Factors contributing to cultural events' branding

Eleni Athanailidou

Department of Journalism and Mass Media Communication
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

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Department of Mass Media and Journalism

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Supervisor: George Tsourvakas

Charalampos Dimoulas

Dimitra Dimitrakopoulou
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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to examine the techniques and the methods that a cultural organization could use in order to become a cultural brand. We think that this is a pretty interesting topic for research, especially in Greece, as our economy is pretty much based in culture. As far as the used methodology is concerned, we applied two qualitative research methods and a quantitative; a case study, semi-formal interviews and a questionnaire respectively. More specifically the data were gathered using TEDxThessaloniki as a case study and interviewing people associated with the specific event. Additionally, we created a questionnaire which was answered by TEDxThessaloniki 2017 volunteers in order to have a more complete aspect of this specific organization. Our findings were pretty encouraging as we proved mainly two things. The first one is that cultural branding exists and the second one is that there are specific factors contributing to it as well.

Key words: Culture, Management, Branding, Events, Marketing, Cultural Communication,
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**Introduction**

In this paper we are going to examine the factors that contribute to cultural events’ branding. To begin with, we would like to make our problem definition clear. What we are looking for is if there are any specific factors for creating a cultural brand. We are already aware that there are millions of commercial brands. The thing is if the factors that turn those commercial products into brands are the same with the factors that can turn a cultural organization or its cultural product into a cultural brand. We begin with a theoretical background in order to explain what a ‘brand’ is and we give term’s definition as well. Continuing there is a brief reference to branding history from industrial age to the twentieth century and how branding form has changed in digital age. The next thing that we examine is the branding procedure, what people think about branding, how this procedure has changed through years, what still the same is and what has changed since the evolution of internet and technology. Branding procedure has specific field which plays a major role to people’s decision. Those fields are examined and reported in an analytical way in this paper. Our next step is to refer ‘funnel metaphor’ in order readers to understand what touch points are and which the factors that drive people’s decisions’ are. We analyze the funnel metaphor and its stages; we present its advantages and disadvantages and describe how things used to work in purchase procedure and what has changed now. Continuing, we refer to the new roles for marketing. Now that things and circumstances have changed marketing field needs to develop new tools or extend its already existed. In order to prove what we want we used two qualitative methods and a quantitative method, a case study, an open-structured questionnaire and a questionnaire respectively. More specifically, we used TEDxThessaloniki and we interviewed four people who are members of TEDxThessaloniki production and executive team. We made a board, presenting briefly their answers and continuing we analyze their responds. In order results to be better understood for the readers we categorized their answers to fields (event’s general script, event’s communication method, event’s target group, event’s interactivity and what do people from TEDxThessaloniki when bad incident that influence the event happen). As long as the questionnaire is concerned we delivered it to TEDxThessaloniki2017 volunteers focusing our questions to their experience during event. This way we are able to have a more completed image about the event about how people from both sides
experience it. As we know TEDxThessaloniki and TEDx events in general is about people, creating and spreading innovative ideas and giving the people the chance to experience unique moments. We conclude up with the results that shows us that cultural branding exists and there are specific factors that contribute in order cultural branding procedure to successful. Of course, we refer all the difficulties that we faced during the research and of course we make some proposal for future studies. As it is proved there is lack of researches in the cultural branding field.
1. Problem Definition
What we try to do in this chapter is to examine if there are specific factors that contribute to cultural branding. Additionally, we will try to define and explain further some terms in order the upcoming text to be more clarifying for the reader.

What we want to prove with this paper is that there are specific factors that contribute to cultural events’ branding. To begin with, we are aware that there already famous ‘commercial’ brands such as Coca-Cola, All Star Converse, AJAX etc.

When people hear about the word ‘brand’ what mainly comes to their minds is trust because is a product that they (or their friends) have used, quality because this product has proved its good condition and consistency because the brand has also proved through years that its quality lasts.

The question is, is it possible for cultural organizations to turn themselves or their products into brands? Additionally, what we are looking for is, if the factors that contribute to branding for ‘commercial’ products are the same for cultural products as well. In the following pages you will meet some terms that may be unknown to you. This is why we give that term definitions in order the survey to be more comprehensible for the readers.

These are the term definitions:

**Brand intangibles** are the aspects of the brand image that do not include corporeal, material or particular advantages or benefits (Levy, 1999). Moreover, is a medium which helps marketers to tell the difference between their specific cultural brands in comparison with other (Park, Javorski and MacInnis 1986) and transform physical products (Kotler and Keller, 2006). Moreover, brand intangibles are the different types of cultural brand firms, such as actual or inspirational imagery, purchase and consumption imagery, history, experience, etc (Keller 2001).
**Paid media** is a really effective method for promoting content. With paid media companies are able to drive earned media as well as direct traffic to owned media properties. Companies invest money to promote their brand and this leads to creation of more exposure and hustle around the brand. Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin offer special designed platforms and services which help the users to boost their content as well as their website. Moreover, there is another one way to gain exposure by paying people who really influence and shape public opinion to share their links impacting this way the reach and recognition your brand receives. Last but not least, there is a Pay Per Click application and display ads which is an effect way to drive searchers to your owned media sites and social media paged in order to increase website traffic and conversions.

**Owned media** is every single web property a firm control and is sole to firm’s brand.

The most usual owned medium is company’s website. Even though, blogs, other sites, social media accounts, channels could also be considered as owned media, too. All those channels and social media accounts are extensions of the main website. Moreover, all those together are extensions of the brand itself. Undoubtedly, the more media a firm owns, the more chances has to expand brand’s presence in the digital society.

The term ‘**earned media’** actually refers to the essentially online word-of-mouth method. Those media are usually seen as ‘viral’ tendencies, mentions, shares, repost etc. In other words if owned media is customer’s final destination then earned media is the vehicle or the way for a customer to reach his final destination. How effective a perfect designed website or an attractive social-media-account can be if no one knows about its existence on even if no one interacts with it? One of the most significant achievements of earned media is a combined outcome of powerful organic rankings on the Search Engines, and content distributed by the brand-product. As it is easily understood first page rankings and good content are usually the most effective drivers.

Rankings on the very first page are able to place automatically firm’s owned media sites and content links in a good position in order to take bigger engagement and shares. This is why a good SEO strategy is really important at this point (SEO is the acronym for Search Engine Optimization. SEO is a process which actually improves the ranking of a website in the ‘organic’ or the unpaid section of unpaid engines).

When it comes to brand content, an interesting and informative content could be included in every shape and length. Even if it is a blog text, or a channel video the
most important is that the content has to be worthy in order to get the valuable earned media. This is why a good content strategy is really important at this point. Even today, with the evolution of internet and technology we should never underestimate the power of a text, especially when it comes to build natural links. A good written, informative and interesting content could be really helpful for any kind of website. 

**Non working spend** are actually the people and the technology which is required in order to produce and manage the content for plenty of online channels and to control or even take part in them.
2. Theoretical Background

That chapter includes brand and cultural brand term definitions. More specifically, we refer two brand definitions as they have reported from McLaughlin and Businessdictionary.com. Continuing, we are able to realize how many valuable functions does a brand strategy serves. We examine Holt’s approach for cultural branding strategy and the fact that the beginning point for cultural branding is cultural innovation. Continuing we make a short reference to branding history. Even though the majority of people believe that ‘brands’ started to exist after industrial revolution in England and then it moved to the rest Europe and United States we realize that since people created goods in order to sell or trade them; they used trademarks, symbols or signs and posters in order to distinguish them. Those are brand elements as well. Then we examine the first attempts for brand creation and how a folding box was able to helped cereal industry evolution. Continuing, we talk about branding procedure in the 20th century and in digital age, how things have changed and how thing are about to change rapidly in the upcoming years.

We continue referring to and analyzing some basic things about brand and branding procedure theory.

2.1 What is Brand?

In a growing economy, the importance of assets like brands is increasing (Gönter and Kriegbhaum-Kling, 2001). At this point though, we should examine the meaning of ‘branding’ term, the importance of branding procedure and the existence of cultural branding as well.

There have been a lot of approaches for the term ‘brand’ though years. Even though marketers support that ‘brand’ is a pretty simple term with specific characteristics we are not sure that people understand what ‘brand’ refers to.

According to Jerry McLaughlin ‘The first definition of “brand” is the name given to a product or service from a specific source. Used in this sense, “brand” is similar to the current meaning of the word “trademark. Put simply, someone’s “brand” is what people think of when they hear your brand name. It’s everything the public thinks it knows about your name brand offering—both factual and emotional. Your brand name exists objectively; people can see it. It’s fixed. But a brand exists only in someone’s mind.’ (McLaghlin, 2011)
At the same time Businessdictionary.com refers that ‘Unique design, sign, symbol, words or a combination of these, employed in creating an image that identifies a product and differentiates it from its competitors. Over time, this image becomes associated with a level of credibility, quality and satisfaction in the consumer’s mind. Thus brands help harried consumers in crowded and complex marketplace, by standing for certain benefits and value. Legal name for a brand is trademark and, when it identified or represents a firm, it is called a brand name.’ (BusinessDictionary.com, 2015).

In other words ‘brand’ term could be defined as a product or a service or even a concept that can be easily differentiate itself from other similar and competitive products, services or even concepts. That means that those brand products will be easily promoted and communicated. The difference between brand and branding is the fact that, branding is the process of creating the brand-product. This process can be practiced in the whole firm identity or just in separated products. According to marketers a brand actually serves a lot of valuable functions. It is really important for people because brand is able to simplify choices, to promise quality to the customers, to reduce purchase risk etc. Referring a cultural organization or a firm in general to a brand means that the complete experience that customers will have is being displayed.

Holt claims that cultural brand strategy is a distinctive approach to strategy, which is influenced by culture, society and politics. Cultural branding attaches a significant perspective for market goals which is to evolve new businesses and helping the dying ones (Holt, 2012). The same researcher supports that the beginning point for cultural branding is cultural innovation. As far as marketing is concerned, economists and financial researchers believe that the only way for the people to notice your work is to make a better ‘mousetrap’. Although, this method means that the there is no room for branding. The product is excellent itself and there is no reason for evolution. Trying Holt to go with the flow refers that a good approach for cultural branding is the fact that a better idea is on and so the world will pay attention to it. So, this is what he calls it cultural innovation (Holt and Cameron, 2010). So, cultural branding is an approach that helps firms and organizations to create brands with innovative ideas.
2.2. History of Branding

The majority of people think that the concept of branding is relatively modern, that it firstly started with the industrial age in England and then it moved to the rest Europe and United States. Well, there are also a lot of supporters of the opposite opinion. It is a matter of fact that since people created goods in order to sell or even trade them; there have been trademarks, symbols or signs and posters in order to distinguish them. What suppliers and sellers wanted to do is to distinguish their goods by printing trademarks and creations on them in order to signify product’s origin and maker (Brand New: The History of Branding, 2012). There are also a lot of authors who have studied brand’s evolution and support that the word ‘brand’ comes from the Norse word “brandr” referring to the branding of cattle (Roper and Parker, 2006). Even though, as we have already mentioned the most acceptable starting point for the use of the word ‘brand’ and brand management was the industrial revolution. It is also believed that during this period there were various macroeconomics factors that allowed innovative companies to lay the foundations of modern brand strategy (Low and Fullerton 1994).

So, industrial revolution which started in the mid 1700s and reached North America in the early 1800s had a major impact on the future of branding and advertising. The mass production that started to exist allows goods to be produced in a cheaper way. Then is the time that, the first forms of advertising and branding showed up in order information about goods to be disseminated, identifying goods’ quality and stimulating demand. This early advertising, achieved its goal which was to influence as a mass market the middle class as well (and not only the rich ones). It is a matter of fact that those years, people did not read newspapers or other forms of printed media. So, advertisers had to be creative in order to find other ways for their goods to reach potential consumers. What they did was to include to their ‘campaigns’ men who wore placards, umbrellas with sported signs etc. The Industrial Revolution in combination with mass production forced the growth of visual identification and trademarks. Additionally, it has been showed how important and valuable the identification of systems and trademarks is (Brand New: The History of Branding, 2012).

Before the Civil War all the bulk goods were being sold according to their weight from barrels. Those products were not identified as ‘brands’ (as we consider the meaning of brand in recent years) but as commodities.
People preferred to buy sanitary goods that promised to them sealed freshness rather than products that were sold out of containers. Before the 1880s consumers used to buy cheese, meat, cookies or any other unpacked stock without knowing where those products actually come from. This situation caused to the companies a lot of troubles as they had to find alternative attractive ways to promote their products through attractive packaging and more effective advertising.

A folding box was enough to help the cereal industry to be developed. A producer had the idea of putting the product into a small box in order to give them a specific personality. What he did is to add information to the box in order to extend its value and change it into something attractive and successful. The key to success of selling packaged products is also based on promoting a specific ‘name’ (of the product). The name (which is actually the ‘brand name’) means that the product has a specific identity, personality and it is distinguished from other goods of the same category. This has as a consequence, consumers to prefer it because they have estimate is price before they buy it (Brand New: The History of Branding, 2012).

What companies and advertisers wanted to achieve with the use of a brand name is to arouse sales and make the brand-product more attractive and desirable. From that moment onwards consumers preferred impressive brand-names which caused them the feeling of reliability and trust for a lot of reasons, for example high-quality, endurance, clean and healthful packaging. Moreover, the majority of consumers requested for brand products because they were convinced that this is the way to make their life easier and more fascinating. Additionally, using brand-products consumers believe that they make themselves more attractive, fascinating and sociably acceptably as well.

There a lot of factors that speed up the rising of brands, such as the increase of mass media, the growth of railways and postal systems, telephone invention and forms of photography and typewriters.

Producers and advertising companies had rapidly realized how important role visual communications played in the triumph of their company in order to lead people to buy their products and to create a certain customer base. At this point we could mention an example which really shows the importance of advertising in order companies to promote their products. ‘The early advertising success story of Lydia Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound® or the meticulously planned campaign and launch of the Uneeda® biscuit, brand manufacturers realized how integrated branding programs
could stimulate sales. Advertising for Lydia Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound, a tincture of alcohol and roots for women’s ailments, greatly increase its sales. In the 1880s, when Pinkham’s son decided that he didn’t need to spend any more money on advertising since sales were very good, he stopped advertising. Sales precipitously dropped’ (Landa, 2006). From that example we realize that advertising is not important only in making a product a brand but helping it to remain as one as well. There are not a few who also believe that in ancient years human beings were also branded for a lot of reasons. For example, slaves were branded in order to declare who was their owner. Even World War II, victims of Nazi persecution who were interned in concentration camps were branded with numbers. From then on things gradually changed. Now, consumers are convinced that brand-goods are able to provide them better quality than other products do. Although some of the terms that used to be used for ‘brand’ had a negative sense it seems that nowadays has remained the positive and commercial aspect of branding which actually is the use of distinguishing brand name goods and services.

2.3. Branding in the 20th century

After the huge industrial growth in the first years of twentieth century, people could afford to spend a significant amount of money on luxury goods and services. Things like advertising and marketing played a significant role in order to ‘encourage’ this kind of economy. Wealthy people chose to spend their money on any kind of branded products, from automobiles to Coca-Cola. As we have already mentioned, what really helped the growth of brand system in the twentieth century is the rise of mass media in combination with the rise of consumer’s desire for specific brand goods. Radio programs started to be sponsored by brands – so, at the same time the products were advertised. This situation created a great path for people to realize and accept that branded products will make their life easier, better and happier. A brand-soap not only cleans your clothes better than others, but at the same time it pays for a radio program which entertains you (Wunsch-Vincent, 2013).

The next big step for brands is television. At first brands sponsored TV programs and the next step was to pay for TV spots. Television really helps the brand-products to create their own ‘image’. In other words, brands were advertised and promoted through a professional visual communication program. It was easier for the consumer
to be attracted by a product which promises specific things and has a completed image. That means that the product has a specific identity or a ‘personality’ which distinguishes it from other similar products (Wunsch-Vincent, 2013).

More specifically, when we talk about business world there are actually three developments worth mentioning.

Firstly, nowadays companies use a more holistic marketing strategy. What it means is that in the past they just advertised a product, trying to convince consumers why they should choose their product. Nowadays, things are a little bit different. Advertising companies offer to the consumers a ‘brand experience’ while at the same time they try to keep safe their relationships with networks and groups of people. Companies have an additional role which is not only to produce something good and useful but at the same time to keep high their reputation and their product paying attention to their ‘product’s image’ as long as the social and environmental issues are concerned (Wunsch-Vincent, 2013).

To continue with, the globalization and multinational companies and communities really helped brands to become international. Advertisers try to develop strategies in order to promote their products across the world but at the same time they try to keep their domestic and local character (Wunsch-Vincent, 2013). Last but not least, what plays major role is the evolution of forms that communication channels use. In the previous years, media used to use one-way communication methods, instead of today that media use evolved and more interactive ways of communication. That media diversification started in the 1960s. Undoubtedly, though, things are about to change rapidly from now on due to Internet and new media evolution which will have as a result a huge number of digital interactions between companies and crowd.

The rising availability of customers’ ‘personal data’ increases the efficiency of branding strategies as companies will be able to detect people’s preferences and target them more easily. Additionally, media offer more evolved advertising chances such as video, e-banners, sponsored websites etc. Automatically those ways of advertising and the ‘creation’ of new communication technologies decrease the ‘distance’ between consumers and producers. This has as a result the highest level (since 20th century) of interaction between producer and consumer as they did in the 18th century, when consumers and clients frequently used to live in the same village, city, area, etc.
2.4. Branding procedure

What we explain in this sub-chapter is what are the factors or the elements and the procedure that is needed to be followed in order a brand to be created. There are a lot of companies that consider ‘branding’ procedure as a mysterious black-box that yields a desirable aura to the firm. At the same time not a few believe that branding is only the design of product’s logo which is just one facet of branding process but not the starting point for the process.

Things in the last years have rapidly changed as long as companies’ marketing and brands are concerned. Many years ago the procedure of buying a product or even providing a service was simpler and briefer than it is now. In other words, a few years ago anytime that a customer would like to buy something he would examine his possible options, he would buy the product which satisfies him more. The relationship between the company and the buyer stopped there.

Now because of the evolution of technology, new and social media, companies’ marketing methods buyers are connected all the time with a lot of different brands. They still examine which product or service is most suitable for them and continues with the purchase. What is different is that since someone purchase something is aggressively engaged with it. The customer is able to promote or ambush the product which means that consumers are able to collaborate in product’s development, in a positive or a negative way. As an extent it means that they are able to shape and public opinion and product’s rating and meaning (Edelman, 2010).

What still remains the same is that customers now and then demand a clear and credible brand promise. They will choose only the product that will be more suitable for them and satisfies them the most. What is different through all new media and ways of products marketing and promoting, is how open customers are in order to be influenced, or how easy is for a company or even for another buyer to manage to interact with them (Edelman, 2010).

What is true about branding is that is a process that define or refine company’s focus, what they are, what makes them different and which is the unique value they offer. This pretty simple definition does not mean that creating a brand product is something easy and simple. There are a lot of steps, skills, tools and means that can help a firm to achieve that.
Thus there are three fields in which brands show their effects, customer market, product market and financial market. The value of those three fields expresses the brand equity.

To begin with, we have to mention what a cultural brand should and should not do with its marketing process. In order to take some cultural brand management decisions we have to think what is important. There are five fields which play a major role for that kind of decisions, developing brand positioning, integrating brand marketing, assessing brand performance, growing brands and strategically managing brand. In order to be more specific and clear we are going to analyze all those fields (Edelman, 2010).

2.5 Developing brand positioning
In this chapter we examine the basic characteristic a product should have in order to become a brand.

To begin with, developing brand positioning sets the specific directions of marketing activities of what a cultural brand should actually do or should not do (Keller et al. 2002). Moreover developing brand positioning sets ways in order to distinguish the brand in people’s mind and establishes competitive advantage (Keller et al. 2002). At this field is also significant the brand intangibles and the corporate images.

2.5.1. Brand personality
Aaker claims that specifically brands in U.S.A are divided in five groups, sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness. Moreover, Aaker also states that
the different brand types dimension influence different types of people in disparate consumption settings (Aaker 1997). However, the same scientist supports that three of the five categories which exist in U.S.A also exist in cultural brands in Spain and Japan (Aaker, 2001). But what does ‘brand personality’ actually mean? According to marketers, brand personality is a combination of some human characteristics by which a brand-product is consisted. Is the way that brand speaks and behaves. Brand personality is something with which consumers can be engaged and related to effectively increasing brand-product’s awareness and popularity. This personality is an additional value to the brand-product.

2.5.2. Brand relationships
As we have already mentioned there is a special composition between people and cultural brand. Fournier is one of the few who studied and tried to explain the nature of relationship that people have, or would like to have with the brand, and the firm by extension (Fournier 1998). According to Fournier, brand relationship quality has a lot of different elements and is also consisted by six aspects; beyond loyalty or commitment along which consumer-brand relationship differ: self-concept connection, commitment or nostalgic attachment, behavioral interdependence, love/passion, intimacy and brand partner quality. As we realize, this typology contains mainly positive dimensions of the relationship between people and cultural brand. Aaker, after a two-month research or the development and the progression of the relationship between those two, realized that there are two factors that has an important influence on development form and dynamics (Aaker et al, 2004).

On the other hand, Aggarwal found out that there are actually two kinds of relationships. The first one is the ‘exchange relationship’. According to this kind the benefits from the company are given to people in order to get something back. Secondly, there is the communal relationship, which declares that benefits are given to people in order to show care for other’s needs (Aggarwal, 2004).

2.5.3. Brand Experience
In the latest years, experiential marketing plays a major role in marketing thinking. According to Schmitt, there is a new concept of marketing which is called ‘Customer Experience Management’. What this kind of marketing does, it to manage
strategically the whole experience of someone with the cultural brand or even with the whole company.

The same researcher claims that there are five different types of experiences that could be created. Those are sense experience (including sensory perception), feel experience (including affect and emotions), think experience (characterized by creation and cognitive thinking), act experience (including physical behavior and incorporating separated actions and lifestyles) and relate experience (which is the result form connecting with a reference group or culture).

Nowadays there is a new concept of marketing which is called ‘Customer Experience Management’. Put simply, this new marketing method helps companies and cultural organizations to strategically manage the whole experience that someone will have getting in touch with the cultural brand-product.

2.5.4. Corporate image and reputation
Corporate images have been widely researched in terms of conceptualization, antecedents and consequences (Barich and Kotler 1991). Until today there are a lot of studies which have proved the importance of the power of a corporate cultural brand. (Argenti and Druckenmiller 2004).

Other two researchers, Brown and Dacin have been differentiated between corporate associations related to corporate ability and to corporate social ability. The first one is about expertise in producing and delivering cultural products or services-offering and the second one is about company’s attitude regarding the social concerns (Brown and Dacin 1997).

Keller (1992) and Aaker (1998) define corporate credibility as the extension by which people that run cultural organizations or a company are willing and capable to create products and services that gratify people’s needs and wishes. What they have also
achieved to prove is that, successfully introduced brand extensions upgrade perceptions of corporate reliability and enhanced assessment of quite different brand extensions. Additionally, they validated that corporate marketing activity which is linked with product innovation created more positive assessments for a corporate cultural brand than corporate marketing activity linked with environment or community as well (Gurhan-Canli and Batra 2004).

In other words corporate image and reputation is the overall opinion that consumers have for a company or a cultural organization according to organization’s past actions and possible future behavior.

Research Questions:

1. How do organizations and cultural brands create a relationship of trust between them and the consumers?
2. Is it significant for the brand to have a stable and specific image?

2.6. Integrating Brand Marketing

There are quite a few branding and marketing activities that are able to help the desired brand positioning and build brand equity. In order those activities to be successful is not enough only to work well at the same time, but they have to work well in combination. What we mean is that those activities effect and interact with each other and also effect and interact with the brand equity. There are actually three main fields: integrating brand elements, integrating marketing channels and communications and combining company-controlled and external events (Keller and Lehmann 2003).

2.6.1. Integrating brand elements

What actually a brand does is to differentiate itself among other similar products. At this point, we should mention that brand is not just a name. There are a lot of brand elements, such as logos, symbols, packaging, and slogans. The combination of all the above plays a major role in order a brand to be created. Companies and marketing department pay a lot of attention on choosing the brand elements. There are also here some specific measures that help brand element to be really helpful in order brand equity to be created: memorability, meaningfulness, attractive appearance,
transferability, adaptability and flexibility through years and legal and competitive protect-ability and defensibility (Kohli and LaBahan 1997).

Even though, the majority of people think that the design of logos is the most significant thing for the brand (Henderson and Cote 1998) there has been some researches that have shown that packaging size and shape plays a major role as well (Wansink and van Ittersum 2003).

2.6.2. Integrating Marketing Channels and Communications
In order firms and cultural organizations to promote their brands and their services try to find as much ways as possible to communicate them. This is the reason why marketers use a lot of mediums of communication, such as interactive advertisements, commerce and buyer promotions, direct response, sponsorship, PR (public relations) techniques and a lot of means of going to market, such as via retailers, online shops, outlets, via telephone. Not a few marketers try to combine and orchestrate those means of marketing in order to create synergistic reactions (Duncan 2002).

According to Naik and Raman and their research, co-existing marketing strategies are able to lead to better results (Naik and Raman 2003). It is easily understood that combining two or more communication methods for promoting a product will have a more effective result than using each one method on its own.

2.6.3. Combining Company-Controlled and External Events
Nowadays marketers use more often methods that help brand-building. To be more specific, marketers pay more attention to create emotion-laden experiences, on-line and on real-world communities and to make some noise among consumers as well. Muniz and O’ Guinn define brand communities as specialized, non-geographically bound communities, which are based on structured set of social relationships among consumers of the same product/brand. What they have also noticed is that those communities have some specific characteristics such as share consciousness, rituals and traditions and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz and O’ Guinn, 2000).

On the other hand there are some other researches that claim that word-of-mouth method is the most effective method in brand-building procedure (Laczniak et all. 2001, Smith and Vogt 1995). Additionally, Moore has detected how intergenerational influences affect brand equity in some product categories among family members. Even though, despite the emphasis that has been given to inter-personal sources
nothing has officially proved that there is a contrast between company-controlled and externally-driven marketing activities (Keller and Lehmann 2003).

Research Questions:
3. What makes some cultural organizations so special?
4. When a cultural organization is already a brand, do they have to use new ways of marketing and communication or can they rely on their standard target group?
5. Are informal kinds of communication (word-of-mouth, viral videos etc) effective?

2.7. Assessing brand Performance
In order cultural organizations to manage their cultural brand in the right and most efficient way they should realize the equity of their brands. That means that they have to understand what makes their brand unique and what do their brands worth. The most significant sub-areas of this category are the measurement and the evaluation of brand equity at different levels (customer, product-market and financial market,) and the relationship of brand equity with the customer equity (Keller and Lehmann 2003).

2.7.1. Measuring brand equity
According to Kapferer and Keller there are three main principals that have been taken into consideration by the researchers in order to study and define brand equity (Kapferer 2005, Keller 2003).

The first one is customer-brand perspective. From that perspective, brand equity is just part of the positive or negative sense that someone may have from the cultural brand or service, generated by the non-objective part of the product offering. Not a few times the brand is connected with the product. Although, sometimes because of advertisements or usage experience or other influences it is possible the brand to create an amount of activities and associations that may exist over and beyond the cultural product or the service (Keller and Lehmann 2004). Broniarczyk and Gershoff support that brand equity could only be based on characteristics that have no innate value (Broniarczyk and Gershoff 2003). On the opposite side Meyvis and Janiszewski believe that unconnected information could be easily create confuse and be unproductive in consumer decision making journey (Meyvis and Janiszewski 2002).
Another perspective is the *company-based* perspective. According to this one, a good brand has a lot benefits; it is able to make advertising and promotion more efficient, to keep a leg up in the competition with the other similar brands or services and make easier its development into other product sections (Hoeffer and Keller 2003). Moreover, from the company-based perspective brand equity is the supplementary value that a cultural organization gains, because of the existence of the brand name. That means that without this specific existence the organization would not be able to gain an equal value with an unbranded cultural product. In financial terms, brand equity could be defined as the degree of market inefficiency that the firm is able to capture with its brands (Erdem 1998a, 1998b).

The third perspective is the *financial-based*. From finance’s point of view the worth of a brand is actually the money and the value that it brings to the cultural organization. That means that the value reveals expectations about the discounted price of coming profits flows.

![Image 3: Brand equity](image)

It is a matter of fact that a lot of new and comprehensive models of brand equity have been prospered in order to include multiple perspectives (Ambler 2004, Epstein and Westbrook 2001, Keller and Lehmann 2003, Sivastava et al. 1998). Every brand equity perspective has brought out applicable results. Customer equity and brand equity are the most important topics to academic researcher (Leone et al., 2006).
2.8. The funnel metaphor

In marketing world it is widely known that there are touch points which are able to influence people’s choice about their final purchase. Marketers in order to describe touch points and purchase procedure have used the ‘funnel metaphor’. According to this, consumers begin their journey at the end of the funnels having many brands in mind and reducing their choices as they reaching their final decision. Organizations have traditionally used paid-media push marketing strategies in order to create awareness, lead consideration where they want to and eventually inspire purchase. Metaphor’s disadvantage is the fact that it fails to seize the nature of buyer engagements which changes all the time.

At this point, before starting to analyze the funnel metaphor and its steps we should define and analyze what touch points are, how they work and how helpful they are in marketing procedure (Edelman, 2010).

The majority of marketers define touch points as the ways that a brand or a service interact and exchange information to as many as possible prospective and current buyers. Touch points are able to allow possible buyers to have a kind of experience every time that they are in touch with the brand or the service. The way to achieve this is across multiple channels and various points in time (Pantano and Milena, 2015 and Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010).

On the other hand, customers are able to shape their positive or negative opinion about the product or the service influenced by the touch points (Meyer and Schwager 2007). There are five stages through which customers could be influenced by touch points in order to buy or to have the intention to buy a brand. Those stages are problem recognition (the knowledge of an issue that could appear during the performance of a process. Marketers should be able to recognize a problem and fine the appropriate solutions in order to solve it. This is how they guide the company to the biggest possible success [Titan-seo.com, 2017]), information research (is a process which describes the kind of information a company needs in order to target customers and what they think, want or need according to the product of the cultural organization [Knowhownonprofit.org, 2017]), evaluation of alternatives (at this stage consumers evaluate their alternatives options, which are organizations who offer similar products and their benefits [Boundless, 2017]), purchase decision (is the stage where the purchase is actually accomplished [Boundless, 2017]), post-purchase decision (once the buyer makes the purchase is able to decided either if he will
purchase again with the same product or if he will consider other similar products [Dr Brian’s SmarterMarketing Blog Number 1, 2017]) (Kotler, Burtor, Deans, Browns, Armstrong, 2013).

In other words, touch point is the way a brand reaches out to the target market in order to provide engagement. This engagement allows the brand to be seen by the considered buyer in an appealing way. The way to understand if the touch point is effective or not, is simple. If the prospective customer chooses your brand over competitors, then touch points have achieved their goals (Lemke, Clark and Wilson 2010).

Continuing with the funnel metaphor and according to McKinsey Quarterly issue of June 2009 (David Court), there is a total new aspect of how people in digital years engage with brands, because today buyers decide on a more iterative and less reductive four-stages-purchase journey.

![Image 4: Funnel Metaphor graph](image)

Firstly is the top-of-mind consideration stage. People and possible buyers are exposed to brands or services in a lot of different ways. For example, they are informed from social media ads or store displays, something they might saw or heard at a friend’s house etc. In the funnel metaphor, normally, in this stage there is the biggest amount
of brand. However, today buyers, because of barrage and awash of information by new and social media they are able to decrease the number of choices at the outset. The next stage is evaluation of the brands that customers have chosen. Buyers gather information from online reviews, peers from the product and its competitors. At this point, it is normal for the consumers to add some new brands as possible choices and discard some of the old ones because now they are aware of more details of each product. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that it is more likely for a good or bad peer or review to shape positively or negatively someone’s opinion rather than classical marketing push methods.

Third stage is the purchase. At this stage, likely consumers are able to make their final decision when they are physically at the store or at the online shop. What is really interesting and logical at the same time at this stage is the fact that points of purchase such as packaging, availability or pricing are more powerful than all the previous touch points.

Last but not least is the enjoy-advocate-bond stage. That stage actually proves that consumers’ connection with the brand and the company are now stronger than it was at the beginning. After customers buy the brands they are able to interact with it every day with a lot of new touch points. Because of the digital and technological evolution now consumers interact mainly online by researching products or reviewing them after the purchase procedure (this is actually a touch point which is totally missing from the funnel metaphor). If buyers are satisfied and pleased with the product they will be promote it by word-of-mouth or online reviews creating this way a fodder for the evaluation of others and exhilarate brand’s potentials. Likewise, if they are disappointed by the product they will never tie with it. Instead, they will spread their negative experience by word-of-mouth method or writing a bad review. This will have as a result products’ discredit, the only thing that companies try really hard to avoid.

2.8.1 Consumer's journey in practice.
Even though the main premise of the buyer decision journey may not be fundamental, its assumptions for marketing are profound. The majority of marketers claim that there are two main implications for marketing.

The first one is where marketers focus on. In other words, marketers pay more attention on how to allocate spending across media (such as TV, radio, social and
other online media, etc) rather than targeting stages in the decision journey. According to a research from students from Harvard there is a mismatch among marketing implications and the touch points that impact customers the most. What also analysis shows is that about 90% of marketing firms try to hit buyers at consider and buy stages. However, consumers could still be influenced during evaluate and enjoy-advocate-bong stage.

As we know, people as consumers are sub-categorized in order smaller target groups with specific characteristics and identity. It is a matter of fact that in most categories the most dominant force to buy is someone else’s advocacy. What, according to this specific research, marketers do wrong is that they still focus on media spend (mainly in all the forms of advertising) and they do not care of driving people’s backing. As history has taught us, even if an organization has to present the best product, performance, show etc accompanied with the best marketing methods, such as cool banners, attractive spots and advertisements and the hottest viral videos if the product gets bad reviews or even worse if the product is not even discussed in the market or online undoubtedly it will not survive the winning process.

There is a second one implication which has to do with the budgets that marketers wrongly use. Marketers pay a lot of money in strategies that are nowadays outdated. When this specific funnel metaphor was used there was a one-way communication. That actually means is that every single interaction that firms had with the buyers has a variable media cost that overbalance creative fix costs. Moreover, marketing departments used to pay more attention on working media spend, media which are nowadays known as paid media. However, things now work in a different way. Now marketers have to take into consideration owned media, earned media and nonworking spend as well.

Even though it is really important to know that all three kinds of media play a significant role in order to create a complete digital marketing strategy.

Research Questions:

6. In what percentage do cultural organizations actually take into consideration the consumer’s decision making procedure?
7. How do cultural organizations and brands achieve to become and stay engaged with the consumers/people?
8. What kind of media do most cultural organizations use?
2.8.2 Consumer’s decision making (CDJ)

‘Up to 90% of spends goes to advertising and retail promotions. Yet the single most powerful impetus to buy is someone else’s advocacy’ (Edelman, 2010).

In order a marketer or an organization to shift to a CDJ-driven strategy must complete three stages; to understand organizations’ consumers’ decision journey, to determine which touch points are priorities and how they have to influence them and to allocate recourses in consequence.

Marketers and cultural organizations should pay attention to what consumers do. What we mean is that organizations should search for how do people search for something? Moreover, do they participate in online communities? If yes, how do they do so? Nowadays, because of digital evolution people tend to express publicly, through social media or other online platforms, their contentment or their disappointment about services, organization and (cultural) brands. This is an easy way for other consumers or even other organizations and firms to realize which services were disappointed or which where pleasant. Moreover, marketers should also notice how simple cultural brands do get into or quit people’s decision-sets. Last but not least, they should be aware the factors drive in the end their decisions

Television advertisements, word-of-mouth method, online or offline channels attract people only during the consider stage. On the other hand, at the evaluation stage consumer do not search for products or services through the several search engines. They go directly to cultural websites where there are consumer-expert ratings, automatically products comparisons etc. It is a matter of fact that those platforms do make the decision making easier and faster because they keep gathered all the possible cultural choices. At this point it should be mentioned that, surveys on marketing field have shown that, even display adds which are consumed to be significant at the consider stage were clicked on only when whey included a specific offer and then only when the buyer is about to choose which event or a brand is going to buy.

As we have already mentioned nowadays consumers keep having a relationship with the brand, the firms or the organization even after the purchase or the event. The way for people to stay connected with the organization is by talking about it, posting about the event or the cultural brand in social media and other online cultural communities and blogs, reviewing their experience online.
Research Questions:

9. Do cultural organizations use social media in order to promote their event? Is it effective enough?

10. Is social media cultural organization’s the only mean of marketing?

2.9 New roles for marketing

Developing and completing a CDJ- strategy that leads to interracial customer experience needs marketing to develop new or extended tools. Even though we are aware that there is almost no firm that has completely generated them, there are a lot that have started to do so. In order that customer’s experience to be successful there are three functions which are increasingly significant.

2.9.1 Orchestrator

Traditionally the most commons touch points for the consumers are the owned media channels. Those media are the official website of the firm, the product packaging, the customer service, the sales function etc. All the previous run by parts of the organization which are different parts of the marketing. Realizing the necessity of organizing those channels a lot of organizations moved their owned media functions into the globe of marketing officer, giving him this way authorization to organize them. That means that, along with traditional and digital marketing communications he has to coordinate customer service and market research, product design etc.

2.9.2 Publisher and “Content supply chain” manager

Another job that marketers have to do is to create the publishing content, for example they produce the videos for marketing, they promote every single product and they handle the means in order to create and price a brand.

Every service, concert, show or cultural brand that is released is required to create more than 160 pieces of content which involve more than twenty different parties and reaching 30 different touching points. There are a lot of researches that have shown that when marketers take action as publishers as well it has as a result for consumers to understand better the cultural product and is also easier for them to understand the quality of those cultural brands. Moreover, marketers are more nimble with the content, easily adjusting it to sales videos and other new uses that completely improve consumers’ decision journey.
2.9.3 Marketplace intelligence leader
Nowadays, touch points become more and more digit. That actually means that is much easier for cultural organizations and firms to collect personal information and preferences and so is much easier to understand consumer’s decision journey.

2.10. References
Brand Definition: McLaglin, 2011
Cultural brand strategy: Holt, 2012
Brand Personality: Aaker, 1997
Brand Relationship: Fournier, 1998
Corporate credibility: Keller 1991
Corporate credibility: Aaker 1998
Brand Equity: Kapferer, 2005
Brand Equity: Keller, 2003
Brand equity: Erdem, 1998a, 1998b
Touchpoints: Pantano and Milena, 2015 and Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010
3. Methodology

In order to see if the theory mentioned before is also valid for cultural organizations and cultural products we contacted a case study, semi-formal interviews and a questionnaire. As you realize we have used both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

In this paper we try to find out the factors that contribute to cultural events’ branding. In one hand we used qualitative research method. More specifically we will use as a case study an already cultural brand-product, which is the TEDx Thessaloniki event and additionally we have open-structured interviews from people who deal with and work in TEDx Thessaloniki. We chose this specific cultural organization because we think that is one of the most representative cultural organizations in Greece that is also a brand. Additionally, the people that have been interviewed are people who work on this organization for a lot of years and really know how to organize, run an event like this and of course they can answer to our questions about the factors that have made TEDx Thessaloniki a cultural brand.

Furthermore, we used quantitative method delivering questionnaires to TEDxThessaloniki 2017 volunteers in order to examine their experience in the last event and to prove that TEDxThessaloniki has a lot of branding elements and characteristics and to have a more completely aspect for TEDxThessaloniki experience.

As we have already mentioned, the tools that we have used is the semi-formal interviews and questionnaires. We have used those specific kinds of or qualitative and quantitative methods because we believed that those are the most appropriate for our survey. Even though the interviewer and the respondents engaged in a formal interview the semi-structured form of the interviews allowed us to have multiple possible answers and make us also able to collect as much details as possible. What goes without saying is the fact that we had an interview guide, which means that we
had a list with specific questions that should have been answered through the conversations but it does not mean that respondents were not encouraged in order to give creative answers and express their selves. Additionally, what semi-structured questions also offered to us is adequate answers to complicated issues. In questions that a Yes or No is not enough and more explanation and clarification is needed, or when a respondent should explain a decision or even make a question about the questionnaire, semi-structured form of interviews was what we needed. Last but ton least, all this freedom that respondents have with their answers means that sometimes there is the possibility of discovering something that you many never even think of. This could really help you and your survey as it opens new ways of thinking and researching about a topic.

Last but not least, as far as the questionnaires are concerned our questions were focused on the experience that TEDxThessaloniki volunteers had during the latest event.

### 3.1. Case Study – TEDxThessaloniki

![Image 5: TEDxThessaloniki official logo](image5.png)

TED is a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short talks, maximum 18 minutes. TED is an acronym for Technology, Entertainment and Design but today it is covered all topics, from science to business and to global social issues in more than 100 languages (Ted.com, 2017).

TED was first showed up in 1984 by Richard Saul Wurman's observation of a powerful convergence among three parts of our everyday lives: technology, entertainment and design. The first TED included a demo of the compact disc, the e-book and cutting-edge 3D graphics from Lucasfilm, while mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot demonstrated how to map coastlines using his developing theory of
fractal geometry. Since then, the TED Conference became an annual event in Monterey, California, attracting a growing and influential audience from many different disciplines which all it wanted was to be informed and learn new things and discover a new exciting secret as well. Before that, TED invitation for the event was just an invitation. Nowadays, TED is owned by the Sapling Foundation which is a private nonprofit foundation and was established in 1996 by publishing entrepreneur Chris Anderson (Ted.com, 2017).

At the same time TED runs TEDx events in order ideas worth spreading to be shared around the world. The ‘x’ after the TED means that TEDx runs independently from TED. By independently we mean that TEDx events have different production team, different sponsors and different volunteers. What remains the same is event’s form, stage’s set up, speeches conformation and of course the non-profit form that TED advocates. In other words TED organization gave the permission to some groups of people in order to create a similar conference on a smaller scale (Kokkotzis, Vlahopoulou and Fouskas, 2016).

3.2 Open-Structured Interviews

As we have already mentioned, we used a ten-question semi-structured questionnaire to people who belong to the core TEDxThessaloniki production team and are aware of how to run this specific event.

They are totally four (4) persons. The participants may seem a few but it is a really good cross section because they have the knowledge that is needed.

**Interviewees**

- TEDx Thessaloniki Curator/ TED Ambassador
- Production Director & Ticketing Manager
- Communication Manager
- Production director and Stage Manager

**Questions**

Those are the questions that were used:

1. Is there a general event script?
• Is there a specific production firm? If yes, is it always the same? If No, who run the event?
• How long before do they start organizing the TEDxThessaloniki?

2. According to your opinion, why TEDxThessaloniki has become a brand?
• Which are the factors that make it so famous?
• How do people learn about it?

3. Which are common Communication methods that TEDxThessaloniki uses?
• Does it use any of them more intensive? If yes, which one? Why this specific?

4. Does TEDxThessaloniki use social media in order to promote their event? Do you think that the Social media use really help the promotion of the event?

5. Does TEDxThessaloniki use any informal forms of Marketing, such as word-of-mouth, viral videos, buzz marketing etc?
• Does TEDxThessaloniki use specific communication methods?
• Does TEDxThessaloniki use specific communication strategies that are addressed to specific target groups or do they use the most commons communication methods because the event has its standard target group?

6. Are there any sponsors?
• Who chooses the sponsors?
• According to what criteria?

7. Does TEDxThessaloniki address to a specific target group?
• If yes, which methods does TEDxThessaloniki use in order to communicate that?
• Does TEDxThessaloniki organizational team write down the percentage of any possible new target group?
8. Is there a way for TEDxThessaloniki organizational team to have a feedback about people’s experience during and after the event day? Are people able to evaluate the cultural event?

9. Is there any kind of interaction between the event and the TEDxers? If yes, who does TEDxThessaloniki accomplish that?
   - Nowadays, what are really common for cultural brand are the participatory projects. In participatory projects, people are able to participate to the event with a lot of different ways (such as vote for the best part of the event, suggestions about coming topics that may interest them etc). Is there any similar section in TEDxThessaloniki?

10. Is able for a cultural organization to minimize any negative impact that comes from a negative statement or behavior that is engaged with the organization (e.g any spokesperson’s bad behavior or racist statements)?

3.3 Quantitative method- Volunteers’ Questionnaire
This questionnaire includes questions about volunteers’ experience before, during and after the event. Additionally we were able to realize if those people who deal voluntary with the event are able to recognize the organization just by looking its logo. Continuing, we ask them if they are aware about TEDxThessaloniki general characteristics and information.

Here you can see the questions:
1. Gender
2. Age
3. Education Level
4. Where did you hear about TEDxThessaloniki?
5. Was it your first time as TEDxThessaloniki volunteer?
6. Have you ever participated voluntary in any other similar events/organizations?
7. Can you recognize that logo?
8. Were you aware of TED and TEDx events before your voluntary participation?
9. Did you know that TED and TEDx are different events?
10. Was your experience as a TEDxThessaloniki volunteer as you expected to?
11. Evaluate your TEDxThessaloniki experience
12. Would you apply for TEDxThessaloniki volunteer again?
4. Results

Undoubtedly, given answers were really helpful for us to reach our goals and be able to present in this paper that factors that contribute in cultural organizations’ branding. In order to explain to the reader our results we used sub-categories for TEDxThessaloniki results: general script, communication methods, sponsors, target group, event’s behavior in bad incidents, interactivity.

Additionally, as far as volunteers’ answers are concerned they were very informative as well. We realized that the majority people, no matter what their gender is, trust this specific event, choose to deal voluntary with TEDxThessaloniki more than once and they really appreciate the specific organization and are able to recognize the event just by looking organization’s logo. There are also other things and elements that are referred to the upcoming pages and prove that TEDxThessaloniki is considered as a cultural brand not only by the people who attends the events but from the organizers, the volunteers and the participants in general as well.

At this point it should be mentioned that following answers are exclusively for TEDxThessaloniki event as it has formed by the production team. In any case those answers are not a general overview of similar Greek or worldwide organizations. In order to for readers to understand better the following results we should define some things.

**Institution:** TEDxThessaloniki is a completed team structured by sub-groups of people with specific roles and obligations.

**Organization:** When we refer to organization we mean all the things that are done in order TEDxThessaloniki to be perfectly prepared on time. We could also claim that TEDxThessaloniki is not a one-day conference. It is unique experience.

**Tedxers:** When we refer to TEDxers we talk about the people who attend the event. Tedxers are event’s crowd. They are the people who have paid for a TEDx ticket and a goodie bag

4.1. Open-Structured Interviews

The following panel shows us briefly the answers that members of TEDxThessaloniki 2017 production team have given to our open-structured interviews. This is a simple way to have a clearer image about how things work from the inside and also how people from TEDxThessaloniki production team deals with issues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>General Script</strong></th>
<th><strong>Production director and Stage Manager</strong></th>
<th><strong>Communication Manager</strong></th>
<th><strong>Production Director&amp;Ticketing Manager</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a central main idea which serves event’s purpose. TEDx Thessaloniki functions under TED’s umbrella</td>
<td>‘Nowadays TEDxThessaloniki has a more specific script that it used to. This organization is getting bigger and more completed through years</td>
<td>our communication policy includes both social media and traditional communication methods (e.g interviews in Television or in newspapers and Media Sponsors)</td>
<td>one-day organization in a conference form that includes speech sessions, performances, breaks with snacks and drinks and workshops or parallel sessions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Communication Methods** | traditional means of communication and Social media are the basic method for our event’s communication | Our main communication method is Social Media | Social Media, Newsletters and traditional forms of communication |

| **Sponsorships** | Two kinds of sponsors, those who give money to the organization those who give their products for free in the organization. | Sponsors and participants (who pay for the ticket) are those who give money to the organization in order its basic need to be covered | TEDx is a non-profit organization not affected by political religious, racist or other beliefs that exclude or insult minorities or other groups of people. Sponsors choice should be similar to those values. |

| **Interactivity** | After the event we sent a ‘feedback attendee survey’ e-mail which is anonymously fulfilled from the participants and sent back to TED organization. Then, we get the general feedback and a detailed report of all the answers | Every year participants get a questionnaire about the event organization and they are free to evaluate and criticize the event. Their answers are recorded anonymously, and every two or three years all the TEDx executive teams from Greece are gathered in order to discuss and record possible deficiencies and what must change | It is really easy for every TEDxer to be in touch with the event. Anyone is able to send to us via email his feedback, or even with a personal message through social media |

| **Participation in the project** | An indirect way of participation is YouTube videos and other Social Media views. Moreover, proposals, suggestions and comments for the event we get through mails and personal messages in Social Media | In the second session there were open talks where people were able to ask the speakers anything they wanted to, related of course to their speeches. Last but not least, not a few times we have asked from tedxers to propose future speakers of performers. | TEDx itself is a participatory project, as we all work there voluntary; we are a team that works in order to run the main event. Besides that, the biggest kind of participation there is through Social media where people are able to participate using the official TEDx hashtag |

| **Bad incidents** | We look for an immediate solution. Then we try to find out how has this negative incident arisen in order to be prepared to avoid similar negative situations for the next time. | It depends on problems nature. It depends on the circumstances, the timing and the general environment. | This year there was a whole session which has created for that reason only. There were workshops and panel discussions with some of the speakers. During those panel discussions participant and speakers were able to discuss about their speeches and any possible questions that they had |

Table 1: Production Team’s answers
### 4.1.1 Event’s General Script

TEDx Thessaloniki, as every TEDx, is based on a basic form which has arisen from TED. The TEDx is a one-day organization in a form of conference. It is consisted by speech sessions, workshops, performances, lunch breaks, and parallel sessions. TEDx’s motto is ‘Ideas worth spreading’. There is also a basic concept as well. Every year, every TEDx announces a general thematic; around which speakers have to build their 20-minute- speeches. The speakers are people who have make something entrepreneurial to their sections, so what they to try to achieve is to explain to people their world with pretty simple sentences. According to E.P, TEDx Thessaloniki Curator and TED Ambassador, about TEDxThessaloniki general script, ‘There is a central main idea which serves event’s purposes. TEDx Thessaloniki functions under the umbrella of TED and of course with TED’s authorization. TED’s motto is ‘Ideas worth spreading’. Additionally, E.V, Production Director & Ticketing Manager supports that ‘TEDx Thessaloniki as every other single TEDx is based on TEDx’s basic form. TEDx is a one-day organization in a conference form. TEDx Thessaloniki includes speech sessions, performances, breaks with snacks and drinks and workshops or parallel sessions as well’.

Last but not least, V.K who is the Production director and Stage Manager claims that ‘Nowadays TEDxThessaloniki has a more specific script that it used to. This organization is getting bigger and more completed through years. Since 2010 that Institution firstly showed up, a lot of things have changed. For a few years (from 2010 to 2012) the event did not have a specific structure and the sub-groups did not have specific roles. However, nowadays our team has evolved and its actions are more specific than ever’.

As long as other details are concerned is it worth mentioning that there is not a production company that runs TEDx. The whole event is based on volunteers. It is explicitly forbidden anyone who works for TEDx to be paid. Of course, during the preparation there are external partners who help the production team to organize the event. Those are the only people who get paid for their services. Normally, TEDx production team starts to organize the event about six months ago. Production team and performances managers are those who decide who are going to participate in the event. However, anyone who might have an idea can express it. Production Director and Stage Manager refers that ‘No, there is not a production company that runs the event. Even if we would like to, we have a limited budget. Even
though, TEDxThessaloniki is a Non-Profit Organization and its annual income comes from tickets sales and sponsorships. As you may all understand our limited budget can barely cater for event’s basic needs. So, TEDxThessaloniki team is the only group of people who run the event basically for two reasons; the first one is because of our limited budget and the second one is because of the total control that we would like to have in order to run the event as we want to. We start to getting ready for the event about 9 months ago.

I have to explain to you team’s structure in order to understand who takes which decisions. There are four tiers. In the first rank which is the base is the production team with the added volunteers that have to run the event just a few weeks before it begins. In the second run is the production team who works during the year (about nine months) in order to achieve event’s goals. In the third rank is the executive team which is consisted by production team’s supervisors and the curator. In the fourth rank there is the curator.

Every year everyone is able to express his opinion about future speakers according to what those speakers have achieved to their field. Those proposals are evaluated by the curator and he/she ends up with a list with the finals invited speakers who are going to share their ideas on TEDxThessaloniki stage.

According to TEDxThessaloniki’s curator statements about TEDxThessaloniki’s production, ‘TEDx is a Non-Profit Organization. The person who is authorized by TED to run the event is the same for the last five years. Moreover, there are about two to three persons who are the same since the very first TEDxThessaloniki, in 2010. Every year there are some people in to the production team and some out of it. TEDx starts to be organized about 8 months ago. Additionally, those two-three persons are those who decide who to invite in order to talk or perform in every TEDx. The additional volunteers that will be needed the day of the event, is decided by the production team.

E. D, Production Director and Ticketing Manager, claims also that ‘There is not any production company. The whole event is based on a group of people who work voluntarily during the year in order to run the event. Additionally, there is a wider group of volunteers which functions ancillary as the event comes closer and of course the day of the event. During TEDxThessaloniki preparation, the production teams cooperated with other companies and firms for products or services that may be
needed. Those firms are getting paid by TEDx. Some of them are the same every year because they know how they work so we trust them’.

4.1.2 Brand of TEDx Thessaloniki

As we have already mentioned, TEDxThessaloniki, TED and every TEDx are considered as a brand. According to people who deal with TEDxThessaloniki there are a lot of things that make this event special.

M.O, Communication Manager for TEDxThessaloniki 2017, supports that ‘TED community and TEDx events in general have achieved to make this event a brand worldwide. Especially in Greece there are a lot of TEDx events, some smaller some bigger. All those events allow us to talk about establishment of successful communities in our country which try to make wider known ideas worth spreading. The reason that, those events have become known has to do with the people who run those events. On one hand those people work completely voluntary spending all their free time on organizing the event and on the other hand are event’s speakers, who are people able to inspire, inform and educate us, people who open new paths to all those things considered so far as known. Additionally, with Internet evolution is really easy for people with just a few clicks to get informed and attend all the events’.

What TEDxThessaloniki 2017 curator responds is that ‘TEDxThessaloniki is an event that promotes ideas that have taken place in our city, in our country or even in any other possible place in the earth. It is not just a theoretical approach but an elevation and a promotion of the reality and evolution of all the things that happen and affect our lives. Moreover, free access to the speeches, to contend of TEDThessaloniki official website and in YouTube TEDx and TED is something that has really helped brand’s publicity’.

Last but not least the Production Director and Ticketing Manager claims that ‘TEDxThessaloniki’s motto, ideas worth spreading, and the voluntary part are two things that make the event really strong. Its various content (such as science, innovation, design, entertainment etc) is what differentiates it from the other conferences which usually deal with just a specific topic’.

4.1.3. TEDxThessaloniki Communication Methods

It is a matter of fact that with Internet evolution things become easier, information is spread fast and widely. Undoubtedly TEDx, TED and every similar organization uses
Internet and its functions in order to promote and communicate their actions and content.

TEDxThessaloniki production team uses all the traditional forms of communication as well. Even though TEDxThessaloniki event has its own fans the production team does not rest on their laurels. They try every year to refresh the participants in order to get them in the TEDxThessaloniki culture. More specifically E.P states ‘There are a lot of different traditional means of communication that TEDxThessaloniki uses. We use press conferences, TV interviews; we upload YouTube and social media interviews and parallel actions in public space in order to raise events and brand’s awareness. Even though TEDxThessaloniki is sold out every year there is not a specific target group. At the same time we are not willing to have a stable target group. What we would like to do is to induct as much people as we can in TEDxThessaloniki experience. Age, gender, job, social and financial background do not impound the forms of communication that we use. Our goal is TEDxThessaloniki to be connected with as many as possible people in order to exchange experiences’.

According to all those that we have contacted with, Social media play a significant role for TEDxThessaloniki’s promotion and communication. As long as Social media and the role that they play in TEDx’s communication E.P refers that ‘Social media really help the communication procedure for our event. We could say that Social media are the basic method for our event’s communication’. At the same time M.O also supports that ‘I could say that Social Media is our basic method of communication. That means that our communication is based in a communication policy which includes in one hand social media and on the other hand traditional communication methods such as interviews in Television or in newspapers and Media Sponsors’. Last but not least E.D. also talks to us about the use of Social Media for TEDxThessaloniki promotion ‘I think that Social media are the basic communication method right after Newsletters. Social media, such as Facebook live streaming, Instagram live, paid ads etc, help the event to be communicated more and better that it used to. Additionally as TEDx has as basic idea the evolution and the innovation it would be impossible not to use the most recent means of communication. As you all may already know, those means are Social Media’.
Production Director & Stage Manager agrees with the above supporting that ‘Our main communication method is Social Media. It is a free promotion tool for our organization. If we only consider technology use and its abilities which allow us to collect and analyze data about users, we realize how important for every organization Social Media are. Through them we are able to have a clear and specific sense about what users want. So, it is easier for us to approach them. We could also support that Social Media are not only a promotion tools but a self-evaluation tool as well. This is not that easy in analog advertisement’.
Of course, social media are not the only mean that TEDxThessaloniki team uses in order to promote their event. There is also an official TEDxThessaloniki website where there is all the information that may be needed information and any answer for every possible question that someone may have.

E.P. says ‘People get informed for TEDxThessaloniki through our official website www.tedxthessaloniki.com. Moreover, more through social media and via friends that have already attended the event and less from other traditional forms of communication’. TEDx Curator add to her sayings ‘The traditional communication forms that TEDx Thessaloniki uses are newspaper listings (local and national coverage) and informative broadcasts. We do that because both of those two communication means inform mainly people who are over 35-to-40 years of age. We would not like those people not to be informed and have the opportunity to participate in TEDxThessaloniki’.

Moreover, there are a lot of informal forms of communication that are used, such as word-of-mouth- viral videos, buzz marketing etc. More specifically, M.O. refers that ‘Nowadays, I believe that there is not a cultural or a non-cultural event that does not use word-of-mouth method on e-word-of-mouth method in order to be spread around. TEDxThessaloniki communication is based in social media promotion through posts (about our event, events’ program, event’s speakers etc) and trough sponsored advertisements and in media sponsors who promote our newsletters. Every cultural or non-cultural organization has to be adapted in what people want. For example, this
was the first time that we have organized a pre-event in Aristotelous Square. Additionally, there was another innovation in our main event. The second session has changed by having a high level interaction between speakers and attendants through mini talks’.

The Production Director & Stage Manager also refers ‘The informal forms of communications are the methods which increase organization’s social impact and increase its popularity. Not only word-of-mouth method but also our speeches create that kind of buzz online increasing this way our participants through years. Let’s not forget that the first TED organized thirty years ago in order to talk about ideas worth spreading, ideas that would not be promoted through media. Organization’s communication is achieved mainly online, through TEDxThessaloniki official website, Social Media, Youtube channel, sponsored advertisements, online banners in other websites. To conclude with, every years Communication team sets different methods of communication according to event’s needs’.

4.1.4 TEDxThessaloniki Target group
Every cultural and non-cultural organization has or at least tries to have a specific target group. Most of organization use specific methods of communication in order to attract the target group they wish to. Same way, we asked people from TEDx Thessaloniki if they have used any specific form of communication or if there is any target group with specific characteristics that they want to attend their event.
M.O responds that ‘I think that we would like our target group to be consisted of people who are willing to be informed, to be affected and be inspired by ideas worth spreading’.

E.P. says that ‘We do not have a specific target group. The majority of TEDxers are people 25-40 years old’.

Production Director & Stage Manager refers ‘We do not want TEDxThessaloniki to have a specific target group. This organization is addressed to all. If we look back we will realize that the organization has been accused that it has been only for the elit of people. This is why in local level we try to open this organization as much as we can. All these years we can prove that our organization is widely open having partipicant from 15 years old to 78 years old. Additionally, live streaming allows us our event to be attended by 52 different countries worldwide’.

Last but not least, TEDx Thessaloniki tried this year to keep up with participants’ statistics. In other words, what TEDx Thessaloniki 2017 wanted this year to do is to have a picture about the percentage of a possible new target group. Surveys data are not ready yet but at first glance it seems that there an increase of people under 18 years old. What Production Director & Ticketing Manager supports is that ‘I am not aware if we used to have target groups statistics in the previous years. However, this year we tried to keep up with participant’s statistics. Unfortunately, no results are available yet. At first glance we could say that there has been an increase mainly in young people and more specifically for people under 18 years old’.

4.1.5. TEDxThessaloniki Sponsors

In every Non-profit organization there are sponsors who help the organization in order to achieve its goals. The same happens with TEDx Thessaloniki.

More specifically, TEDx Thessaloniki Curator reports that ‘There are two kinds of sponsors, those who give money to the organization and they are present during the event day, organizing promotional or informative actions about their products and those who give their products for free in the organization. The people who are responsible to choose the sponsors are TEDx Thessaloniki Curator in consultation with Sponsors Manager and Communication Manager. The basic criterion in order to choose or to exclude a Sponsor is the Sponsor firm to agree with event’s main idea. What are not allowed for sure are Tobacco and drug firms, weapon firms or other companies whose product respond only to adults’.
At the same time Production Director & Ticketing Manager refers that ‘Of course there are sponsors in TEDxThessaloniki. The event could not be existed without them. Sponsors and participants (who pay for the ticket) are those who give money to the organization in order its basic need to be covered’.

V.K , Production Director & Stage Manager says ‘Of course there are sponsors. This organization could not even exist without them. For sponsors choice the only responsible is the Fundraising team. According to TED rules, TEDx is a non-profit organization which is not affected by political religious, racist or other beliefs that exclude or insult minorities or other groups of people. So, sponsors choice should be similar to TEDx’s values and beliefs in order all the above criteria not to be defended’.

For my experience as Food Experience Catalyst, which means that I was responsible for food sponsors, there were not specific rules or obligations that we had to follow in order to cooperate with restaurants and other food sponsors. What we wanted to achieve for TEDxers is to have diversity of choices in order everyone to be satisfied. In TEDxThessaloniki 2017 there three breaks, breakfast, lunch and after party. That gave us the opportunity this year to cooperate with more food partners that we used to. What we have to pay attention to, is the fact that a lot of TEDxThessaloniki participants were vegetarian or vegans or they preferred gluten free products. It practically means that every break should include a choice for food for that group of people, as well.

4.1.6 TEDx Thessaloniki Interactivity

It is more than important for organizations to have a feedback from their participants in order to know if they are satisfied or not by the product, if there was anything that they would change and even if they could propose something new for the next time. E.D, Production Director & Ticketing Manager of TEDxThessaloniki 2017 says that ‘A way to get a feedback for the event is people’s reactions in Social Media, for example, likes, dislikes, comments, mentions, shares etc. Additionally, after every TEDx event we send an e-mail which is used by all TEDx events and is about organization’s evaluation and if people who have already attended a TEDx event would recommend it to a friend’.
Similarly, TEDxThessaloniki curator refers that ‘Yes, there is a way for us to get a feedback. After the event we sent a ‘feedback attendee survey’ e-mail which is anonymously fulfilled from the participants and sent back to TED organization. Then, we get the general feedback and a detailed report of all the answers’.

Production Director & Stage Manager says ‘Yes, of course there is a way to get peoples feedback for the event. It is something that we use in order to get even better. Every year participants get a questionnaire about the event organization and they are free to evaluate and criticize the event. Their answers are recorded anonymously, and every two or three years all the TEDx executive teams from Greece are gathered in order to discuss and record possible deficiencies and what must change’.

Last but not least, Communication Manager supports that ‘It is really easy for every TEDxer to be in touch with the event. Anyone is able to send to us via email his feedback, or even with a personal message through social media’.

Another way for interactivity to be expressed is through participatory projects. In those projects the participants are able to participate dynamically and in a lot of ways in events (for example they can vote for the best part of the project, they can make proposals for similar future projects in which he would be interested in etc.) At this point TEDx Thessaloniki curator mentions ‘There is not any kind of vote in TEDxThessaloniki. An indirect way of participation is YouTube videos and other Social Media views. Moreover, proposals, suggestions and comments for the event we get through mails and personal messages in Social Media’.

Last but not least, another really significant feature for projects, and more specifically for cultural projects, is the interactivity between the event and the participants. This feature is really helpful in order to keep people’s interest high. According to researches organizations that achieve that are successful for years. At this point, we asked the Production Director & Ticketing Manager if there is any similar kind of interactivity in TEDxThessaloniki. He responds ‘According to TEDx’s basic form this kind of interactivity used to be available only in lunch breaks and in after party where everyone is able to be in touch with the speaker of the performer he would like to. This year there was a whole session which has created for that reason only. There were workshops and panel discussions with some of the speakers. During those panel discussions participant and speakers were able to discuss about their speeches and any possible questions that they had. Besides that, there were always parallel sessions and workshops but they were not always connected with the speakers’.
Continuing, TEDxThessaloniki Curators says that ‘From 2010 to 2016 there was interactivity between participants and speakers/performers only through lunch breaks and in the after party. This year, the second session was panel discussions with the participation of two or three speakers where there were questions not only for the panel discussion coordinator but from the participants as well. This was a really nice way for interactivity to be enforced’.

In similar way, Communication manager responds ‘In all these years, there have been some participatory actions. However, I personally think that TEDx itself is a participatory project, as we all work there voluntary; we are a team that works in order to run the main event. Besides that, the biggest kind of participation there is through Social media where people are able to participate using the official TEDx hashtag’.

Concluding Production Director & Stage Manager refers that ‘TEDx is like living creatures. They are getting evolved through their crowd. The most important strand for this organization is the socializing between speakers, TEDxers and sponsors. Another example of interactivity is the fact that in TEDxThessaloniki 2017 it was the first time that we have changed the second session in order participants, speakers and performers to be more involved to each other. In the second session there were open talks where people were able to ask the speakers anything they wanted to, related of course to their speeches. Last but not least, not a few times we have asked from tedxers to propose future speakers of performers’.

4.1.7. TEDxThessaloniki and bad incidents

Not a few times people who represent an organization or they are just a part of them make a bad statement or have accidently a bad behavior. In general, any bad incident is able to create negative impact on the event. It is really important how the organization is going to handle this bad incident in order to avoid its negative consequences as much as it can. Just one bad incident is able to destroy a product or a whole firm and its reputation. This is why firms and cultural organization should me very careful with the people who they choose to represent them. In order to be more accurate TEDxThessaloniki curator states ‘Creation and maintenance of a specific identity for TEDx Thessaloniki and for people who participate in the event helps in order uniformity to be created. This uniformity helps not to be entered people who do not have the same values with the event. The term ‘uniformity’ does not concern the
interests, the peculiarities where diversity is being appreciated and reinforced. This uniformity is about values and principles according to which behave all those who participate in the team: respect, cooperation, synergy, support, inspiration, passion, enthusiasm, creativity, flexibility and optimism. It is a time consuming procedure. What is really important to this procedure is to have honesty and transparency and the leader to be accurate and consistent to their sayings in order to be a good example for the rest. When we have to deal with a negative incident our attitude is to recognize it, to look for an immediate solution and then to find out how has this negative incident arisen in order to be prepared to avoid similar negative situations for the next time. That brings us back to the importance of event’s strong identity. If our identity, our values, our actions are obvious to our every single action then the possible negative incident remains is isolation that just happened and it is not a feature of our team or event. What is important to us is to recognize and make good use of the negative incidents as a chance to work on an omission from our side. This is a chance for us to become better. All the above must be clearly communicated inside and outside the team’.

At the same time Production Director & Stage Manager refers ‘It depends on problems nature. It depends on the circumstances, the timing and the general environment. This is why is really important for communication rules to be followed’.

4.2 Questionnaire

As we have already mentioned in order to make a more detailed research we created a questionnaire that was answered by TEDxThessaloniki2017 volunteers. We have totally 57 answers, 35 men and 22 women. This questionnaire helped us to have a clearer image of how do event’s volunteers live TEDxThessaloniki experience.

To begin with, as we have just mentioned the majority of answers come from female. Being a member of the production team I can say that women were a much as men but as it seems females responded more to our call. Continuing, 84,2% of the respondents were between 18-30 years old and only 15,5% of the people who fulfilled our questionnaire were older than 30 years old. Those statistics are real as the majority of the volunteers were in that age (from 18 to 30 years old). At this point we are able to claim that most of our volunteers were educated people (63,2% of them hold a bachelor degree, 35,1% of them hold a Masters’ degree and 2 persons have a Ph.D).
Continuing, as we have previously mentioned it is really important for a brand or an organization to be present online through Social Media and sponsored adds, official Website, to be reviewed though peers and to make some noise about itself as well. It seems that TEDxThessaloniki’s marketing section works effectively. According to questionnaire statistics more than 50% of the people (64.8%) heard about the event from organization’s Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube channel, and Twitter. Nowadays with Internet evolution Social Media use is one of the most effective and useful marketing and communication tool. Additionally, TEDxThessaloniki communication team used informal ways of communication as well. As it seems word-of-mouth method is really effective as about 33% of our volunteers applied for the event as they have heard about it from a friend. For a brand, an organization or a product in general is really important to be positively reviewed. Marketers and advertisers support that it is more likely for someone to choose a product if his surroundings have already lived a positive experience engaging with it. Likewise, they will not choose a product if his friends have negatively reviewed it. This is what happens with TEDxThessaloniki as well. Someone has a positive experience engaging with TEDxThessaloniki and so he proposed it to a friend. This is also the reason why it was not the first time as TEDxThessaloniki as volunteers for the 70% of our respondents. This is another one element that makes this organization cultural brand. People choose it over and over again. They trust it, they have created a specific relationship with the cultural product and they are engaged with it. 100% of our respondent declares that they are willing to apply for TEDx event next year as well evaluating this year’s experience positive. This is really important for an organization, to be able to satisfy everyone’s requirements. At this point, it should be mentioned the second important factor that makes this event a cultural brand. 100% of the respondents were able to recognize the event just by looking its logo. This is a major success for a cultural organization. Image is one of brand elements, and TEDxThessaloniki achieve to do is its logo to be known and easily recognizable by everyone.

All the above, the combination of interviews and questionnaires are factors that prove that TEDxThessaloniki could easily be characterized as a cultural brand.
5. Discussion
As backed by the theoretical background it is easily proved that TEDxThessaloniki is a cultural brand-product and there are specific factors that contribute in order this to be achieved. To begin with, one of the most significant things is the brand experience that TEDxers live during the event. We have mentioned above that a new trend in marketing field is the experiential marketing, meaning that the organization is able to manage the whole experience that customer will have with the product. TEDxThessaloniki acts likewise. Production team is responsible for TEDxers’ whole experience during event day. Since the event begins they will take care for what TEDxers are going to have for brunch, who speakers they will hear, which performances they will attend etc. TEDxThessaloniki production team members are those who run every single detail of the event. Schmidt has declare that there are five types of experience that customer will have engaging with the product, sense experience, feel experience, think experience, act experience, and relate experience. This specific event we examine combines two kinds of experiences, think experience and relate experience. On the one hand, think experience helps consumer’s creativity and cognitive thinking. TEDxers, volunteers, production team and everyone who attends the event is inspired and influenced by all those people who talks and analyses their point of view according to what they do for living, what they have experienced on their own, how they see and deal with everyday things. TEDxThessaloniki is totally an event which is able to inspire and motivate people in every possible way. The second kind of experience is the relate one. According to Schmidt, this experience refers to the connection of people with a reference of group of people or ideas, or cultures etc. This year, as the members of the production team has stated, the second session was totally interactive by getting close people, speakers and performers in order to exchange ideas, questions or whatever they wanted to. Another finding that agrees with our theoretical background is the fact that TEDxers have a specific relationship with the event/TEDxThessaloniki organization. As Aggarwal has stated there is a kind of relationship which is called ‘communal’ and this is what kind of relationship TEDxers and TEDxThessaloniki organization have. This communal relationship is organization’s way to show to TEDxers that actually cares for their needs. This is why organization’s team is really careful when chooses who people are going to talk to the event, who will be the persons that represent them,
which will be the performers that will entertain the crowd. All the above should have the same humanitarian values and aspect of life.

Another really important thing is organization’s brand elements. Now we are aware that a brand is not just a name or a logo. It is consisted of a lot of different things such as logo, image, slogan, symbol etc. TEDxThessaloniki has all the previously mentioned. Has a specific logo, which is known and easily recognizable from all. All those who answered our questionnaire were able to identify the organization just by looking its logo. This question has 100% success. Moreover, TEDxThessaloniki has a specific logo, ‘ideas worth spreading’ and its whole concept, speeches and performances are based on it.

Another thing is the fact that TEDxThessaloniki integrate all the possible marketing channels. Trying the production team to promote the event uses all the available channels and media tools. Additionally, a lot of TEDx online communities are created in Social Media and other New Media platforms where people from all over the world interact with each other, expressing ideas, questions and discusses about thing that they are interested to. Additionally, the questionnaire has shown that word-of-mouth informal communication method is something is also an effective one in the case of TEDxThessaloniki. Almost half of the volunteers got informed about this year’s event from a friend or someone they know.

Last but not least is event’s equity and the fact that TEDxThessaloniki has loyal ‘fans’ and people who attend it almost every year. Besides TEDxers who attend the event, there are also a lot of volunteers who have experienced TEDxThessaloniki and choose to participate to it again and again.

Examining the literature review and combining it with the results that we got from open-structured interviews and volunteers questionnaire we are realize that using TEDxThessaloniki as a case study was a right decision as this events has most of the characteristics that a brand must be consisted of. Last but not least, now is clear which are the factors that contribute in order a cultural organization to become a brand.
6. Research Limitations

As it is already mentioned in order to examine the factors that contribute for cultural events’ branding we have created questionnaires that were answered by three persons who belong to the main production team of TEDxThessaloniki. It is a matter of fact, though, that we faced some difficulties.

To begin with, the questionnaires were ready to be answered about two months before TEDxThessaloniki 2017. That means that people have already started to organize the upcoming event (TEDxThessaloniki 2017) so, they did not have plenty of time to answer the questions. Being part of that production team I was able to realize there was a lot of pressure for those people in order to prepare that last details for the event.

Another difficulty that we faced and comes up from the limited time of production’s team members is that even though the interviews were open structured we did not have the chance to meet in person to discuss any additional questions that were maybe occurred. The questionnaire was answered by e-mail. Of course there were plenty of emails exchanged in order to clarify some questions or event production members to add something that they have forgot, but still we believe that the fact that there was not touch in person was something that made the procedure harder for both sides.
7. Suggestions for future studies

Researching for our paper we found out that there is a lack of studies to cultural branding field. Even though there are a lot of studies about branding in organization in general but there are only a few samples of research for cultural organizations. This is why we think that people who deal with this field should invest more in cultural branding or more specific in digital branding for cultural organizations. Moreover, there could be a research about people’s opinion. For example, the research could examine people’s perspective about branding in general and if they think that cultural organizations could become cultural brands. It is really interesting to find out how people who do not deal with marketing or management field define the meaning of the word ‘brand’. Additionally, in case that there are people who believe that there are cultural organizations that are brand products it would be really helpful to know which is the characteristic that make those organizations a brand. Last but not least the same paper could include people’s believe if they consider branding as something positive or negative. In the last years there a lot of people who choose not to buy or consume brand products trying to support smaller firms and organizations. They act this way because there has been created the general aspect that smaller firms nowadays have more qualititative products. Same things happen in cultural field as well. According to surveys the last few years there is recorded an increase in smaller ‘alternative’ cultural events that present events supported by people with more special methods of expressing art. So, there would be really interesting if we could record people’s opinion and choice between, for example, an art exhibition in Museum of Acropolis by some famous photographer or if they would choose a smaller art exhibition in an industrial warehouse by an unknown photographer.

What people could also do, having the existence of cultural branding as a fact, is a survey about the existence of different factors that contribute to cultural organizations’ branding according to the kind of cultural organization. We have already mentioned the factors that contribute to cultural organizations’ branding in general. It would be interesting to know if factors for branding in art performing arts are the same for branding in exhibited arts.
8. Conclusion

The research we have made in combination with the qualitative methods we have used helped us to come to some conclusions and examine the factors that contribute to cultural events’ branding. As it is proven it is possible for a cultural organization to become a brand but there are some specific factors that contribute to it. Additionally, even if an organization has become a cultural brand there are some things that it has to make in order to remain a brand. At this point, let’s take a deeper look at our conclusions.

As the research has completed we came up to the induction that cultural organizations work the same way with every other kind of organizations. That means that it is possible for a cultural organization to become a brand. It is a matter of fact that nowadays there are a lot of different kinds of cultural organizations that have become cultural brands, such as Museum of Modern Art (New York), Broadway Theater (New York), Moni Lazariston Festival (Thessaloniki) and of course TED (New York) and TEDx events (Worldwide). What is also easily perceptible is that branding procedure is not an easy one. Organizations have to follow specific steps in order to achieve to make their company a brand. Branding procedure needs time; it cannot be completed in a few days or even months. It takes at least a few years in order a cultural organization of a firm to become a brand. It is not something that that can be created for one day to another or event to be disappeared for one day to another. Usually, brands have a specific image, logo, motto and an identity in general. What makes a product brand is its storytelling behind the product, the credibility that is being expressed, the quality of the product, people’s reliability that organizations have earned because of their consistency to consumer’s demands. Keeping those standards high for years it is very possible for organization to become brands. As we can all realize ‘brand’ is not something tangible. We could support that ‘brand products’ is how people have the specific products on their minds. Factors such as image, logo, motto and the general identity that a product should have are the characteristics that distinguish in appearance a product from other similar competitive products. Same way factors such as storytelling, credibility, product quality are the characteristics that distinguish mainly a product from other similar competitive products. The combination of two above kinds of factors is the reason that a product has become a brand and why product-brand is clearly distinguished among others as well. People
will choose the specific brand-product because they are familiar with it, they have already tried it, they know it and they trust it. At this point it should be mentioned that even if someone has not ever tried a specific brand-product it would be easier for him to pick this one rather than other similar products because of the possible word-of-mouth product’s marketing. Same way works and TEDxThessaloniki that we have used as a case study. It is an event that is taken place in the city for eight years now. It is an event widely known in Greece but worldwide as well. People are now convinced that is a qualitative cultural product. They know that is something time and money worth spending so they choose to attend it every year. This is why TEDxThessaloniki events are sold out for the very first days.

Occasioned by the last one and the word-of-mouth marketing method it should be mentioned that nowadays in the digital age marketers use to say that ‘that if it is not on it does not exist’. In other words, if a brand even if it is cultural or not, do not appear anywhere online it means that it does not exist. In the last years with the Internet evolution everyone is being informed by internet. So, if a firm wants to promote or advertise its product must have a presence online. This is a way for people to know about the product, come in touch with it in order firms to achieve the branding procedure. To this one what also plays significant role is Social Media. Social Media and their features (promoted ads) is a really easy way for firms to promote and advertise their products. Additionally, Social Media can really help firms to talk about their product, to present product’s story in a more attractive and perhaps interactive way and present their possible actions about social issues. TEDxThessaloniki besides its official website is also present in all the Social Media. It is the easiest way for someone to come in first touch with any kind of products.

Digital age has a very specific characteristic which is interactivity. Put simply and according to Oxford Dictionaries ‘interactivity is the process of two people or things working together and influencing each other’ (Oxford Dictionaries English, 2015). This means that cultural organizations are able to affect people and at the same time people are able to affect organizations. That means that consumers should be able to participate, if they want to, to the product with every possible way. There are a lot of brands that try to be as much interactive as they can. For example, Fanta firm try to engage the consumers with its product by making them think and propose Fanta’s new package. This is a way of participation. Fanta is already a brand which uses the method of interactivity in order to stay engaged with the people. Same way,
TEDxThessaloniki interacts with its participants in a lot of ways. As people from TEDxThessaloniki production team has mentioned, event’s participants are able to participate in the event using the official hashtag in Social Media. Furthermore, participants are able to suggest future speakers or performances that they would like to see through personal message in social media or via e-mail. Additional the last TEDxThessaloniki’s structure was a little bit different that the previous. The second session was totally interactive as speakers and participants were able to communicate and discuss in smaller groups about the issues that are interested to. It seems that this change was really good and people were excited about how easily they were able to interact with the TEDxThessaloniki speakers and performers. Concluding, after the event there is a specific form that participants are able to complete in order to give their feedback about the latest event. This feedback will help production team to fix possible defects for upcoming events.

As we all understand it is not important for a firm only to become a brand but to remain one as well. This is why organizations and firms should never stop trying evolving their product and their marketing methods as well. Of course the most important and simple thing that they have to do is to keep their standards up, be consistent with people demands.
9. References

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