

The integration among museums and the key role of Internal Marketing

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Work-in-Progress Paper

Key words: museum, integration, network, system, internal marketing, service, relationship.

Introduction

The integration - meant as real and virtual organization among various museums - is opening new perspectives to the Italian cultural panorama.

The new experiences of network which inevitably pass through criticalities – in the change process, in the definition of roles and objectives to be shared among the operators, in the integration of resources and offer, in the training of personnel – brings great opportunities, too. The advantages of the system or network are related to:

- *competencies*: the network promotes the construction of new competencies for the operators and new organizational models for museums; in this way each reality can concentrate on its specificities, strengthening both its offer and the value of the group of museums;
- *offer*: it facilitates and optimises the offer for the demand; in this way also the small institution can contribute to the value of the offer sharing common programs and goals. As a result of such synergy its image, capacity of attracting visitors and partners and the value its cultural offer are strengthened. But also the great realities can benefit such synergy: thanks to the small structures they can be present on the territory in a more flexible and detailed way;
- *economic and financial advantages*: scale economy, more revenues, costs reduction and resources optimisation, more efficiency and effectiveness, more capacity of investments, fund raising, are possible in an integrated system.

The *leitmotiv* to put together all this aspects in order to promote and realise the integration among different structures is the logic of service (Gronroos). One of its tools is marketing because it can optimise resources and internal relationships in a logic of attention for the client, both internal – personnel – and external –visitors.

Such an integration finds a strategic perspective in the marketing vision and operative tools in the internal marketing and new technologies. This paper starts from the more recent contributes³ about how museums are orientating themselves to marketing and what the role of internal marketing is in the creation of a network.

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³ See the notes in bibliography about Gronroos and the recent research the Region Lombardia has made about the creation of cultural system in its territory.

The paper

The paper is focused on:

- ▶ The process of integration among museums: case histories. Many museums are guessing how to answer to the market and the demand requests. Integration, as a good answer to these challenges, can be realised in various ways. Three types of integration have been here considered:
 - *the mixed management*, the integration between public and private partners. Case history: Museo dello scarpone e della calzatura sportive in Veneto;
 - *real/virtual integration* of the offer, between a museum and its web site. Case history: Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia in Milano;
 - *the system*, the integration among different museums which are concentrated in a territory. Case history: Porto Antico in Genova.

Issues for this section: What does integration mean for the operators? Which are their advantages, disadvantages? First results in the considered cases.

- ▶ The key role of internal marketing: first evidences. The construction of a museums network involves an important change in the entire organisation. The integration goes both through the sharing of physical resources and HR. With such an approach internal marketing is not limited to personnel training and commitment in museums. The real aim is to drive the entire organisation to the client. The role of internal marketing has been **hypothesized** in the three cases considered.

Issues for this section: How can the internal marketing help the creation of a synergy among museums? What are its tools? How much is the personnel important for the creation of the service and how can it contribute to improve its value?

- ▶ Hypotheses for a research. From a first interpretation of the Italian cultural context and the cases proposed new hypotheses have emerged. We will see the objectives and the structure of the research we intend to develop through the analysis of integration of both Italian and foreign cases. The principal aim is to construct a pattern of reference for the process of integration among museums, describing its phases and the strategic and operative implication for each step.

Issues: cases analysis, a model for integration, strategic and operative implication for each phase, the role of internal marketing and new technologies in each phase.

Case histories

1. *The mixed management: Museo dello scarpone e della calzatura sportive in Montebelluna, Veneto*⁴

A mixed management in a museum can be successful for various reasons:

- public partners are responsible for the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage of the territory;
- private partners are responsible of the fruition of the collections. They bring their managerial experience making the museum more flexible and reactive towards market and its demand and bringing important financial support;

⁴ Winner of the Guggenheim Award as the best cultural enterprise in 2001

- mixed management and the know how exchange between private and public partners allow both a social service and the pursuit of parameters of efficiency, effectiveness and satisfaction of the visitor. The result is a better integration of the museum with its territory, inhabitants and resources.

But mixed management can bring risks too. If the mission is not sufficiently shared the different background and traditional goals of the two partners can cause problems like a confuse positioning of the museum, a loss of commitment in the personnel, a dangerous change in the mission, internal conflicts, failure of the museum itself.

Internal marketing can play an important role in the creation of a common culture, the sharing of a coherent mission, the formulation of adequate objectives and strategies.

€ The case of the Museo dello Scarpone is a positive example of synergy between public and private partners, a good relation in which each part plays an important role according to its specificity.

The museum starts in 1984 as a small exposition of sport shoes for athletes and alpinists. In 1992 it becomes an association and then a private foundation with the mission of witnessing the tradition of the territory in this kind of production. The house is owned by the Comune which gives the building to the foundation in usufruct: so the property is public but the management is private.

The foundation, which is in the most important industrial district for sport shoes in Italy, has the following goals:

- historical evidence of the territory and its production;
- synergy and enhancement of the shoe enterprises of the territory;
- development of research activities;
- technological innovation, training and quality in shoe production;
- representation of the shoe producers all over the world through collection and activities.

Partners of the museum are both private⁵ and public⁶. Since the beginning the economic and financial participation of the private partners⁷ is strong because they find the museum a good place both for cultural offer and for business development (a good link among them, young people looking for specialist training, job offer, business presentations and business negotiations). As a matter of fact the museum has become - thanks to the mixed management - a multipurpose structure for visitors, students, teachers, researchers, journalists and business men.

The offer is composed by:

- a permanent exhibition on historic sport shoes and various temporary exhibitions, didactic activities;

⁵ Important shoes producers like Alpinestar, Dolomite, Fila Sport, Nike, San Marco, Lomer, Lange, Rossignol, Lotto, Geox, Nordica, Salomon, Sangiorgio- Adidas, Scarpa, Stonefly, Tecnica, Tieffe, Trezeta, Vibram, have concentrated in this district, but also private societies like Messe Muenchen International Veneto Banca, etc.

⁶ COMUNE of Montebelluna, the Camera di Commercio of Treviso, the Confartigianato of Montebelluna, the Region Veneto,

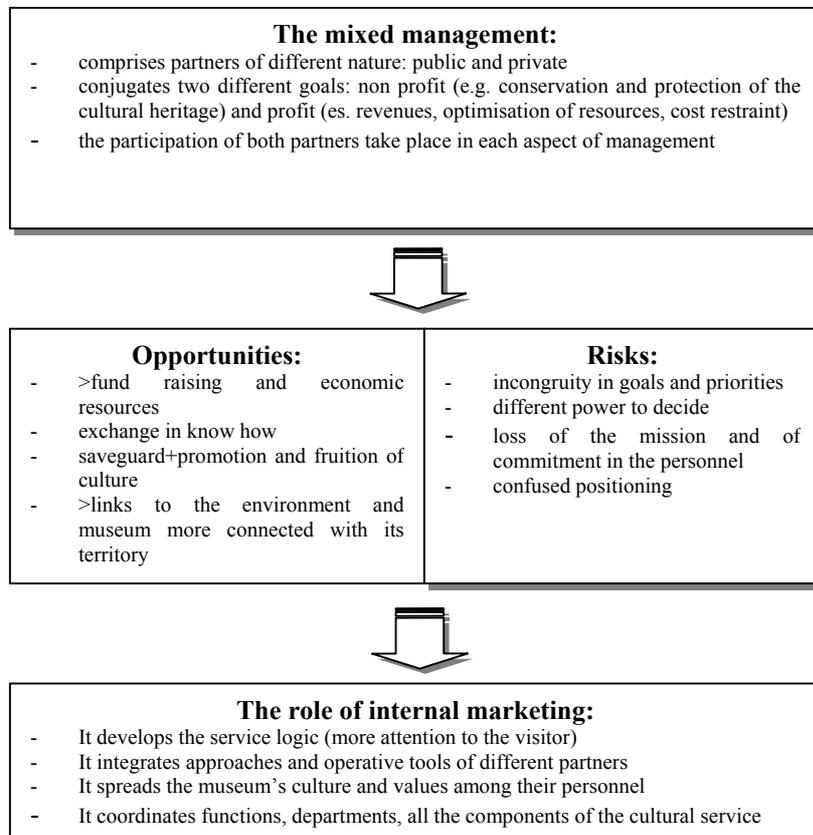
⁷ The Museo dello Scarpone can have revenues up to 600.000.000 €⁷ and strong investments by the private partners for its activities and collection

- room for rent for promotional events or presentations;
- vocational training programs sponsored by the firms;
- a web site with a section about the museum and a section about job opportunities, information about the sponsors, a list of the courses organised at the museum;
- news and publications about the shoe district.

So the Museo dello Scarpone has become a landmark for Veneto and its inhabitants who consider the museum both a cultural centre and a good meeting point with enterprises and training programs.

But how could internal marketing enhance such a success? The opportunities and the risks of a mixed management have been summarised here below, in order to identify possible application of internal marketing in such a type of integration.

The mixed management and the role of internal marketing



2. *The real/virtual offer: Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia in Milano and www.museoscienza.org*

Usually considered as a distribution and communication channel, the web site represents for a museum the unique alternative for direct selling. It gives to the institute more visibility in the market and gives value to the intangible aspects of the cultural service, changing not only the dynamics in the relationships between museum and visitors, but also redesigning the structure or the offer and its fruition process.

In this sense the web site is no more a part of the augmented offer (Gronroos 2000) but part itself of the service's core and of the museum itself. But such a versatile and relatively cheap instrument can become a strategic trap if the management does not integrate it with the organisation of the museum and its resources: it has to be developed and managed in coherence with the museum's nature and in synergy with it (too often can we find examples of web sites which live outside the museum's philosophy, as if they were a thing apart from it).

The web site can be an important part of the cultural offer of a museum and an effective tool to manage the relationship with clients and stakeholders.

€ The case of Museo della Scienza is a good example of how a museum can integrate its physical offer – already existing – with a web site – in accordance with a unique mission and cultural service.

Inaugurated in 1953 the museum has a triple mission:

- to represent the scientific and technical culture in Italy (considering past, present and future);
- to promote culture in general through the Leonardo da Vinci figure⁸ and rich didactic programs for schools;
- to valorise Milan as one of the most important European cities for its economic development.

The offer of the museum is composed as follows:

- a wide collection of scientific and technical objects of various periods;
- visits with guide, interactive laboratories and activities;
- open spaces for summer programs about science and technology;
- meeting and congress activities;
- web site.

The targets are principally four:

- schools (with didactic programs and guided visits);
- children with parents (with special tickets);
- foreigners in groups organised by travel agencies and tour operators (especially Japanese fond of Leonardo da Vinci);
- Italian adults, students, researchers.

Because of the long tradition of the museum and the age of its collection the management perceives the need to make the museum more flexible and reactive. In this way the web site is conceived as the right tool to redefine the relationship between the museum and the visitors: in this way the museum evolves from a position of static institution for conservation – a sort of mausoleum for culture – to a dynamic reality related to its environment.

The virtual offer is based on high quality and quantity level of information and interactive pages and sections with news, links, tools to create the community⁹.

⁸ The museum is dedicated to this scientist and artist

⁹ E-mail, newsletter, mailing list, thematic forum and chat line are the tools for the community on a web site

Four the objectives of the web site:

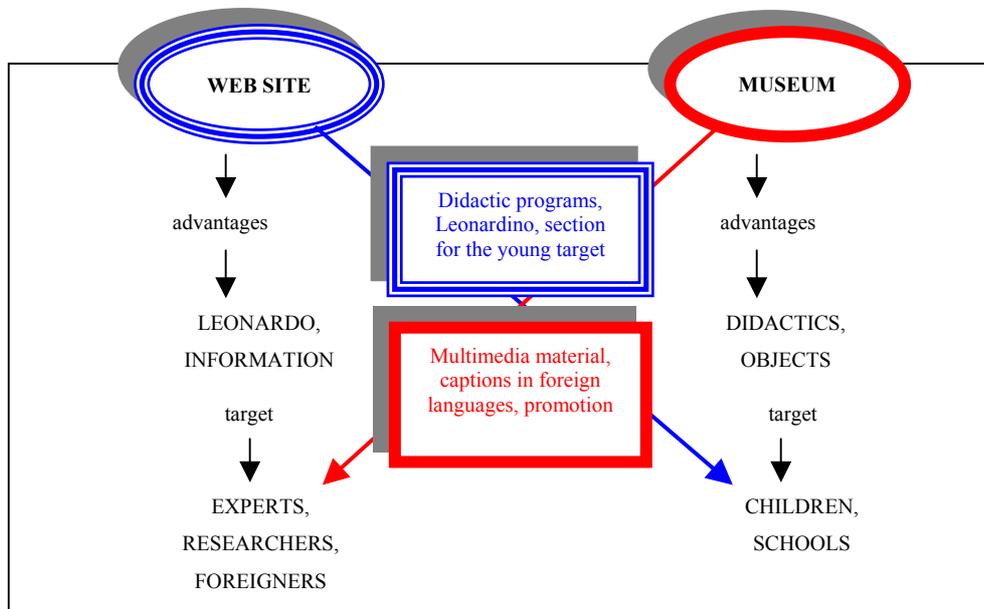
- more visibility to the museum;
- an interesting and attractive site for visitors;
- a useful site for the museum;
- an interactive instrument of communication:

The contents and section of the site are on the offer and characteristics of the museum but it develops also other sections which expand the themes we can find at the museum with deepening on science, technology and above all Leonardo da Vinci.

So the targets of the web site are those of the museum but also different segments: sponsors, museums operators, teachers, students, adults living in Milan and hinterland.

How to integrate the two offers? A research has been made¹⁰ to better understand how to improve the relationship between museum and site and how to design the new sections of the site.

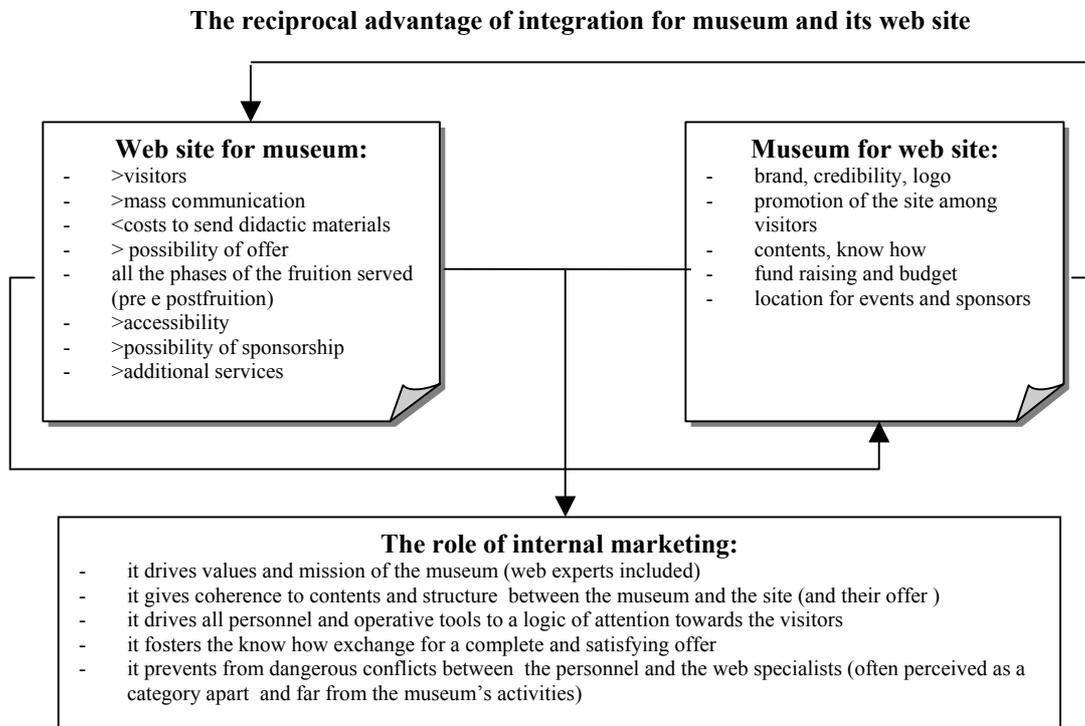
The relation between MNST and its web site



The web site can make the museum's offer more visible but it can also change deeply the construction of the service value, expanding its intangible aspects, enriching its contents, giving the possibility - in terms of access and usability - to improve the process of fruition. Paradoxically thanks to the web site, the museum can strengthen its traditional mission: to make the culture accessible to people, preserving our heritage. The net can do all this, introducing new ways and contents to museum's offer. But this kind of integration involves a synergic planning and the cooperation of all competencies and figures of the museum.

¹⁰ A questionnaire has been made to the mailing list of the web site in order to better understand how to improve the site and how to integrate it with the traditional offer of the museum. Period: July 2001. Partners: Museo della Scienza and Università Cattolica S. Cuore of Milan.

The advantages of the real/virtual integration are synthesised in the following graphic, in order to hypothesize how internal marketing can support such an integration.



3. *The system: Porto Antico in Genova*

The integration among different museums and cultural institutions is one the most innovative trends in cultural panorama. A pole or a system is a set of different museum concentrated on a territory which has various advantages: a wider catchment area, wider offer and fruition, more and different possibilities for the visitors, mixed offers, services in common, a stronger brand and image, more capacities of attracting sponsors and partners for the management of the system or the supporting of its activities. The integration is played on different levels: resources, offer, communication, people, structures. The synergy can be build starting from the sharing of the mission and the objectives; if planned correctly the system can become a landmark for other cultural realities that want to make system.

Ε The case of Porto Antico is a good example of different museums concentrated in a specific site which are integrating their offer in different ways and with various means and instruments. Such integration comprises also the mixed management and the use of the web site. In this way it summarises the two cases seen above.

Inaugurated for the celebration of the V Century of Cristoforo Colombo this area situated near the commercial harbour just in front of the sea, named Porto Antico, wants to rejoin the city with the sea¹¹. The 130.000 square meters area has different uses:

¹¹ Hindered for long time by the naval stores and buildings

The distribution of activities in the area

Cultural-scientific	28%
Congresses	23%
Didactics	18%
Services, Parking	14%
Commercial services	7%
Restaurants	5%
Offices	5%

The State commits the area to the Comune of Genova.

To manage the area a private company is established: Porto Antico Spa, is so composed:

- 80% Comune of Genova;
- 20% Camera di Commercio di Genova.

Different partners take part in the enterprise:

- 51% Comune of Genova;
- 39% Camera di Commercio;
- 10 % Autorità Portuale di Genova.

Because of the complexity and the different uses of the area, the mission of the company is multilevel:

- give the site back to the Genovese;
- create a place open all the year with events, cultural appointments, expositions and cultural services;
- create a tourist and cultural pole of both national and international level;
- valorise the docks and buildings already existing in the area putting different commercial activities.

The Porto Antico Spa is responsible for the location and sub location of the buildings, the general strategies of the area and the coordination of its activities, the development, promotion of the system. Each structure has an independent management.

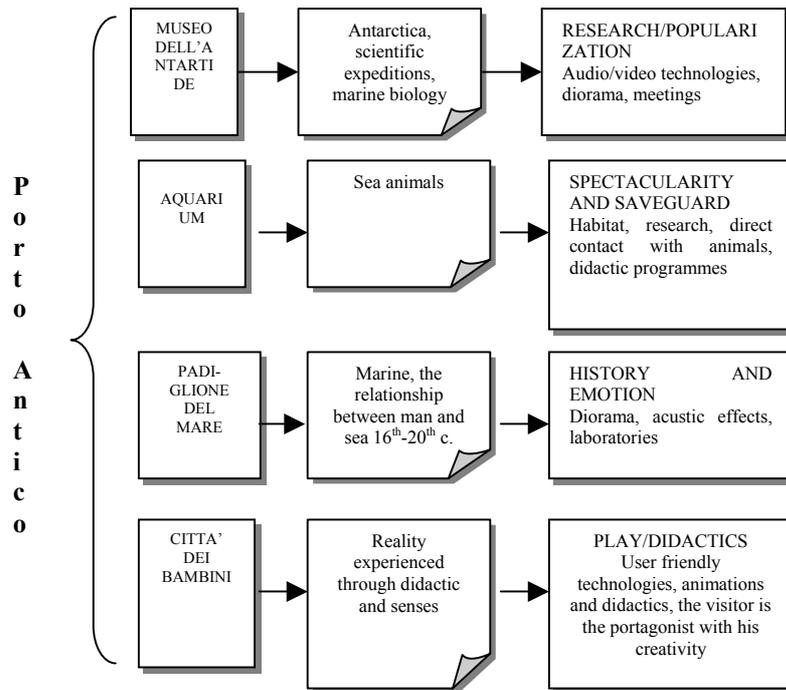
As for the cultural offer the main institutions are:

- the *Aquarium*: it is the core of the cultural offer of Porto Antico, being the third cultural reality in Italy as number of visitors and being the biggest marine park in Europe;
- the *Museo Nazionale dell'Antartide*: the expositive seat of the university research centre, represents the Antarctic environment and the scientific expeditions;
- the *Padiglione del Mare e della Navigazione*: a very appreciated museum by the Genovese for its collection about the history of the marine from the 16th to the 20th century with accurate reconstructions and dioramas of scenes of maritime life and professions;
- the *Città dei Bambini*: the biggest interactive and didactic space for children in Italy, based on the principle of edutainment (education + entertainment) and realised in collaboration with the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie La Villette

in Paris. The Città dei bambini is a centre where to study, learn new things about science doing things, attend specialist courses for teachers.

Each structure has strong peculiarities, giving a personal interpretation of the sea and its inhabitants. This aspect, together with the physical concentration of the structure, has constituted the base for the integration and the creation of a systemic offer.

The cultural offer of Porto Antico



In 2004 Genova will be the European Capital of Culture, developing various cultural programmes. Porto Antico is asked to play an important role in promoting the city and its resources to visitors and inhabitants. Travel by sea and its characters and animals will be the leading theme followed by all the museums of the city. Porto Antico wants to develop the theme of great transatlantics – both ships and Cetacea –in all its aspects: each museum will give a special interpretation of it.

In this phase the integration has been accomplished with shared exposition programs, combitickets, promotion for all the museums, focus groups on particular strategies and initiatives.

The progressive construction of the system, in terms of strategies, offer and objectives, asks for a deep integration of the people working in the museums. The real quality of the cultural service depends first of all on values like knowledge, company culture, cooperation, shared mission, team atmosphere. In this sense the persons who interact in the visit - client and personnel – are the base of the system.

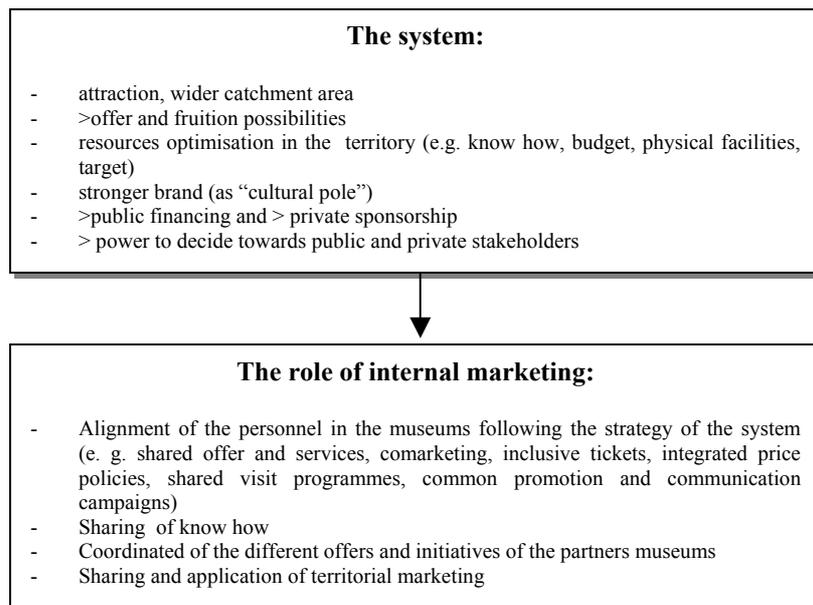
But the integration of Porto Antico is basing on a different level too: it is involving the companies that manage the structures and the alignment of the structure to the same quality level¹².

¹² According to the adjustment process to European Quality Standards

The internal marketing can play a crucial role in the integration of the personnel coming from the different companies: this is particularly true if we consider that three cultural institutions of Porto Antico¹³ are now managed by Costa Edutainment Spa, a company specialised in museums and cultural parks management. We can say that a system in the system is taking place and is driving the entire area to a more effective arrangement of the cultural offer in Porto Antico.

The advantages of making system and the role that internal marketing could have in their promotion, are summarised here below.

The advantages of the system and the role of internal marketing



The key role of Internal Marketing

As we have seen, to create a network of museums implicates a deep change in the whole museum's organization. The network passes at first through the integration and sharing of physical resources and above all the persons, in accordance with the so called "holistic approach" (Gronroos 2000). It is not therefore confined to simple training and motivation of the team components. The real objective is to orientate the whole organization to the client, through the consent, commitment and cooperation of the personnel: all things that are based on inner relationships and effective and continuous communications.

In the three case histories we have seen some possible applications of internal marketing in different contexts of integration.

With internal marketing the inevitable initial resistance of the personnel to the change can be transformed into constructive stimulus aimed at "developing relationships in which team work and shared know how can develop a new organizational knowledge and culture, able to focus on the activities which affect the quality of the relation between museum and market" (Santagostino 2003).

¹³ The Aquarium, the Padiglione del Mare and the Città dei Bambini

Such a holistic approach, the most advanced so far, is based on the integration of all the functions of the organization: so the personnel integration has to be carefully planned both in vertical – the interfunctional integration manages the relationships among colleagues – and in horizontal way – the intrafunctional integration manages the relationships among functions and departments.

But how to apply the internal marketing policies to museums? We now propose a short overview from the literature about I. M. policies (Gronroos, Rafiq, Santagostino) which help us to identify the hypotheses for a research, as described in the following section.

The intervention areas for I. M. could be three:

- management of internal relationships;
- motivation and orientation of personnel;
- support to the change – the process of integration among different structures – through shared know how, values, practises and experiences.

The goals of internal marketing are:

- *intellectual and emotional sharing* of the museum's nature: this means that the staff reflect themselves into the values and the strategies of the museum and the system and take part into their realization according their functions;
- *strong commitment*: the cultural service is highly intangible, variable and personalized. This entails flexibility by the personnel to the needs and expectations of the visitor, empathy to his problems and problem solving capacity;
- *team work*: working together increases the quality of the service both for the internal client – the personnel – and for the external client – the visitor.

The instruments and phases to intervene on these three goals are: recruitment, selection, training, retention and communication. We see all the phases in detail.

1. *Recruitment of candidates*: in this first step goals and functions must be clear for the museum. The HR responsible picks then the candidates out with the right profile. The internal marketing considers the candidates like a market which has to be segmented in order to find the target, that is the right people to be contacted. The instruments for this phase are: mass media, employment agencies, professional schools, employment offices, meeting and congresses, Internet. In this last case more and more museums have a special section in their web site to recruit personnel. An interesting way to promote an effective recruitment is that of planning programs and courses of specialization¹⁴ with schools in accordance with the real requests of museums.
2. *Selection of right people*: the selection of candidates is based both on technical abilities (for instance qualification, professional background) and personal attitudes and character (for instance spontaneity, relational capacity, bent for research). A mixed team very often can bring to better results: but relationships must be managed carefully to prevent conflicts. The instruments for this phase are: group discussion, personal interview, oral or written questionnaire, CV examination. In any case mission and operative processes of the museum,

¹⁴ Many FSE courses and university faculties and courses have spread in the last five years in Italy

together with the contractual conditions and career perspectives must be clear to the candidates in order to come to a right identification of the person to the institute. The selection can concern also the employees of the museum in case of career advancement or promotion.

3. *Training*: working in a logic of service and according with the system values requires a continuous training of its personnel. Too often such aspect is left to everyday work or simple refresher courses. Training must be focused not only on technical abilities but also on relational capacities, so important in the cultural service production and delivery. Three moments in the training can be identified: the participation to the course, the application of what has been learned in the daily work¹⁵, the valuation of the training results¹⁶.
4. *Retention and commitment*: the personnel can be appealed to the museum with contract and personal benefits. Gathering their opinions and communicating to the team, meeting regularly to share the strategy of the system, rewarding the best performances can strengthen the sense of membership to the team and a strong commitment to the system. The empowerment then is an effective tool to increase on one hand the satisfaction and motivation of the employee, on the other hand to improve the flexibility and personalisation of the service which gains in quality for the visitor. This aspect is strictly tied to the training and selection of the right people. Other instruments for this phase are: the logic of internal client¹⁷ and the value chain¹⁸, the fixing of objectives and rewarding for groups rather than for single persons, meetings for exchange and sharing, evaluation of performances.
5. *Management of internal communication*: all the phases we have seen need to be supported by a good communication to be effective. The internal communication has actually the goal of tuning in people and resources to mission and strategies, of spread contents and objectives through the entire organization, of keeping the balance between the internal and external dynamics of the system, in order to be oriented to the client in a service logic.
The communication can be :
 - vertical: a) from top to bottom with brochures, newsletter, blackboard, assemblies, circulars, e-mails, Intranet, questionnaires; b) from bottom to top with personal communications by e-mail, face-to-face, assemblies;
 - transversal, between employees and different departments with forum, newsletter, e-mails, department assemblies, team projects.

The channels for the internal communication are various: oral, written, formal, informal; in any case the communication must keep transparent and coherent

¹⁵ A good relationship with colleagues and a flexible senior are crucial to improve know how and service in its complex

¹⁶ The publication and sharing of the results contribute to give visibility to training programs through the personnel and divisions and to strengthen a team perspective. Presentation, discussion, gathering of suggestions are their tools.

¹⁷ In which each person has a role to play and a client to satisfy, no matter if he is a colleague or the visitor

¹⁸ In which each person plays a necessary role in the production of the service and its quality

with mission and nature of the system and the contact must keep constructive in order to improve the service for the client.

Hypotheses for a research

Marketing can be an adequate tool for the realisation of the process of integration; it can join the traditional museums' requirements (conservation and research) to visitors' needs (culture spreading, emotional and intellectual involvement).

With marketing the cultural offer becomes a cultural service, in which each component of the museum plays an important role in the value chain. This is true both for the single institution and for a group of museums.

In particular internal marketing plays a key role because it promotes the business culture, creates the right conditions for the integration among museums through the exchange and relations among functions, departments, people and their competencies. The inevitable resistance to the process of reorganisation in museums and its management patterns can be transformed by internal marketing into synergy. The operators' involvement in the mission of the museum is a crucial point, because personnel together with visitors are the real protagonists in the construction of the relationship and the cultural service, the base of the real competitive advantage for museums.

As **Gronroos** says "human resources form a strategic resource for any firm (...) The focus of internal marketing is on good internal relationships between people at all levels in the organization, so that a service-oriented and customer-oriented mindset is created among customer contact employees, support employees in internal service processes, team leaders, supervisors and managers" (Gronroos 2000).

In the network approach managing a service does not mean managing a single museum or a single offer. It means managing many different services and realities together. Their organization – owing to the type of integration that has been realized – can be driven by marketing which plays a role of integrator among all the actors of the network.

The network, then can be both virtual and physical: marketing has different implications for them:

- in the first case the network is virtual and is realized through web sites on the Internet: the structures are physically far one from each other and scattered on the territory – in some cases museums do not even exist physically;
- in the second case the network is physical: different structures are integrated among themselves in order to coordinate their offer. Such integration can start from whether museums which are scattered on the territory, or museums which are concentrated in a delimited area, but maintaining their specificity.

These two situations do not leave out each other: on the contrary they complete themselves.

A research about the process of integration and the role of internal marketing seems to be of great actuality and interest for all kinds of integration.

For the research we have chosen to analyse the second typology of integration – physically concentrated museums – for some precise reasons:

- such typology should be "simpler" to investigate than the other one, because presenting more tangibles and accessible aspects;

- it is at the moment the most experienced integration in Italy –our country has as a matter of fact a long tradition in industrial districts: a kind of background that museums are borrowing;
- Italy is characterized by a cultural heritage which is rich, manifold but highly fragmented.

For all these reasons the integration of physically concentrated museums and cultural institutions seem to be the most representative typology for Italy, at the moment.

The principal aim of the research is to construct a pattern of reference for the process of integration among museums, describing its phases and the strategic and operative implication for each step. The starting point is that the network of different structures is more efficient and effective than a single museum.

The hypotheses:

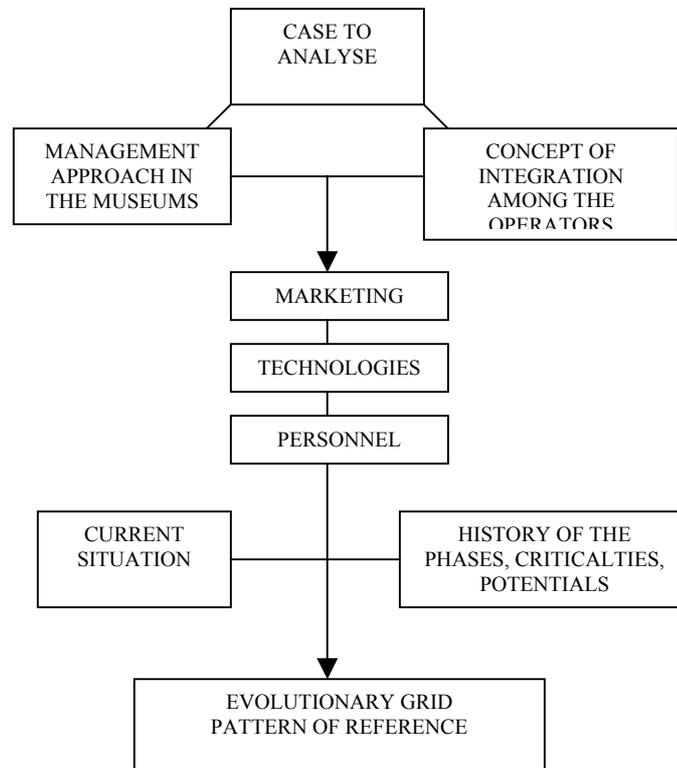
- the network asks for a transition of the management from an *internal logic* to an external one: that means from priorities based on the needs of the operator to strategies which answer to the market and the demand needs. In this sense the cultural offer becomes a service in which each one – no matter if part of personnel or simple visitor – plays an important role in the creation of the value and the quality of the offer. Thus marketing is both the strategic and operative integrator for the process of integration. The research wants to verify how and how much such logic has been adopted by Italian museums and with what implications;
- network or system means first of all *synergy among people and resources*, just because they do the service really distinctive. “The emerging importance of services to almost every business has enhanced the notion that a well-trained and service-oriented employee, rather than raw materials, production technology or the products themselves, is the most critical resource” (Gronroos 2000). And that is particularly true if we consider how intangible is a cultural offer. The research aims to verify how much the concept of system/network and synergy are shared among the operators and what are the basis for them. It wants also verify how and how much the physical concentration of the structures encourages the creation of a network of synergic relationships.

The objectives of the research are principally four:

1. to *analyse the current situation of some cases of integrated offer*: to value the level of integration realised, the concept of system the operators have, the specificities of each museum and the point of interaction with the other ones, the effect of the network on the visibility of the structure, the distribution of the competences, the management of the resources, integration and specialization, the relation between the network and its territory;
2. to *reconstruct all the phases to come to the system*: opportunities and risks, advantages and problems the museums have come across in each phase of the process;
3. to *verify the use of marketing* – especially of internal marketing, new *technologies* and the *personnel* management as tools for the integration;

4. *to outline a evolutionary grid* in order to construct a *pattern of reference* for the process of integration among museums, describing its phases and the strategic and operative implication for each step.

The four objectives are represented in the scheme below.



Tools of the research:

The tool for the research will be initially qualitative: the operators – directors, managers - will be interviewed. The variables emerged from the interview will be checked in a second moment through a questionnaire to all the personnel, in order to quantify what emerged and confirm or to give the lie to it.

The sample:

Italian cases will be studied in comparison with foreign examples – both small and great, in order to value our situation in Europe and find best practices of integration.

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