differ from those of business representatives of music companies. The rather apparent divide between business and art was discussed mainly through comparing the views of Tähtinen and Lampi; however, a customer perspective from a composer client would have given these conclusions more reliability.

As only two staff members were interviewed, it cannot be generalized that the conclusions drawn from their answers apply to everyone. However, since there are differences in their views regarding Music Finland's brand, it can be assumed that different views exist throughout the organization. In addition, the author of this study works at Music Finland, which may have led to some results being differently emphasized due to her observations made through her every-day work within the organization.

Although this study is in English, the interviews were conducted in Finnish, which presents a possibility for misunderstandings. To ensure that the interviewees' opinions were presented accurately, they were asked to check whether some words chosen for this report did not correspond to what they meant in the interviews. In addition, some questions asked the interviewees to describe Music Finland, and not the

brand; therefore, the straight comparison of the results derived from the author's interpretations to theories of branding is not valid.

7 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

7.1 Conclusion

Literature about branding mergers focuses mostly on cases where the brand of either of the merging companies remains. In Music Finland's case a completely new brand was built but the staff and functions of previous organizations remained. From a theoretical point of view, theories about building a new brand were examined in this study, but aspects influencing the brand identity were numerous, deriving from two different backgrounds.

Branding is rarely considered important among associations, as it is often associated with marketing and selling. However, even a brand of an association holds a strong meaning in the customers' minds especially in a business-to-business environment, where the brand's meaning is to reduce the customers' risks by giving support, whether functional or emotional.

Through clearly defining its brand identity, Music Finland will be able to coherently communicate its mission and vision to its customers, and make it clear in the minds of its staff what the organization stands for. As the brand is in straight connection with customers in several touch points, the staff communicating with the clients in these touch points having a unanimous understanding of the brand identity can ensure that Music Finland's brand image will be as desired. Although Music Finland is a completely new brand, in the minds of staff and customers it is bringing together two very different brands, which is a big, but a very unique challenge for the organization.

7.2 Suggestions for further research

After Music Finland's brand identity has been clearly defined and communicated throughout the Finnish music industry, and when the operations of the background organizations have been successfully united under one organization, it is recommended to conduct a brand research on the brand image of Music Finland. This would help the organization see whether the brand image matches the identity, and examine the noise causing the possible differences.

Since this research focused on perceptions of Finnish customers, it would be beneficial to research what the meaning of Music Finland's brand is in international markets. This would provide valuable information on Music Finland's role in taking Finnish music abroad from the buyers' perspective.

Internally, it is important to continuously monitor the staff's perceptions of Music Finland's brand identity. As already stated in this research, customers form their images of Music Finland mostly based on personal communication with the organization's staff, and every staff member transmits their understanding of the brand identity to the customer in some level.

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