

HEC Montréal

**Brand Identity and Brand Image in the Cultural Context
of Film Festivals**

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Abstract

A major problem currently plagues the success of cultural organizations – market saturation: a surplus of offer relative to demand (Colbert, 2009). Faced with competition from their own industry as well as that of popular entertainment, arts institutions strive to stand out and survive (Colbert, 2009). To alleviate these market pressures, previous literature has proposed that traditionally commercial concepts – like marketing and branding – can be of aid ((Baumgarth, 2009; Baumgarth & O’Reilly, 2014; Boerner, Moser, Jobst, 2011; Boerner & Renz, 2008; Boudier-Pailler, 1999; Caldwell, 2000; Caldwell & Coshall, 2002; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Carù & Cova, 2011; Christin, 2012; Colbert, 2003; Colbert, 2009; d’Astous, Colbert & Fournier, 2007; Goetzman, Ravid & Sverdlove, 2013; Hausman, 2012; Hume, 2008; Johnson & Cui, 2013; Le Gall-Ely, Urbain, Bourgeon-Renault, Gombault & Petr, 2008; Miesen, 2004; Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000; Southerton, Tolson & Warde, 2012; Van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013; Voss & Cova, 2006; Walmsley, 2013; Willekens & Levens, 2014; Zolfgharian & Cortes, 2011).

The relatively nascent field of cultural marketing has garnered controversy between the diverging viewpoints of traditionalists and modernists (Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2001; Unwin et al., 2007). Over the few last years, however, a growing body of literature has increasingly supported the use of marketing in the arts sector (Boudier-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007). Little research has, however, considered the core concept of branding. Among the few studies on the topic, generally positive results have been found for its use (Baumgarth, 2009; Bowdin, McDonnel, Allen, Harris & O’Toole, 2006; Baumgarth & O’Reilly, 2014; Caldwell, 2000; Caldwell & Coshall, 2002; Colbert, 2003; d’Astous, Colbert & Fournier, 2007; Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000). Though these broad findings argue in favour of cultural branding’s value, they fail to holistically consider the topic from the perspectives of both organizations and their customers.

Our main objective was, thus, to contribute to the discussion on cultural branding by holistically applying the concepts of brand identity and brand image, while analyzing the impact of their relationship on value creation for both the organization and its customers in the film festival context. Specifically, we based the construction of our analysis on Aaker's (1996) brand identity model and Keller's (1993) understanding of brand image. This allowed us to answer the questions: Can the traditionally concept of branding be applied in the cultural context? How does it apply from the perspectives of both consumers and managers? In what ways does it impact overall success?

Using semi-structured in-depth interviews, we explored the perceptions of three film festival managers and nine visitors. Our results were gathered and analyzed in three steps. We first considered the perspective of managers, we then explored those of visitors and, finally, we compared the information of both groups. This allowed us to determine overall branding perceptions, the applicability of typically commercial concepts (brand identity, brand image, brand position, communications and brand equity), the content of these concepts, the communications methods used to diffuse and gather information about them, and the overall impact that they have on film festival success.

Findings suggested that film festival managers and visitors positively perceived cultural branding. In exploring their content and comparing both groups' perceptions, we found that the dimensions with the most strategic importance were the quality/value, product attributes, organizational attributes and brand personality dimensions. Interestingly, we found that two recurring aspects predominated and formed the core of these brand identity perspectives: films and experiences. This further supported the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market-orientation) and the artistic products (product-orientation) is adopted from both the consumers and managerial points of view in the film festival context. While we found that managers and visitors possessed relatively congruent brand perceptions, this was not

deemed due to their communications practices. Indeed, while managers tended to diffuse their efforts across platforms, visitors highly emphasized the website and word-of-mouth. In fact, the latter method was the primary reason for their first visit. Any return visits were influenced by a positive first experience. As such, brand equity – and ultimately film festival success – is generated by the films and the supporting events and atmosphere – two core brand dimensions. Thus, per our exploratory research on the nascent topic of cultural branding can be applied in the film festival context and can have a positive impact on success.

Keywords: Film festivals, cultural marketing, cultural branding, brand identity, brand image, brand positioning, communications, brand equity

Résumé

Actuellement, les organismes culturelles font face à un problème majeur – la saturation du marché : un surplus d’offre relatif à la demande (Colbert, 2009). Confrontées à la concurrence de leur propre industrie, ainsi qu’à celle du divertissement populaire, les institutions artistiques s’efforcent de se démarquer et de survivre (Colbert, 2009). Pour atténuer ces pressions du marché, la littérature a proposé l’utilisation de concepts commerciaux, tels le marketing et la marque (Baumgarth, 2009; Baumgarth & O’Reilly, 2014; Boerner, Moser, Jobst, 2011; Boerner & Renz, 2008; Boudier-Pailler, 1999; Caldwell, 2000; Caldwell & Coshall, 2002; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Carù & Cova, 2011; Christin, 2012; Colbert, 2003; Colbert, 2009; d’Astous, Colbert & Fournier, 2007; Goetzman, Ravid & Sverdlove, 2013; Hausman, 2012; Hume, 2008; Johnson & Cui, 2013; Le Gall-Ely, Urbain, Bourgeon-Renault, Gombault & Petr, 2008; Miesen, 2004; Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000; Southerton, Tolson & Warde, 2012; Van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013; Voss & Cova, 2006; Walmsley, 2013; Willekens & Levens, 2014; Zolfgharian & Cortes, 2011).

Le nouveau domaine du marketing culturel a suscité beaucoup de controverse entre les points de vue divergents des traditionalistes et des modernistes (Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2001; Unwin et al., 2007). Au cours des dernières années, de plus en plus d’auteurs ont trouvé du soutien pour l’utilisation du marketing dans le secteur artistique (Boudier-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007). Cependant, peu d’études ont considéré le concept central de la marque. Parmi les quelques études portant sur le sujet, les résultats ont été généralement positifs (Baumgarth, 2009; Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen, Harris & O’Toole, 2006; Baumgarth & O’Reilly, 2014; Caldwell, 2000; Caldwell & Coshall, 2002; Colbert, 2003; d’Astous, Colbert & Fournier, 2007; Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000). Malgré ces résultats, les études ne tiennent pas compte d’une perspective holistique, mariant à la fois les points de vue des gestionnaires et des consommateurs.

Notre objectif principal était donc de contribuer à la discussion sur la marque culturelle en appliquant, de manière holistique, les concepts d'identité de marque et d'image de marque tout en analysant l'impact de leur relation sur la création de valeur tant pour l'organisation que pour ses clients dans le contexte du festival du film. Plus précisément, nous avons basé nos résultats et notre analyse sur le modèle d'identité de marque de Aaker (1996) et celui de l'image de marque de Keller (1993). Le tout nous a permis de répondre aux questions suivantes: Le concept traditionnel de la marque peut-il être appliqué dans le contexte culturel? Comment s'applique-t-il selon les points de vue des consommateurs et des gestionnaires? De quelle manière cela a-t-il un impact sur le succès de l'organisme?

En utilisant des entrevues semi-structurées en profondeur, nous avons exploré les perceptions de trois responsables de festivals de film et de neuf visiteurs. Nos résultats ont été recueillis et analysés en trois étapes. Nous avons d'abord considéré la perspective des gestionnaires. Nous avons ensuite exploré ceux des visiteurs. Enfin, nous avons comparé l'information des deux groupes. Cela nous a permis de déterminer les perceptions globales de la marque, l'applicabilité des concepts typiquement commerciaux (identité de marque, image de marque, position de marque, communication et image de marque), le contenu de ces concepts, les méthodes de communication utilisées pour diffuser et recueillir des informations à leur sujet et l'impact global qu'ils ont sur la réussite des festivals de films.

Les résultats suggèrent que les gestionnaires et les visiteurs de festivals de film possèdent des perceptions positives quant à l'utilisation de la marque culturelle. En explorant leur contenu et en comparant les perceptions des deux groupes, nous avons constaté que les dimensions ayant de l'importance stratégique étaient la qualité/valeur, les attributs du produit, les attributs organisationnels et la personnalité de marque. Fait intéressant, nous avons aussi constaté que deux aspects récurrents prédominaient et constituaient le cœur de ces perspectives d'identité de marque: les films et les expériences. Ces résultats soutiennent l'approche duelle de la marque culturelle (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), car l'équilibre de ces

concepts traditionnellement commerciaux (orientation-marque et orientation-marché) et du produit artistique (orientation-produit) est adopté par les gestionnaires et les visiteurs des festivals de film. Bien que nous ayons trouvé que les gestionnaires et les visiteurs possèdent des perceptions de la marque relativement congruentes, cela ne semblait pas être en raison de leurs pratiques de communication. En effet, bien que les gestionnaires aient tendance à diffuser leurs efforts sur plusieurs plateformes, les visiteurs utilisent fortement le site Web et le bouche-à-oreille. En fait, cette dernière méthode était la principale raison de leur première visite. Toute visite supplémentaire a été influencée par une première expérience positive. C'est ainsi que l'équité de la marque – et donc le succès du festival de film – est généré par les films ainsi que les événements et l'atmosphère – deux des principales dimensions de la marque. Grâce à notre recherche exploratoire sur le nouveau domaine de la marque culturelle, nous avons donc trouvé qu'il est possible de l'appliquer aux festivals de film et qu'il peut avoir un impact positif sur leur succès.

Mots-clés : Festivals de film, marketing culturel, marque culturelle, identité de marque, image de marque, positionnement de marque, communications, équité de marque

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Introduction

It is 4:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon and the week is almost over. Thinking about the weekend ahead, you ask yourself: “What should I do for fun?”. You could visit an art exhibit at the contemporary art museum, see a sports game at the stadium, attend a music festival, or even stay home and watch Netflix. With so many options available in a cultural and entertainment hub like Montreal, it is difficult to choose; between the city’s thriving arts scene (theaters, museums, operas, musicals, festivals, etc.) and its many popular entertainment activities (movies, hockey games, fireworks, etc.), how can any one option stand out? This question exemplifies the main problem with which cultural organizations currently face – **market saturation**: a surplus of offer relative to demand (Colbert, 2009). Not only are arts institutions confronted with competition from their own industry, they are also faced with that of the popular entertainment industry (Colbert, 2009). With too many options and so little leisure time to spend, consumers cannot partake in all the arts and entertainment activities available (Colbert, 2009). How, then, can cultural organizations stand out and survive?

It is often believed that marketing and culture cannot be combined for fear that the latter’s quality and integrity will suffer (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014). Though focusing on the product’s quality (product-orientation) is essential for the success of cultural institutions, it is insufficient in today’s highly competitive environment (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). Arts organizations must also adopt a market-orientation, whereby consumers and competitors are strategically accounted for in addition to the product’s quality (Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2009; Hume, 2008). This suggests that practices akin to traditional marketing can have a positive impact for the cultural sector. Indeed, in his review of the contemporary challenges facing cultural organizations, Colbert (2009) proposes three marketing-based solutions to address the sector’s saturation: (1) improve market positioning, (2) enhance customer service, and (3) capitalize on information technology. Our current study will focus on notions surrounding cultural organizations’ positioning via the broader concept of branding.

Arts marketing literature has considered many important marketing concepts. Authors in this field have studied concepts such as social demographics (Christin, 2012; Van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013; Voss & Cova, 2006; Willekens & Levens, 2014), choice motivations (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Miesen, 2004; Zolfgharian & Cortes, 2011), customer experience (Carù & Cova, 2011; Southerton, Tolson & Warde, 2012; Walmsley, 2013), customer satisfaction (Boerner, Moser, Jobst, 2011), customer service (Maher, Clark & Motley, 2011), the impact of reviews and word of mouth (Boerner & Renz, 2008; Hausman, 2012), as well as pricing strategies (Goetzman, Ravid & Sverdlove, 2013; Johnson & Cui, 2013; Le Gall-Ely, Urbain, Bourgeon-Renault, Gombault & Petr, 2008). Despite the growing body of arts marketing literature, little research has considered the core concept of **branding**. Among the few studies on the topic, it has been suggested that branding can help alleviate the purchase decision anxiety caused by the intangibility and riskiness of experiences (Bowdin, McDonnel, Allen, Harris & O'Toole, 2006), thereby increasing success (Baumgarth, 2009). Others have proposed varying brand implementation and analysis frameworks (Baumgarth & O'Reilly, 2014; Caldwell, 2000; Caldwell & Coshall, 2002; Colbert, 2003; d'Astous, Colbert & Fournier, 2007; Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000). Though these broad findings argue in favour of cultural branding's value, they fail to holistically consider the topic from the perspectives of both organizations and their customers.

Our main objective is to contribute to the discussion on cultural branding by holistically applying the concepts of brand identity and brand image, while analyzing the impact of their relationship on value creation for both the organization and its customers. The importance of these concepts rests in their diverging perspectives; brand identity is how the company or organization wishes to be perceived by the market (Aaker, 1996), whereas brand image is consumers' understanding of the brand (Keller, 1996). We apply these concepts in the context of film festivals, which were chosen for three main reasons. First, few arts marketing studies have focused on festivals in general, and even less on film festivals. Indeed, most studies focus on museums, theaters, and opera. Second, film festivals are multiplex and universal, ranging in themes and geographical scope (Cooke, 1996; d'Astous,

Colbert & d'Astous, 2006; Unwin, Kerrigan, Waite & Grant, 2007). Their pervasiveness helps ensure the validity and reliability of our study, as festivalgoers will possess organized cognitive structures about these events (d'Astous et al., 2006). This is further intensified by film festivals' remarkable growth over the last few decades (Unwin et al., 2007). In Canada alone, major film festivals attracted 1.9 million attendees in 2011 (Nordicity, 2013). Third, they offer a unique communications paradigm due to their short yearly occurrence (Unwin et al., 2007). Visitors are not constantly exposed to the festival and communications efforts concentrate around the time of the event (Unwin et al., 2007). As such, visitors must heavily rely on memory and available communications tactics to form their brand image. This unique and fertile context forms the basis of our exploratory research.

Our specific research objectives build on Pusa and Uusitalo's (2014) application of brand identity in museums. This view is partial as it only accounts for one perspective – that of the organization. In considering a holistic view of film festival branding, we look at both the managerial (brand identity) and customer (brand image) perspectives. In addition to studying them separately, we consider the relationship of both concepts on value creation for both parties. Accordingly, our study's objectives are divided into three sections: (1) branding from the film festival's perspective (brand identity), (2) branding from the film festival visitors' perspective (brand image), and (3) the overarching relationship between both.

In this exploratory study, we use semi-structured interviews to gain insight from both the organizations' and visitors' perspectives. Each group is selected from three Montreal-based film festivals, for a total of three managers and nine visitors. Their responses are analyzed via manual thematic coding.

Our research has several theoretical and managerial contributions. From a theoretical perspective, there are four main contributions. First, it broadens the discussion on cultural branding by offering a holistic approach that simultaneously accounts for the perspectives of both managers (brand identity) and visitors (brand image). Second, it helps further support the

application and strategic relevance of traditional marketing concepts in the cultural sector. In our study, the concepts of branding, brand identity, brand image, brand equity, and communications are applied or reapplied in an effort to gather theoretical support. Third, for those concepts being reapplied, it helps support their theoretical validity and reliability. Fourth, our study contributes to the cultural marketing literature by applying marketing concepts in the rarely studied context of film festivals.

From a managerial perspective, our study provides three main contributions. First, it determines whether branding is a viable strategic tool for film festivals' success. Second, it offers insights into the brand identity dimensions that drive strong (or weak) film festival brands. In knowing the relevant dimensions, it can help film festivals orient their marketing activities to help (re)attract visitors, thereby ensuring their survival in a saturated market. Third, our study helps determine strategically relevant communications practices that will help convey the brand to its target audience. These theoretical and managerial contributions affirm the importance of diving into the sparsely considered topic of cultural branding.

Chapter 1 Literature Review

The aim of our study is to holistically explore branding from the perspectives of both film festival managers and their visitors. Our literature review sheds light on this paradigm while discussing the relevance of its underlying concepts. We start this chapter by assessing the cultural sector's current market context. We then dive into the general concept of cultural marketing and the more specific concept of cultural branding. We end the chapter by presenting the specific cultural context of our study: film festivals.

1.1 Current Cultural Context: Market Saturation

The current cultural sector is fraught with barriers that inhibit its success. According to Colbert (2009), the main obstacle with which arts institutions are faced is **market saturation**: a surplus of offer relative to demand. Saturation is reached once demand can no longer be increased despite the continued influx of new products, services, and companies or organizations on the market (Colbert, 2009). This poses a difficult problem for the survival of arts organizations. Colbert's (2009) example of Canadian novelists and families illustrates the matter. The author stipulates that, based on an average yearly royalty-based income of \$30 000, the country's 17 000 novelists would have to sell 50 novels to eight million families each year to survive (Colbert, 2009). This objective is clearly unrealistic as few families consume such a high number of novels on an annual basis (Colbert, 2009). Indeed, their level of demand is lower than the quantity of offered novels, thereby resulting in market saturation. This example reflects the uncertain context for culture as a whole.

While customers rejoice in the large quantity of available choices, the direct consequence of market saturation is a high level of **competition** among new and existing arts organizations (Colbert, 2009). This level of competition is further enhanced by consumers' inability to distinguish between high art (arts and culture) and low art (popular entertainment) (Colbert, 2009). Indeed, cultural institutions such as museums and theaters are pitted against each other, as well as against increasingly cheap and convenient leisure options like sports,

video games and television (Hill, O’Sullivan & O’Sullivan, 2012; Kotler & Scheff, 1997). What, then, can be done to alleviate the pressures of this precarious situation?

1.2 Marketing in the Cultural Sector

The cultural sector is inherently different from traditional commercial industries. Rather than creating a product for a specific target market, artistic products are typically created for their own sake (Colbert, 2003; Colbert, 2009; Gainer & Padanyi, 2002). The art sector’s divergent essence lends the question: Can marketing be applied in the cultural context? In the following sections, we take a look at the commercial definition of marketing, the diverging opinions about its use in the cultural sector, and the ways in which it can be applied in the arts sector.

1.2.1 Broad Definition of Marketing

Popular belief tends to equate marketing with advertising and selling – practices rooted in common sense (Crane, 2011). It is also often negatively perceived as customer manipulation and dupery (McKenna, 1990). Marketing is, however, much greater than what it is so often believed to be. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), **marketing** is defined as “(...) the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large” (AMA, 2014). This definition emphasizes the **added value** that marketing can provide to all stakeholders through a meaningful exchange leading to the satisfaction of unmet needs (Crane, 2011). Far greater than simple common sense, this added value can only be attained through the careful analysis of customer needs, wants and motivations, the understanding of competitive market fluctuations, and the strategic decisions relative to the marketing mix’s four P’s: product, price, promotion and place (Crane, 2011). It can, therefore, be understood that marketing is an important strategic tool. Indeed, it cannot be simply categorized as manipulative advertising to sell unwanted goods and services to unsuspecting publics; there is will from all involved parties. The controversy surrounding the

concept of marketing is further intensified in a context where it has not traditionally had a place. In the following section we look at the diverging opinions on marketing in the cultural context.

1.2.2 Diverging Opinions on Marketing in the Cultural Context

As with many controversial topics, two opinions preside: that of those who support the matter and that of those who oppose it. The application of marketing in the cultural context is a particularly hot-button topic for many. Those from a **traditional standpoint** are suspicious of cultural marketing for fear that it will degrade the quality and integrity of artistic experiences (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2011; Unwin et al., 2007). Those of this stance tend to favour a **product-orientation**, whereby the quality of the product is optimized without consideration for the market (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). For example, in a fictional market, the opportunity to socialize might be important to customers' museum experience. However, a product-orientated museum would not account for this factor, believing that quality products primarily drive visits. This type of museum might, therefore, allocate its budget towards obtaining some of Rembrandt's famous paintings, rather than investing in a café to encourage social interaction.

Oppositely, arts institutions from a **modern standpoint** view marketing as a useful tool for achieving success. Those of this stance tend to favour a **market-orientation**, whereby strategic decisions take into account the market (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). Such modernist organisations strive to achieve superior value for their customers by fulfilling unmet needs while generating a sustainable competitive advantage (Narver & Slater, 1990). Market-oriented activities consist of three behavioural components: (1) customer-orientation, (2) competitor-orientation, and (3) interfunctional coordination (Narver & Slater, 1990). (1) **Customer-orientated activities** refer to the acquisition of information about the needs, wants, perceptions and satisfaction of the organization's target markets (Caldwell, 2002; Gainer & Padanyi, 2002; Kotler and Andreasen, 1996; Narver & Slater, 1990). (2) **Competitor-orientated activities** refer to the acquisition of knowledge regarding competitors' potential strengths and weaknesses (Narver & Slater, 1990). Finally, (3) **interfunctional coordination**

activities represent the organization-wide strategic efforts to create superior value for customers by taking into account the information previously gathered about its customers and competitors (Narver & Slater, 1990). Simply put, information about customers and competitors is continuously gathered and informs company-wide strategies in an effort to provide superior value, and, in turn, a sustainable competitive advantage (Narver & Slater, 1990). As such, a market-oriented museum might allocate a budget toward assessing points of value-creation for its customers, while determining if and how competitors have acted upon these points. For example, in a fictional market, socialization might be important to customers' museum experience. A market-oriented museum might engage in activities to ensure that the museum's resources are synchronized throughout its departments providing visitors with social gathering opportunities. If, however, in obtaining competitor information, it is found that all other museums offer cafés, the museum might decide to opt for a bar, a point of differentiation. Table I presents a comparison of each orientation's characteristics (Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Narver & Slater, 1990).

Table I. Comparison of Product-Orientation and Market-Orientation

	Product-Orientation	Market-Orientation
Focus	Belief that customers primarily value the artistic quality	Belief that customers value aspects other than just the artistic quality
Strategic efforts	Efforts are put towards conservation, restoration, acquisition and research	Efforts are put towards understanding customers (customer-orientation) and the competition (competitor-orientation) to make informed strategic decisions that provide value organization-wide (interfunctional coordination)
Market influence	Does not adapt to customer needs and wants, nor to the competition in determining strategies for success	Adapts to customer needs and wants, and to the competition in determining strategies for success

Source: Camarero, C., & Garrido, M. J. (2008). The influence of market and product orientation on museum performance. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 10(2), 14-26.

To reconcile the diverging perspectives of traditionalists and modernists, a **dual approach** has been proposed to optimize success in the cultural sector's saturated market (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007). This approach balances both a product-orientation and a market-orientation. This is well demonstrated in Camarero and Garrido's (2008) analysis of 182 Spanish museums. The authors find that economic performance is related to a combination of product-orientated and market-orientated activities. Though artistic quality (product-orientation) is important, the authors suggest that economic success can be achieved through greater customer-orientation and interfunctional coordination, facets of a market-orientation (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). Support for the dual approach suggests that, in addition to focusing on a product-orientation, market-oriented practices akin to marketing can have a positive effect on arts organizations. The question then becomes: Can marketing applied to the arts sector as it is in the commercial sector? The following section considers the parameters of its application in this particular context.

1.2.3 Marketing in the Cultural Sector

As concluded in the previous section, a growing body of literature supports the notion that the integration of marketing practices can have a positive effect on cultural organizations' performance. However, it cannot be simply applied as it would in the commercial sector. Colbert (2003) exemplifies this in the following statement:

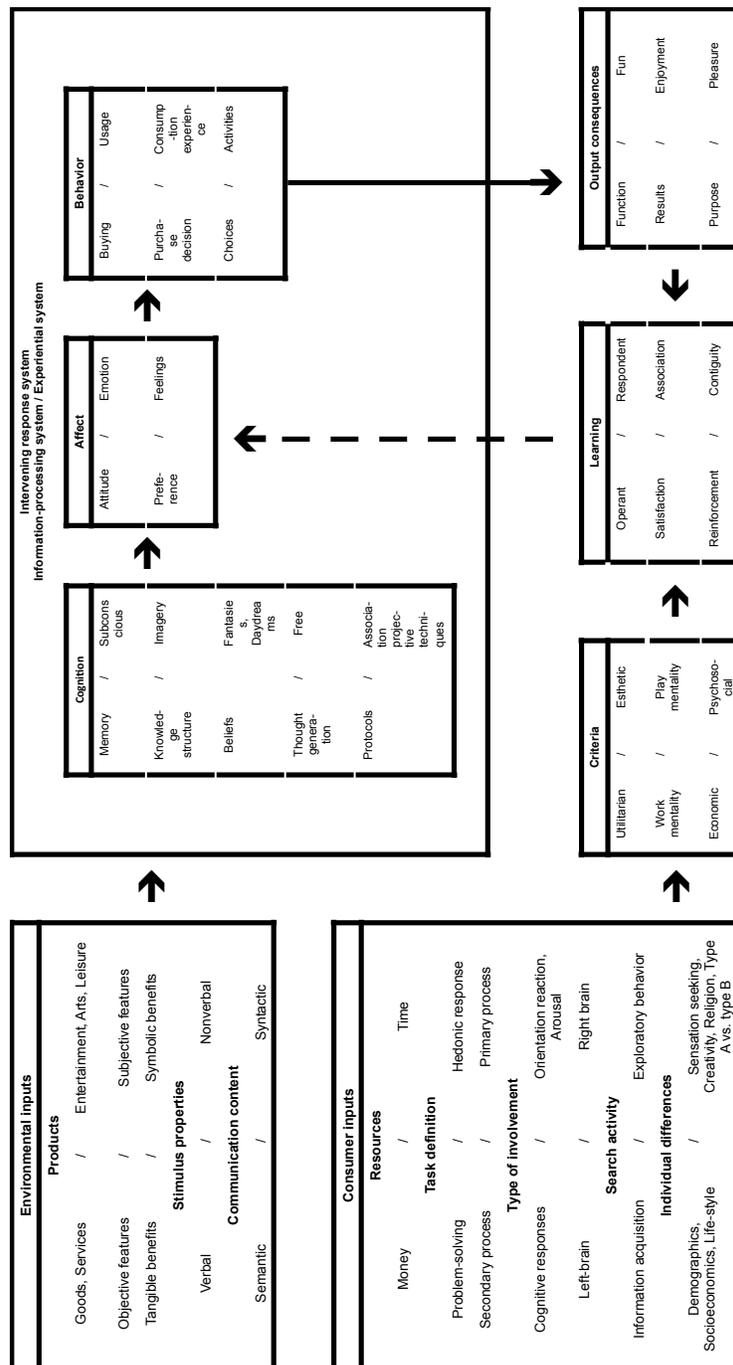
The fundamental concept in traditional marketing – meeting the needs of the consumer – does not apply in high art. This is what distinguishes cultural marketing from traditional marketing. The artistic product does not exist to fulfil a market need. Its *raison d'être* is independent of the market, which is what makes it particular marketing challenge. Instead of seeking to meet consumers' needs by offering them a product they desire, the arts manager seeks consumers who are attracted to the product. In order to find the right consumers the manager must acquire as much knowledge as possible about the market and the benefits sought by its various segments (p. 31).

This statement highlights the particular paradigm of arts marketing; in a reversed model, the artistic product is first created then matched to the appropriate audience (Butler, 2000; Colbert, 2003). With an artistic product independently created from the needs and wants of its

customers, only elements peripheral to the product can be strategically leveraged for success. A number of studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of such elements. To make sense of this literature, we begin by presenting Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) framework of cultural consumer's behaviour and the factors that impact their responses. The main blocks of their model will serve as an outline for the rest of our arts marketing literature review.

In their article, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) build on the traditional information-processing model of consumer cognition and behaviour to include an experiential facet. In doing so, they propose corresponding customer inputs, environmental inputs, customer responses systems, and customer outputs. For example, they propose that task definition diverges between both the information-processing and experiential viewpoints. For instance, problem-solving – like selecting a hairbrush or a financial advisor – in the information-processing model, becomes a hedonic response – like selecting a play or a film – in the experiential portion (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) model is of particular relevance in the arts as cultural activities are experiential in nature. Indeed, it helps us understand the cultural consumer's decision making processes, while accounting for core marketing concepts and their relationships. Further, this model addresses customers' choice behaviours, a factor directly impacting cultural organizations' visits. Though the model's conceptual breakdown does not exactly reflect the current cultural marketing literature, its main blocks will serve as an outline for the following literature review. The following sections will be broken down into three parts: consumer inputs, consumer response system, and environmental inputs (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Information Processing and Experiential Perspectives of Consumer Behaviour



Source: Holbrook, M. B., & Hirschman, E. C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. *Journal of consumer research*, 9(2), 132-140.

1.2.3.1 Consumer Inputs

Customers are at the core of a cultural organization's success, therefore, understanding their nature, their cognitive processes, and their behaviours is of utmost importance. The literature suggests that arts consumers have particular attributes. **Demographic** research into typical high-arts and low-arts consumers shows significant differences between the two groups. Though there is variation regarding the types of artistic experiences and organisations, high-arts consumers are generally well-educated females with relatively high-income white-collared jobs (Christin, 2012; Colbert, 2003; Colbert, 2009; Willekens & Levens, 2014). Specifically, Christin (2012) finds that those working full-time in the educational and cultural sectors are more likely to be arts consumers. Indeed, higher educated individuals tend to be more affluent and are more likely to participate in highbrow culture, an effect moderated by a country's wealth, upward social mobility and level of cultural funding (Van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013). In addition, an important antecedent to adulthood, arts consumption from previous childhood exposure and socialization (Colbert, 2003; Kraaykamp, 2003; Willekens & Levens, 2014). Unlike high-arts, typical low-arts consumers are of either sex (Willekens & Levens, 2014) and come from all education backgrounds and income levels (Colbert, 2003; Colbert 2009). This demographic pattern appears to be relatively stable as it is independent from governmental and economic cultural support (Colbert, 2003). Overall, this demographic research suggests that there are differences between arts consumers and, much like with traditional marketing, these distinctions should be considered when making strategic decisions. These broad strokes of knowledge are further segmented by research on consumer psycho-behavioural processes. We tackle this topic in the following section.

1.2.3.2 Consumer Response System, Output and Learning

In addition to determining the demographic characteristics of arts consumers, the literature has shown the impact of their **psycho-behavioural processes** on the success of cultural organizations (Carù & Cova, 2011; Miesen, 2004; Voss, Montoya-Weiss & Voss, 2006; Walmsley, 2013; Zolfgharian & Cortes, 2011). Among other factors, motivations,

relationship strength and satisfaction influence visitation and, ultimately, the cultural sector's success. We consider these topics in the following paragraphs.

Customers' **motivation** to fulfil certain needs has been found to influence their selection of arts organizations and offerings (Botti, 2000; Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Zolfgharian & Cortes, 2011). These needs are primarily intellectual, economic, social, symbolic and emotional (Botti, 2000; Zolfgharian & Cortes, 2011). In her study, Bouder-Pailler (1999) demonstrates the importance of accounting for such needs in the performing arts context. For instance, if an individual's attendance is motivated by social hedonism, theaters should create opportunities for socialization in and around the artistic performance (Bouder-Pailler, 1999). Further, it has been found that self-efficacy has a role to play in spectators' motivation (Jepson, Clarke, Ragsdel, 2014). Indeed, people are found to be more motivated to plan community festivals if the challenge slightly exceeds their ability, thereby leading to self-efficacy (Jepson, et al. 2014). As such, the authors propose that the concept of self-efficacy be added to the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) model of motivation. Overall, research on motivation suggests that cultural experiences cannot be similarly diffused among all arts consumers.

The **strength of a relationship** between consumers and their arts organizations or offerings has been found to influence engagement and openness (Carù & Cova, 2011; Voss, Montoya-Weiss & Voss, 2006). For instance, a weak relationship can cause a difficulty to immerse oneself in the artistic experience (Carù & Cova, 2011). Carù and Cova (2011) explored this notion in their study of young people's reaction to *The 1970's: The Long Decade in the Short Century*, an exhibit about an era unfamiliar to them. The authors found that meaningful referents are vital to visitors' immersion (Carù & Cova, 2011). Indeed, younger audiences were less engaged with the exhibit as they had difficulty relating to its content (Carù & Cova, 2011). To reduce this perceptual distance, the authors propose that facilitators, such as guides, are necessary to bridge such knowledge gaps (Carù & Cova, 2011). The importance of relationship strength has also been demonstrated in Voss et al.'s (2006) study of relational and transactional customers on their acceptance of new and risky plays. The authors found that visitors who have a strong relationship with their theater (relational customers) are not as open

to innovative plays. Oppositely, transactional customers are far more open to them, particularly in a sophisticated market (Voss, et al., 2006). These studies on relationship strength demonstrate its impact on customers' perceptions and reactions to the arts. It also highlights the fact that cultural experiences cannot be equally diffused among all consumers, thereby requiring refinement of the strategic arts marketing process. While meeting customers' needs and understanding the impact of their relationship strength can help attract visitors, their repeated visits are the key to success (Grappi & Montanari, 2009; Hume, 2008).

Repeated visits, or loyalty, are often quoted as having the greatest impact on an arts organization's success (Grappi & Montanari, 2009; Hume, 2008). One of the most important determinants of loyalty is **satisfaction** (Fornell, 1995; Oliver, 1999; Preis, 2003). Several factors have been found to influence arts consumers' satisfaction. For one, perceived value plays a role (Grappi & Montanari, 2009; Hume, 2008). Indeed, if customers perceive value in an artistic experience, they are more likely to be satisfied which, in turn, leads to an increase in repeated visits (Grappi & Montanari, 2009; Hume, 2008). Interestingly, Hume (2008) found that perceived value is primarily dependent on time and money. Other factors influence satisfaction include gender (Voss & Cova, 2006), emotional response, quality perceptions (Boerner, Moser & Jobst, 2009), attitude towards re-patronizing, subjective normative pressure, and visitors' identification with the organization and its typical patrons (Grappi & Montanari, 2009). Research on loyalty and satisfaction further supports the notion that attracting and retaining cultural visitors is a complex process that depends on numerous visitor and organizational factors.

Overall, research on motivations, relationship strength, and satisfaction demonstrates the importance of customer-related factors on visitation. Much like with traditional marketing situations, research also suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate; individual needs, wants, and perceptions can influence their desire to visit. Indeed, notions akin to the commercial sector like segmentation and loyalty antecedents are vital. In addition to these findings, inputs other than those that are customer-based can have an impact on artistic activity participation. In the following section, we review the literature pertaining to those factors that are external to the customer: environmental inputs.

1.2.3.2 Environmental Inputs

In the previous section, we determined that customer perceptions about an arts organization or offering can impact their decision to visit thereby influencing its success. Beyond their internal psycho-behavioural processes, consumers' perceptions can be influenced by inputs external to themselves. These environmental inputs principally stem from the cultural organizations. For one, **customer service** has been found to impact satisfaction, visits and return visits (Colbert, 2009; Maher, Clark & Motley, 2011). Indeed, given the large selection of cultural offerings, service quality may play a determining factor in the decision-making process (Colbert, 2009). More specifically, staff empathy is a significant predictor of membership (Maher, Clark & Motley, 2011). The availability of **information technology** is also found to be a factor in consuming cultural experiences (Colbert, 2009). Indeed, an integrated system containing a website, subscriber lists and partner information can help with promotional platforms and simpler activity coordination between departments and audiences (Colbert, 2009; Colbert, Brunet, Martin, Radbourne, Ravanas & Rich, 2008). Effective management of such information technology systems can lead to greater customer loyalty (Colbert et al., 2008). **Pricing** schemes can also impact visitation (Le Gall-Ely, Urbain, Bourgeon-Renault, Gombault & Petr, 2008). For instance, though free admission is positively perceived, it does not necessarily result in greater attendance (Le Gall-Ely, et al., 2008). Indeed, this prompts visitors to focus on non-monetary costs like the discomfort of large crowds and, therefore, poorer experience (Le Gall-Ely et al., 2008). **Communications** about the arts organization also play a role. Though little research has considered communications stemming directly from arts institutions, some authors have looked at word-of-mouth and the impact of reviews. It has been shown that one of the principal reasons for visiting museums is personal recommendation (Hausman, 2012).

In conclusion, much like in traditional commercial marketing, arts consumers are not created equally and taking their differences into consideration could have an impact on an arts organizations' success. The parallels seem to suggest that certain commercial marketing practices have a place in the cultural sector; as the product is typically produced prior to marketing activities, peripheral variables can be leveraged to positively impact arts

organizations. Though customer-centered factors have an impact on their behaviour, factors that are externally controlled by the organization can also play a role. They fit into the ‘environmental inputs’ of Holbrook & Hirschman’s (1982) model.

1.3 Branding in the Cultural Sector

In the previous section, we established that marketing is a practice that can be strategically used to benefit arts organizations. This broad field is composed of numerous subfields and concepts. Though customer and environmental inputs have been studied, more research is needed on topics related to branding. In this section, we look to establish whether this traditionally commercial subfield can be successfully applied to aid arts organizations in today’s saturated market. We first start by considering the broad commercial definition of a brand. We then look at its application within the cultural sector.

1.3.1 Broad Definition of a Brand

In the traditionally commercial field of marketing, a **brand** is typically defined in terms of the compositional elements (name, term, symbol and design) that help differentiate it from that of the competition (AMA, 2014). A brand is not, however, static; its existence depends on two different perspectives: that of the company (brand identity) and that of the consumer (brand image) (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). A **brand identity** is how the company wishes to be perceived by the market and is comprised of strategically selected associations (Aaker, 1996). A **brand image** is customers’ understanding of the brand (Keller, 1993). It is comprised of the collection of associations that a customer has about a brand in his or her mind (Keller, 1993). This latter perspective is particularly important, as the company’s success will depend on consumers’ positive brand image perceptions.

Understanding that the brand is partly rooted in the consumer’s mind is extremely important in implementing a branding strategy. In his article, Keller (1993) argues for the importance of conceptualizing the brand as constructed in consumers’ minds, as these perceptions will influence their adherence to the brand and, by extension, its success (Keller,

1993). As such, effective brand management is a circular process; it requires an understanding of customer perceptions and continuous adjustments from the company or organization to help ensure congruence in perceptions. Indeed, according to Colbert (2003), if effectively managed, customer's perceptions about the brand (brand image) should be congruent with the brand's identity. This can help increase brand strength and derive a number of benefits for both the company and its customers (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986). The following table enumerates the benefits of a strong brand for companies (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Rowley, 1997) and customers (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rowley 1997) (Table II).

Table II. Benefits of a Strong Brand for Companies and Consumers

Benefits for the company	Benefits for the consumer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased product performance • Increased customer loyalty • Reduced vulnerability to competition • Increased margins • Increased elasticity of customer responses to price decreases • Inelastic customer response to price increases • Increased support from product-diffusion intermediaries • Increased effectiveness of marketing communications • Increased licensing and brand extension opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet functional needs (externally generated needs, consumption-related problems) • Meet symbolic needs (internally generated needs for self-image) • Meet experiential needs (provide sensory pleasure or cognitive stimulation) • Increased facility of identifying the product's source • Reduced perceived risk • Increased use satisfaction • Reduced informational processing time

Sources: Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building Strong Brands*. Simon and Schuster. Hoeffler, S., & Keller, K. L. (2003). The marketing advantages of strong brands. *The Journal of Brand Management*, 10(6), 421-445. Jaworski, B., Kohli, A. K., & Sahay, A. (2000). Market-driven versus driving markets. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 28(1), 45-54. Keller, K.L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity, *Journal of Marketing*, 57,(1), 1-22. Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J., & MacInnis, D. J. (1986). Strategic brand concept-image management. *Journal of Marketing*, 50(4), 135-145. Rowley, J. (1997). Managing branding and corporate image for library and information services. *Library Review*, 46(4), 244-250.

As per the previous table, several benefits can be derived from having a strong brand. With customers at the core of a firm's success, it could be argued that the most important benefit derived from strong brands is their likelihood of being recalled during the purchase decision-making process. Indeed, customers do not have unlimited cognitive processing powers; they only rely on a limited amount of information in making decisions (Colbert, 2003). As such, in making a purchase, customers cannot consider all available options; only an evoked set of brands will come to mind (Colbert, 2003). In this situation, a strong brand can provide the basic benefit of being considered as part of the evoked set of brands (Colbert, 2003) – only then can it have a chance to be selected. For this reason, a brand can be viewed as a company's strongest asset (Neumier, 2006). If the traditionally commercial concept of branding can be positively applied in the cultural context, it has the potential to greatly influence the performance of arts organizations. The question becomes: Can branding be applied in the cultural context? In the following section, we review the literature on surrounding this topic.

1.3.2 Branding in the Cultural Sector

Unlike the broader concept of marketing, little research has covered the topic of cultural branding (O'Reilly, 2011). Traditionally, the brand has been often considered a company or organization's most valuable asset (Neumier, 2006). It is therefore worth understanding whether it has a *raison d'être* within the cultural context. Among the few authors who have touched on the topic, there is generally positive support for its use. As mentioned earlier, branding must be understood from two perspectives: that of the company (brand identity) and that of the customers (brand image) (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Accordingly, these two perspectives can be used to categorize the sparse cultural branding literature. In the following paragraphs, we first start by presenting the literature on branding from the organizations' perspective. We then look at that of the customers.

Authors who studied **cultural branding from the organizations' perspective** have principally considered brand management strategies and the ensuing brand identity. For instance, in studying museums' managerial culture, it has been determined that those who are brand-oriented – meaning that they account for the brand when making strategic decisions –

tend to be more successful (Baumgarth, 2009). Given brand's impact on success, it is necessary for arts organizations to develop stronger branding and positioning initiatives (Colbert, 2003). To do so, a few strategies and frameworks have been proposed (Baumgarth, 2009; Baumgarth & O'Reilly, 2014; Caldwell, 2000; Colbert, 2003; d'Astous et al., 2007; Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000). For instance, in considering brand extension strategies, it has been suggested that co-branding should be favoured (d'Astous et al., 2007). In addition, regardless of the extension strategy, new arts products should have a good fit with the organizations' activities (d'Astous et al., 2007). Engaging in such strategic branding activities should lead to a stronger brand, thereby generating greater brand equity, and, ultimately the success of arts institutions (Caldwell, 2000). Though scarce, the literature suggests that it is important to consider a cultural brand's identity and to effectively manage it. Of course, branding strategies are meaningless if they are not met with a positive reaction from potential customers.

Authors who study **cultural branding from the customers' perspective** principally look at brand image and the impact that it has on consumers' decision-making processes. Comparable to services, cultural experiences can be qualified as intangible, variable, inseparable and perishable (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Potential customers therefore view them as riskier decisions (Murray & Schlater, 1990). To help counter the intangibility of culture's experiential nature, it has been suggested that branding can be a solution (Bowdin et al., 2006). Not only has a brand image been found to impact the decision to visit an arts organization, but it has also been found to impact customers' intention to re-visit them (Grappi & Montanari, 2009). For instance, in studying visitors' motivations to revisit a cinema, Grappi and Montanari (2009) found that brand image plays a powerful role. The authors also found that revisits are also influenced by customers' identification with said brand (Grappi & Montanari, 2009). Though scarce, the literature suggests that the importance of considering and measuring a cultural brand's image as it is related to the success of the organization (Caldwell & Coshall, 2002).

Though there is some reluctance to integrate marketing practices in the cultural sector, a growing body of literature has proven its usefulness in achieving success in a saturated arts market. Despite these positive findings, the current literature has scarcely studied cultural

branding and has failed to do so in a holistic manner. To build on the current literature, we address this gap by dually applying the concept of branding from the perspectives of the organization (brand identity) and its customers (brand image). In the following section, we present the context in which cultural branding will be applied: film festivals.

1.4 Film Festival Context

The arts sector encompasses numerous cultural activities. From museum exhibits, to theatrical performances, it is no wonder that the industry faces market saturation (Colbert, 2003). For the purposes of our study, we focus on film festivals as they offer an interesting study context. In the following paragraphs, we divide these reasons into film-related and festival-related arguments.

There is value in studying the **film** sector for two principal reasons. First, the film industry is a coveted cultural player (Unwin et al., 2007). In Canada, provinces are increasingly competing for international and national business (Boryskavich & Bowler, 2002). Indeed, “Canada’s skilled crews and attractive production incentives ensure that Canadian locations remain one of Hollywood’s preferred destinations for filming (...)” (Nordicity, 2013). In 2011, the operating revenue for motion picture and video production in Canada rose to over \$ 3.5 billion from \$ 3.1 billion the previous year (Statistics Canada, 2013). These numbers demonstrate the prevalence and key economic role that films play. Second, films play an important role in the propagation of socio-cultural knowledge (Unwin et al., 2007). Indeed, “cinema allows images of national culture to be explored through the dissemination of knowledge about race, gender, sexuality and religion” (Cooke, 1996 in Unwin et al, 2007). This unique quality contributes to the documentation of a particular society’s way of life. In addition to the prevalence and attributes of films, several festival-related arguments support the value of our study context.

Festivals represent an important alternative distribution channel for non-mainstream cinema (Unwin et al., 2007). There is value in studying them for three principal reasons. First, film festivals are universal, prevalent and have seen remarkable growth over the last few

decades (Unwin et al., 2007). In Canada alone, major film festivals have attracted 1.9 million attendees in 2011 (Nordicity, 2013). Specifically, Montreal – the city in which we are conducting our study – has around 10 film festivals (Qui fait quoi, 2014). Film festivals are therefore prevalent and universal which helps ensure a high level of accessibility and awareness among their consumers. Second, they are highly multiplex, offering a range of themes (comedy to drama) and scope (local to international) (d’Astous et al., 2006). For instance, in Montreal, one can find large fantasy-focused festivals like Fantasia International Film Festival, just like you can find the much smaller Stop Motion Festival of Montreal. Together, these universal and multiplex characteristics help ensure the validity and reliability of our study, as festivalgoers will possess strong and organized cognitive structures about film festivals (d’Astous, et al., 2006). Third, festivals offer an interesting communications paradigm due to their short yearly occurrence (Unwin et al., 2007). Unlike museum or theater visitors, film festival visitors cannot be constantly exposed to the annual event. In addition, communications efforts concentrate around the time of the event (Unwin, et al., 2007). As such, this particular context will allow us to verify the strength of brand image formation, as it heavily relies on memory and available communication tactics.

Overall, film festivals have been rarely studied in the arts marketing literature (d’Astous et al., 2006; Unwin et al, 2014), yet they offer an interesting study context. They are extremely prevalent and multiplex, propose an interesting communications paradigm, represent an alternative distribution channel, and are characterized by their fleeting annual occurrence. For these reasons, film festivals are the focus of our study.

1.5 Literature Review Conclusion

Our literature review gave us insight into the cultural sector’s marketing and branding practices. After determining that the current cultural market faces saturation (Colbert, 2009), we looked at a potential solution to help alleviate its effects: marketing. Though the traditionally commercial practice has been highly debated in the cultural sector, it is found to positively impact arts institutions’ success (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007; Hume, 2008). In determining that the broad

concept of marketing can be applied in the cultural context, we dove deeper to review the specific concept of branding. Though it has been studied to a lesser extent, branding has also been found to positively affect the success of arts organizations (Baumgarth, 2009; Baumgarth & O'Reilly, 2014; Bowdin et al., 2001; Caldwell, 2000; Colbert, 2003; d'Astous et al., 2007; Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000). Studies show growing support for the commercial concept of branding in the cultural sector, however current research has failed to holistically assess the topic from both managerial (brand identity) and customer (brand image) perspectives. Our current study bridges this gap by exploring this duality and its impact on value creation for both the organization and its customers. In today's oversaturated cultural market, it is imperative to understand factors that contribute to creating a strong brand. Indeed, it can lead to increased visits and, ultimately, the success of the organization. In the following sections, we will detail our conceptual model.

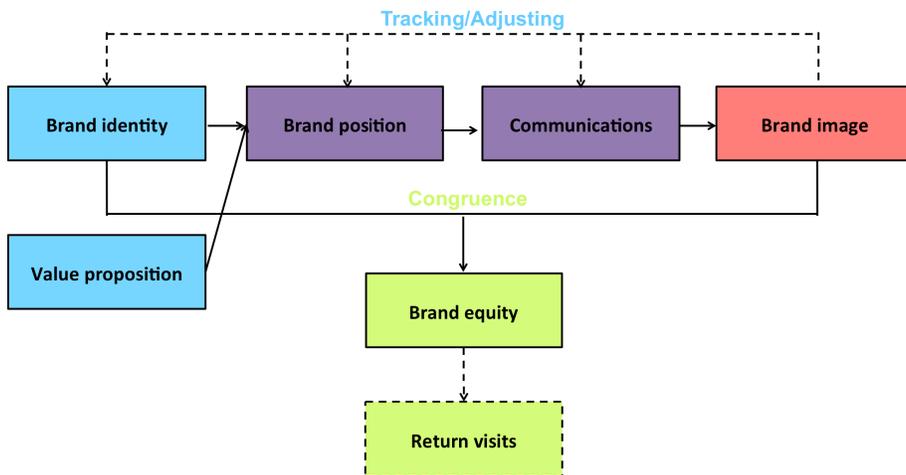
Chapter 2 Conceptual Model

Our conceptual model accounts for our holistic approach by including the diverging perceptual positions of brand identity and brand image, while presenting their relationship. Since branding has scarcely been studied in the arts sector, the model is grounded in traditional commercial marketing theory. We start this chapter by presenting our conceptual model. We then dive into the literature behind each concept, their relationship and their impact on overall brand equity.

2.1 Conceptual Model

As per our literature review, the brand exists from two perspectives: that of the organization (brand identity) and that of the customer (brand image) (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Though there is some support for the use of brand identity and brand image in the arts, authors have failed to holistically consider these perspectives in the same study. Our research addresses this gap by exploring the perceptions of managers and visitors within and across three film festivals. Figure 2 presents our model and the ways in which the concepts relate to one another.

Figure 2. Conceptual Model

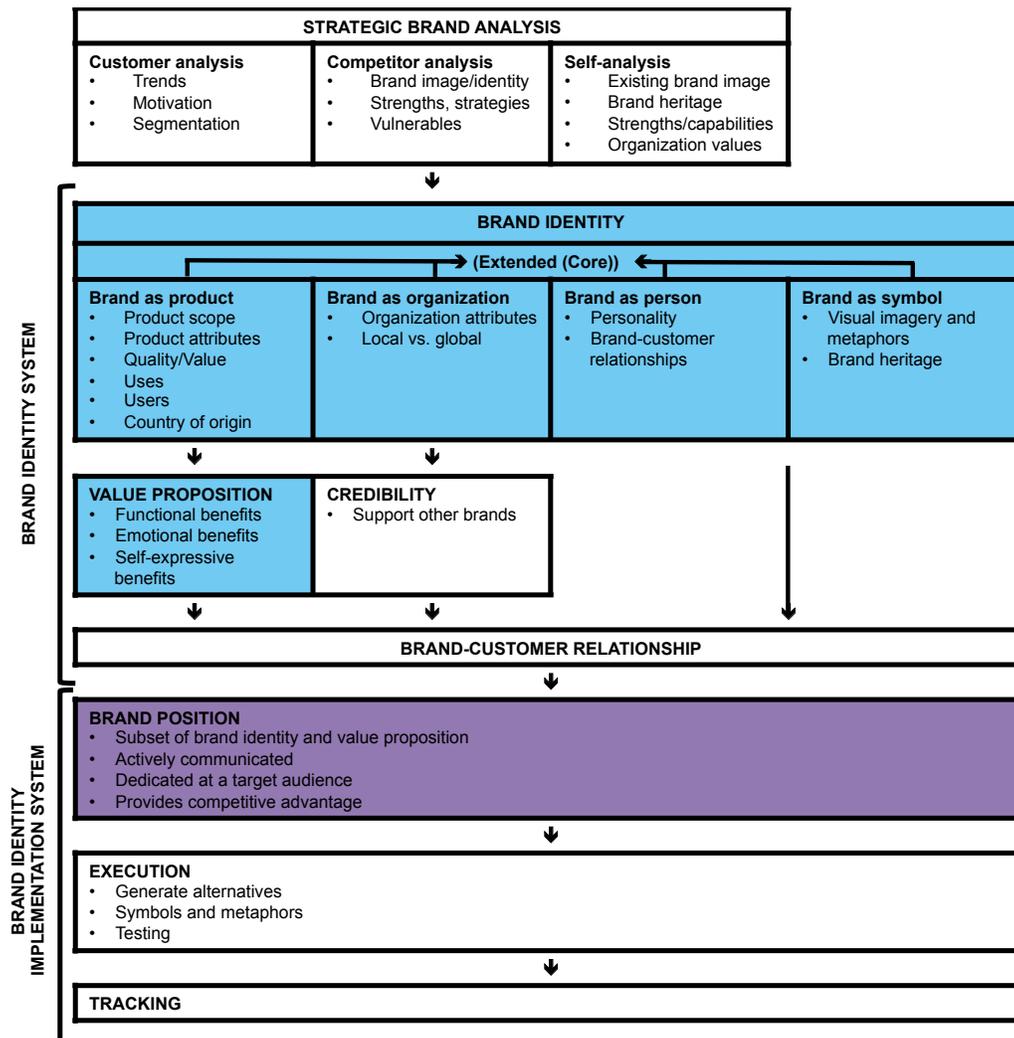


Our model attempts to explain the relation between a company's brand identity (blue), its customers' brand image (red), the implementation process (purple) and the impact they can have on creating value for both parties (green). It suggests that brand identity and value proposition form the grounds on which a brand position can be selected (Aaker, 1996). Once chosen, the brand position is actively transmitted to consumers through various communication channels (Aaker, 1996), thereby allowing them to form a brand image (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Tracking and adjusting consumer brand association perceptions must be a core activity as the company or organization must ensure that their brand identity is congruent with that of the brand image (Aaker, 1996; Keller 1993). Indeed, if the brand is strong and congruent between both parties, it can lead to greater brand equity and, ultimately, additional sales and visits (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993). In today's saturated cultural market, it is necessary to find ways to help increase sales and visitors for arts organizations' survival (Coblert, 2009). In the following section, we begin by presenting the first portion of our model, the brand identity system.

2.2 Brand Identity System

Aaker's (1996) **brand identity model** provides a framework of the company's or organization's brand management process. It comprises three main blocks: (1) Strategic brand analysis, (2) brand identity system, and (3) brand identity implementation system. Figure 3 outlines Aaker's 1996 model.

Figure 3. Brand Identity Model



Source: Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building Strong Brands*. Simon and Schuster.

According to this model, the process must begin with a strategic market analysis of customers, competitors and of self (Aaker, 1996). Once business intelligence has been gathered, the company or organization must develop a strong brand identity (Aaker, 1996). Along with a subset of the value proposition, portions of the brand identity must then be selected for active communication (Aaker, 1996). Once communicated, the company or organization must track performance to verify whether adjustments must be made to help effectively achieve success. Our model takes root in a portion of Aaker’s (1996) brand identity model. For the purposes of

our study, we will only focus on the portions highlighted in Figure 3. The colours correspond to those in our conceptual model (Figure 2). In the following sections, we present the concepts associated to the brand identity system: brand identity and value proposition.

2.2.1 Brand Identity

A **brand's identity** is strategically derived from the company or organization (Aaker, 1996). It reflects how they wish to be perceived by existing and potential customers (Aaker, 1996). This is described in the following quote:

Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members.” (Aaker, 1996, p.103).

In Aaker's (1996) widely acclaimed book *Building Strong Brands*, the author separates brand identity into twelve dimensions that can be categorized into four perspectives and two general brand identity structures. In the following sections, we breakdown these brand identity dimensions and structures.

2.2.1.1 Brand Identity Dimensions

The company or organization's ultimate branding goal is to create an identity that is rich and strong (Aaker, 1996), as several benefits can be derived (Table II). In building such a brand, Aaker (1996) proposes that four brand identity perspectives should be considered: (1) product, (2) organization, (3) person, and/or (4) a symbol. The author cautions that while all four perspectives should be considered, only those that impact customer perceptions should be strategically used (Aaker, 1996). These four perspectives can be further broken down into twelve brand identity dimensions, as seen in Aaker's (1996) brand identity block (Figure 3). The following paragraphs define each dimension.

First, in the (1) **brand-as-product perspective** the brand is understood in terms of its product-related associations (Aaker, 1996). This perspective comprises six brand identity dimensions: (1.1) product scope, (1.2) product attributes, (1.3) quality/value, (1.4) uses, (1.5) users, and (1.6) country of origin (Aaker, 1996). The (1.1) **product scope dimension** refers to

product class associations (Aaker, 1996). For example, MasterCard's product class is credit cards and Honda's is cars (Honda, 2016; MasterCard, 2016). In the case of our study, a film festival brand's product class would be films. The (1.2) **product attributes dimension** refers to additional or improved features that might benefit the product's user (Aaker, 1996). For example, Duracell is a brand that provides better batteries as they are said to last longer than any other (Duracell, 2016). In the case of our study, a particular film festival might be known for having the most comfortable screening locations. The (1.3) **quality/value dimension** refers to a brand's associations with quality and, by extension, greater value (Aaker, 1996). Quality is often at the core of a brand's identity, as sub-par perceptions will lead to less customer interest (Aaker, 1996). For example, Starbucks puts forward the fact that it purchases and roasts some of the world's finest coffee (Aaker, 1996; Starbucks, 2016). In the case of our study, a film festival brand might be associated with films produced by award-winning directors. The (1.4) **use occasion dimension** refers to the brand's association with a particular function (Aaker, 1996). For example, Clorox Regular Bleach has a few different cleaning uses, however, it is often associated with the function of whitening clothes (Aaker, 1996; Clorox, 2016). In the case of our study, a particular film festival brand might be associated with the educational function of presenting new cultures. The (1.5) **users dimension** refers to the association of a particular brand to certain types of users (Aaker, 1996). For example, Gerber baby food is primarily associated with babies as they are the products' primary consumers (Gerber, 2016). In the context of our study, a particular film festival brand might be associated with a particular group such as hipsters. Finally, (1.6) the **country or region of origin dimension** refers to the association of a particular brand with its provenance, provided it contributes to its credibility (Aaker, 1996). For example, Volkswagen is associated with Germany, a country often perceived as proficient in engineering (Volkswagen, 2016). In the case of our study, a particular film festival brand might be associated with Montreal, a city recognized for its strong arts scene. Each of these six brand identity dimensions contribute to product-related associations that a company or organization could strategically select to put forward in their branding activities.

Second, the (2) **brand-as-organization perspective** means that the brand is understood in terms of its organization-related associations (Aaker, 1996). This perspective is composed of two brand identity dimensions: (2.1) organizational attributes and (2.2) local

versus global associations. The (2.1) **organizational attributes dimension** refers to attributes related to the organization's culture, values, people, programs, and assets/skills that help deliver a product or service (Aaker, 1996). For example, The Body Shop strongly values the reduction of CO₂ emissions and makes this a central part of their brand (The Body Shop, 2016). In the case of our study, a particular film festival brand might be associated with ecofriendly initiatives like the use of recycled paper for its programs. The (2.2) **local versus global dimension** refers to the brand's geographic dispersion (Aaker, 1996). For example, the Montreal-based Jean-Talon Market that receives products from nearby farmers is associated with being a local brand (Marchés Publics de Montréal, 2016), as opposed to Coca Cola that is internationally renowned (Coca Cola, 2016). In the case of our study, a particular film festival brand could screen films from around the world, thereby giving it an international flavour. Each of these dimensions contribute to the organization-related associations that a company or organization could strategically select to put forward in their branding activities.

Third, the (3) **brand-as-person perspective** means that the brand is understood in terms of its human-related associations (Aaker, 1996). This perspective is composed of two brand identity dimensions: (3.1) brand personality and (3.2) brand customer relationship. The (3.1) **brand personality dimension** refers to the human characteristics that can be associated to a brand like gender, age, or personality traits (Aaker, 1996). For example, Old Navy can be perceived as fun loving and lower income due to its lower price points (Old Navy, 2016). Oppositely, its sister brand Banana Republic might be seen as sophisticated and higher class due to its more expensive looks (Banana Republic, 2016). In the case of our study, a particular film festival might be seen as unpredictable and fun, traits that characterise human personalities. The (3.2) **brand customer relationship dimension** refers to the type of relationship between a consumer and the brand (Aaker, 1996). For example, loyal Starbucks customers who visit the coffee chain daily can be viewed as having a dependent relationship with the brand. In the case of our study, a particular film festival relationship could be akin to that of an acquaintance as it only occurs once a year. Each of these dimensions contribute to the human-related associations that a company or organization could strategically select to put forward in their branding activities.

Fourth, the (4) **brand-as-symbol perspective** means that the brand is understood in terms of its symbolic associations (Aaker, 1996). This perspective is composed of two brand

identity dimensions: (4.1) visual imagery/metaphors and (4.2) brand heritage. The (4.1) **visual imagery/metaphors dimension** refers to the strong visual images associated with the brand (Aaker, 1996). For example, Nike's swoosh symbolizes movement and the wings of Greek the goddess Nike (Daily mail, 2011). In the case of our study, a particular film festival might be visually associated to a globe thereby symbolizing the international source of its films. The (4.2) **brand heritage dimension** refers to the brand's historical legacy (Aaker, 1996). For example, the chocolate brand Laura Secord keeps the figure of the Canadian heroine in their logo (Laura Secord, 2012). In the case of our study, a particular film festival might contain the name of the city in which it was first inaugurated. Each of these dimensions contribute to the human-related associations that a company or organization could strategically select to put forward in their branding activities.

Though Aaker (1996) proposes that using multiple brand identity dimensions can help create a strong brand, it is not necessary to use them all; a company or organization should only select those that will contribute to the desired brand image (Aaker, 1996). Some of these associations are more central to the brand's identity, whereas others are more fleeting (Aaker, 1996). As such, a brand's dimensions and associations can be further organized into two structures: (1) core identity and (2) extended identity. These concepts are developed in the following section.

2.2.1.2 Brand Identity Structures

A brand's identity is comprised of two structures: (1) core identity and (2) extended identity. The (1) **core brand identity** is defined as the "central, timeless essence of the brand" (Aaker, 1996:p.104). It is expected to remain constant across new markets and over time (Aaker, 1996). For example, one of Walmart's core associations is 'low prices', often exemplified in their advertisements that promise "Everyday low prices" (Walmart, 2016). This is something that they have long been communicating and is a core aspect of their branding strategy. In the case of our study, a particular film festival might focus on films from around the world. As such, a core brand association might be 'international'. The (2) **extended identity** comprises all the other associations that help complete the core identity and can

change over time (Aaker, 1996). For example, Walmart might be associated with less dominant characteristics like ‘clean’ and ‘consistent’. In the case of our study, a particular film festival might be associated to characteristics like ‘tasty snacks’. Together, these brand identity structures offer a general structure for all the brand identity associations and dimensions that the company wishes convey. The brand identity does not, however, act alone in establishing a relationship with its potential and actual customers; the value proposition also plays a role. We describe this concept in the following section.

2.2.2 Value Proposition

The brand’s identity is incomplete without the company or organization’s **value proposition**. It is defined as a statement that highlights the benefits provided by the brand to its customers (Aaker, 1996). The benefits contained in a value proposition are threefold: (1) functional, (2) emotional and (3) self-expressive (Aaker, 1996). First, (1) **functional benefits** refer to the advantage of using the product or service (Aaker, 1996). For example, the functional benefit of using Bounty paper towels is a quicker clean up process due to the product’s high level of absorbency – it is The Quicker Picker Upper (Bounty, 2016). In the case of our study, the functional benefit of visiting a particular film festival might be to watch films to learn about new and exciting filmmakers. Second, (2) **emotional benefits** refer to the positive feelings generated by the product or service (Aaker, 1996). For example, Canada’s Wonderland amusement park is often associated with positive feelings like excitement and thrill due to its many fun rides (Canada’s Wonderland, 2016). In the case of our study, a particular film festival might be associated with the positive feeling of comfort if, for example, the movies are all very local and remind the viewers of their city or their home. Third, (3) **self-expressive benefits** refer to customers’ use of the brand to help express their self-image (Aaker, 1996). For example, a young woman wearing Chanel No.5 might wish to express her maturity and high level of sophistication (Chanel, 2016). In the case of our study, visitors of a particular film festival might visit an international festival to articulate their worldliness and cultural openness. Though it is not necessary that all three benefits be included in the value proposition, they help establish and strengthen the relationship between the company or

organization and its customers (Aaker, 1996). Together, the brand identity perspectives, dimensions, structures and the value proposition form the brand identity system. A complete brand identity example for Nike is presented in Table III (Aaker, 1996: p.128-129).

Table III. Nike’s Brand Identity Example

Nike’s brand identity		
	Dimensions	Associations
Core identity	Product scope	Sports and fitness
	Users	Top athletes Fitness and health enthusiasts
	Product attributes	Performance shoes based on technological superiority
	Quality/value	Enhancing lives via athletics
Extended identity	Brand personality	Exciting, provocative, spirited, cool, innovative, aggressive, into health and fitness, into the pursuit of excellence
	Brand-customer relationships	Hanging out with a rugged, macho person who goes for the best in clothing, shoes and everything else
	Product scope	Air Jordan, etc.
	Visual imagery	Swoosh symbol
	Metaphor	Just do it
	Organizational attributes	Supportive and connected to athletes and their sports, innovative
	Brand personality	Endorsers are top athletes
	Brand heritage	Track shoes first developed in Oregon
Value proposition	Functional benefit	“High-technology shoe that will improve performance and provide comfort”
	Emotional benefit	“The exhilaration of athletic performance excellence; feeling engaged, active, and healthy”
	Self-expressive symbolic benefit	“Self-expression is generated by using a shoe with a strong personality associated with a visible athlete”

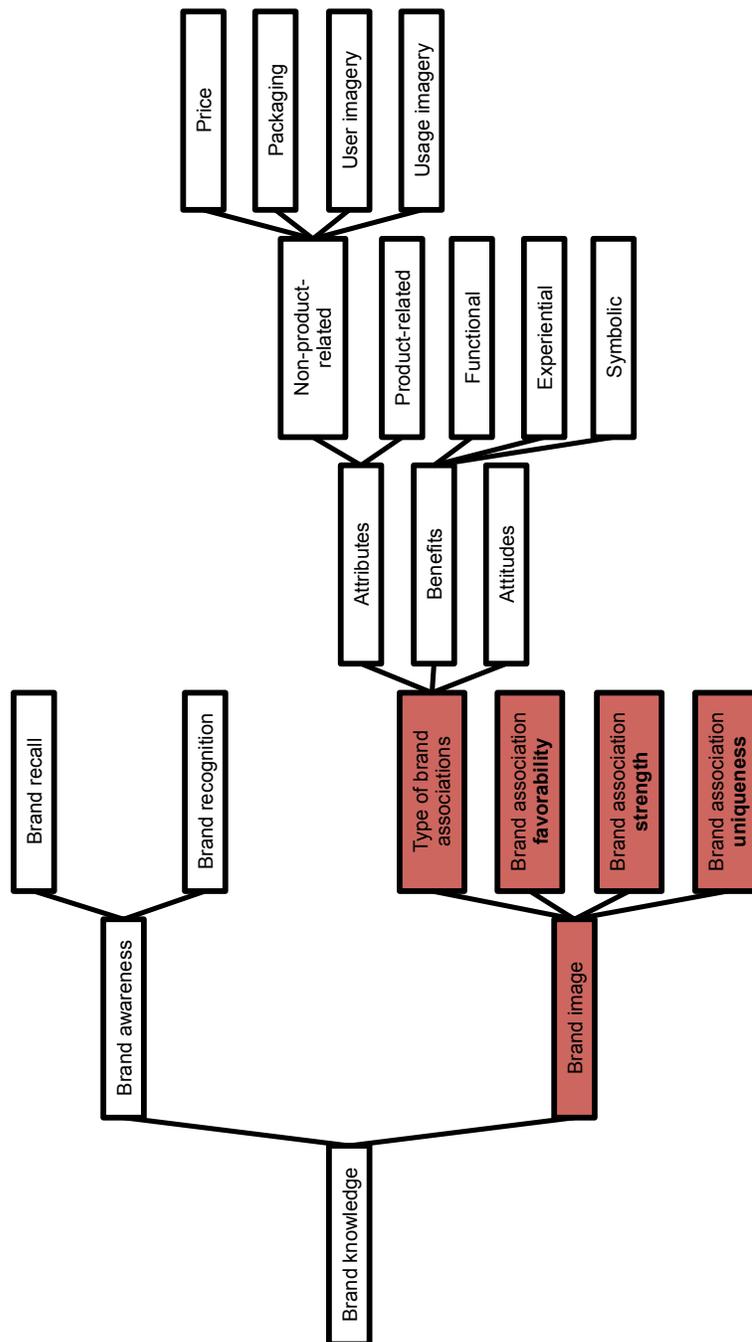
Source: Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building Strong Brands*. Simon and Schuster.

Though Nike has many segments and sub-brands associated to it's name, the previous table presents its predominant brand identity dimensions and associations (Aaker, 1996). This example highlights the components that companies or organizations can strategically select or modify to help influence how they are perceived. Despite the greatest managerial efforts, customers' perceptions are not always congruent with those of the company. In the following section, we touch on the customers' elusive perceptions of the brand: brand image.

2.3 Brand Image

A **brand's image** is directly related to its potential and existing brand associations held in consumers' minds (Keller, 1993). In his seminal article, Keller (1993) presents a structural framework on which this brand knowledge is organized (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Brand Knowledge Dimensions

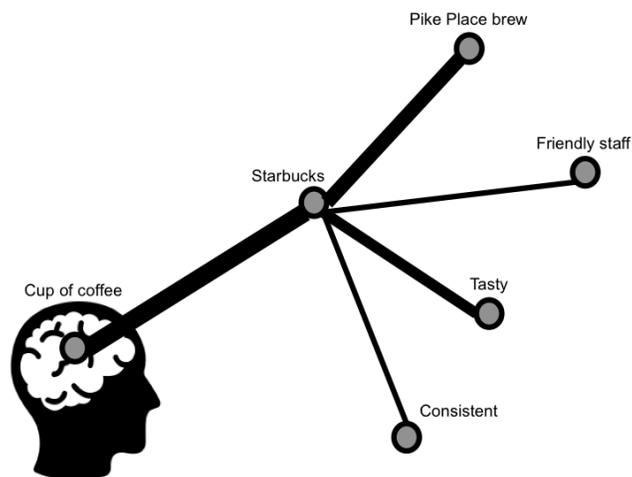


Source: Keller, K.L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity, *Journal of Marketing*, 57,(1), 1-22.

According to this model, brand knowledge is a function of brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). Indeed, before consumers can form a brand image, they must first be **aware** of the brand's existence (Keller, 1993). This can be demonstrated through recall or recognition of the brand's name or logo. Once awareness is achieved, consumers can form a **brand image** (Keller, 1993). If the associations contained in it are favourable, strong and unique, brand equity can be achieved, ultimately leading to its precedence over other brands (Keller, 1993). Our model takes root in a portion of Keller's (1993) model. For the purposes of our study, we will only focus on the highlighted portions in Figure 4. The colours correspond to those in our conceptual model (Figure 2).

Keller's model is largely based on the **associative network memory theory** (Keller, 1993). According to this theory, knowledge held in memory consists of informational nodes attached by links of varying strengths (Collins and Loftus, 1975; Keller, 1993; Raaijmakers and Shiffrin, 1981; Ratcliff and McKoon, 1988). When one node is activated, other nodes can be subsequently triggered through spreading activation (Keller, 1993). Given the varying strength of the nodular links, some knowledge nodes will be more heavily recalled than others (Keller, 1993). The following graphic provides an example related to purchasing a cup of coffee (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Associative Network Memory Model – Starbucks Example



In this example, a consumer is thinking about purchasing a cup of coffee. Upon activating the knowledge node ‘cup of coffee’, the Starbucks brand first comes to mind due to the strong link it has with the node ‘Starbucks’. Through spreading activation, brand associations might come to mind like ‘Pike Place brew’, ‘friendly staff’, ‘tasty’, and ‘consistent’. In considering whether Starbucks is the right brand choice, the customer will rely on these more or less strongly held brand associations (Keller, 1993). In this case, Starbucks’ strongest brand associations are generally positive (friendly staff, tasty, consistent) and unique (Pike Place brew), thereby leading customers to purchase coffee. This exemplifies the payoff of a strong brand’s equity: purchase. It is therefore essential to understand and manage customers’ brand perceptions and associations, as they will affect the brand’s success (Keller, 1993). In achieving the company or organizations’ desired brand image, the brand’s identity must be implemented through mechanisms such as brand positioning and communications. We review these topics in the following sections.

2.4 Brand Identity Implementation

As per our conceptual model (Figure 2), the company or organization must engage in certain implementation activities to reach consumers and help them develop a brand image (Keller, 1993). The first step is to select a brand position, whereas the next is to communicate it through strategically selected channels (Aaker, 1996). In the following sections, we first define and elaborate on the notion of brand positioning. We then look at communications.

2.4.1 Brand Position

Brand position is defined as a portion of the brand identity and value proposition that is actively communicated to the target audience (Aaker, 1996). It helps differentiate the brand by displaying a competitive advantage over others (Aaker, 1996). In continuing with the Nike’s brand identity breakdown, the brand’s position would reflect a subset of the associations presented in Table III. For example, in light of the 2016 Rio Olympics, Nike’s goal might be to attract an audience of amateur athletes who idolize and aspire to go to the

Olympics themselves. As such, it might choose to focus its communications around its ‘top athlete’ users, its ‘endorser’ brand personality and the functional benefits of ‘high performance’ and ‘comfort’. In the case of film festivals, a brand might be known for its high-tech international fantasy films, top-notch venues and tasty snacks. In an attempt to attract a tech-savvy demographic, the festival might position its communications on its technological prowess and state of the art screening facilities. Once the brand’s position has been selected, it must be actively communicated to the target audiences. In the following section, we discuss communications.

2.4.2 Communications

If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it really make a sound? This popular philosophical thought raises an interesting point about marketing communications; if a brand has an exceptional identity/position and there is no audience to discover it, does it really impact success? Communications are a vital link in the brand identity-brand image transmission sequence; to be part of consumers’ evoked set of brands (Colbert, 2003) and for an image to be formed, the company or organization must communicate relevant information through effective channels (Keller, 1993). Active communication is, therefore, important for the transmission of a brand’s identity to potential and existing customers (Aaker, 1996). **Active communication** implies “that there will be specific communication objectives focused on changing or strengthening the brand image or brand-customer relationship” (Aaker, 1996: p.241). Indeed, consumers’ brand images might not always reflect the company’s brand identity. It is therefore important to compare them and determine points of incongruence (Aaker, 1996). In determining these differences, it is possible to find a strategically relevant brand position to be actively communicated to target audiences (Aaker, 1996).

Different positioning strategy goals include broadening a restrictive brand identity, reinforcing a well-established set of associations, or emphasizing what the brand is *not* (Aaker, 1996). For example, American Apparel recently faced an alleged sexual harassment scandal

by its CEO Dov Charney towards its employees (Berman, 2012). In addition to being perceived as a forward-thinking American brand, it now had the negative association of sexual harassment (Berman, 2012; Bradford, 2013). In this instance, to counter such negative associations, the company might chose a positioning strategy that reinforces a well-established set of positive associations while directing it away from unwanted sexual assault associations. This might be executed through ads with more conservatively dressed models. In the case of a lesser-known film festival, visitors might only have a very restricted set of brand associations in mind such as 'short films' and 'festival'. The organization might choose a positioning strategy that broadens the brand's identity by focusing on the predominant genre of horror. To this end, their communications could emphasize the genre by selecting dark colours and scary characters from this year's films. It is in this notion of incongruence that the holistic nature of our study takes all of its relevance. Indeed, in exploring the content of film festivals' brand identity and visitors' brand images, we aim to verify the similarities between both in an effort to understand whether there is effective brand identity transmission and whether it affects performance. As per Colbert (2003), if effectively managed, customer's perceptions about the brand should be congruent with the brand's identity, thereby helping the company or organization succeed (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rowley, 1997). Once a brand position has been strategically extracted and established, types of marketing communication and their platforms must be selected.

The **marketing communications mix** includes the means by which consumers' brand awareness, perceptions and relationships are influenced (Aaker, 1996; Barich & Kotler, 1991; Keller, 1993; Keller 2009; Pektus, 2004). It includes eight major communications types: (1) advertising, (2) sales promotions, (3) events and experiences, (4) public relations and publicity, (5) direct marketing, (6) interactive marketing, (7) word-of-mouth marketing and (8) personal selling (Keller, 2009). Each one is defined in Table IV.

Table IV. Types of Communications

Type	Definition
Advertising	Paid promotion by a sponsor
Sales promotions	Short-term incentives to purchase
Events and experiences	Activities to encourage interaction by a sponsor
Public relations and publicity	Programs to manage image
Direct marketing	Direct contact with potential and existing customers (ex. e-mail, phone, mail)
Interactive marketing	Web-based programs to encourage interaction
Word-of-mouth marketing	Live, written or web-based person-to-person communication
Personal selling	Personal interaction with potential customers

Source: Keller, K. L. (2009). Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment. *Journal of marketing communications*, 15(2-3), 139-155. Kotler, P. and Andreasen, A.R. (1996). *Strategic Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations*, 4th Edition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

These eight types of communications range in scope. The first four are considered as more mass, whereas the latter four are more personal (Keller, 2009). These types of messages can be diffused through a number of platforms including television, print, social media, websites, e-mails, person-to-person and events (Keller 2009; Pektus, 2004). In selecting appropriate communications mixes and platforms, it is important to understand the means by which target audiences typically gather brand information (Keller, 2009). For this reason, we integrate the concept of communications into our model in an effort to determine their congruent use and the impact they have on transmitting brand information (Figure 2). For example, if a brand of orthopaedic shoes is meant for an older crowd who often stays home watching television and reading the newspaper, a social media-centric communications effort would be useless. Communications are the vehicle used to transmit and shape relevant brand information in the potential consumer's and existing consumer's mind (Barich & Kotler, 1991;

Keller, 2009). In doing so, communications efforts can help create strong, unique and favourable brand associations in the customers' mind (Keller, 1993; Keller, 2007). In turn, they can contribute to brand equity, which is related to increased sales and success for the company or organization (Keller, 1993; Luo & Donthu, 2006). In the following section, we develop on the topic of brand equity and its impact on success.

2.5 Brand Equity

Strong brands can provide a number of benefits for both the company and its customers (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rowley, 1997) (Table II). The overarching benefit is **brand equity**: the added value of the brand (Keller, 1993). A strong brand's value and success is dependent on its consumers' purchasing behaviour (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993). This is described in the following statement:

No matter how it is used or measured, the value of the brand – and thus its equity – must ultimately be derived in the marketplace from the words and actions of consumers. That is, consumers decide with their purchases, based on whatever factors they deem important, which brands have more equity than other brands. [...] (which) implicitly or explicitly reli(es) on brand knowledge structures in the minds of consumers [...] as the source or foundation of brand equity. (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003: p.421)

The customers' central role prompted Keller (1993) to develop his concept of **customer-based brand equity**. It is defined as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993: p.1), or the differential effect that the brand's presence has over not having it. As such, if customers react more positively to one brand's marketing mix over that of a similar other, the brand is said to have greater brand equity. This is well exemplified in Yovovich's (1988) comparative blind test of car brands. In his study, the author presented participants with two images of the same car – one with the Chrysler logo and one without it (Yovovich, 1988). Though the cars were, otherwise, exactly the same, consumers were willing to pay more for the Chrysler (Yovovich, 1988). The example suggests that stronger brands can generate greater benefits. In the case of film festival

brands, an internationally renowned film festival might have a stronger, unique and favourable brand image in the mind of its visitors as opposed to a smaller local film festival that might have weaker associations. In essence, high levels of brand awareness can be achieved through effective communication and a positive brand image which should, ultimately lead to greater brand success (Keller, 1993). As such, effectively managing brand identity and its diffusion is key to building strong brands and creating brand equity. To explore whether each of our model's concepts is relevant in the cultural context of film festivals, we set certain research objectives. These are described in the following section.

2.6 Research Objectives

Our research objectives build on Pusa and Uusitalo's (2014) study on the application of brand identity in museums. As previously mentioned, in considering a holistic view of film festival branding, we look at both managerial (brand identity) and customer (brand image) perceptions. Additionally, we consider the relationship of both concepts on value creation for both parties. As such, our study's objectives are divided into three sections: (1) branding from the film festival's perspective (brand identity), (2) branding from the film festival visitors' perspective (brand image), and (3) the overarching relationship between both. The following details our research objectives:

(1) Branding from the film festival's **managerial perspective** (brand identity):

- a. Explore managers' perceptions of film festival branding;
- b. Explore film festivals' brand identity content;
- c. Explore film festivals' communications practices;
- d. Explore the perceptions of a brand identity's impact on performance.

(2) Branding from the film festival **visitors' perspective** (brand image):

- a. Explore visitors' perceptions of film festival branding;
- b. Explore visitors' brand image content;
- c. Explore visitors' means of acquiring branding information;

- d. Explore the influence of branding on film festival selection.

(3) **Relationship** between film festivals and their visitors:

- a. Explore whether branding appears to be an appropriate strategic tool for film festivals;
- b. Explore whether the concepts of brand identity and brand image can be applied in the film festival context;
- c. Explore which aspects and dimensions of brand identity and brand image have the most strategic importance in the film festival context;
- d. Explore which communications practices have the most strategic importance in the film festival context;
- e. Explore whether branding has an impact on film festival success.

The methods used to study these research objectives will be described in the following chapter.

2.7 Conceptual Model Conclusion

Our conceptual model relates the concepts covered in our research (Figure 2). Since branding has been scarcely studied in the cultural context, our model is grounded in traditional marketing theory. At its essence, it holistically takes two central concepts – brand identity and brand image – and meaningfully relates them to one another and to the film festival context. Brand identity represents the way that companies or organizations wish to be perceived by their customers and is composed of twelve dimensions that are categorized into four perspectives: product, organization, person, and symbol (Aaker, 1996). Brand image reflects the set of associations held in customers’ minds about the brand (Keller, 1993). In order for companies or organizations to achieve their desired brand image, they must use implementation mechanisms (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Indeed, they must first select a brand position – a subset of the brand identity and value proposition (Aaker, 1996) – and a mix of communications to transmit the desired message (Aaker, 1996; Barich & Kotler, 1991; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Pektus, 2004). In achieving perceptual congruence, greater brand

equity can be attained and, ultimately, increase a company or organization's success (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rowley, 1997) – the overarching goal in a saturated cultural market (Colbert, 2009). In the following section, we describe the methodology used to apply these traditionally commercial concepts in the arts sector.

Chapter 3 Method

The present chapter describes the method we used to explore our research objectives. As the aim of our study was to holistically explore branding in the film festival context, our approach accounted for the exploratory nature of the research and our two population pools. We start this chapter by contextualizing our research within the realm of quantitative and qualitative methods. We then detail our approach by defining our samples, describing our questionnaires and discussion guides, elaborating on our data collection process, and explaining our methods of analysis.

3.1 Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research

The many research methods used to study marketing phenomena can be separated into two categories: quantitative methods and qualitative methods. Each of these approaches has a set of distinct features pertaining to the data collected, the generalizability of results, the level of variable control, and key research instruments (Belk, Fisher & Kozinets, 2013). In **quantitative research**, predetermined variables are measured or manipulated, ultimately leading to the collection of numerical data (Belk & Al., 2013; Creswell, 2013). In this type of study, the researcher tries to remain invisible while administering structured measures such as experiments and survey questionnaires (Belk & al., 2013; Creswell, 2013). The ensuing results are assumed to be generalizable throughout contexts, as unrelated variables are controlled (Belk & al., 2013). This allows the researcher to target specific phenomena. For example, in studying the influence of a coffee shop's logo colour on customer satisfaction, a researcher might decide to control other variables – like logo size and shape. In controlling for variables unrelated to the study's objectives, it is possible to isolate the impact of a logo's colour on customer satisfaction.

In **qualitative research**, variables are measured in a naturalistic context where little control is exercised over the studied phenomena (Belk & al., 2013). In this type of study, the researcher becomes the most important instrument, as he or she must use his or her skills and rapport to build participant trust (Belk & al., 2013). Rather than quantitative research's

impersonal experiments and questionnaires, qualitative methods include depth interviews and case studies (Belk & al., 2013). The resulting data are nuanced verbal and visual information that cannot be generalized beyond the specific study context (Belk & al., 2013). For example, a researcher studying consumer coffee consumption behaviour might enquire about a participant’s daily coffee routine via journals and in-depth interviews. This allows him or her to gain a detailed understanding of consumers’ behaviour. Qualitative methods can be insightful as they have the potential of raising interesting points that might not be captured in a closed questionnaire. Table V offers a comparison of both quantitative and qualitative methods’ features (Belk & al., 2013).

Table V. Quantitative and Qualitative Research Features

	Quantitative Approach	Qualitative approach
Nature of data	Responses are translated into numbers	Visual and verbal recordings with a lot of detail
Context generalizability	Results are generalizable across contexts	Results cannot be generalized as they are assumed to be specific to the particular context being studied
Nature and control of potential causes	The researcher controls and manipulates certain variables in an effort to deduce causality	The study is naturalistic with multiple uncontrolled factors affecting behaviours and discussions
Key research instrument	The researcher is invisible and structured measures are used to gain insights	The researcher is the main instrument and gains insights via skills, rapport and trust

Source: Belk, R., Fischer, E., & Kozinets, R. V. (2013). *Qualitative consumer and marketing research*. Sage.

Quantitative and qualitative approaches both have their strengths and weaknesses. In selecting between the two, it is important to consider the purpose behind one’s research. In the context of our study, we examined the relatively nascent topic of branding in the cultural context of film festivals. As such, we opted for a qualitative approach to explore this phenomenon in depth (Creswell, 2007). Indeed, rather than quantifying our data and controlling the context’s numerous variables, we allowed an open discussions in an effort to explore the *how* and the *why* with greater flexibility and depth (Belk & al., 2013; Grant & Waite, 2003). To this end,

we used semi-structured depth interviews for both participant populations. This qualitative method is detailed in the following sections.

3.1.1 Semi-Structured Depth Interviews

Simply put, **interviews** involve two key players: an interviewer who poses questions and an interviewee who responds. There are three main interview formats ranging in structure: (1) structured interviews, (2) semi-structured interviews and (3) unstructured interviews (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Table VI details each of these interview types and their corresponding level of researcher control.

Table VI. Types of Depth Interviews

Type of depth interviews	Definition	Level of researcher control
Structured	The researcher uses specifically ordered and fixed interview questions across a number of participants. This interview technique most resembles a survey.	High level of control over participant responses
Semi-structured	The researcher uses an interview guide with specific questions and topics to be covered. There is some freedom with regard to question order and probing. This helps maintain a somewhat informal conversational style. This method is selected when researchers want to gain a profound understanding of a topic.	Moderate level of control over participant responses
Unstructured	The researcher has a clear goal but allows the discussion to go in many different directions, thereby allowing for rich and nuanced information. These interviews are usually quite lengthy and occur when the researcher intends to spend a lot of time with a particular community.	Minimum level of control over participant responses

Source: Harrell, M. C., & Bradley, M. A. (2009). *Data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*. Rand National Defense Research Institute Santa Monica CA.

In selecting between them, it is important to consider the objectives behind one’s research. In the context of our study, we explored the application of traditionally commercial concepts and the impact that they have in value creation for both film festival managers and their visitors. While we aimed to explore these concepts’ place in the cultural context, we had specific

discussion topics to cover. As such, we opted for **depth interviews**, defined as an often-lengthy formal interviews aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding about a topic (Belk & al., 2013). They “give us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves” (McCracken, 1988:9). More specifically, we selected a **semi-structured** format in an effort to target specific discussion questions and topics, while leaving enough freedom for an open conversation (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). In this type of interview, the researcher uses an interview guide containing specific topics to be covered while maintaining a moderate level of control over the discussion. We selected this approach because it supports the nature and goal of our study, exploration (Savoie-Zajc, 1998). Indeed, we freely explored the concept of film festival branding among managers and visitors, while directing the discussion towards specific topics related to our research objectives (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

Our interview questionnaires (Annexe 1) comprised four main topics, typically with one or two open-ended questions reflecting the concepts in our proposed model (Figure 2): brand identity/brand image, brand position, communications, brand equity. The questions centered on each topic’s primary concepts. Both managers’ and visitors’ questionnaires strongly resembled each other as to provide a better platform for comparison.

3.2 Approach

In our study, we holistically explored branding perceptions. As such, with our two population pools, we have separate questionnaires, discussion guides and slightly different methods. In the following sections, we detail the development of our questionnaires and discussion guides, our pre-tests, our samples and participant selection, as well as our methods of analysis.

3.2.1 Data Collection Instruments

The bulk of our research is conducted with interviews. To reduce interview time and to keep participants focused on the topic of film festival branding, we began our study with **pre-interview questionnaires**. The questionnaires – administered through web-based SurveyMonkey – aimed to gather basic participant-related information like demographics, festival participation rates, and/or brand knowledge. This method was deemed appropriate as it also served as a secondary screening tool to ensure participant appropriateness. It is important to note that though participants provided their names within the questionnaires, they were solely used for cross-reference with the interviews. All personal information remained confidential and names were replaced during transcription and data analysis.

Once the pre-interview questionnaires had been administered, participants engaged in semi-structured depth interviews. Our **discussion guide** comprised targeted questions and discussion topics pertaining to the perceptions on branding as a strategic tool, the content of brand identity and brand image, the types of communications used to deliver and learn about the brand, and its impact on film festival success (Appendix 1). Though specific questions were targeted in our discussion guide, they remained open-ended to allow greater freedom and probing opportunities (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). After collecting the interview data, it was cross-referenced with that of the questionnaires to gather a full picture of visitors' and managers' film festival branding perceptions.

With our data collection instruments, we posed questions that were both phenomenological and grounded in theory. Our research is **phenomenological** in that it “(...) describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (...) describing what all participants have in common (...)” (Creswell, 2013: p.57). Indeed, common perceptions among and between both samples can suggest certain theoretical and managerial guidelines for film festivals and the cultural context as a whole. To ensure that we would gather valuable information, we began by pre-testing our questionnaires and discussion guides. This is discussed in the following section.

3.2.1.1 Pre-Tests

In an effort to determine whether our questionnaires and discussion guides were clear, we approached two personal contacts that had recently visited film festivals in Montreal, Canada. Each participant filled out the online questionnaire, and was then asked to meet for an interview. Interviews were conducted at a local coffee shop and lasted about one hour each. The process resulted in some wording adjustments and the elimination of redundant questions. Further, it was deemed appropriate to provide participants with a list of branding definitions before participating. This was to increase core concept comprehension, thereby increasing the study's validity and reliability. It is important to note that due to the almost-identical questions between both parties, and the very small sample size of film festival managers, pre-tests were only conducted with visitors. All personal information remained confidential. All participants were over 18 years of age. Once the questionnaires and discussion guides were finalized, we began contacting participants and gathering data. In the following section we detail our samples and participant selection process.

3.2.2 Samples and Participant Selection

Our study addressed two separate population pools: film festival managers and film festival visitors. In this section, we start by detailing our selection of the three film festivals within which we selected our corresponding managers and visitors. We then detail the selection of our participants.

3.2.2.1 Film Festival Selection

For the purposes of our study, our film festival sampling frame included all film festivals in the Montreal Metropolitan Area. Within this sampling frame of approximately ten festivals (Qui Fait Quoi, 2014), we selected three: (1) Festival du nouveau cinema (FNC), (2) Fantasia International Film Festival (FIFF), and (3) Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM). The reason for their selection is threefold. First, these festivals are well established and are, therefore, more likely to have a distinguished branding

schema in both managers' and visitors' minds (d'Astous, et al., 2006). Second, they form a relatively representative subset of film festival themes: modern, fantasy and documentary. Third, to reduce the impact of irrelevant variation in our analysis, we selected festivals that are similar in size, notoriety and within the same city. The three film festivals are described in Table VII (Fantasia International Film Festival, 2016; Festival du nouveau cinéma, 2016; Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal, 2016).

Table VII. Description of our Study's Film Festivals

Film Festival	Logo	Description	Visitors
Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM) <i>Nov. 10 to Nov. 20, 2016</i>	 RENCONTRES INTERNATIONALES DU DOCUMENTAIRE DE MONTRÉAL <small>MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentaries • Local and international • One of the most important festivals of its type in North America 	63 000+
Fantasia International Film Festival (Fantasia) <i>Jul. 14 to Aug. 3, 2016</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaginative and fantasy cinema • From Asia, Europe and Americas • Most important festival in its genre in North America 	100,000+
Festival du nouveau cinéma (FNC) <i>Oct. 5 to Oct. 16, 2016</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for new technologies; • Quality and unique venues; • Cinema of all types; • Rich and varied line-up; • Local and international. 	Over 50 000

Source: Fantasia 2016. (n.d.). Retrieved October 25, 2015, from <http://www.fantasiafestival.com/>, Festival du nouveau cinéma. (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2014, from <http://www.nouveaucinema.ca/>, RIDM. (2017). Retrieved August 6, 2015, from <http://www.ridm.qc.ca/en>

It is important to note that the selection of these film festivals was partly out of convenience as it depended on managerial personnel's availability and willingness to participate. Their selection is described in the following section.

3.2.2.2 Manager Selection

In our study, we interviewed film festival managers in an effort to gain a deep understanding of their brand perceptions. Within the three aforementioned film festivals, we selected three members of upper management – one for each festival. Since each festival has its own managerial structure, the personnel needed to be strongly familiar with the brand and/or work closely with it. At the time of data collection, all participants worked for a film festival in the city of Montreal, Canada and were over 18 years of age. A description of the managerial participants can be found in Table VIII.

Table VIII. Description of Film Festival Managers

Film festival	Name <i>Pseudonym</i>	Title	Years within position	Description of Position
RIDM	<i>Amanda</i>	Executive director	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan global strategies • Manage festival team • Manage partnerships • Supervise department heads
Fantasia	<i>Carl</i>	Co-director	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan global strategies • Manage partnerships • Sales • Logistics • Programming
FNC	<i>Sebastian</i>	Director	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan global strategies • General management • Artistic direction • Human resources

We began recruiting managers through convenience sampling. During this phase, participants were selected and contacted with the help of a personal contact at the *Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec*. Our contact initiated the conversation by introducing us to the appropriate member of each film festival. The significance in interviewing a member of film festival management rests in their deep understanding of the brand’s identity. Indeed, the gathered knowledge served as a basis for comparison with visitors’ brand images. In the following section, we detail our selection of film festival visitors.

3.2.2.3 Visitor Selection

To understand how visitors perceive film festival brands, we interviewed three participants per festival. In an effort to speak with knowledgeable participants, we opted for mid-range to frequent festival visitors. As per Unwin et al.’s (2007) study, we define mid-range visitors as those who saw four to six films in the previous year’s festival, and frequent visitors as those who saw eight films or more. Otherwise, we include visitors who have returned to the festival more than once. In addition, to ensure that the participants had a well-rounded understanding of their corresponding brand, we selected only those living within the festivals’ cities – in this case, Montreal, Canada. This helped ensure that participants were exposed to the most festival-related media, print and web communications. All participants were over 18 years of age. A description of the visitor participants can be found in Table IX.

Table IX. Description of Visitors

Film festival	Name Pseudonym	Years visited	Number of films viewed last visit	City	Field of work
RIDM	<i>Diane</i>	2	5	Montreal	Administration / Law
	<i>Evelyn</i>	3	4	Montreal	Marketing / Communications
	<i>Olivia</i>	3	4	Montreal	Marketing / Communications
Fantasia	<i>Yvette</i>	4	6	Montreal	Administration / Law
	<i>Henry</i>	2	4	Montreal	Graphic design
	<i>Isabelle</i>	2	4	Montreal	Graphic design
FNC	<i>Nadia</i>	2	5	Montreal	Administration / Law
	<i>Vivian</i>	3	6	Montreal	Marketing / Communications
	<i>Louis</i>	5	4	Montreal	Marketing / Communications

We began recruiting participants through convenience sampling, then grew the number of participants through a snowballing approach. During the convenience-sampling phase, we surveyed our close friends and family members to determine whether they had recently seen at least four films at one of our three film festivals (Creswell, 2013). This method was executed over social media and allowed us to gather six participants, while reducing time and money costs (Creswell, 2013). Afterwards, during the snowballing phase, we asked our initial sample to recommend other possible participants (Belk et al., 2013; Creswell, 2013). This provided us

with an additional three participants. The significance of interviewing film festival visitors rests in the impact of their perceptions on success (Keller, 1993). In the following section, we detail our data collection process.

3.2.3 Data Collection Process

Despite slightly different questionnaires and discussion guides for each group of participants, the data collection process was essentially the same. Indeed, after making an initial contact via e-mail or social media (Appendix 1), we asked all participants to become acquainted with a list of branding definitions (Appendix 2). Afterwards, they were asked to answer a preliminary questionnaire via the SurveyMoneky website (Appendix 3). The initial questionnaire's purpose was to simply gain the participants' demographic data, to reduce interview time while focusing on the topic of branding, and to offer an additional screening for candidate appropriateness. The questionnaire did not cover any of the core brand-related topics. Participants were given one week to complete questionnaire after which they were contacted to set up a date and place for the interview. Once the preliminary questionnaires were completed, all participants were sent a second e-mail to set up an interview time and location at their discretion (Appendix 4). All interviews were conducted at a local coffee shop, managers' offices or via Skype and lasted between 45 minutes and one hour each. They were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researchers. Though the questionnaires required participants to provide their name, it was simply used for cross-referencing with the interviews. Complete confidentiality was maintained during data analysis. Participants were made fully aware of this fact on the first page of the preliminary questionnaire.

All questionnaires and interviews were administered over a period of four months, from November 2016 to February 2017. The preferred language for both tools was French due to its predominance in the city of Montreal, Canada. This also helped keep a certain level of vocabulary consistency that may have been lost during translation. It is important to note that though the questionnaires and discussion guides were slightly adapted for each population pool, they covered the same topics for purposes of comparison during data analysis. Once our

data were collected, we proceeded with their analysis. We cover our process in the following section.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

Following the questionnaire and interview data collection process, the audio-recordings were transcribed and cross-referenced with the web questionnaires. Once the data had been integrated, we engaged in an **inductive data analysis process** by which data were organized “into increasingly more abstract units of information” (Creswell, 2007:p.38). We worked “back and forth between the themes and the database until [we] establish[ed] a comprehensive set of themes” (Creswell, 2007:p.39). We started this process by **manually coding** our interview data. This method was selected over computer-aided analysis due to the small sample size and the predetermined theory-based codes derived from our research objectives (Belk et al., 2013). Since the “tabula rasa” approach to coding is not recommended by Belk et al. (2013), we pre-determined some of our codes based on our research questions as well as prior literature. Once completed, we interpreted our data and proceeded with **theory building** by looking for response patterns and relating them to current marketing concepts (Belk et al., 2013). A number of theory-derived themes and sub-themes were identified and classified from our twelve interviews. We describe our results in the following chapter.

3.3 Methodology Conclusion

Our methodology chapter outlines the approach used to collect our data. Due to the exploratory nature of our study, we opted for a qualitative view to help us study film festival branding in depth, while attempting to understand the *how* and the *why* with greater flexibility (Belk & al., 2013; Creswell, 2007; Grant and Waite, 2003). As we are holistically studying the topic, we gathered data from two core participant pools: film festival managers and visitors. In total, we gathered three managerial participants (one per festival) and nine visitor participants (three per festival). Having two participant groups, our methodologies vary slightly for each, but remained relatively stable as we wished to compare the two during analysis. As such, both

groups were first administered a web-based questionnaire to gather basic information. They were then interviewed using the semi-structured depth technique. Once collected, the data were transcribed, manually coded and analysed using induction and theory building (Creswell, 2007; Belk et al., 2013). Our analysis revealed a number of interesting findings. The results are described in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 Results

The present chapter details our findings gathered through the questionnaire and interview process. Preceding cultural marketing literature demonstrates varying levels of support for the use of traditionally commercial concepts in the arts sector (Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2011; Unwin et al., 2007). Based on the modernist suggestion that branding can help cultural organizations succeed in a saturated market (Colbert, 2003; Colbert, 2009), our findings aim to holistically verify its application from the perspective of two key groups: film festival managers and visitors. In the following sections, we look at each group's perceptions on the topic. We then consider the application of brand identity and brand image in the film festival context. Afterwards, we review the brand implementation process. Finally, we consider the impact that brand identity and brand image can have on overall film festival brand equity.

4.1 Perceptions of Film Festival Branding

Paralleling Pusa and Uusitalo's (2014) research, our first global objective was to explore the perceptions of branding in the film festival context. In considering both perspectives, the findings help us establish overall openness towards cultural branding, a traditionally controversial concept. We describe our findings in the following sections.

4.1.1 Manager Perceptions on Branding

The film festival managers in our study **do not perceive the use of cultural marketing and branding as controversial** or unwarranted. They believe that these strategic concepts are necessary to best serve customers and to optimize festival operations. While the managers recognize that branding is borrowed from the traditionally commercial field of marketing, they believe in its cultural relevance and even its necessity. RIDM's Amanda expresses this in the following citation:

Donc tout ce qui englobe le branding en général et le marketing, y'a beaucoup de choses qui peuvent s'appliquer aux festivals, plus précisément aux festivals de film. [...] C'est important de s'outiller. J pense même que ça fait partie de nos devoirs en tant qu'OBNL, en tant qu'organisme culturel, bin, pour faire fonctionner les festivals comme du monde.

Not only do our study's film festival managers positively perceive the concept, it is deeply rooted in their strategies. This is demonstrated by their unique appropriation of brand identity. Indeed, the managers perceive branding as having **distinctive cultural features** resulting from a balance between two traditionalist perspectives: the belief that marketing principles cannot be applied in the cultural context and that by which they should be solely reserved for commercial organizations. The participants acknowledge that they operate in a unique space between these two viewpoints. Strategically, this translates into the use of a commercial process with culturally driven objectives. FNC's Sebastian exemplifies this in the following quote:

(Le logo) reste avant tout un logo corporatif. Donc, c'est la même démarche de départ sauf que la liste que tu vas adresser quand tu fais un brainstorm, bin ça sera d'autres mots que tu vas utiliser, quoi. C'est la même démarche créative, mais avec des objectifs différents.

The distinctive nature of film festival branding has even lead to one manager's use of the term 'cultural marketing'. The affirmation of this unique concept is highlighted in Carl's description of his career transition from his previous employment in the commercial marketing sector:

Euh, pi c'est un peu le plaisir aussi pour un entrepreneur qui aime, dans le fond, la culture pi la commercialité des choses. Bin moi j'suis plus à l'aise de faire du marketing culturel que de faire du marketing de p'ti pois, de couches, de hamburgers, tsé.

In this statement, Carl contrasts the cultural and commercial sectors and acknowledges that cultural marketing rests in the space between the two. It is an area necessitating a distinctive approach.

4.1.2 Visitor Perceptions on Branding

Our study's film festival visitors **do not perceive the use of traditionally commercial concepts as controversial** or unwarranted. Indeed, these festivalgoers perceive film festivals as having brands and hold positive opinions on their use. They view branding as a concept that is increasingly used and that has become necessary for film festivals' success. Indeed, they believe that it can help reach the audiences needed to generate revenue and survive. Vivian describes this in the following statement:

Tous les festivals doivent faire de l'argent, donc c'est toujours commercial. [...] Fak y sont comme prisonniers du marketing (du branding), sont obligés là.

Part of our festivalgoers' acceptance of traditionally commercial concepts stems from their ability to **rationalize their transferability** into the cultural context. Indeed, they believe that film festivals are a nobler cause given their minimal funding and artistic nature. Regarding the financial aspect, it is believed that the festivals do not possess the resources needed to effectively generate a strong reputation and visibility. Isabelle describes the impact of this in the following quote:

L'image des entreprises culturelles est souvent, euh, j'dirais, sous-représentée, pi au niveau financier souvent c'est plus difficile. C'est pas des entreprises qui ont beaucoup d'argent – des théâtres, des musées, des festivals justement – y'ont pas les moyens, c'est souvent éphémère. Fak sinon ça va être des petites campagnes, des trucs qui sont assez ponctuels. J'dirais pas y'a un sous-financement des organismes culturels, mais clairement y'a pas beaucoup d'argent pour ça au Québec.

Our visitors' funding perceptions appear to influence their tolerance towards marketing and branding. Indeed, it is as though they forgive film festivals because they are doing what they can with what little they have. They do suggest, however, that utilizing commercial tools such as branding can help them build a reputation – what a festival is known for. Diane describes how RIDM's brand provides credibility to its projections in the following statement:

Bin moi la marque des RIDM, je trouve que, euh, y'ont réussi à avoir une bonne signature. Elle a un **visuel qui tappe à l'œil** pi on le reconnaît. Ce qui est intéressant c'est qu'on associe bien leurs événements (projections) aux RIDM et à la crédibilité que le RIDM a réussi à avoir de par la qualité de sa programmation à chaque année.

Regarding film festivals' artistic nature, our participants believe that branding in the cultural sector can be distinguished from that of commercial sector. While they perceive the branding process as inherently similar to the commercial process, differences lay in the artistic execution. Indeed, our visitors suggest that film festival branding parallels its artistic nature, in that it is developed with more creative freedom, or *laissez-aller*. In distinguishing between the cultural and commercial contexts, Isabelle expresses this idea in the following quote:

Le branding culturel y se différencie bien souvent du branding plus commercial. Souvent une image peut-être plus légère, plus artistique, euh, qui permet, disons, aux artistes ou au designers de se laisser un peu plus aller. On fait plus confiance qu'on est vraiment dans un domaine purement culturel, créatif. Les gens sont déjà enclins, sont déjà ouverts à ça.

Indeed, while our study's visitors perceive the process as having a similar rigorousness as the commercial sector, its artistic execution is perceived to provide more legitimacy.

4.1.3 Film Festival Branding Perceptions Conclusion

Overall, branding does not appear to be viewed as controversial among our study's three film festivals. While managers strongly advocate for its importance and actively use it, both groups maintain similarly positive perceptions. Their explanations as to the importance of branding in the film festival context mirror each other on two points: the goal of achieving success and the singularity of cultural institutions. With regard to success, our study's managers actively manage their brands because they believe it will help them obtain the audiences they need to ultimately secure funding. This notion is echoed in our visitors' rationalization of using a traditionally commercial concept in the cultural context. In their view, film festivals have small budgets and, therefore, need to use the tools at their disposal to ensure success, including branding. With regard to the unique nature of the cultural context, both participant groups agree that there are differences between commercial and cultural branding. Much like managerial participants, visitors perceive the branding process as being the same as that used in the commercial context whereby only the objectives differ. For visitors, brands are more creative and parallel the artistic nature of the film festivals themselves. As such, in response to our first overarching objective, we find that branding is

positively perceived and understood by both groups. Therefore, it appears to be an appropriate strategic tool for film festivals. In the following sections, we look at how it can be applied.

4.2 Brand Identity Application

Paralleling Pusa and Uusitalo's (2014) research, our second and third objectives were to explore film festivals' brand identity content and how it is applied in this particular cultural context. In the following sections, we breakdown the brand identity dimensions found in film festival brands. We then look at some brand management principles used by our study's managers to gain further insight into their strategic choices.

4.2.1 Brand Identity Content

In commercial marketing theory, a brand's identity is comprised of twelve dimensions categorized into four perspectives: brand as product, brand as organisation, brand as person and brand as symbol (Aaker, 1996). To determine whether this traditionally commercial concept can be applied in the cultural context, we analyse the associations put forth by film festival managers. In the following sections, we explore each brand identity perspective and their associated dimensions.

4.2.1.1 Brand as Product

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, six dimensions are found within the brand-as-product perspective: product scope, product attributes, quality/value, use occasion, users and country of origin. We find that our study's film festivals possess all of these brand identity dimensions. First, for the **product scope dimension**, while the genres and topics vary from one festival to the other, managers strongly associate their festivals with those that are predominant in their brand identity. For RIDM, the documentary is the primary genre. Most of the presented documentaries are festival films that cannot be viewed outside of such events. Topics include a wide range of socio-political subjects. For instance, the festival's 2016

program presented films ranging from *Fire at Sea*, a documentary about the Italian island of Lampedusa, a refugee gathering point to *Aim for the Roses*, a documentary about Mark Haney's musical tribute to an infamous stuntman (RIDM, 2016). For Fantasia, genre cinema is the festival's primary category. Its yearly program comprises over 150 films in archetypical genres such as horror, action, science fiction and comedy. The films also greatly range in topic. For instance, movies range from *Doctor Strange*, a superhero film, to *Bloppy*, a two-minute short animated film about an old man followed by a strange shape (Fantasia, 2016). FNC is more of a generalist cinema focused on presenting all new moving images with a focus on the use of new technologies, as represented by the 'N' for 'new' in the festival's name. Much like the other festivals, it too presents a variety of topics. For instance, Sebastian talks about presenting films such as *Drive*, a fast-paced crime film that can be contrasted with experimental films such as *Be Boy Be Girl*, a multi-sensory experience (FNC, 2016). To view all of the main product scope associations, consult Table X.

Second, for the **product attributes dimension**, our study's film festivals collectively possess one added feature that benefits their visitors: the experience. While the specific associations vary from one festival to the other, managers strongly associate their festivals with experiential factors, particularly those that are social in nature. Indeed, the experiential factors that matter most are those that provide festivalgoers with the opportunity to interact with the festival or other visitors. For instance, RIDM demonstrates the importance attributed to visitor-festival interactions in the first letter of its name's acronym: "R" for "rencontres", or "meetings". In addition to viewing a film, visitors have the opportunity to meet and dialogue with someone who worked on the documentary after its viewing. This fundamental feature was administered by the festival's founders and is a feature that persisted throughout its 19 years of existence. As Amanda describes it:

Quand tu viens aux RIDM, tu viens voir un film, mais tu viens aussi assister à une discussion. Y'a 75% de nos projections où y'a un artiste présent – soit un réalisateur, soit un DOP, soit un des personnages. Euh on se fait un point d'honneur à ce qui ait le plus possible quelqu'un pour accompagner le film.

Our study's film festival experiences can also revolve around interactions between visitors. For instance, Fantasia fosters these types of socialization opportunities during film screenings. Carl describes the experience as a 600-person sofa where people come to watch a movie as a group, akin to friends or family. In this informal context, festivalgoers are treated to a party atmosphere where little is off limits, which allows for a unique group synergy. Carl describes this in the following citation:

Fantasia est identifié à des grosses projections, beaucoup de monde, beaucoup de rires, public créatif, participatif. Et ça vient, j'pense, du fait qu'on se présente comme ça. On fait rien pour encourager les gens à crier, mais on les décourage pas de crier non plus.

Other types of experiences can be indirectly related to film screenings. Indeed, some of our study's festivals organize events, such as cocktails, for like-minded individuals to interact. For instance, FNC's Sebastian truly values networking events and other socialization opportunities. He believes that this aspect is one that has been largely cut due to budget restrictions but prides himself on the fact that he maintained them. He describes their importance in the following quote:

Aujourd'hui ce qui fait vraiment la grande différence du festival – et que beaucoup ont coupé pour raisons économiques et budgétaires – c'est les activités de réseautage et de rencontre. D'avoir un quartier général et actif tout au long du festival et non pas seulement un bureau d'accueil dans un hôtel ou d'avoir juste comme un repas ou une sortie. Avec nous, tu vas voir un film et t'es pas abandonné après. Tu peux continuer l'expérience. Y'a toujours un lieu que tu vas rencontrer d'autres gens qui ont les mêmes intérêts que toi et à l'Agora, le quartier général, on le gardera toujours, que tu veux prendre un verre, que tu veux t'asseoir voir une performance, mais aussi dans un endroit plus *lounge* pour discuter.

To view all of the main product attribute associations for each film festival, please consult Table X.

Third, the **quality/value dimension** principally refers to the yearly film selection. Managers of our study's more generalist festivals, Fantasia and FNC, explicitly discuss their strong beliefs in the importance of the films' quality and, consequently, similarly perceive themselves as cultural barometers. The great lengths they go through to curate quality content is exemplified by FNC's yearly selection process. During the submission period, FNC receives

around 3000 films for which teams are hired to preview. The selection's quality is akin to that of fine wines, according to Sebastian. He expresses this in the following quote describing the yearly cocktail FNC hosts at Cannes:

On organise un gros cocktail à Cannes pour environ 350 professionnels, mais on essaie de travailler sur l'image aussi de qualité. [...] Ce qu'on va proposer c'est plein de différents vins et de dire : « On sélectionne notre vin de la même manière qu'on sélectionne nos films. C'est la même qualité, la diversité. T'as pas juste un blanc un rouge, t'a plusieurs. » Et on a réussi à avoir du monde grâce à ça et jouer avec ça en disant : « Ce que vous buvez là, c'est la même préoccupation qu'on a dans notre sélection de films. »

Fantasia and FNC's managers believe that the consistent calibre of their film selection has made them cultural references, or trend barometers. Indeed, in a context where audiences lack the time and the tools to unearth quality films, they rely on the professionally curated film festival content. FNC's Sebastian describes this in the following citation:

Notre spécialité pour nous c'est de dire : « Faites-nous confiance on va défricher tout ça et on va même aller à des endroits qui sont encore plus compliqués et inaccessibles ». Faire une chasse au trésor sur internet, si t'as pas les connaissances et l'équipement pour faire ta chasse au trésor, tu vas visionner tellement de mauvais contenu que tu vas t'arrêter et tu vas être dégouté du cinéma, tsé.

Our study's film festival managers believe that this consistency and reliability has built trust with their audiences, thereby impacting their decision process. Fantasia's Carl describes this in the following quote:

On a créé un élément de confiance avec le public. Si t'as juste trois films, fais nous confiance, choisis parmi les dix qu'on présente. On est devenu, j'pense, une référence pour les gens.

To view all of the main quality/value associations for each film festival, please consult Table X.

Fourth, for the **use occasion dimension**, we find that our study's managers somewhat elicit associations pertaining to particular functions associated with their festival. While they indirectly discuss the opportunity provided to visitors to discover quality films, more specific functions are underlined within each festival. Such functions vary from one festival to the next

and appear to depend on the predominant genre. For instance, RIDM presents socio-politically charged documentaries. Amanda believes that the genre has the function of flattening geographical and socio-political borders by bringing attendees closer to previously unknown realities and by showcasing films that are primarily exclusive to film festivals. Amanda discusses the opportunity that her festival provides to visitors in the following statement:

Tu l’retrouveras pas à la télé, tu l’retrouveras pas sur Netflix, tu l’retrouveras pas sur iTunes, ou sur whatever. Euh, y’a un gros pourcentage de nos films qui sont des films de festival. Que si tu vas pas chez nous, à moins d’aller dans un autre festival, tu l’verras pas.

The functions associated with visiting a documentary festival can be contrasted with that of more generalist ones like Fantasia and FNC. With their widespread topics, they often present films that can or will soon be available through other easily accessed channels. In these cases, the use of attending a film festival is more associated with experiential factors. For instance, FNC’s Sebastian believes that there is something special in viewing a film as a group; a sort of synergy is derived from the community of people, the music and the location. He describes this in the following citation about *Drive*, a popular film that many have previously seen:

Drive, tout le monde l’a vu, pi tu peux le télécharger gratuitement. [...] Parce que ces gens-là, y’a une raison pourquoi ils étaient là ensemble. Y’avait la musique, y’avait le fait d’être ensemble, le fait d’être à l’extérieur, au Centre-ville de Montréal. Y’avait le choix aussi du festival. Pis c’était notre communauté. *Drive* correspondait à notre image, correspondait à leur image, et puis fallait montrer qu’ils sont tous ensemble, puis réunis autour de cette même philosophie, finalement. Et ça fonctionne vachement bien, quoi.

To view all of the main use occasion associations for each film festival, please consult Table X.

Fifth, for the **users dimension**, our study’s managers somewhat associate their festivals with particular types of users. While the set of specific associations varies from one festival to the other, we find that they tend to associate their festival with both the general population and a more specific demographic. Managers view the general public as an important target audience to significantly grow their number of attendees. While the generalist

nature is inherent to some festivals, it is actively strategized and implemented in others. For instance, as previously mentioned, RIDM presents documentaries, a genre believed to be democratic in nature. It is in an effort to further this notion that the festival underwent a recent visual branding modernization. Amanda expresses the importance of this strategic decision with regard to the festival's strategy in the following quote:

Tsé, la mission du RIDM c'est de démocratiser le documentaire. C'est de l'emmener là où il n'est pas et de pousser le grand public, euh, à aller voir du documentaire, à connaître le documentaire, à rencontrer le documentaire. Fak, d'avoir une image de marque justement qui sort de l'enveloppe poussiéreuse du documentaire, ça fait partie de cette volonté-là.

In addition to targeting larger audiences, our study's film festival managers tend to associate themselves with the demographic that represents their typical attendees. We find that these specific groups vary between festivals and reflect the identity of each. For instance, Fantasia's Carl subjectively describes his typical festivalgoers as geeky, unmaterialistic introverts who are interested in watching movies on large screens and in big groups. These marginalized individuals parallel the brand's laid-back identity. Carl describes this in the following quote regarding the festival's dress code:

Pis notre public c'est un public qui s'identifie pas en fonction de s'qui a. C'est un public qui s'identifie en fonction de ce qui aime. C'est pour ça que c'est des gens qui s'affirment socialement en portant des t-shirts de band, des t-shirts de films, des t-shirts de réalisateurs. T'es verras pas avec du Gucci, avec du Versace. [...] Tsé nous on se présente pas en complet trois-pièces. On est encore en jeans pi en t-shirt le soir de l'ouverture.

To view all of the main user associations for each film festival, please consult Table X.

Sixth, for the **country or region of origin dimension**, our study's managers loosely associate their festival with its provenance. While it is not purported as a predominant association for film festivals, managers similarly acknowledge the presence of their organization within the city of Montreal. Indeed, as a cultural hub in North America, the city can lend credibility to film festival brands. FNC's Sebastian particularly believes in the

importance of this aspect. For him, the brand must resemble that of its city of origin. He describes this in the following statement:

Faut pas oublier qu'on est une métropole culturelle, et puis faut aussi prendre en considération quant on parle d'une marque pi de créer comme une identité, c'est de ressembler au maximum à l'identité de la ville parce que l'identité de la ville correspond- on est dans une ville qui est très diversifiée, qui est très inclusive. [...] Ici, c'est une identité culturelle qui correspond à l'exception culturelle en Amérique du nord, fak y faut pas qu'on ait peur de ça.

To view all of the country or region of origin associations for each film festival, please consult Table X.

Table X. Brand-as-Product Associations for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Product scope Genres-specific / Wide range of topics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentaries Festival films Variety of topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genre films Wide selection (150+) Variety of topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of topics Generalist films All new moving images
Product attributes Experience / Social interactions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "R" for "rencontres" in RIDM, or "meetings", opportunity to meet/discuss with documentarians Supporting events with shows and music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large projections Large groups (600+) Party atmosphere, fun Large room (Mel Oppenheim at Concordia University) Film premieres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking events such as cocktails Agora meeting place available throughout the festival Unique locations (ex. in parks)
Quality/value Experience / Social interactions		
<p><i>Little direct reference to quality associations in branding</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality program Cultural barometer for what will soon be popular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality program due to careful selection akin to fine wines Internationally recognized by larger festivals like Cannes Cultural barometer for quality film selections
Use occasion Experience / Social interactions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flatten geographical and socio-political borders View films that cannot be seen elsewhere Interact with other visitors and filmmakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See films in premiere View films as a large group, as a community Unique atmosphere, ambiance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View films in unique locations View films as a group, as a community Unique synergy provided by the location, people and music/ambiance
Users General public / Marginalized groups		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public: Documentary as a democratic genre can reach large population Specific demographic: Young/Females/Documentarians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public: Targets larger audiences by offering films of all genres under the premise that there will be something for everyone Specific demographic: Marginalized/Geeky/Unmaterialistic introverts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public: Diversity of presented films and topics to respond to a more general demand from larger audiences <p><i>No specific demographic directly referenced</i></p>
Country of origin Montreal / Quebec		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "M" in RIDM referring to Montreal lightly reference, but not overtly used as a means to influence credibility <p><i>These are not overtly used to influence the festival's credibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual branding alludes to the Concordia University location in Montreal Winged horse symbolizes Quebec, <p><i>These are not overtly used to influence the festival's credibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montreal viewed as a cultural hub that brings credibility to the festival Used to influence branding

4.2.1.2 Brand-As-Organisation

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, two dimensions are found within the brand-as-organisation perspective: the organizational attributes dimension and the local versus global dimension. We find that each of our study's festivals possess these brand identity dimensions. First, for the **organizational attributes dimension**, managers strongly elicit associations pertaining to the culture and values that guide their festival's operations. While the set of specific associations varies from one festival to the other, we find that an overarching value is that of approachability. Indeed, all of our festival managers discuss their openness and welcoming nature towards visitors. RIDM's Amanda believes that this is particularly important for first-time attendees who may find the process intimidating. She expresses this in the following statement:

On met énormément d'effort dans cet aspect-là du festival, de le rendre accueillant, de le rendre chaleureux, que les gens qui viennent pour la première fois chez nous ne se sentent pas intimidés euh par la structure même. On essaie le plus possible d'être toute l'équipe, autant que les cinéastes qui viennent chez nous, d'être abordables- que les gens puissent venir nous parler.

Per this quote, the value of approachability directly guides company culture in terms of how employees and cinematographers interact with RIDM's visitors. Managers do, however, rely on some less direct methods to portray such a relatable image. For instance, Fantasia's Carl heavily relies on the jeans-and-t-shirt dress code as a metaphor to express the informal nature of his festival. Indeed, by allowing festivalgoers to dress how they please, and by doing so himself, Carl creates an informally comfortable atmosphere. He expresses this in the following citation regarding opening night:

Tsé nous on se présente pas en complet trois-pièces. On est encore en jeans pi en t-shirt le soir de l'ouverture, pi on invite les gens au festival. [...] Les gens s'associent à nous à cause de ça- y s'associent à nous programmeurs, parce qu'on est des gens comme eux qui parlent comme eux, qui s'habillent comme eux.

In addition to guiding festival workers' behaviour, we find that the organizational value of approachability also influences our participants' strategic decisions. For instance, Carl strongly values being perceived as non-commercial because he believes that the opposite would have a negative effect on his festival. As such, in making strategic decisions like

sponsorship selection, he believes it is important to select sponsors that best relate to his public and do not favour commercial perceptions. He expresses this in the following quote:

Mais faut que tu fasses attention – du moment où la perception commerciale est là, t'es faite. Pi chu sur le bord d'arriver là. J'ai réussi à gérer ça. Jusqu'ou chu obsédé par ça j'te donne un exemple. Mon commanditaire c'est Québecor, mais j'me suis entendu avec Québecor que ça serait Vidéotron sur le poster et non Québecor. Vidéotron est plus proche de notre public - téléphones cellulaires, Illico, services de cable par internet. En fait le Super Club Vidéotron, euh- au niveau du quotidien de notre public, Vidéotron en fait partie. En fait, Vidéotron est naturel. C'est pas grave que Vidéotron soit là. Quebecor, tu rentres dans la politique, tu rentres dans la grosse magouille, pi tu peux pas aller là.

To view the main organizational attributes associations for each film festival, please consult Table XI.

Second, for the **local versus global dimension**, our study's film festival managers associate their brands with the geographical dispersion. We find that all festivals similarly have a local and international nature. Regarding the local aspect, film festivals are somewhat associated with the city of Montreal and the province of Quebec to varying degrees. For instance, while RIDM directly refers to Montreal in the 'M' of the festival's acronym, Fantasia indirectly refers to its Quebec provenance through the symbolic imagery of the black horse. The latter alludes to the province's rich history of fantastic legends and helps further its Quebec-based origins. Carl describes this in the following quote:

Et y'a une légende qu'on aimait beaucoup nous autres, la légende du Cheval Noir qui venait de Trois-Pistoles. C'est une légende de la fin du siècle dernier. [...] On est fantastique, pi à quelque part d'aller dans les légendes fantastiques ça nous permet de québéquiser un peu Fantasia qui a un look international.

Regarding the global aspect, our study's film festivals are loosely associated with international realms. These are principally related to the geographic dispersion of their films' provenances. For instance, Fantasia directly references the international aspect in its full name: *Festival international de films fantasia*. This is concretized in the films they present like Doctor Strange, produced in the United States of America. Similarly, RIDM's association to internationality stems from the geographical dispersion of the documentaries' on-set location and topics. For Amanda, it represents a means to further democratize this film genre because it

flattens perceptual borders and allows cultures to learn about others. In describing a Quebec-produced documentary filmed in Greece, she explains her point in the following quote:

Le documentaire a la particularité d’être encore une fois comme j’ai dit, très très démocratique et d’attirer des gens de tous horizons parce que c’est tellement universel, parce que toi tu peux être un documentariste québécois pi de faire un film en Grèce. Pi ça va parler à la communauté grecque tsé, même si ça été fait par un québécois. Fak que je pense que ça ça met à plat beaucoup beaucoup de frontières euh que la fiction va avoir que nous on n’a pas.

To view the main local versus global associations for each film festival, please consult Table XI.

Table XI. Brand-as-Organization Associations for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Organizational attributes Accessibility / Informality		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees and cinematographers are expected to be approachable • No preferential treatment (ex. red carpets, VIP sections) • Films made by and present ordinary people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeans-and-t-shirt dress code • Sponsor selection that best meets visitors • No preferential treatment (ex. red carpets, VIP sections) • Avoidance of being too commercial, playing in the fringes of mainstream culture • Informal atmosphere during film viewings (ex. big couch for 600 people, animal cries during viewing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual branding that alludes to warmth and welcoming – represents a return to the sources • Yellow wolf represents a reassuring guiding light on the path to discovery • Informal management style described as a pirate ship – they do what they wish and see themselves as a group of rebels
Local versus global Montreal / Quebec / International		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “M” in RIDM for Montreal • Films about international topics and in international locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “International” in <i>Festival international de films fantasia</i>, references the international nature of films presented • Use of Concordia University screening location in visual materials • Black horse as a symbol of Quebec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand must reflect, as much as possible, the city in which the festival occurs • Importance attributed to Montreal as a cultural metropolis • Presentation of international films • Presence at international festivals (ex. Cannes)

4.2.1.3 Brand-As-Person

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, two dimensions are found within the brand-as-person perspective: brand personality and brand-customer relationship. We find that our study's film festivals possess these brand identity dimensions. First, for the **brand personality dimension**, our findings suggest that managers strongly associate their film festivals with human characteristics. While the specific associations vary from festival to the next, they tend to be used to describe some of the film festivals' main components: films, experience, visitors, overall philosophy, and origin. For instance, RIDM's Amanda describes her festival as having the following human associations: warm, welcoming, low-key, ordinary people and democratic. The 'warm', 'welcoming' and 'low-key' aspects describe the festival's culture and values, as discussed in the organizational attributes section. Per our previous findings, this reflects the approachable image portrayed by RIDM. Other person-related characteristics like 'democratic' and 'ordinary people' help describe the documentary genre and the people who participate in its creation.

Those of our festivals with an animal in their visual branding use it as a symbol to further personify their identity. This applies to Fantasia who currently utilizes the black horse in its visual branding and communications, and FNC who has the wolf in its logo. For instance, FNC's branding and logo revolves around the female wolf (Table VII). Sebastian associates this animal with numerous human characteristics including 'female', 'family-oriented', 'leader', 'reassuring', 'self-assured', 'adventurous'. These associations represent a film festival that is not afraid to take risks and to discover new paths. Sebastian describes some of the human characteristics of his logo in the following citation:

L'idée c'était d'avoir l'idée de louve, chef de meute, enfin, d'avoir quelque chose de rassurant, aussi d'avoir une valeur familiale. Pour nous – le loup c'est bien, mais l'idée c'est le loup solitaire alors que la louve s'occupe de sa marmaille, de sa famille. [...] C'est comme se dire elle a 45 ans aujourd'hui pi elle se porte bien, elle va bien, et donc on a décidé de faire quelque chose de – tu vois ce logo, euh – ça c'est le logo qu'on a mis en place pour le 40e et on vraiment voulu mettre de l'avant. Là c'était vraiment, y'avait quelque chose- on a toujours des influences qui sont derrières qui sont, euh, pas inconscientes, mais tsé vraiment dans une forêt un peu sombre pi ça c'est quelque chose de rayonnement, de rassurant. [...] T'as vraiment la louve qui explore dans la forêt. Y'a vraiment ce côté de territoire. Donc tu vois on réfléchit vraiment à tout ça pour avoir une homogénéisation de tout en terme d'identité, quoi.

To view the main personality associations for each film festival, please consult Table XII.

Second, for the **brand-customer relationship dimension**, our study's film festival brands strongly elicit associations pertaining to the relationships fostered between their festival and its visitors. While the specific set of associations vary from one festival to the next, we find that managers attempt to build relationships with their attendees in various ways. Indeed, in attracting certain demographics and being generally approachable and relatable, film festivals foster a sense of community among like-minded individuals. For instance, Fantasia's Carl discusses the sense of belonging that his festival can provide to his predominant demographic of 'geeky' and 'marginalized' attendees. For him, the festival is akin to a non-judgemental sanctuary where individuals can freely express their true selves. He describes this sentiment in the following quote:

Quand tu travailles avec un personnel qui trippe plus sur les comédies sentimentales, pi la question de la semaine c'est plus 'T'as-tu vu Bridget Jones?' que 'T'as-tu vu le dernier Godzilla?', euh, c'est comme quand t'aimes le heavy métal. T'es à part. Fak à quelque part Fantasia c'est comme pour ceux qui aiment le métal.

FNC's Sebastian believes that the brand has a direct role to play in forming a community. For him, the brand – particularly the logo – acts as a sort of totem that represents groups of individuals. He expresses this in the following statement:

[La marque] c'est quelque chose de super important aujourd'hui parce que tu dois créer une communauté. [...] Les gens- la raison pour laquelle ils s'associent à des communautés c'est parce qu'elles représentent leur philosophie, leur identité et ils font confiance à ça.

Our study's festival managers foster such relationships by providing interaction opportunities. As discussed in the product attributes dimension section, such experiences can occur during film projections or in other supporting events. For instance, Fantasia promotes a sense of community by creating an informal and festive atmosphere during film viewings. Carl describes how his festival creates a unique group environment in the following quote:

Pour moi le festival c'est un grand divan de 700 places où on invite du monde à venir voir des films, pi à venir les voir en gang, pi à avoir du fun en gang. [...] Fantasia est identifié à des grosses projections, beaucoup de monde, beaucoup de rires, public créatif, participatif. Et ça vient, j'pense, du fait qu'on se présente comme ça. On fait rien pour encourager les gens à crier, mais on les décourage pas de crier non plus [...].

To view the main brand-customer relationship associations for each film festival, please consult Table XII.

Table XII. Brand-as-Person Associations for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Personality Festival-specific / Animal		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young • Dynamic • Warm • Welcoming • Edgy • Low-key • Ordinary people • Democratic • Female • Diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festive • Welcoming • Non-judgement • Strong • Hard working • Québécois • Marginal • Geeky • Fun • Fantastic <p style="text-align: center;">Importance of the horse to describe the festival</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Dynamic • 40 years old • Reassuring • Leader • Nostalgic • Does not forget the past • Discovering • Curious • Adventurous • Reassuring • Econoclass • Family-oriented • Self-assured • Pirate • Diverse <p style="text-align: center;">Importance of the wolf to describe the festival</p>
Brand-customer relationship Community / Relationship nurturing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is treated equally (no preferential VIP treatment or red carpets) • Community of young, predominantly female, individuals who feel the urgency to do things • “R” for “<i>rencontres</i>” in RIDM, or “meetings” • Socialization activities with music and shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is treated equally (no preferential VIP treatment or red carpets) • No judgement • Community of geeky, marginal individuals • Laid-back party atmosphere • 600-place sofa where people come watch a movie as a group • Attachment similar to that of a rockband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community generated by the brand • Networking events and cocktails • Communications efforts through social media and web platforms / Hire of full-time community manager

4.2.1.4 Brand-As-Symbol

As per Aaker’s (1996) brand identity model, two dimensions are found within the brand-as-symbol perspective: visual imagery and metaphors, and brand heritage. We find that each of our study’s festivals possess these brand identity dimensions. First, for the **visual**

imagery and metaphors dimension, managers strongly elicit symbolism and metaphors in their branding. While the set of specific associations varies from one festival to the other, we find that they principally pertain to the festivals' overall philosophy, which transcends all aspects and strategic decisions. For instance, FNC's Sebastian greatly emphasizes the symbolic relevance of the wolf logo (Table VII). Indeed, the wolf is described as a mature, self-assured, comforting family leader on the path to discovery. Sebastian describes this brand identity change for the festival's 40th anniversary in the following citation:

Là j'ai dit qu'il faut qu'on l'affirme d'avantage cette image. Il faut prendre la louve et lui donner une identité qui a 40 ans. Avant, au niveau visuel, c'était beaucoup plus agressif. Et là, au bout de 40 ans, c'est de dire que c'est quasiment, pas une cougar, mais c'est comme se dire : elle a 40 ans aujourd'hui pi elle se porte bien, elle va bien. [...] On a toujours des influences qui sont derrières qui sont, euh, pas inconscientes, mais tsé vraiment dans une forêt un peu sombre pi ça c'est quelque chose de rayonnant, de rassurant. Pi ça c'est le second degré, mais on a l'impression d'avoir quelque chose d'attirant, c'est comme un vagin. C'était un retour- pi on l'assume tsé. Y'a des niveaux et des degrés, donc c'est peut être pas aussi direct quand on le voit, mais y'avait- c'est vraiment une sensation dans la forêt, de retour aux origines, de retour aux sources.

As previously mentioned, symbolism pertaining to the festivals' overall philosophy can transcend the rest of the festival's operations and strategic decisions. For instance, Fantasia puts forth the idea that it is a very laid-back and fun party. The festival symbolizes this through several outlets such as the visual branding. One such symbol is the festival's location, a strategic decision that was the source of much debate in the early 2000's. Indeed, in 2002, the festival made the difficult decision to take a one-year hiatus to find the perfect location after losing its space at the Imperial due to renovations. This risk was deemed necessary given the importance of the location in providing the perfect atmosphere for the festival's renowned large crowds. Indeed, a Cinéplex movie theater would simply not do the trick. As Carl illustrates it, it's like having a party in your parents' basement – it's just not the same. The selection of the festival's new location is detailed in Carl's following quote:

Évidemment on était connu parce qu'on était le festival qui occupait le plus ou le mieux l'Impérial. Euh, et on était, ça nous a beaucoup aidé parce que ça nous faisait des files d'attente très visibles, en plein milieu du centre-ville. Et c'est ça qui a créé, j'te dirais, l'équité de la marque, l'équité du nom, pi notre réputation. Mais c'est ça la force de Fantasia : Y'a du monde. Euh c'est ça notre force. Donc, euhm, bin voilà. Et donc en 2002, y'avait, euh, on n'a pas pu avoir lieu parce que l'Impérial a été fermé par la ville de Montréal qui imposait des rénovations. [...] Pi nous pour Fantasia, ce qui est essentiel

dans notre modèle d'affaires ça nous prend une grande salle de plus de 600 personnes. Parce que le secret de notre public, c'est les gens qui aiment le cinéma, qui aiment le cinéma sur grand écran contrairement à la nouvelle génération, et c'est des gens qui aiment l'idée de voir en gros groupe.

To view the visual imagery and metaphors for each film festival, please consult Table XIII.

Second, regarding the **brand heritage dimension**, our study's film festivals somewhat allude to their historical roots in their branding. While the set of specific associations varies from one festival to the other, we find that they are principally evoked in the festivals' name and visual branding. Aspects of the name of each festival have persisted over time as core elements to their identity. For instance, as previously mentioned, RIDM's 'R' for 'rencontres' or 'meeting' represents a fundamental brand association. Indeed, the festival was originally founded by documentarians that wished to have a platform to showcase each other's work. It is in this spirit that the 'meeting' aspect became central to the festival's brand and it is something that has persisted since its foundation. She discusses this in the following quote:

Pi y faut pas oublier que les RIDM c'est un festival qui a été fondé par des documentaristes, euh, qui voulaient une plateforme pi une tribune pour montrer leur travail. C'est pour ça que c'est appelé 'les rencontres' aussi. Et ça l'a grandi de façon organique jusqu'à devenir un festival, mais la communauté documentaire se sent un fort sentiment, euh, d'appartenance et même de parenté au festival. C'est leur festival. Fak je pense pas que la communauté laisserait le festival changer de manière drastique.

Elements of the visual branding also serve to promote festivals' heritage. This appears to be primarily true for the two more generalist festivals: Fantasia and FNC. For instance, to celebrate the festival's 20 years of existence, Fantasia's Carl brought back many of the iconic characters in the festival's mythology on the cover of his yearly program. He describes this in the following citation:

Et cette année, pour terminer, comme c'est le 20^e, je voulais faire une célébration. [Shows the 2016 program] Ça c'est l'université Concordia, et ça c'est une parade des principaux personnages qui ont occupé notre mythologie depuis des années. Donc c'est une façon de rendre hommage à notre histoire. Donc tu vois, le jeune garçon avec la caméra, c'est celui de 2005. Le windigo qui est ici était ici. Là tu r'connais le bébé, là tu r'connais le Chiva à 7 bras. Elle, est ici. Le samouraï était sur plusieurs affiches, dont celle-ci. Euh, et donc, c'est comme ça que j'ai rattaché toutes les histoires du festival. Évidemment, les 20 personnages ne sont pas la- pour t'expliquer comment je travaille le branding pour revenir sur l'histoire. Puis, euh, la célébrer comme ça. Les gens comprennent que c'est une fête.

To view the visual imagery and metaphors for each film festival, please consult Table XIII.

Table XIII. Brand-as-Symbol Associations for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Visual imagery and metaphors Overall philosophy (guides strategic decisions)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New modern logo to symbolize the democratic nature of documentaries • New modern overall visual branding represents the festival's efforts to remove the documentary genre from the dusty envelope that it is typically associated with • Symbolizes the modern nature that documentaries can have in an effort to remove the presumptions that the genre can be for larger audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black horse represents a Quebec legend and is used to symbolize the Quebec-based origins of the festival and those who work for the festival (hard-working, sleep standing, strong, reliable) • Compares Fantasia and visitors' attachment to the festival as that of a rock-band – Brand is managed like a rock-band, easily recognized like Iron Maiden or Kiss • Large waiting lines symbolizes the large crowds and party atmosphere of the festival • Metaphor of the large couch to represent the colloquial nature between visitors – a family • Black horse with wings also represents the fantastic nature of the festival's films • Mythology of illustrated characters, festive atmosphere and overall image are used to represent the parallel universe of genre cinema • Logo that no longer contains a capital 'T' which alluded to a sword and put too much emphasis on 'fantastic' and 'asia' as it no longer represents the only genres of the festival • Mel Oppenheim auditorium at Concordia University is a large room that guarantees the party atmosphere and allows for the festival's renowned large crowds to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolf visually represents the festival and its films, a reassuring, self-assured, dynamic female wolf on the path to new discoveries • Wolf logo also represents the community and the local Montreal aspects of the festival • Yellow color represents a reassuring guiding light in the dark forest • Dark forest in the background represents the path to discovery, a return to the source • Pirate ship metaphor is used to describe how the festival is managed, a style that is more rock and roll, more marginal • Active use of the wine-selection metaphor at a cocktail they hold yearly at Cannes: The quality of their selected films is comparable to the selection of fine wines offered
Brand heritage Founding principles / Visual branding		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "R" for "<i>rencontres</i>" in RIDM, or "meetings" was brought about by the documentarians who founded the festival and has remained since 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantasia's name and the main structure of its logo has remained the same throughout the years • Black horse represents Quebec because of its popular legends • Mythology of characters for the 20th anniversary are featured parading on the special edition program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolf logo looking back on its 40 years • "N" for "new" in FNC, referring to new technologies that has remained the same since the start of the festival

4.2.1.5 Core and Peripheral Associations

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, brand associations and dimensions can be divided into two overarching categories: core and peripheral. We find that all of our study's festivals possess these based on managers' direct affirmation or the sheer weight and repetition allotted to each. In this section, we emphasize core associations as the two categories are typically mutually exclusive. While the set of specific associations vary from one festival to the other, we find that all of our study's film festival core identities center on two main aspects: film offering (genre and program) and the supporting experience. The related associations fit into several dimensions including product scope, product attributes, organizational attributes, personality and visual imagery and metaphors. Regarding the film offering, our study's festivals strongly associate themselves with their predominant genre. As described in the product scope section, RIDM is associated with documentaries, Fantasia with genre films, and FNC has a more generalist offering. More specifically, the latter festival's core identity centers on the "N" for "new" in FNC's name. This associations refers to the presentation of films that use new technologies or all new moving images. This is an aspect that has remained consistent throughout the festival's existence. Sebastian describes this in the following statement:

C'est un nom qu'on porte depuis- on le porte pas depuis 45 ans, car il a évolué un peu. Ça évolué en fonction des nouvelles technologies. Au tout premier, je pense ça s'appelait le Festival des films en 16mm, pi après Festival des nouveaux médias, euh, enfin, ça changé. Là le nom qu'on a c'est celui qu'on aurait gardé le plus longtemps. La chose principale dans ça c'est 'nouveau'. Oui, c'est un festival, c'est du cinéma, mais c'est l'idée de nouveauté. Ce qu'on veut vraiment faire ressortir c'est le festival, c'est la fête des nouvelles qui bougent, des images en mouvement. [...] Pour nous c'est avant tout- on considère le festival du nouveau cinéma. Pour nous le nouveau cinéma c'est, euh, c'est la définition d'origine du cinéma. C'est des images en mouvement.

Regarding the supporting experience, our study's managers strongly associate themselves with the experiential aspects surrounding the films and their viewing. Indeed, the opportunity to meet with people who worked on the documentary is important for RIDM, networking events are important to FNC and large-group parties are important to Fantasia. For instance, a core association for Fantasia is its location at the Concordia University Mel

Oppenheim auditorium. As previously discussed in the visual imagery and metaphors section, this location stands as a metaphor for the festive experience inherent at Fantasia. The importance accorded to the festival's location is illustrated in the festival's one-year hiatus in 2001 due to the closure of its previous location at the Imperial. Carl expresses this in the following quote:

Et une des choses qu'on pense avec Fantasia c'est qu'on envahi un lieu pendant un mois. Ce lieu-là appartient au public. Donc, nous, l'idée c'était de garantir au public que l'esprit survivrait même si on change de place. On était reconnu comme étant un festival qui présentait des films festifs dans de très grandes salles, fallait maintenir ça.

To view the core brand associations for each film festival, please consult Table XIV.

Table XIV. Core Brand Associations for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Core		
Film offering (genre and program) / Supporting experience		
Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "R" for "rencontres" in RIDM, or "meetings" that was brought about by the documentarians who founded the festival • Documentary • Warm • Welcoming • Edgy • Young 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concordia University, Mel Oppenheim auditorium, large space for 600+ people • Large groups, long lines, lots of people • Genre cinema, a festival of all genres • Quality films carefully selected • Party atmosphere, festive • Margins of mainstream • Visual design: Iconic arrangement of visual elements, illustrated mythology of characters 	Associations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logo, wolf and its symbolism • Festival's name, "N" for "new" in FNC, referring to new technologies and all new moving images • Quality films carefully selected • Festival of cinema rather than film • Networking events • Community
Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product scope • Product attributes • Organizational attributes • Personality • Brand-customer relationship 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product scope • Product attributes • Quality/value • Organizational attributes • Personality • Brand-customer relationship • Visual imagery and metaphors 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product scope • Product attributes • Quality/value • Organizational attributes • Personality • Brand-customer relationship • Visual imagery and metaphors

4.2.1.6 Value Proposition

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, brands can provide three types of benefits to their customers: functional, emotional and self-expressive. In the context of our study, we find that each festival has its own unique value proposition containing at least some of these benefits. First, all three managers suggest that their brand has **functional benefits** for festivalgoers. While the specific set of associations vary from one festival to the other, they are principally related to the films and touch on the product scope and quality/value dimensions. For instance, RIDM's unique value proposition relates to the accessibility of the presented films. Indeed, Amanda notes that most of the documentaries are festival films, meaning that they cannot be viewed elsewhere. She expresses this in the following quote:

Tu le retrouveras pas à la télé, tu le retrouveras pas sur Netflix, tu le retrouveras pas sur iTunes, ou sur whatever. Euh, y'a un gros pourcentage de nos films qui sont des films de festival. Que si tu vas pas chez nous, à mois d'aller dans un autre festival, tu le verras pas.

For Fantasia, the multiplicity of its films is an important benefit for its visitors. Indeed, the value comes from the fact that there is something for everyone. This is illustrated by the festival's recent repositioning. Carl expresses this in the following quote about the perceptions that audiences have about the festival's genres:

On n'est pas un festival d'horreur, on est un festival de genre et l'horreur est un des genres qu'on distribue. J'ai un challenge. Cet été j'ai décidé non pas de produire un pub pour Fantasia pi d'la passer sur TVA, mais passer 4 pubs. Le slogan tentativement ressemblait qu'que chose à: Le festival de tous les genres. Parce qu'en fait on joue de tous les genres. Donc, par exemple, j'va faire une pub pour l'action parce qu'ya des fans d'action. TVA, l'action ça va ensemble, les films sportifs, les films d'action. AH! C'est ça aussi Fantasia.

Second, our study's managers' value propositions include **emotional benefits** that foster positive feelings for festivalgoers. While the specific set of associations vary from one festival to the other, these benefits are particularly associated with the sense of community generated by the experiences surrounding film viewings and touch on the product attributes, users, organizational attributes and brand-customer relationship dimensions. As previously discussed, film festivals offer opportunities for visitors to interact with the festival and its

other attendees via discussions, informal viewing conditions, as well as socialization and networking events. The importance in these experiences is the sense of community that they generate. Indeed, visitors can feel part of a group of like-minded individuals. FNC's Sebastian best describes the importance of this in the following citation:

La marque est importante aujourd'hui pour fidéliser une clientèle, pour sa capacité à créer une identité et un sentiment d'appartenance, peu importe si les gens sont interconnectés, restent à la maison. Y'a comme un besoin d'appartenance à un groupe et ça devient indispensable de travailler sur la marque. C'est plus la question de créer un environnement, une communauté, comme sur l'Internet, mais non virtuelle. Et que cette nécessité de rencontre existe et elle est indispensable et moi j'pense que y'a beaucoup de paramètres qui font qui perdent en achalandage.

Third, our three managers' value propositions can include **self-expressive benefits** that allow festivalgoers to express their self-image. We find, however, that this benefit applies principally to Fantasia who welcomes a unique group of festivalgoers. The associations principally pertain to the organizational attributes and brand-customer relation dimensions. As described in the users dimension section, while the festival aims to attract the general population, it's predominant demographic is a susceptible group of introverted, unmaterialistic and marginal individuals. Carl describes this in the following citation:

Fantasia c'est beaucoup d'introvertis qui ne peuvent pas parler de cinéma dans le cadre de leur travail. Pi notre public c'est un public qui s'identifie pas en fonction de s'qui a. C'est un public qui s'identifie en fonction de ce qui aime. C'est pour ça que c'est des gens qui s'affirment socialement en portant des t-shirts de band, des t-shirts de films, des t-shirts de ralisateurs. T'es verras pas avec du Gucci, avec du Versace. Y font pas une promotion de ce qu'ils aiment. C'est complètement différent. Ce qu'on voit c'est des gens qui affirment leurs goûts à travers leur habillement et ça devient comme une façon d'te reconnaître dans des groupes. Ay, asti d'bon band! Tsé t'entends souvent ça. Ayyyy! Juste à cause du t-shirt, c'tune façon de connecter. C'est plus que l'habillement. C'est une façon de s'exprimer socialement.

To view all value propositions, please consult Table XV.

Table XV. Value Propositions for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Value proposition		
Functional benefits		
Program (access, quality, multiplicity)		
Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility, mostly festival films 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of yearly program, cultural barometer • Multiple genres, 'Festival of all genres' 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of yearly program, selection like fine wines • Multiple genres, all images in movement • Focus on "N" of FNC, new technologies, new images in movement
Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product scope 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product scope • Quality/value 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product scope • Quality/value
Emotional benefits		
Experience (Sense of community, socialization)		
Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "R" for "rencontres" in RIDM, or "meetings" to discuss with documentarians • Supporting events with shows and music provide additional opportunities to socialize • Place for documentarians to group and present their work as it was meant to be at the festival's inception 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal viewing in large room, many people, animal cries during viewing • Community of introverts, geeks, jeans-and-t-shirt dress code, laid-back • Party, festive atmosphere • Importance of the location (Concordia University's Mel Oppenheim auditorium) 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of community created by meeting in unusual locations (ex. parks) with groups of like-minded individuals • Socialization and networking events are fostered
Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product attributes • Organizational attributes • Brand-customer relationship 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product attributes • Organizational attributes • Brand-customer relationship 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product attributes • Brand-customer relationship
Self-expressive benefits		
Freedom of expression		
<i>Little direct reference to self-expressive associations in branding</i>	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-judgmental environment where introverts can be themselves • Express their likes via their t-shirts like rock bands Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational attributes • Brand-customer relationship 	<i>Little direct reference to self-expressive associations in branding</i>

4.2.2 Brand Management

In the previous sections, we determined that film festivals have a brand and that its content reflects that of Aaker (1996) commercial marketing model. While our study's managers acknowledge that their film festivals have a brand, they actively strategize its application. Our results suggest that certain recurring principles guide managers' branding strategies: coherence and consistency. In the following sections, we first discuss these principles. We then dive into the strategic flaws with that film festival managers grapple when developing brand strategies.

4.2.2.1 Brand Coherence and Consistency

In a context of fluidity, film festival brand managers value coherence and consistency in their branding strategies. Incurred changes revolve around **pivotal brand elements** and rarely involve a complete redirection. These elements depend on each festival and can relate to the festival's mission, name, visual branding, and festival sections. For instance, though Fantasia's "mythology of characters" changes every few years, the illustrator remains the same thereby maintaining the look and feel of the visual communications. This helps ensure consistency and coherence of the visual layout, which Carl values as a means to be recognized. He explains this in the following citation:

Tu connais La Presse, tu connais le Time. Quand t'arrives dans un magasin, tu sais c'est quoi le magazine. Y'a toujours le même logo à la même place. Y'a toujours la même mise en page, y'a une cohérence au niveau visuel qui est très important parce que le public- [...] À tous les sept ans, on a changé de série, mais y'en reste une certaine cohérence. On roule encore sur cette série-là (shows a festival program); C'est la série du cheval noir.

To view all brand coherence and consistency parameters for each festival, please consult Table XVI.

Table XVI. Brand Coherence and Consistency for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Brand coherence and consistency Mission, name, visual branding, film sections		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “R” for “rencontres” in RIDM, or “meetings” to discuss with documentarians • Democratization of the documentary • RIDM umbrella has recently been established to accompany all film sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mythology of characters change over time but the same illustrator is used to keep the visual landscape similar and recognizable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festival’s name has changed over the years but the “new” aspect has remained the same to reflect new technologies • Animal used for the festival has been the wolf, but the wolf’s design has changed • Brand personality changed from a more aggressive image to one that is more self-assured

4.2.2.2 Brand Management Flaws

Per our interviews, film festival managers believe that branding is a necessary strategic tool for their festival and actively use it while abiding by certain principles. Though, at first view, managers appear to have a strong grasp of their brand, strategic management is not without flaws. While the specific issues vary from ones festival to the other, managers appear to have **difficulty clearly and precisely communicating their identity**. Amanda attributes this to the dichotomous nature of film festivals; on one side there is the brand and on the other there are the films. In comparing cultural and commercial branding, RIDM’s Amanda explains her thoughts on this matter in the following quote:

J’pense que la différence vient du fait, euh, qu’il y a l’espèce de dichotomie entre « Est-ce qu’on fait la promotion entre, nous, le festival (la marque)? » ou « Est-ce qu’on fait la promotion des films? ». Parce que beaucoup de festivals de film sont peu connus de l’auteur, donc il n’y a pas l’attrait de quelque chose de populaire. Donc, euh, c’est toujours cette espèce de dualité: Qu’est-ce qu’on met d’avant en premier? Est-ce qu’on met d’avant notre marque en tant que festival, ou est-ce qu’on met le film et le cinéma de l’avant en premier? Fak, j’pense que c’est un des facteurs qui fait qu’on est aussi qu’on a un peu plus de misère à vraiment pousser plus loin l’utilisation, puis le renforcement d’une marque dans les festivals de films.

For Amanda, it is a question of determining the primary focus of her festival's communications: the films or the festival's brand. This is particularly meaningful for the documentary genre as the actors and documentarians are unknown. As such, she cannot, for instance, rely on celebrities to attract audiences.

For Carl, the struggle resides more so in the large array of films presented in his festival. He has difficulty diversifying the film genres with which audiences associate his festival. Indeed, one of his biggest concerns stems from the audience's unwavering association of Fantasia with a predominantly horror, gore, animation and Asian film base. These genres were only at the brand's core in the its early years. Carl expresses this in the following statement:

Bin du monde pense qu'on est un festival d'animation parce qu'on a toujours des dessins. [...] Beaucoup d'gens pensent que c'est de l'horreur, mais c'est juste 25% de ce qu'on offre. L'horreur nous distingue beaucoup des autres festivals, mais on est un festival de genre. [...] Le public nous a suivi, mais le grand public général est encore stallé à Fantasia 98. Pi on est en 2016 pi c'est pu le même festival. Ce qui était là est encore là, mais y'a tellement de choses ajoutées. Tout est venu en ajout. On n'a rien enlevé. On avait 25 films d'horreur, on en a encore 25. Mais 25 sur 50 et 25 sur 150, c'est pas la même chose. Y'a toujours 25 films japonais. Donc, tout ce que j'ai fait est en progression. J'ai essayé de jamais le faire au détriment de notre public.

For Carl, the struggle resides in convincing the general population that his festival is so much more than those film genres. He struggles with the notion of changing his branding to better reflect the festival's content, but does not want to lose the strong brand that he has established, nor alienate his loyal customers, nor become too commercial. He does however, acknowledge, and even obsess about this. He describes his struggle in the following quote:

Écoute, le risque- y'a deux autres tresses qui me pendent en dessous des yeux : perdre des spectateurs et en chercher des nouveaux. Parce que tu défais la formule visuelle et ça laisse dire que le festival devient commercial, qu'que chose comme ça. En même temps, pour moi Fantasia, changer c'pu pareil. R'garde, ça change pas. [...] Du moment où la perception commerciale est là, t'es faite. Pi chu sur le bord d'arriver là. J'ai réussi à gérer ça.

To view all brand management flaws for each festival, please consult Table XVII.

Table XVII. Brand Management Flaws for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Brand management flaws Dichotomous nature of film festivals (films and film festival brand)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty balancing the promotion of films over brand, or vice versa • Unknown actors and documentarians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public's association of the festival with predominantly horror, gore, animation and Asian films • Does not want to be perceived as too commercial 	<p><i>Little direct reference to brand management flaws</i></p>

4.2.3 Brand Identity Application Conclusion

Overall, the concept of brand identity appears to be applicable in the context of our study's film festivals. Indeed, in describing their festivals, managers presented a wide array of associations that fit into Aaker's (1996) four brand identity dimensions. We did find, however, that film festival brands each possess a unique set of brand associations and that their related dimensions are more or less emphasized. For instance, the visual imagery and metaphors dimension is strongly used in film festivals, whereas the local versus global dimension is done to a lesser, more indirect extent. Table XVIII highlights the weight of these dimensions by festival, with green having greatest emphasis, orange less, and white none.

Table XVIII. Brand Dimension Emphasis for Managers

	RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Brand-as-product	Product scope Genres-specific / Wide range of topics		
	Product attributes Experience / Social interactions		
	Quality/value Experience / Social interactions		
	Use occasion Experience / Social interactions		
	Users General public / Marginalized groups		
Brand-as-organization	Organizational attributes Accessibility / Informality		
	Local versus global Montreal / Quebec / International		
Brand-as-person	Personality Festival-specific / Animal		
	Brand-customer relationship Community / Relationship nurturing		
Brand-as-symbol	Visual imagery and metaphors Overall philosophy (guides strategic decisions)		
	Brand heritage Founding principles / Visual branding		

We found that our study's film festivals' brand identities can also be placed within the broader categories of core and peripheral associations, as well as within value proposition benefits. For the core versus peripheral associations, our results suggest that the three film festival brands possess core associations that represent their timeless essence along with other peripheral associations that are less central. Core associations are comprised of two important film festival constructs: films and supporting experiences. For the value propositions, we find that they are composed of some or all types of benefits: functional, emotional and self-

expressive. Overall, functional and emotional benefits predominate in these film festivals, whereas self-expressive benefits are less emphasized and indirectly referenced.

In addition to determining that our study's film festivals possess brand associations that fit into most brand identity dimensions, we find that managers abide by two common brand management principles: brand fluidity and brand coherence and consistency. Indeed, we find that while change appears to be the norm in branding, it is not an arbitrary process and must maintain a certain amount of uniformity. Despite their best efforts, however, our study's managers have difficulty clearly and precisely communicating their brand's identity. The question of promoting the festival brand over the films, and vice versa, plagues some managers. Others have difficulty changing visitor perceptions and broadening the scope of their brand's identity.

As such, in response to our second and third overarching objectives, we found that the concept of brand identity, as defined by Aaker (1996) can be applied in our study's film festival context. We also find that it is done in a relatively complete way, with all brand identity dimensions, core and peripheral associations, and value proposition benefits covered. To gain further insight into the reception of these strategic efforts, we now consider visitors' film festival branding perceptions; brand image.

4.3 Brand Image Application

Our third overarching research objective was to explore visitors' brand image content. The relevance of this stems from the idea that the brand exists in the minds of consumers and their perceptions ultimately influence their choices and behaviour (Keller, 1993). To assess a film festival brand's influence on relatively loyal visitors, we spoke with those who had previously attended and interacted with the festival multiple times. In the following sections, we first assess the brand image content. We then consider some brand management principles.

4.3.1 Brand Image Content

As per Keller (1993), a brand image is the set of associations that exists in the consumer's mind. To organize festivalgoers' brand associations, and for comparative purposes, we use Aaker's (1996) brand identity framework. As such, like with our study's film festival managers, we categorize our visitors' associations into four perspectives: brand-as-product, brand-as-organization, brand-as-person and brand-as-symbol. We cover each of these in the following sections.

4.3.1.1 Brand-As-Product

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, six dimensions are found within the brand-as-product perspective: product scope, product attributes, quality/value, use occasion, users and country of origin. We find that our study's film festivals visitors have brand associations pertaining to each of these dimensions except the country of origin. First, for the **product scope dimension**, visitors acknowledge more or less directly each festival's film genres and topics. While the set of specific associations varies from one festival to the other, we find that festivalgoers typically agree on the film genres and topics on each film festival. For instance, Fantasia visitors strongly associate the festival with genre cinema and discuss its secondary genres as being fantastic, gore, Asian and horror. RIDM's visitors discuss the documentary genre in passing without isolating it as a focal association. They do, however, note the diversity of the festival's socio-political topics. For FNC, festivalgoers have a little more trouble establishing its exact genre; they acknowledge that there is a large selection of diverse films and somewhat attribute it to the idea of 'new cinema', but they do not cite any predominant genres or topics. Vivian expresses her confusion about FNC in the following quote:

J'ai jamais vraiment compris. J'trouve que le nom du festival colle pas nécessairement avec la programmation. Fak, dans le fond pour moi le Festival du nouveau cinéma, c'est un peu comme- y'a tout sorte de courants dans le cinéma, par exemple le post-modernisme. Le 'nouveau cinéma' est-ce que c'est un courant de cinéma? Est ce qu'il parle du cinéma émergent? C'est pas vraiment clair. Est-ce que j'ai trouvé que c'était du nouveau cinéma et que y'avait un lien qui pouvait rassembler les films dans un courant? Non.

To view all of the main product scope associations for each film festival, please consult Table XIX.

Second, for the **product attributes dimension**, our study's film festival visitors strongly acknowledge additional features that serve to benefit attendees. While specific experiences are found to vary from one festival to the next, visitors suggest that experiences can enhance screenings. Festivalgoers suggest that effect is derived from the overall atmosphere and supporting events. For instance, Fantasia's attendees all discuss the importance of this festival's unique ambiance. Indeed, the laid-back atmosphere encourages a fun and festivity. Yvette describes this in the following citation:

Pi vraiment l'ambiance de feu dans les salles, les miaulements au début- ça y faut y aller pour comprendre c'est quoi, mais les bruits d'animaux... Quand que la lumière est noire avant les films, les gens font comme « miaouuuuuu ». Mais après ça, y'en a qui vont faire des bruits de gorilles, ça devient vraiment une joke. C'est vraiment les gens, c'est l'ambiance.

Beyond atmospherics, supporting events also contribute to our participants' experience. Indeed, attendees associate each festival with its events such as premieres, opening ceremonies and gatherings. For instance, RIDM's visitors talk about the opportunity that the festival provides to meet with a documentarian that participated in creating the film that they just watched. Indeed, festivalgoers remember and value the opportunity to discuss the film they just viewed. Olivia discusses this in the following statement:

Les documentaristes ont certains événements qui leur permettent de montrer leur travail, de proposer des échanges, de rencontrer des gens. Pour moi c'est l'opportunité. C'est des gens qui sont intéressés à découvrir pi à rencontrer des gens.

To view all of the main product attribute associations for each film festival, please consult Table XIX.

Third, for the **quality/value dimension**, our study's visitors strongly associate film festivals with their level of excellence. We find that the quality associations are similar among festivals as they are principally associated with the yearly program. Across film festivals,

attendees repeatedly talk about the films' calibre. For Diane, it contributes to building RIDM's brand credibility. She expresses this in the following quote:

Bin moi la marque des RIDM, je trouve que, euh, y'ont réussi à avoir une bonne signature. Ce qui est intéressant c'est qu'on associe bien les RIDM à la crédibilité qu'il a réussi à avoir de par la qualité de sa programmation à chaque année.

Fantasia's visitor, Yvette, echoes the role that a quality program can play in further attracting and retaining visitors. She believes that one good film can be enough to elicit potential visitors' curiosity, thereby leading them to dig deeper and discover the quality of Fantasia's program and overall value of the festival. She expands on this in the following statement:

À travers leur programmation tu réalises que y'a des films qui sont bon quand même pi d'enlever le jugement que certaines personnes peuvent avoir sur le festival. Ils voient que c'est pas super intello pi artistique et tout ça.

To view all of the main quality/value associations for each film festival, please consult Table XIX.

Fourth, for the **use occasion dimension**, we find that our study's visitors somewhat associate each festival with the reasons for which they attend it. While the specific associations vary from one festival to the next, our participants principally visit film festivals to view quality films and, secondarily, to enjoy the experience. In talking about why he returns to FNC each year, Louis states the following:

Mettons c'est principalement les films. C'est la- tsé, c'est leur sélection de films qui est vraiment intéressante. Si j'avais un horaire-là, tsé, complètement libre que j'pouvais déterminer- Tsé souvent y'a des bons films qui jouent à 14h un mercredi pi j'peux pas y aller. Euh, mais j'trouve que y'a beaucoup de films qui me rejoignent moi [...] (et) FNC donne accès à des films qu'on n'a pas accès habituellement.

A more specific experiential use can, however, be derived from each festival. It appears to be dependent on the predominant genre. Indeed, generalist festival visitors, like those of Fantasia and FNC, largely speak about attending a festival to have fun and to be around other people in a fun atmosphere. Fantasia's visitors greatly emphasize this aspect, as discussed in the product attributes dimension. In comparing the ambiance to that of the iconic Rocky Horror Picture Show, Isabelle says the following:

Aussi ça fait penser à tout ce qui est le Rocky Horror Picture Show. Les gens interagissent dans la salle. Les gens vont faire des cris d'animaux, vont huer, vont vraiment, tsé, tu vas les entendre très verbalement. C'est déchainé!

The documentary film festival's visitors, on the other hand, discuss a more functional experiential use for the festival. Indeed, they predominantly talk about attending it to learn something new about unfamiliar socio-political topics, cultures or perspectives. Olivia describes this in the following quote:

C'est un peu intellectuel, des gens qui aiment découvrir des choses, qui se questionnent. Souvent on parle de certaines sociétés, donc souvent on va entendre parler des problèmes dans le Nord, problèmes amérindiens, problèmes- ou le défi culturel de certaines cultures dans le monde.

To view all of the main use occasion associations for each film festival, please consult Table XIX.

Fifth, for the **users dimension**, we find that our study's festivalgoers somewhat associate film festivals with their perceptions about typical film festival attendees. While the set of specific associations vary from one festival to the other, they have some common features. Indeed, visitors from all three festivals are perceived as being young and highly interested in films. Participants do, however, believe that each festival has its own specific predominant demographic. For instance, RIDM's visitors are described as university-educated hipsters who are curious and eager to learn. Olivia describes this intellectual group in the following quote:

J'pense que souvent, la plupart du temps, surtout avec RIDM – parce que là les autres sortes de films peuvent attirer beaucoup de fans différents – mais souvent, j'pense que les gens c'est un peu intellectuel, des gens qui aiment découvrir des choses, qui se questionnent, surtout j'pense j'pourrais te dire, la population universitaire.

To view all of the main users associations for each film festival, please consult Table XIX.

Sixth, for the **country of origin dimension**, as previously mentioned, our study's visitors do not strongly associate film festivals with the country or region of origin. While they

acknowledge, in passing, that each festival occurs in Montreal, they do not emphasize this association as a means to provide credibility to it.

Table XIX. Brand-As-Product Associations for Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Product scope Genres-specific / Wide range of topics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentaries • Variety of topics <p><i>Little direct reference to quality associations in branding</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genre films • Wide selection • Variety of topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of topics <p><i>Unclear associations to genre</i></p>
Product attributes Experience / Social interactions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunity to meet/discuss with those who worked on the film • Supporting events with shows and music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party atmosphere, fun, animal cries • Film premiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking events such as cocktails • Agora meeting place available throughout the festival
Quality/value Film program		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality program
Use occasion Experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View films that cannot be seen elsewhere • Interact with other visitors and filmmakers • Learn something new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique atmosphere, ambiance 	<p><i>No specific use occasion directly referenced</i></p>
Users General public / Marginalized groups		
<p>Specific demographic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young • Hipsters • University-educated • Curious, eager to learn • Highly interested in films • "Cinephiles" 	<p>Specific demographic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marginalized, geeky, unmaterialistic introverts • "Cinephiles" • Highly interested in films 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cinephiles" • Highly interested in films
Country of origin		
<p><i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i></p>	<p><i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i></p>	<p><i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i></p>

4.3.1.2 Brand-As-Organization

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, two dimensions are found within the brand-as-organization perspective: organizational attributes and local versus global associations. We find that our study's film festival visitors possess brand associations pertaining to each of these dimensions. First, for the **organizational attributes dimension**, our participants strongly elicit associations pertaining to each festival's organizational culture and values. While the specific set of associations varies from one festival to the other, they are principally related to approachability. For instance, visitors associate film festivals with openness, diversity, being laid-back, friendly, informal, easily accessible locations and, some even mention the low-cost. Together, these factors help visitors feel comfortable and welcome. Evelyn expresses this in the following citation about her experience at RIDM:

Pour moi les RIDM c'est la diversité, c'est l'ouverture. Par exemple, tu vois autant des jeunes de 20 à 30 ans que des plus vieux de 50 ans et plus. [...] Tsé pi les gens qui travaillent là sont sympathiques en plus.

This informal approach and accessible nature appear to make visitors more comfortable. They do not feel as though the festivals are trying to be too pretentious and exclusive. Henry describes this in the following quote about his experience at Fantasia:

C'est genre laid-back. C'est comme un plus comme un événement pour tout le monde. Surtout que y'a une grosse programmation, ça coûte pas cher. Je trouve aussi que y'a le côté accessible que du fait que y'a beaucoup de- mais comme tout ça c'est beaucoup plus axé sur les gens.

To view all of the main organizational attribute associations for each film festival, please consult Table XX.

Second, for the **local versus global dimension**, our study's visitors loosely discuss film festivals' geographical dispersion. While they acknowledge that the festivals are located in Montreal and possess certain international connotations due to the films' provenances, these do not appear to be strong factors in identifying the brand. For instance, local associations are indirectly discussed upon recalling screening and event locations. Evelyn discusses RIDM's local associations in the following quote:

C'est vraiment cool parce que c'est bien situé, tsé. C'est dans des quartiers près du Centre-Ville comme le quartier latin. C'est des quartiers qui ne dorment jamais.

To view all of the main local and global associations for each film festival, please consult Table XX.

Table XX. Brand-As-Organization Associations for Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Organizational attributes Approachability / Informality		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendly staff Openness, diversity Intergenerational Employees and cinematographers are expected to be approachable Events, parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not too expensive Lots of people Great ambiance Informal atmosphere during film viewings (ex. lots of people, animal cries during viewing), laid-back Does not try to appear to be something very intellectual, snobbish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not big blockbusters Parties, music concerts
Local versus global Montreal / Quebec / International		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Films about international topics and in international locations Quartier Latin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concordia University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of international films Berri UQAM metro station Quartier Latin Concordia, Place des Arts, Agora de l'UQAM

4.3.1.3 Brand-As-Person

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, two dimensions are found within the brand-as-person perspective: brand personality and brand-customer relationship. We find that our study's film festival visitors possess brand associations pertaining to each of these dimensions. First, for the **brand personality dimension**, festivalgoers strongly elicit associations pertaining to each festival's human characteristics. While the set of associations varies from one festival to the other, they are related to the films, experience, values and culture. For instance, visitors associate FNC with the following human characteristics:

modern, bold, intriguing, erotic. Such associations appear to relate to the festivals' values and culture, and, ultimately, films. FNC's Louis relates the notions of 'bold', 'intriguing' and 'erotic' in the following citation:

J'trouve que le FNC joue sur ça, pas d'une mauvaise façon, mais j'trouve que y'ont quand même des- bin moi dans l'sens que j'ai vu euh, de deux façons en fait. J'trouve que des fois y'essaient de donner une image sexy au cinéma de par leur image, de par leur façon de présenter. Pi aussi parce que y présentent des fois des bons films avec des éléments érotiques qui est pas un genre qu'on voit tant que ça, tsé.

Our participants also use human characteristics to describe festivals' supporting experiences. As previously described in the product attributes, atmospherics and related events are important to film festival visitors. We find that they are largely defined with human traits. For instance, Fantasia possesses associations like 'geeky', 'marginal', 'weird', 'eccentric', and 'laid-back'. These descriptors paint the picture of the relaxed festive ambiance repeatedly discussed in the previous sections. To view all of the main brand personality associations for each film festival, please consult Table XXI.

Second, for the **brand-customer relationship dimension**, our study's festivalgoers loosely elicit associations pertaining to each festival's relationship characteristics. While they do not tend to overtly report a relationship between themselves and their festival, the types of relationships appear to vary from one festival to the other. We find that across festivals, our participants perceive a general sense of informality and openness, as described in the organizational attributes section. This helps them feel comfortable and at ease. Some resemblances of more specific types of relationships can be extrapolated from discussions with visitors. For instance, RIDM's visitors indirectly refer to an educator/student dynamic. This is because visitors discuss their festival attendance in relation to the fact that they come to learn something new about a particular socio-political context, as discussed in the use occasion dimension section.

Fantasia's visitors are the only ones who directly discuss the relationship that they have with their festival, something more akin to family dynamics. Visitors feel as though the festival maintains a certain proximity with its audiences. Yvette describes this in the following statement:

C'est vraiment les gens, c'est l'ambiance, c'est des gens qui vont voir comme 100 films, qui sont mordus les gens qui vont à Fantasia, des vrais cinéphiles, pi y'attendent ça avec impatience, c'est comme leur activité de l'année. [...] C'est comme une famille Fantasia.

To view all of the main brand-customer relationship associations for each film festival, please consult Table XXI.

Table XXI. Brand-As-Person Associations for Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Personality Festival-specific		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young • Warm, welcoming, open • Low-key • Diverse • Hipster • Indie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festive • Welcoming • Marginal, weird • Geeky • Fun • Young • Eccentric • Laid-back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventurous, audacious, intriguing • Reassuring • Diverse • Modern • Fun • Open
Brand-customer relationship Community / Relationship nurturing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No judgement, open, accessible • Laid-back party atmosphere • Family • Proximity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, accessible

4.3.1.4 Brand-As-Symbol

As per Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, two dimensions are found within the brand-as-symbol perspective: visual imagery and metaphors, and brand heritage associations. We find that our study's film festival visitors loosely possess brand associations pertaining to each of these dimensions. First, for the **visual imagery and metaphors dimension**, festivalgoers loosely elicit these types of symbolic associations. Where some exist, they are specific to each festival. The strongest visual association comes from FNC: this festival's visitors all agree that the visual branding is beautiful, distinctive, with the wolf as a predominant figure (Table VII). While it is not clear how the wolf symbolizes the festivals and

its cinematographic offering, Louis believes that it touches on the intriguing nature of the festival. He describes his in the following citation:

Y’a quelque chose d’intrigant dans l’image du FNC. C’tune louve. Euh, et quant on r’garde- j’m rappelle y’a deux ans, tu voyais des hommes pi des femmes avec des bouts de fourrure, des bouts de peau nue, tu vois ça- y’a du monde que ça choqué, mais ça c’tune image forte qui correspond bien au FNC, puisque les gens regardent ça pi, tu t’attends à ce que ce festival-là, justement, présente des films qui seront pas des films grand public.

For RIDM, visitors also speak of the logo’s visual strength (Table VII). According to visitors, it represents the program’s modernity. Diane describes this in the following statement:

Quand je parlais du graphique c’est que je trouvais qu’il est actuel pi ça ça répond bien- y’a vraiment une typographie qui fait actuel pi ça ça répond bien à ma vision des RIDM. Tsé, c’est pas nécessairement une programmation collée sur l’actualité, mais y’a quelque chose de très préoccupation contemporaine dans tout ce qui reflète les RIDM.

For Fantasia, the festival’s visitors discuss no significant symbolism. To view all of the main visual imagery and metaphor associations for each film festival, please consult Table XXII.

Second, visitors do not refer to the **brand heritage dimension** in describing our study’s film festival brands. This factor does not appear to be a predominant association in visitor brand image formation.

Table XXII. Brand-As-Symbol Associations for Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Visual imagery and metaphors		
Logo		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New modern logo 	<i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wolf Represents something intriguing, an offering that is not large public
Brand heritage		
<i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i>	<i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i>	<i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i>

4.3.1.5 Core and Peripheral Associations

Both core and peripheral associations can be found in our visitors' brand image descriptions based on their direct affirmation or the sheer weight allotted to each. In this section, we emphasize the core, as the two categories are typically mutually exclusive. While the set of specific associations vary from one festival to the other, we find that visitors' core identities center on two main aspects: film offering and the supporting experience. The related associations fit into several dimensions including product attributes, quality/value, organizational attributes, and personality, brand-customer relationship. Regarding the films, attendees strongly associate the yearly program with their quality. As described in the quality/value section, this is one of the focal reasons for visitors to attend a festival – to see good films. Regarding the supporting experience, our study's visitors strongly associate film festivals with the experiential aspects surrounding the films and their viewing. These associations are elicited in relation to product attributes, organizational attributes, and personality dimensions. Through these dimensions, our study's visitors convey the importance of overall atmosphere and surrounding events within each festival. For instance, as previously described in the product attributes, organizational attributes and personality sections, RIDM offers the unique opportunity for visitors to meet with a documentarian. This ability to openly interact with filmmakers contributes to the warm and welcoming personality that festivalgoers perceive for this festival. To view the core brand associations for each film festival, please consult Table XXIII.

Table XXIII. Core Brand Association for Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Core Film offering / Supporting experience		
Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “R” for “rencontres” in RIDM, or “meetings” that was brought about by the documentarians who founded the festival • Warm • Welcoming • Young • Approachable / informal • Events parties 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large groups, long lines, lots of people • Party atmosphere, festive • Margins of mainstream • Film premiers • Approachable / informal • Geeky • Young 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking events • Community • Not big blockbusters • Parties, music concerts • Modern • Fun
Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product attributes • Organizational attributes • Personality • Brand-customer relationship 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product attributes • Quality/value • Organizational attributes • Personality • Brand-customer relationship 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product attributes • Quality/value • Organizational attributes • Personality

4.3.1.6 Value Proposition

Our study’s visitors discuss two of Aaker’s (1996) benefits. First, participants from each festival somewhat report **functional benefits** that underline the advantage of attending each festival (Aaker, 1996). Across festivals, these benefits principally pertain to the yearly program’s quality, with the exception of RIDM who has the added benefit of learning. The associated dimensions are product scope with a primary focus on quality/value. As previously discussed in the quality/value dimension section, our participants believe in the importance of providing good films. This is a feature that visitors believe contributes to the festival’s credibility. In a more specific festival like RIDM, visitors perceive the additional benefit of providing visitors with learning opportunities. Indeed, in discussing this festival, visitors repeatedly discuss how the festival provides them with an opportunity to discover new socio-political realities. Olivia describes this in the following quote:

J'associe le festival avec les défis internationaux, les problèmes politiques, les défis culturels. [...] mais souvent, j'pense que les gens c'est un peu intellectuel, des gens qui aiment découvrir des choses, qui se questionnent, surtout j'pense j'pourrais te dire, la population universitaire.

Second, our study's visitors somewhat report **emotional benefits** that provide each festival (Aaker, 1996). While the specific associations vary from one festival to the other, they are particularly associated with experiential factors. The associated dimensions are product attributes, organizational attributes and brand-customer relationship. Indeed, our participants report the enjoyment felt by experiencing the festivals' atmosphere and approachable nature. As discussed in the organizational attributes dimension and use occasion dimension sections, these related to the fun, easy-going atmosphere put forth by each organization. For instance, all festivals are associated with the emotional benefit of fun, but Fantasia is specifically associated with its unusual festival spirit that allows for hundreds of people to coexist as a family and shout animal cries during the screening.

Third, our study's visitors do not overtly report **self-expressive benefits** that allow them to express their self-image (Aaker, 1996). This factor does not appear to be a predominant association in their brand image formation.

To view all value proposition associations, please consult Table XXIV.

Table XXIV. Value Proposition Associations for Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Functional benefits Program (quality)		
Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn something new Quality films 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of yearly program 	Associations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of yearly program
Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product scope Quality/value 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality/value 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality/value
Emotional benefits Experience (Accessible, atmosphere)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fun party Opportunity to socialize Accessible, welcoming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal viewing in large room, many people, animal cries during viewing Party, festive atmosphere, ambiance Like a family Accessible, welcoming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Films presented in unusual locations (ex. parks) Socialization and networking events Fun
Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product attributes Organizational attributes Brand-customer relationship 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product attributes Organizational attributes Brand-customer relationship 	Dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product attributes Brand-customer relationship
Self-expressive benefits		
<i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i>	<i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i>	<i>These are not overtly perceived by visitors</i>

4.3.2 Brand Image Application Conclusion

Overall, the concept of brand image appears to be applicable in our study’s film festival context. Indeed, in describing RIDM, Fantasia and FNC, visitors presented a wide array of associations unique to each festival. For comparative purposes, we categorized these associations into the four brand identity dimensions of Aaker’s (1996) model. We found that visitors’ brand images fit into most of these dimensions, with some emphasized more than others. For instance, the quality/value dimension is strongly emphasized, but the country or region of origin dimension is inexistent. Table XXV highlights the weight of these dimensions by festival, with green having greatest emphasis, orange having less and white having none.

Table XXV. Brand Dimension Emphasis for Visitors

	RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Brand as product	Product scope Genres-specific / Wide range of topics		
	Product attributes Experience / Social interactions		
	Quality/value Experience / Social interactions		
	Use occasion Experience / Social interactions		
	Users General public / Marginalized groups		
Country or region of origin Montreal / Quebec			
	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
Brand as organization	Organizational attributes Accessibility / Informality		
	Local versus global Montreal / Quebec / International		
Brand as person	Personality Festival-specific / Animal		
	Brand-customer relationship Community / Relationship nurturing		
Brand as symbol	Visual imagery and metaphors Overall philosophy (guides strategic decisions)		
	Brand heritage Founding principles / Visual branding		
	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

We found that our study’s film festival visitors’ brand images can also be placed within the broader categories of core and peripheral associations. While the specific associations and dimensions vary from one festival to the other, we find that the core focuses on those pertaining to the films and their supporting experiences. These associations fit into several dimensions including product attributes, quality/value, organizational attributes, and personality, brand-customer relationship.

We also found that our study's festivalgoers have associations and dimensions that principally fit into two of the three value proposition benefits: functional and emotional. For the functional benefits, visitors elicit associations that principally pertain to the quality/value dimension of the yearly program. For the emotional benefits, visitors elicit associations that principally pertain to the experiences surrounding the festival. These fit into the product attributes, organizational attributes and brand-customer relationship dimensions (Table XXIV).

As such, in response to our second and third overarching objectives, we found that the concept of brand image, as defined by Keller (1993) and categorized in Aaker's (1996) brand identity model, can be applied in our study's film festival context. We also find that it is done in a relatively complete manner, with most dimensions (except country or region of origin and brand heritage), core (product attributes, organizational attributes and personality dimensions) and peripheral associations and value proposition benefits (functional and emotional) covered. We now consider typical communications practices and brand positioning perceptions among managers and visitors in order to gain a greater understanding of the transmission of brand information in the following section.

4.4 Brand Identity Implementation

A brand's identity can be transmitted to target audiences by determining a relevant brand position and selecting effective communication methods. Paralleling Pusa and Uusitalo's (2014) research, our fourth research objective was to consider the ways in which brand information is transmitted by film festivals and how it is received by their visitors. In an effort to determine the communications methods that are most strategically relevant, we explored both groups' practices. In the following sections, we first consider managers' brand positioning and communications mix, we then look at that of visitors.

4.4.1 Brand Identity Implementation by Managers

In commercial marketing theory, a brand's identity is transmitted to target audiences through strategic communication efforts (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). Only a portion of the entire brand identity – the brand position – is, however, actively transmitted (Aaker, 1996). To determine whether these concepts can be applied in the film festival context, we first asked managers to describe their current brand position and positioning strategies. Afterwards, we assessed their communications practices.

4.4.1.1 Brand Positioning

A brand's position is a subset of brand identity associations and value proposition benefits that are actively communicated to the target audience (Aaker, 1996). These are selected based on three positioning goals: broaden a restrictive brand identity, reinforce a well-established set of associations, or emphasize what the brand is not (Aaker, 1996). We find that our study's film festival managers principally use two positioning strategies to do so. First, managers strongly use the **broadening strategy to diversify a restrictive brand identity**. While the specific set of associations to be broadened varies from one festival to the next, most managers believe that their visitors' **genre perceptions** are too narrow and wish to amend this. For instance, Fantasia's difficulty in distancing itself from its predominantly gore, horror and Asian genre associations has prompted Carl to reposition it as the "festival of all genres". Carl describes this in the following citation:

J'suis certain tu vas arrêter dix étudiants au HEC au hasard pi tu vas leur demander c'est quoi Fantasia, y vont dire : horreur, science fiction, animation. On est reconnu pour ça, mais l'horreur a jamais compté pour plus de 25% de mon offre. Mais c'est un 25% qui est tellement fort. [...] Comment jouer avec ça? J'ai un grand partenaire qui est Québécois qui rejoint beaucoup de monde. Fak j'va faire une pub pour les films d'actions, pi à la fin : « Vous aimez les films d'action? Fantasia, festival de tous les genres. ». Tu vois un peu le- mais dans cette pub là, j'va pas juste voir des arts martiaux, j'va voir des autos à la Fast and Furious. Et là cette démonstration-là, ce buffet chinois d'action-là avec toutes sortes d'extraits- AH! C'est ça aussi Fantasia. On va en faire une aussi avec d'la comédie où tu vas avoir des acteurs français, où tu vas avoir des acteurs québécois, des acteurs américains, pi y'a carrément de l'humour. Pas des comédies d'horreur, de l'humour. Pi là la même chose : « Vous aimez les films d'humour? Fantasia, festival de tous les genres. », tsé. Euh, c'est une des parties de mon défi.

Second our study's managers strongly wish to **reinforce a well-established set of associations**. While the specific set of communicated associations varies from one festival to the next, we find that all managers wish to emphasize those related to their programs and films. We find that the nature of each festival impacts the direction of its communications. Indeed, whether the festival is more or less generalist, or has a more or less known cast and crew, impacts positioning efforts. For instance, in a documentary film festival like RIDM, the filmmakers and actors tend to be "ordinary people", as Amanda puts it. In an effort to create a connection between festivalgoers and these lesser-known documentaries, she chose to emphasize the films' stories by visually immersing festivalgoers in her communications. This was an important consideration for the development of the festival's new website. Amanda describes this in the following citation:

C'est vraiment les films qu'on met d'avant dans les communications parce que contrairement à, par exemple, un festival de film de fiction, avec des gros noms, les documentaristes euh en général sont pas connus, tsé. Pi les personnages c'est du monde ordinaire. Donc, c'est les films qui sont mis de l'avant pi c'est ce qu'on pousse principalement. [...] Euh, pour mettre, euh, tout un site web qui est beaucoup plus facile d'utilisation, mais qui met aussi beaucoup plus d'emphase sur les films. Qui met beaucoup plus d'emphase sur les images. Je sais pas si tu as été sur notre site, mais c'est vraiment, euh, tsé- les fiches de films sont vraiment des photos là. Tsé pour que tu rentres dans le film direct.

To view all brand positions and strategies, please consult Table XXVI.

Table XXVI. Current Brand Positioning Strategies per Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Broaden a restrictive brand identity Diversification of genre perceptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young, welcoming and modern associations to get new, loyal public (promotion in high-school and cegep) which is done through the new square logo complemented by more organic designs – also in an effort to further democratize the documentary genre Emphasize the perception that documentaries are stuffy and restrictive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Festival of all genres” positioning to include additional genres like comedy and action 	<i>This does not pertain to the current positioning strategy</i>
Reinforce a well-established set of associations Films and yearly program		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active communications focus on the films and really visually engulfing potential visitors, as they do not possess famous casts and crews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active communications focus on the films by providing a yearly catalogue with long descriptions and reviews of each film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active communications focus on films and supporting events The rest of the year, active communications revolve around supporting partners and distributors, contests Communicate on quality with wine selection during cocktail at Cannes
Emphasize what the brand is not		
<i>This does not pertain to the current positioning strategy</i>	<i>This does not pertain to the current positioning strategy</i>	<i>This does not pertain to the current positioning strategy</i>

4.4.1.2 Marketing Communications Mix

In the context of our study, festival managers’ communications mixes principally focus on five types: advertising, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, interactive marketing and some direct marketing. First, managers somewhat use **advertising** to communicate information about the return of their film festival as well as their yearly program. While the specific channels can vary from one festival to the next, the use of paid advertisement largely depends on budget restrictions. For instance, Fantasia’s Carl – who has a relatively large budget – relies on numerous paid advertising channels to remind visitors of

the festival's impending arrival. For this, he uses metro and bus advertisements, as well as television and radio spots. He also relies on print advertising in newspapers like *Le Devoir*. While some advertising is done on the Internet, Carl attributes a lot of importance to print materials. He expresses this in the following quote:

Une bannière Internet c'est pas pareil qu'une page de pub dans un journal, pour moi. Euh, fak oui, y faut qu'on travaille les réseaux sociaux, mais nous ce qui fonctionne bien c'est l'imprimé parce que y'a des critiques de films, parce que y'a des articles. [...] L'imprimé, j'ai beaucoup d'éditoriaux, j'ai besoin de beaucoup de critiques de films. J'ai besoin d'annoncer dans mes- les affiches j'veux les faire vivre ailleurs que sur les murs. Mais criss, tous les médias sont en train de mourir, tsé. La Presse- j'peux même pu acheter de pubs sur La Presse. Euh, c'est un défi.

Second, to convey brand identity information, our study's managers strongly rely on **events and experiences**. While the specific types of events and experiences vary from one festival to the other, they typically include socialization activities and atmospherics. For instance, as discussed at length in previous sections, Fantasia's unique screening atmospherics allow visitors to truly understand the laid-back and festive nature of the festival.

Third, our study's managers loosely discuss the use of **public relations and publicity** to further their brand communications and to build relationships with festivalgoers. While most participants mention the use of press releases in passing, FNC's Sebastian is the only one who discusses its active use during the film festival. He does this in an effort to better reach new communities. The importance of this reach is derived from his belief that films represents the seventh art. He expresses this in the following citation:

On a un bureau de relation de presse pendant le festival, y'en a qui travaillent les anglophones, d'autres les francophones. On a essayé d'identifier- notre idée c'est vraiment d'aller toucher des communautés, quoi. Parce que pour nous le cinéma ça s'appelle le septième art car c'est le regroupement de tous les arts, quoi. Y'a des gens qui disent : « Non, je vais jamais au cinéma j'aime pas ça. », mais si on est passionné de musique, de peinture... et que le cinéma c'est le rassemblement du septième art c'est qu'il rassemble les disciplines artistiques. Pour les films il faut de l'écriture, y'a souvent

des adaptation de livres... Tsé, donc pour moi tout le monde est cinéphile et y'en a qui l'ignorent même. C'est juste qu'il faut montrer les bonnes choses, quoi.

Fourth, our study's managers strongly use **direct marketing** to promote their brand. While the specific platforms can vary from festival to festival, they principally use their website, e-newsletter and print materials. For instance, RIDM's Amanda sees her festival as less popular than other larger ones. For this reason, she views flyers and print programs as an accessible and democratic way to introduce the festival and its cinematographic offerings to people. She expresses this in the following quote:

Euh, on est encore, j'te dirais très papier. On a, bon comme tu vois, un flyer. On a des programmes qu'on distribue. Pi c'est important pour nous parce qu'il faut que les gens l'aient en main les programmations. Les gens qui nous connaissent pas, il faut qu'ils soient capable de découvrir les films rapidement sans même aller sur leurs téléphones. Pi tsé, les documentaires ça appelle aussi toute sorte de gens de toutes sortes de générations fak c'est à travers ces outils là, on donne ça à quelqu'un on peut distribuer ça dans les écoles pi ça nous ramène du public, tsé.

Our study's managers also heavily rely on web-based solutions to directly promote their films and events. While most festivals have periodic e-newsletters, their website is an important platform for promoting their yearly program. On it, festivals have the opportunity to present content at a very low cost. FNC's Sebastian exemplifies the every-day importance attributed to this platform in the following statement:

Évidemment notre site internet aussi. Des consultations en croissance. L'achalandage, le nombre de visites du site est en constant développement. Euh, là on a refait notre site internet l'an passé parce qu'il fallait- on voulait surtout un truc moins compliqué à gérer. Tout ce fait maintenant ici, parce que le système avant il fallait que tous les updates passent par une compagnie pi ça mettait du temps. Pi ça s'adapte à tous les formats mobiles. Ça c'était important pour nous aussi cette flexibilité pour avoir une rapidité d'exécution.

Fifth, our study's managers somewhat rely on **interactive marketing** to communicate with their audiences. While all three festivals possess social media accounts, some use them more actively than others. We find the festivals have social media presence on popular platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They also have a relatively strong presence on video platforms like YouTube and Vimeo to promote trailers. For instance, Fantasia's Carl

has always emphasized the importance of being relatable and in close proximity with his public. One way to achieve this is via social media. He expresses this in the following statement:

Nous, on est encore en grosse proximité avec notre public. On leur répond sur Facebook, on se fait vraiment- fak oui, on se l'a approprié le public.

FNC is, however, the only festival with a dedicated full-time community manager who actively promotes the brand year-round. Sebastian proudly describes this in the following quote:

Ce qui a d'intéressant c'est qu'au niveau de tout ce qu'on travaille au niveau de l'image de marque sur les réseaux sociaux pi on a créé un poste à temps plein y a 3-4 ans. Y'a quelqu'un qui est là tout le temps à l'année longue pour travailler sur les réseaux sociaux et donc sur la promotion de la marque. Pour nous c'était un investissement que peu d'entreprises et peu de festivals ont mis en place pi nous on l'a mis y'a longtemps. Pi on voit le résultat et le positif de tout ça.

We find that the scope of each festival's communications mix relies on each one's **available budget**. For instance, RIDM is smaller than Fantasia and FNC. For this reason, they have less money to attribute to large-scale promotions. Unlike Fantasia, the festival cannot afford televised advertisements. As such, it relies heavily on owned media outlets to communicate the brand and its films. Amanda expresses this in the following citation:

On essaie le plus possible d'utiliser, euh, ce qui est électronique, si tu veux. Tout ce qui est réseaux sociaux, tout ce qui est web-based. Plus que le papier parce que c'est de moins en moins vers ça qu'on s'en va, mais euhm, ce qu'on privilégie- non, j'te dirais qu'avec le peu de ressources qu'on a, on a tellement peu de budget à placer en achat média, euh, chez nous notre budget d'achat média c'est des peanuts, fak euh, on s'appuie beaucoup sur nos propres médias pour faire notre promotion sur nos bénévoles qui distribuent sur nos circuits de distribution de grilles horaires.

To view each festival's current communications mix, please consult Table XXVII.

Table XXVII. Current Communications Mix per Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Advertising Print, web, television		
<i>Not a primary type of communication due to budget restrictions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transit (bus, metro) Television (ex. Musique Plus, Télétoon, SciFi Channel, RDTV, CISM, TVA, etc.) Radio (CURSM, CURBL, CKUT, etc.) Internet banners News papers (Ex. Le Devoir) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banners throughout Montreal (previously included STM who recently changed their policies)
Sales promotions N/A		
<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>
Events and experiences Cocktails, gatherings and atmospherics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to meet and discuss with a documentarian Other side events to socialize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience related to the unhinged atmosphere where people release animal cries and aren't afraid to be themselves Other supporting events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting events like cocktails (ex. Cannes) Meeting place available throughout the event called Agora Unique viewing locations
Public relations and publicity Press releases, community outreach		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of press releases 	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PR bureau during the festival to work different communities (Anglophone and francophone groups) Press campaigns
Direct marketing Print materials, newsletters, website		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-newsletter Still very "paper": Use of flyers that are distributed to local businesses, but slowly moving away from this model due to costs Website: Newly developed to really emphasize the films and allow visitors to dive into the images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still very "paper": Large program created every year and sold for \$5 and smaller program Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-newsletter Website: Newly developed to be easily updated by internal employees
Interactive marketing Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vimeo, Flickr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest Full-time community manager on social media to connect with people
Word-of-mouth marketing N/A		
<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>
Personal selling N/A		
<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>

4.4.2 Brand Image Formation by Visitors

A brand's identity must be effectively communicated to audiences to form a brand image – the set of associations that exist in consumers' minds (Keller, 1993). Consumers do not always, however, make use of the all communications efforts put forth by institutions. To organize those used by visitors, and for comparative purposes, we use Keller's (2009) eight-part communications mix. While our study's visitors acknowledge most types of communications – like advertising (print ads in public transit), events and experiences (gatherings and atmospherics), direct marketing (website, e-newsletters, print catalogues and flyers), interactive marketing (social media) and word-of-mouth marketing (close friends, work environment) – they only actively use a small subset: direct marketing, word-of-mouth marketing, and events and experiences.

First, we find that our study's visitors strongly report using **direct marketing methods** to gather information about the festival and its films. While festivalgoers acknowledge using a number of direct marketing methods, we find that they principally rely on the festival's website and sometimes consult the paper program. This appears to be out of convenience, as the modular format allows visitors to find films that fit their schedule. For instance, Diane (RIDM) expresses that catalogues are inconvenient due to the fact that they only present films in alphabetical order. This prompts visitors to rely on the website. Vivian (FNC) expresses its practicality in the following quote:

J'utilise principalement le web. C'est rare de regarder les programmations papiers. Mais le web c'est vraiment facile à trouver en général. Pour ces festivals-là tu dois planifier combien de films tu veux aller voir et les heures. Justement, tu peux te faire un palmarès, une liste.

We do, however, also find that some participants like consulting the paper program when they have more free time on their hands. Indeed, a few festivalgoers enjoy the act of reading the synopses and circling films of interest. Yvette describes her experience in the following citation:

Pour moi c'est leur programmation papier journal. J'ai vraiment des souvenirs de la regarder, encercler des choses dedans- pi c'est toujours la même à chaque année grosso-

modo, le même format. Euh, le même look, tout ça. Euh pi c'est très- justement c'est pas euhm- ça ressemble à ce que tu t'attends que ça va être une programmation de film.

Second, our study's visitors strongly rely on **word-of-mouth** recommendations. Across festivals, we find that participants rely on a close friend to learn about the festival and its films. We find their first visits were heavily dependant on a friend's recommendation or invitation. Vivian explains how she came to visit FNC for the first time in the following statement:

J'pense que mon chum était critique de cinéma. C'est lui qui m'a emmenée. J'fréquente les festivals, mais de moi-même. J'pense pas que j'aurais fréquenté ce festival-là sans lui.

Third, our study's visitors somewhat rely on **events and experiences** to learn about the festival's true nature and offerings. While most participants discuss having attended a festival's socialization events or experienced the unique atmospherics, events and experiences appear to truly impact first-timers. It is in attending the festival that new festivalgoers get a true understanding and develop positive associations. Indeed, given that current attendees first heard about the festival through a close friend, many first interacted with the festival by attending it. Yvette expresses this in the following quote:

J'serais pas allée- c'est pas mon genre de film, donc j'suis allée justement par des billets gratuits. Euh, mais c'est ça qui m'a fait aimer le festival. Tsé, en ayant des passes pi en y allant, pi t'embarques. C'est comme une famille Fantasia. Pi tu découvres après ça, même si tu penses que t'aimes pas ça, à travers leur programmation tu réalises que y'a des films qui sont bons quand même pi d'enlever le jugement que certaines personnes peuvent avoir sur le festival vu que c'est pas super intello pi artistique et tout ça.

To view the communications methods used by each festival's visitors, please consult Table XXVIII.

Table XXVIII. Current Communications Mix Used by Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Advertising Print, web, television		
<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transit (bus, metro) 	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>
Sales promotions		
<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>
Events and experiences Cocktails, gatherings and atmospherics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to meet and discuss with a documentarian Other side events to socialize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience related to the unhinged atmosphere where people release animal cries and aren't afraid to be themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting place available throughout the event called Agora
Public relations and publicity		
<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>
Direct marketing Print materials, newsletters, website		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-newsletter Still very "paper": Use of flyers Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still very "paper": Large program created every year and sold for \$5 and smaller program Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-newsletter Website
Interactive marketing Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media: Facebook, Twitter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media: Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media: Twitter
Word-of-mouth marketing Friend		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friend told visitor about festival or its films for the first time, thereby prompting the initial visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friend told visitor about festival or its films for the first time, thereby prompting the initial visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friend told visitor about festival or its films for the first time, thereby prompting the initial visit
Personal selling N/A		
<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>	<i>Not discussed as a primary type of communication</i>

4.4.3 Brand Identity Implementation Conclusion

Overall, we find that the concepts of brand positioning and communications are applicable in our study's film festival context. Indeed, managers first select a subset of the brand identity and value proposition for active communication (Aaker, 1996). This selection is made, partly, on the basis of typically commercial goals: to broaden a restrictive brand identity and to reinforce a well-established set of associations. The emphasis attributed to each

positioning strategy is illustrated in Table XXIX with green being the strongest, orange being less, and white being the least.

Table XXIX. Brand Position Strategy Emphasis for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Broaden a restrictive brand identity Diversification of genre perceptions		
Reinforce a well-established set of associations Films and yearly program		
Emphasize what the brand is not Diversification of genre perceptions		

Once a brand position and strategy has been selected, the message must be actively communicated through a mix of channels. We found that managers rely on five main types: advertising, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and interactive marketing. A special emphasis is placed on events and experiences and direct marketing, with print materials still favoured in festivals like RIDM and Fantasia. Oppositely, FNC strongly focuses its efforts on its interactive marketing efforts, having recently hired a full-time community manager to breathe life into the brand year-round. We do find, however, that the scope of communications efforts – particularly advertising methods – is strongly bound by budget, with RIDM having the least. The emphasis attributed by managers to each of these methods is depicted in Table XXX, with green having the most importance, orange less, and white little to none.

Table XXX. Communications Mix Emphasis for Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Advertising Print, web, television		
Sales promotions N/A		
Events and experiences Cocktails, gatherings and atmospherics		
Public relations and publicity Press releases, community outreach		
Direct marketing Print materials, newsletters, website		
Interactive marketing Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)		
Word-of-mouth marketing N/A		
Personal selling N/A		

From our visitors’ point-of-view, we find that they acknowledge most types of communications put forth by film festival managers like advertising (print ads in public transit), events and experiences (gatherings and atmospherics), direct marketing (website, e-newsletters, print catalogues and flyers) and interactive marketing (social media), except for public relations and publicity. However, they primarily use direct marketing, word-of-mouth and events and experiences. Indeed, participants predominantly use film festivals’ websites to gain information about upcoming films and events. They prefer this method over print catalogues as it allows them to better see what fits into their schedule. They do, however, time permitting, use the catalogue and circle films of interest. Interestingly, they greatly utilise word-of-mouth marketing to learn about film festivals, often citing that it is through this method that they came to know the festival in the first place. Finally, the events and experiences encountered during the festival solidified their appreciation and ensured their future return. The emphasis attributed to each of these methods for each festival is depicted in Table XXXI, with green having the most importance, orange less, and white little to none.

Table XXXI. Communications Mix Emphasis for Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Advertising Print, web, television		
Sales promotions N/A		
Events and experiences Cocktails, gatherings and atmospherics		
Public relations and publicity Press releases, community outreach		
Direct marketing Print materials, newsletters, website		
Interactive marketing Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)		
Word-of-mouth marketing N/A		
Personal selling N/A		

As such, in response to our fourth research objective, we find that the concepts of brand positioning (Aaker, 1996) and communications mix (Keller, 2009) can be applied in our study’s film festival context. Indeed, most positioning strategies and communications methods are utilized. We do, however, find a discrepancy in the types of communications used by managers and visitors. While there is common ground regarding events and experiences, visitors favour the website and word-of-mouth.

4.5 Brand Equity Application

A strong brand can provide benefits for both the organization and its customers (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rowly, 1997). Its main benefit is brand equity, the added value that the brand provides to the product or service that it represents. The importance of brand equity rests in its impact on customer perceptions and the influence that this may have on purchasing behaviour (Keller,

1993). Indeed, these decisions will impact a brand's success (Keller, 1993). As such, paralleling Pusa and Uusitalo's (2014) research, our fifth and final objective was to explore the perceptions regarding the impact of a film festival's brand on overall success: can the brand attract and retain visitors? In the following sections, we first consider managers' views on brand equity and its influence, we then consider those of visitors.

4.5.1 Manager's Perceptions on Brand Equity

Our study's film festival managers strongly believe that their brand has a role to play in attracting and retaining visitors. While each festival's branding is unique, managers greatly emphasize the importance of their visual branding on attracting and its symbolic meaning in retaining visitors. With regard to **attracting** visitors, visual branding appears to have an important role to play. Indeed, managers believe that seeing a logo or visual layout can pique initial curiosity. The importance attributed to its visual branding is one of the reasons why RIDM underwent a complete modernization of its visual identity in recent years (Table VII). Amanda believes that this helps to disassociate documentaries from traditionally stuffy perceptions. While Amanda believes that her brand identity solid, she acknowledges that it is not widely recognized. She expresses this in the following quote:

On a fait ça dans le souci d'avoir un impact visuel fort parce que avant, pi je pourrais te montrer on a des vieux catalogues- c'était vraiment le nom au long. Fak tsé, l'impact visuel de la marque était zéro. Oui, tu voyais peut-être une affiche, ça attirait peut-être ton attention, mais tu savais pas chez qui t'étais. Maintenant, tsé, vraiment mettre le logo, pi ça fait un 4-5 ans qu'on met vraiment de l'avant ça, euh- et que le logo soit reconnaissable. C'est très important de faire ce travail là. C'était aussi d'avoir un logo de fort impact. [...] D'un point de vue marketing, est-ce que ma marque est vraiment forte? Moi je pense que c'est une marque solide. Est-ce qu'elle est assez visible, est-ce qu'elle est assez reconnue, notre empreinte? J pense pas. Tsé y'a encore des gens- je veux dire- c'est pas vrai que les gens regardent ce logo là et sont comme : « Ah ouais, documentaire! ». Tsé, à Montréal, les gens voient mettons la louve du FNC pi y vont faire : ah ouais, le FNC. Bon, ils ont 45 ans passés, mais quand même tsé. C'est pas automatique que tu vois ça pi tu dis : « Ah ouais, film documentaire! ». On aimerait s'y rendre, mais on n'est pas là.

More specifically, brand equity is achieved if positive associations are attributed to these visual design cues, such as the logo or the layout. For instance, FNC's Sebastian believes

that from the moment you see a logo and associate something positive to it, equity is created. Over time, the visual cues become synonymous with the festival and everything it represents. Sebastian expresses this in the following quote:

C'est difficile à quantifier, mais y'a une importance majeure. C'est à partir du moment où tu vois un logo pour la première fois et t'entends des choses positives- euh, une fois que t'as vu la louve, y'a beaucoup de genres qui associent ça à mon festival maintenant.

In addition to being positively perceived, the visual identity's recognition over time and place is also important to managers. Indeed, they attribute a lot of importance to visual consistency and coherence in their logo, design and overall layout. This ultimately generates a strong association between the visual cue and the film festival. FNC's Sebastian expresses this in the following citation:

Surtout une continuité, ça sert à rien tu changes- moi j'ai toujours voulu que la louve apparaisse sur les affiches en gros et après en plus petit. Je voulais que ça soit associé immédiatement, que ça fasse un flash.

A concrete example of this is Fantasia's consistent use of the same logo, layout and illustrator. Carl strives to create visuals that are as easily recognizable, much like Times magazine or La Presse. He describes this in the following statement:

Ma solution en gros, pour moi le branding, Tu connais La Presse, tu connais le Time. Quand t'arrives dans un magasin, tu sais c'est quoi le magazine. Y'a toujours le même logo à la même place. Y'a toujours la même mise en page, y'a une cohérence au niveau du visuel qui très importante parce que le public- tout de suite le message que t'envoies c'est la prévente des billets arrive. Il faut que les gens sur la rue- pour moi l'équité d'un festival, l'équité du visuel d'un festival est l'équivalent de l'équité du visuel d'un magazine. Tu r'connais tout de suite Dernière Heure, tu r'connais tout de suite parce qu'il y a une forme de mise en page qui est tout le temps pareille. Au niveau de la couverture, y'a le placement d'éléments et donc les gens peuvent se poser la question : « Y'é où le 24 Heures? Y'é là le 24 Heures. ». Il faut pas qu'ils se disent : « Le 24 Heures c'est où? ». Euhm, en tout cas, moi j'travaille beaucoup comme ça.

With regard to **retaining** visitors, the meaning behind the visuals is important. More than a simple act of recognition, positive associations to these visual cues are believed to influence repeat attendance. For instance, FNC's Sebastian believes that his logo represents the community of attendees and generates feelings of attachment similar to seeing the logo of one's favourite sports team. He explains this in the following citation:

Pour nous c'est vraiment le sentiment d'appartenance. C'est comme le logo des Canadiens, tsé. C'est le symbole. Tsé pour nous- moi je le considère notre animal totem. C'est un totem. Tu le vois dans des communautés, dans des sociétés tribales. Le lien avec l'animal totem, la représentation, une image qui est symbolique finalement. L'être humain est plus complexe dans sa diversité car il est capable de cacher des choses alors qu'un symbole lui aura, à moins qu'il se passe quelque chose d'énorme. Mais, c'est que y'a un symbole, une identité qui résume quelque chose qui pourrait être très complexe.

The visual identity acts as symbolic representation of the festival's brand in the consumer's mind. Managers believe that the positively held associations about each festival can generate stronger relationships and, ultimately, lead to more visits. The brand is something that managers believe is important in generating loyal attendees because it makes them feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves – they feel like they belong, that it represents them and their like-minded peers. He expresses this in the following quote:

La marque est importante aujourd'hui pour fidéliser une clientèle, pour sa capacité à créer une identité et un sentiment d'appartenance. Peu importe si les gens sont interconnectés, restent à la maison- y'a comme un besoin d'appartenance à un groupe et en ça, ça devient indispensable de travailler sur la marque.

To view all brand equity perceptions by film festival managers, please consult Table XXXII.

Table XXXII. Brand Equity Perceptions by Managers

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Attract / Recognize		
Visual identity (logo, design, layout)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that the festival has a relatively strong brand but that it is not visible or recognized enough yet (people don't see the logo and directly associate it with documentaries) • New visual logo and branding is more modern, more easily recognized, more attractive • Does not believe that her visual design cues are directly associated with the documentary genre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance attributed to the placement of visual elements that is consistent across platforms and throughout the years (logo has barely changed, same illustrator is always used, etc.) • Wishes to be recognized to the same effect as largely popular magazines like Time • Believes that the logo, visual design and layout are synonymous with the Fantasia brand – just upon seeing them, people know it is Fantasia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually recognizable logo that is consistently used in the festival's communications • Believes that the logo is synonymous with the FNC brand – just upon seeing it, people know it is FNC
Retain / Positive associations		
Positive associations from interaction with films and overall experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentarians (festival founders) return because of the origins of the festival: to present documentaries and discuss them • A portion of the public comes to the festivals because it is currently a currently popular genre, especially with the popularization of Netflix which presents a lot of documentaries • Certain film lovers have been visiting the festival since a very long time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When visitors attend the festival they experience the unique laid-back atmosphere where everyone is treated as equals in a fun, unhinged atmosphere • The quality program is something that the festival believes makes them a cultural barometer • Safe space for marginalized individuals who want to express themselves without judgment • Some of the people who return are considered to be "cinophiles" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolf logo acts as a totem around which FNC's community rallies, much like seeing the logo of a favoured sports team • Believe that the sense of belonging generated by the community of attendees brings people to return to the festival • Unique experience (like viewing films in the park) brings people to view films, even though they are widely available (ex. Drive)

4.5.2 Visitors' Perceptions on Brand Equity

Our study's film festival visitors somewhat believe that the brand plays a role in attracting and retaining them. While participants view branding as an increasingly important concept in the success of film festivals, they do not believe it is a factor that influenced their attendance. Indeed, the main reason for first attending was principally through word-of-mouth and repeat attendance was related to a positive initial visit. With regard to visitors' **attraction** to film festivals, participants unanimously recalled that their first visit was prompted through a

friend's word-of-mouth or referral. Isabelle recalls her experience with Fantasia in the following quote:

C'est un de mes amis qui m'a juste envoyé la bande annonce d'un film. Un des amis que j'ai avec qui on aime bien explorer des trucs un peu spécial, un peu curieux, pi quand on a vu ça on trouvait que ça avait l'air drôle. C'était avec celui qui joue Frodon, Elija Wood. J'pense que c'est lui qui produisait ça.

With regard to **return** visits, our study's attendees strongly expressed the importance of a positive initial experience. Indeed, once they'd attended the festival, visitors realized that there were elements that interested them and were motivated to learn more. Specifically, the quality of the yearly program was the main reason for visitors' return. For instance, Fantasia's visitors discussed how they were marked by the laid-back, friendly, and unique ambiance during their first visit. This, in turn, altered their perceptions about the festival. Yvette describes this in the following quote:

J'serais pas allée- c'est pas mon genre de film, donc j'suis allée justement par des billets gratuits. Euh, mais c'est ça qui m'a fait aimer le festival. Tsé, en ayant des passes pi en y allant, pi t'embarques. C'est comme une famille Fantasia. Pi tu découvres après ça, même si tu penses que t'aimes pas ça, à travers leur programmation tu réalises que y'a des films qui sont bons quand même pi d'enlever le jugement que certaines personnes peuvent avoir sur le festival vu que c'est pas super intello pi artistique et tout ça.

To view all brand equity associations, please consult Table XXXIII.

Table XXXIII. Brand Equity Perceptions by Visitors

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Attract / Recognize Friend word-of-mouth / Daily proximity		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main reason visitors report visiting the festival for the first time is through word-of-mouth referral from a close friend Visitors acknowledge the new visual logo and branding as modern, easily recognized, and attractive but do not cite it as a reason for their attending the festival for the first time Visitors would attend RIDM versus another festival because of its unique offering of documentaries and the quality of its program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main reason visitors report visiting the festival for the first time is through word-of-mouth referral from a close friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through a friend or received free tickets for their first time
Retain / Positive associations Positive associations from interaction with films and overall experience / Quality program		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main reason why visitors report returning to this festival is due to the quality of its yearly program and the diversity of its topics A secondary reason touches on the experience (party, pleasant staff) While visitors acknowledge that the visual branding is beautiful and recognizable, they do not attribute much influence of the brand on their return 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once they've experienced the festival for the first time, visitors report being hooked by the ambiance The quality of the program also plays an important role in retaining visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is in visiting the festival for the first time through a friend's recommendation or through free tickets that they liked the experience and were prompted to learn more about the yearly program The main reason visitors report returning to this festival is because of the films

4.5.3 Brand Equity Conclusion

Our study's film festival managers attribute a lot of their ability to attract visitors to their nice and consistent visual identity. The deeper meaning behind it, however, is what they believe ensures repeat visits. The emphasis attributed by each film festival manager to branding on the attraction and return of visitors is depicted in Table XXXIV, with green having the most importance, orange less, and white little to none.

Table XXXIV. Emphasis on Managers' Perceptions of Attraction and Repeat Visits

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Attract / Recognize		
Visual identity (logo, design, layout) Friend word-of-mouth / Daily proximity		
Retain / Positive associations		
Positive associations from interaction with films and overall experience		

While visual branding is a priority for film festival managers, it was not found to impact our study's visitors' first or repeat visits. In fact, initial attendance was due to a friend's word-of-mouth recommendation or invitation. When it came to returning to the festival, however, managers and visitors agreed that it was related to the positive associations generated by interactions with the festival. Upon enjoying their first experience, visitors were motivated to learn more about the films, and a quality program helped ensure their return. The emphasis attributed by each film festival visitor to branding on their attraction and return visits is depicted in Table XXXV, with green having the most importance, orange less, and white little to none.

Table XXXV. Emphasis on Visitors' Perceptions of Attraction and Return Visits

RIDM	Fantasia	FNC
Attract / Recognize		
Friend word-of-mouth / Daily proximity		
Retain / Positive associations		
Positive associations from interaction with films and overall experience / Quality program		

Chapter 5 Discussion

The present chapter brings to the literature on cultural branding. It addresses our primary research objective: to holistically explore the application of branding, a traditionally commercial concept, in the film festival context. In doing so, we interpreted our findings from the perspectives of both film festival managers and visitors while relating them to prior studies. In the following sections, we first interpret our results. We then provide our theoretical and managerial contributions. Afterwards, we consider some of our research's limitations. Finally, we provide some recommendations for future research.

5.1 Result Interpretation

In this section, we review our results and interpret them in accordance with our research objectives and literature review. We first explore both groups' perceptions on branding. We then look at their respective brand identity and brand image content. Afterwards, we consider their communications practices. Finally, we assess film festivals' brand equity and whether it can impact film festival success. Throughout our discussion, we interpret managers and visitors' results separately and comparatively.

5.1.1 Perceptions on Branding

Past literature has shown that arts organizations should use commercial marketing tools – like branding – to help them succeed in an increasingly saturated market (Baumgarth, 2009; Baumgarth & O'Reilly, 2014; Caldwell, 2000; Colbert, 2003; Colbert, 2009; d'Astous et al., 2006; Pulh et al., 2008; Scott, 2000; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997). There has, however, been much controversy regarding its place in the cultural context. Traditionalists have adopted a product-oriented perspective that avoids marketing for fear of its detrimental impact on the quality and integrity of the artistic experience (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2001; Unwin et al., 2007). Modernists have, oppositely, favoured a market-oriented approach that accounts for customers, competitors and interfunctional coordination

activities in their strategic activities (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). While scarce, research on the application of branding suggests that it can have positive effects on a cultural organization's success (Baumgarth, 2009; Baumgarth & O'Reilley, 2014; Caldwell, 2000; Colbert, 2003; d'Astous et al., 2006; Pulh et al., 2008; Scott, 2000; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014; Rowley, 1997). The brand is said to alleviate the riskiness associated with an intangible, variable, inseparable and perishable service-like experience (Bowdin et al., 2006; Grappi & Montanari, 2009; Kotler & Keller, 2006; Murray & Schalater, 1990). As such, to reconcile the diverging perspectives of traditionalists and modernists, a dual approach has been proposed that balances product and market-orientation.

Our study allowed us to confirm the **dual approach**, as we found that both groups appreciated the importance of marketing and branding (market and brand orientation), as well as that of the films' quality (product orientation). Indeed, we noticed that both groups viewed the concepts of marketing and branding (market and brand orientation) as strategic assets in attracting visitors and generating revenue. While this was matter of fact for our study's film festival mangers, we found that visitors needed to rationalize the application of traditionally commercial concepts in the cultural context; in their view, film festivals' small budgets justified their need for such tools. Both groups did, however, agree on **certain cultural differences** in their application relative to the commercial sector. Indeed, these beliefs lead both groups to appropriate the distinctive term 'cultural branding'. This roughly translated to the application of a traditionally commercial process with culturally driven objectives. We also found that both groups attributed a lot of importance to the quality of the films. Managers discussed their program's careful selection, often believing that the consistent calibre of their films has made their festival – particular Fantasia and FNC – cultural barometers. Visitors also suggested that their quality was one of the primary reasons for their return.

We thus understand that, based on our first overarching research objective, **branding appears to be an appropriate strategic tool in our study's film festivals** (modernist standpoint: market and brand orientation) with the caveat that the films' quality is also greatly important (traditionalist standpoint: product orientation). Given both groups' diverging market/brand-oriented and product-oriented priorities, we conclude that they adopt a dual approach to film festival branding.

5.1.2 Brand Identity Application

Past literature has rarely considered the topic of cultural branding (O'Reilly, 2011). However, authors who have touched on the subject have generally found positive outcomes for its use. Indeed, it has been suggested that brand-oriented arts organizations can generate greater success (Baumgarth, 2009; Caldwell, 2000). As the topic had not previously been studied in depth in the cultural context, we borrowed Aaker's (1996) commercial definition of brand identity to assess its film festival application and content (Figure 3). Our study allowed us to confirm that RIDM, Fantasia and FNC possess brand identities that parallel the commercial definition, as they possess associations that fit into Aaker's (1996) twelve brand identity dimensions, two structures and three value proposition benefits. In the following sections, we explore this brand identity content and application, as described by the organizations' managers. While we found associations that fit into most of these categories, they were either strongly, somewhat or loosely emphasized during the interviews. For strategic purposes we focus our discussion on those that were strongly emphasized by managers.

5.1.2.1 Brand Identity Dimensions

In exploring film festivals' brand identity content, we noticed that, per the Brand Identity Content section, our study's organizations possess associations that fit into most of Aaker's (1996) twelve dimensions. We thus understand that, per our second and third overarching research objectives, the **traditionally commercial concept of brand identity can be applied** in our study's film festival context. While each festival possesses a unique set of brand associations, we note that they similarly emphasized certain dimensions (product scope, product attributes, quality/value, organizational attributes, brand personality and visual imagery and metaphors) and themes (films, supporting experiences, approachability).

5.1.2.2 Brand Identity Structures

In exploring core and peripheral identity content, we noticed that, per the Brand Identity Content section, our study's film festivals possess associations that fit into both

perspectives. We thus understand that, per our second and third overarching research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concepts of core and peripheral brand identity can be applied** in our study's film festival context, as managers center a portion of their brands around core features – in this case, films (product scope dimension) and experiences (product attributes dimension). This further supports the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market orientation) and the importance of the products (product orientation) is adopted in the film festival context. While each film festival brand is found to possess a unique set of associations, they similarly converge on the dimensions and features emphasized at their core.

5.1.2.3 Value Proposition

In exploring film festivals' value propositions, we noticed that, per the Brand Identity Content section, some benefits were more or less emphasized by managers. We thus understand that, per our second and third overarching research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concept of value proposition can be applied in our study's film festival context**, as managers principally utilized functional and emotional benefits to provide value to visitors. Overall, we found that the benefits, much like the brands' core, principally related to the two main film festival offerings: films and experiences. This further supports the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market orientation) and the importance of the products (product orientation) is adopted for film festival managers. While each film festival brand is found to possess a unique set of associations, they similarly converge on the dimensions and features emphasized in their value proposition.

5.1.2.4 Brand Management

As previously discussed, past literature has scarcely considered the topic of cultural branding (O'Reiley, 2011), but it has been found that those who partake in these activities tend to see greater success (Baumgarth, 2009). In line with this notion, active brand management has become an increasingly popular notion with a few strategies and frameworks proposed to support its application (Baumgarth, 2009; Baumgarth & O'Reilly, 2014; Caldwell, 2000; Colbert, 2003; d'Astous et al., 2007; Rowley, 1997; Pulh et al., 2008; Scott, 2000; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014).

In exploring film festival managers' branding activities, we noticed, per the Brand Management section, that certain principles structured their strategies. We thus understand that, per our second and third overarching research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concept of brand management can be applied** in our study's film festival context, as managers actively manage their brand identities with a particular focus on coherence and consistency. This mindfulness is further demonstrated by managers' awareness of brand management flaws. Their ability to recognize such weaknesses provides them with points to improve and better establish brand congruence between their festivals and visitors' brand images.

5.1.3 Brand Image Application

As per the previous section, past literature has scarcely considered the topic of cultural branding (O'Reilly, 2011). This extends to that of customers' perceptions: brand image. For the purposes of our study, we borrowed Keller's (1993) commercial definition of brand image to assess the content of film festival visitors' brand perceptions. The author defines this concept as the collection of brand associations that customers hold in their minds (Keller, 1993). This notion is important because it is these perceptions that influence consumption behaviour (Keller, 1993). Indeed, a brand image composed of strong, unique and favourable associations can lead to a number of benefits for both the consumer and the company (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Park et al., 1986; Rowley, 1997) (Table II). Specific to the cultural context, it has been found that branding can help bridge the riskiness

associated with the intangibility of culture's experiential nature and positively influence their visitation behaviour (Bowdin et al., 2006; Grappi & Montanari, 2009; Kotler & Keller, 2006; Murray & Schlater, 1990). For comparative purposes, we grouped visitors' brand image associations under Aaker's (1996) twelve brand identity dimensions categorized into four perspectives (brand-as-product, brand-as-organization, brand-as-person and brand-as-symbol), two brand identity structures (core and peripheral associations) and three value proposition benefits (functional, emotional and self-expressive) (Figure 3). In the following sections, we explore this brand image content and application, as described by film festival visitors. While we found associations that fit into most of these categories, they were either strongly, somewhat or loosely emphasized during the interviews. For strategic purposes, we focus our discussion on those that were strongly emphasized by visitors. Further, in assessing the perceptions of mid to frequent repeat visitors, we were able to gain insight into the associations and dimensions most correlated with attendance behaviour.

5.1.3.1 Brand Image Content

In exploring our study's film festival brand image content, we noticed that, per the Brand Image Content section, visitors possess associations that fit into most of Aaker's (1996) twelve dimensions, with the exception of country or region of origin and brand heritage. We thus understand that, per our second and third overarching research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concept of brand image can be applied** in our study's film festival context, as visitors possess associations for each film festival. While each festival has a unique set of brand associations, we note that our participants similarly emphasize certain dimensions (product attributes, quality/value, organizational attributes and brand personality) and themes (films, supporting experiences, approachability).

5.1.3.2 Brand Image Core and Peripheral Associations

In exploring festivalgoers' core and peripheral image content, we noticed that, per the Brand Image Content section, it comprises associations that fit into both perspectives. We

thus understand that, per our second and third overarching research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concepts of core and peripheral brand images can be applied** in our study's film festival context, as visitors center a portion of their perceptions around certain core features – in this case, films (quality/value dimension) and experiences (product attributes dimension). This further supports the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market orientation) and the importance of the products (product orientation) is adopted in the film festival context. While each film festival brand is found to possess a unique set of associations, visitors similarly converge on the dimensions and features emphasized at their core.

5.1.3.3 Brand Image Value Proposition

In exploring film festivals visitors' value propositions, we noticed that per the Brand Image Content section, they utilize functional and emotional benefits to describe the value of either film festival. We thus understand that, per our second and third overarching research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concept of value proposition can be applied in our study's film festival context**, as visitors use different types of benefits to describe a film festivals' value. Overall, we found that the benefits, much like the brands' core, principally related to the two main film festival offerings: films and experiences. This further supports the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market orientation) and the importance of the products (product orientation) is adopted for festivalgoers. While each film festival brand is found to possess a unique set of associations, they similarly converge on the dimensions and features emphasized in their value proposition.

5.1.4 Brand Identity and Brand Image Comparison

Past literature has shown that congruence between a brand's identity and its brand image can lead to greater brand equity and, ultimately success (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993). Comparing both viewpoints can help managers determine points of strength and of improvement. Our study allowed us to confirm that managers and festivalgoers possessed relatively congruent brand identities and images, as we found that they both had many common associations. Though visitors' brand images comprised a smaller scope of associations, those that were elicited typically existed in the broader set proposed by brand managers. Differences mainly emerged with regard to the level of emphasis placed on certain associations and dimensions. In the following sections, we compare the brand identity and brand images dimensions, brand structures and value propositions discussed by both groups. For strategic purposes, we focus our discussion on those that were strongly emphasized by both groups.

5.1.4.1 Brand Identity and Brand Image Dimensions Comparison

Upon comparing the **brand-as-product perspective** of managers and visitors, we found that the quality/value and product attributes dimensions were strongly emphasized. The main difference was the product scope dimension that was strongly highlighted by managers, but only somewhat by visitors. Indeed, the program's quality (quality/value dimension) and its supporting experiences (product attributes dimension) are strongly valued by both groups. Oppositely, both groups unevenly valued the films' topics and genres (product scope dimension) in film festival branding; festivalgoers view it as less important, possibly suggesting that they prefer quality films over their particular genre or that the genres are so ubiquitous with the film festivals that they need not be mentioned. Additional research would be required to verify the product scope dimension's impact. We thus understand that both groups' branding perceptions are relatively congruent with film quality (quality/value dimension) and supporting experiences (product attributes dimension) as predominant strategic assets in film festival branding. To view a comparison of the emphasis placed on each brand-as-product dimension, please consult Table XXXVI.

Upon comparing the **brand-as-organization perspective** of managers and visitors, we found that organizational aspects (organizational attributes dimension) were strongly valued. Both groups' associations vastly pointed towards the theme of approachability through a warm, welcoming, accessible and informal festival. We thus understand that managers' and visitors' branding perceptions are relatively congruent with the overall organizational culture (organizational attributes dimension) found to be a predominant strategic asset in film festival branding. To view a comparison of the emphasis placed on each brand-as-organization dimension, please consult Table XXXVI.

Upon comparing the **brand-as-person perspective** of managers and visitors, we found that both groups relied on human characteristics (brand personality dimension) in their branding perceptions. Indeed, this dimension was used throughout the interviews to describe many of the festival's main aspects: overall culture, films, experiences and people. Oppositely, both groups unevenly valued the brand-customer relationship dimension, with visitors only loosely using relationship associations to describe film festival brands and managers strongly utilizing it. We thus understand that managers' and visitors' branding perceptions are relatively congruent with the brand personality dimension as a strong strategic asset. Indeed, this suggests that human traits can be a useful strategic tool to convey film festival brand information. To view a comparison of the emphasis placed on each brand-as-person dimension, please consult Table XXXVI.

Upon comparing the **brand-as-symbol perspective** of managers and visitors, we found that both groups unevenly valued symbolism. Indeed, only managers strongly used the visual imagery and metaphors dimension to describe their festival's overall culture. This was particularly found to be attached to festivals' visual branding, as managers conveyed symbolically conveyed a deeper meaning through their logos and illustrations. While visitors positively perceived the visual branding, they did not attribute any symbolic or metaphorical meaning to it. We thus understand that managers' and visitors branding perceptions are incongruent with regard to the brand-as-symbol perspective. This suggests that it may not be an important strategic element in film festival branding. To view a comparison of the emphasis placed on each brand-as-symbol dimension, please consult Table XXXVI.

We thus understand that, per our second and third research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concepts of brand identity and brand image can be** applied in our study's film festival context as both managers and visitors relatively congruently perceive brand associations and dimensions found within them. Overall, we've come to understand that film festival managers' and visitors' brand associations and dimensions are relatively congruent. We noted, however, that visitors' perceptions form a smaller scope; this appears to be normal, as managers are highly aware of their own brand and visitors aren't necessarily exposed to all brand associations in their communication consumption practices. Despite this, our comparison of both groups' brand content allowed us to determine the brand dimensions and associations with the most strategic importance. While participants from each festival possessed unique sets of brand associations, we noted that they similarly emphasized certain dimensions (quality/value, product attributes, organizational attributes and brand personality – with the exception of product scope dimension) and themes (films, supporting experiences, approachability). This further supports the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market orientation) and the importance of the products (product orientation) is adopted from both the consumers and managerial points of view in the film festival context. To view a comparison of the emphasis placed on each brand dimension, please consult Table XXXVI. To view our new conceptual model that accounts for these results, please consult Figure 6.

Table XXXVI. Comparison of Brand Dimensions Between Managers and Visitors

	RIDM		Fantasia		FNC	
	Managers	Visitors	Managers	Visitors	Managers	Visitors
Brand-as-product	Product scope Genres-specific / Wide range of topics					
	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	White
	Product attributes Experience / Social interactions					
	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Orange
	Quality/value Experience / Social interactions					
	White	Light Green				
	Use occasion Experience / Social interactions					
	White	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
	Users General public / Marginalized groups					
Orange	Orange	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	
Country or region of origin Montreal / Quebec						
White	None	White	None	White	None	
Brand-as-organization	Organizational attributes Accessibility / Informality					
	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	White
	Local versus global Montreal / Quebec / International					
Orange	White	Orange	White	Orange	Orange	
Brand-as-person	Personality Festival-specific / Animal					
	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
	Brand-customer relationship Community / Relationship nurturing					
Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	White	
Brand-as-symbol	Visual imagery and metaphors Overall philosophy (guides strategic decisions)					
	Light Green	White	Light Green	White	Light Green	Orange
	Brand heritage Founding principles / Visual branding					
Orange	None	Light Green	None	Light Green	None	

5.1.4.2 Brand Identity and Brand Image Core and Peripheral Brand Comparison

Upon comparing the core and periphery of our managers' and visitors' brand perceptions, we found that they comprise relatively congruent associations and dimensions. As these categories are mutually self-exclusive, we focused on the core associations in our study. We found that both groups strongly emphasized two main features in their core identities and

images: films (quality/value dimension) and supporting experiences (product attributes dimension). Indeed, these two dimensions provided very important in overall strategies and reasons for repeat visits. We thus understand that, per our second and third research objectives, **the traditionally commercial concept of core and peripheral brand can be** applied in our study's film festival context as both managers and visitors relatively congruently perceive brand associations and dimensions. This suggests that film festivals must, more than any other dimension, strive to maintain their program's quality perceptions and maintain supporting experiences like socialization activities and atmospherics. This further supports the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market orientation) and the importance of the products (product orientation) is adopted from both the consumers and managerial points of view in the film festival context. To view our new conceptual model that accounts for these results, please consult Figure 6.

5.1.4.3 Value Proposition Comparison

Upon comparing both groups' value propositions, we found that they comprise relatively congruent associations and dimensions, with a particular focus on functional and emotional benefits. Within the functional benefits, both groups strongly emphasized the importance of the program quality (quality/value dimension). Within the emotional benefits, both groups strongly emphasized the positive feelings generated by supporting experiences (product attributes dimension) like socialization activities and atmospherics. These findings parallel those of the core identity, further supporting their strategic importance in film festival branding. We thus understand that **the traditionally commercial concept of value proposition can be** applied in our study's film festival context as both managers and visitors relatively congruently perceive their associated functional (quality/value dimension) and emotional (product attributes dimension) benefits. This suggests that film festivals must, more than any other dimension, strive to maintain their program's quality perceptions and maintain supporting experiences like socialization activities and atmospherics. This further supports the

dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market orientation) and the importance of the products (product orientation) is adopted from both the consumers and managerial points of view in the film festival context. To view our new conceptual model that accounts for these results, please consult Figure 6.

5.1.5 Communications

Past literature has shown that, to be part of a customers' evoked set of brands (Colbert, 2003), and to form a brand image a selection of brand identity associations (brand position) must be actively communicated through effective channels (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). A particular brand position, positioning strategy and communications mix must be selected to influence consumers' brand awareness, perceptions and relationships (Aaker, 1996; Barich & Kotler, 1991; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Pektus, 2004). The brand's position is selected based on three strategies: broadening a restrictive identity, reinforcing a well-established set of associations or emphasizing what the brand is not (Aaker, 1996). The communications mix balances a selection of eight types of communications: advertising, sales promotions, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth marketing and personal selling (Keller, 2009) diffused through a number of channels like television, print, social media, websites, e-mails, person-to-person and events (Keller, 2009; Pektus, 2004). The strategic importance of these decisions rests in their ability to generate awareness, but can also lead to greater congruence between the brand identity and the brand image, which has been shown to influence overall brand equity and success (Aaker, 1996; Colbert, 2003; Hoefler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rowley, 1997). For strategic purposes, we focus on those strongly emphasized by both groups.

Upon comparing our managers' and visitors' positioning and communications practices, we found that managers select a subset of brand information that they actively communicate through a mix of channels. Our analyses allowed us to find that they strongly

use the broadening strategy (broaden a restrictive brand identity) and the reinforcement strategy (reinforce a well-established set of associations), which appear to be in line with their perceived brand management flaws. Indeed, managers find that visitors possess restrictive genres associations (product scope dimension). Per our previous findings, this may be associated to the fact that visitors only loosely emphasize the product scope dimension in their brand images. Managers also wish to reinforce a well-established set of associations regarding the quality of the yearly film selection. To do so, they use a communications channel mix that only loosely mimics that of visitors; while managers equally focus their efforts on their website and print materials, visitors principally visit their website due to its convenient modularity and rely on an inner-circle's word-of-mouth. We thus understand that, per our fourth research objective, **the traditionally commercial concept of brand position and communications strategies can be applied** in our study's film festival context, though with little congruence between both groups. We find, however, that strategic emphasis must be placed on the website as it is the primary vehicle used by film festival visitors interested in returning to the festival. This method is strongly complemented with word-of-mouth, which visitors attribute as the main reason for their first attendance. To view our new conceptual model that accounts for these results, please consult Figure 6.

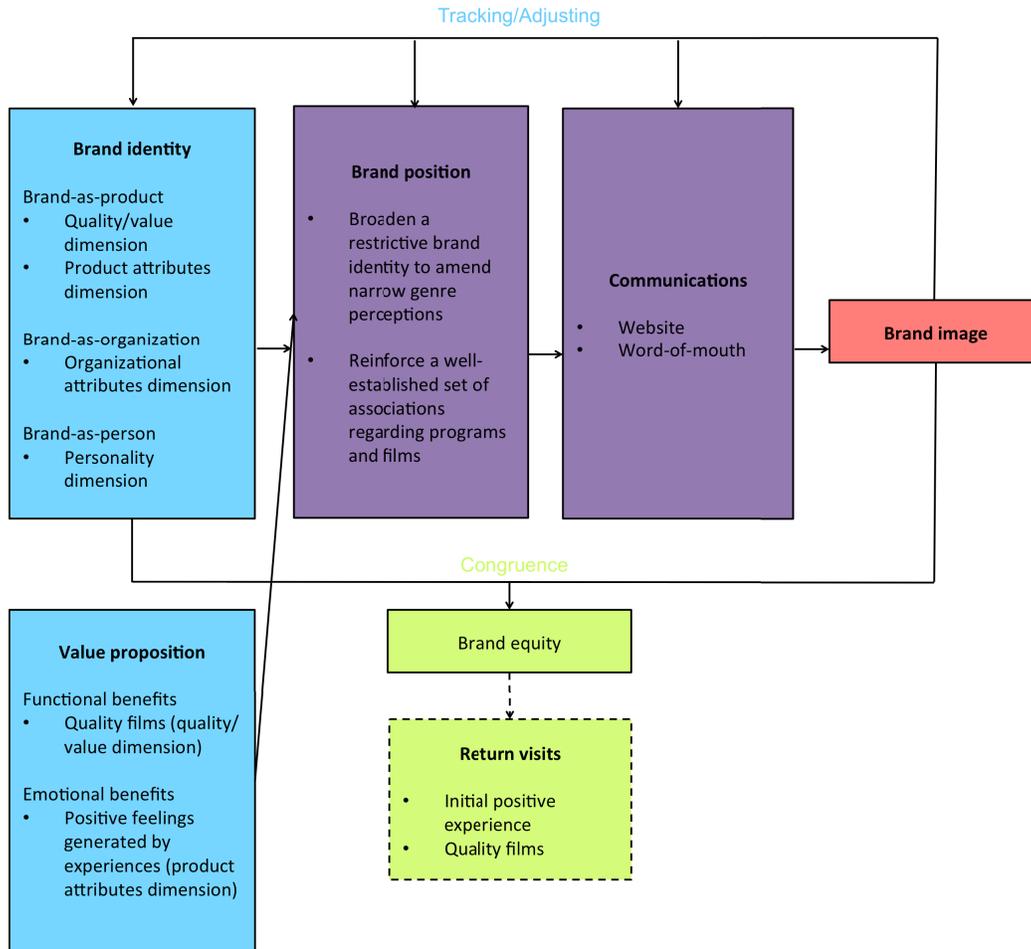
5.1.6 Brand Equity

Past literature has shown that strong brands can provide benefits for both the company and its customers (Aaker, 1996; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rowley, 1997) (Table II). The overarching benefit is brand equity: the added value of the brand (Keller, 1993). The value of brand equity is particularly associated to customers' consumption behaviour, as it is their purchasing that will influence the success of a brand (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993) leading Keller (1993) to develop the concept of customer-based brand equity. It is defined as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993; p.1). According to this author, brand awareness and the development of a brand image can be achieved through effective communication (Keller, 1993). In turn, if it is strong, positive and unique, the brand image should lead to greater brand success (Keller, 1993). As such,

effectively managing a brand's identity and its diffusion is key to building strong brands and thus generating brand equity and, ultimately, success (Keller, 1993).

Upon comparing our managers' and visitors' brand equity, we found that certain brand identity/image associations and dimensions influenced attendance, but the exact impact on success remained unclear. As previously discussed, visitors' core film quality associations (quality/value dimension and product attributes dimension) are the primary reason for their repeat attendance. However, though in the brand perception section they discussed the importance of branding for film festival success, they did not acknowledge the brand's impact on their visitation behaviour. Indeed, their initial visit was strongly associated to word-of-mouth and repeat visit was strongly associated to a positive initial experience and subsequent quality films. This discrepancy can be attributed to a bias by which interviewees prefer to not admit that they are influenced by marketing practices, which would explain why they view the positive impact of branding on others' behaviour. This diverges from managers who strongly believed in the impact of their branding on initial and repeat visits. We thus understand that, per our fifth research objective, **the traditionally commercial concept of brand equity can be tentatively applied** in our study's film festival context, with more research needing to be done to confirm its direct impact on visitors. We did find, however, that important brand dimensions like film quality impacts their attendance, so we can indirectly extrapolate its impact on success. To view our new conceptual model that accounts for these results, please consult Figure 6.

Figure 6. New Conceptual Model



Our model demonstrates the relation between a company’s brand identity (blue), its customers’ brand image (red), the implementation process (purple) and the impact they can have on creating value for both parties (green). Per our results, we found that certain brand identity dimensions and aspects predominate within film festival branding and, thus, are strategically important. We also found that these branding activities tend to be relatively consistent with that of the commercial sector. Indeed, our model suggests that the brand identity and value proposition form the grounds on which a brand position can be selected (Aaker, 1996), with a particular focus on the brand-as-product (quality/value dimension, product attributes dimension), brand-as-organization (organizational attributes dimension) and brand-as-person (personality dimension) perspectives. Once chosen, the brand position it is

actively transmitted to consumers through various communication channels (Aaker, 1996), with a particular focus on the website and word-of-mouth, thereby allowing them to form a brand image (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Tracking and adjusting the brand must be a core activity as the company or organization must ensure that their brand identity is congruent with that of the brand image (Aaker, 1996; Keller 1993). Indeed, we find that managers often wish to reposition themselves in an effort to broaden a restrictive identity or to reinforce a well-established set of associations. If the brand is strong and congruent between both parties, it can lead to greater brand equity and, ultimately, additional sales and visits (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Keller, 1993), something is believed to be influenced by a positive initial experience and quality films.

5.2 Theoretical and Managerial Contributions

This exploratory study has provided us with a number of theoretical and managerial contributions. Given the scarce literature on cultural branding, it provided one of the first looks into its holistic application. Taking into account the perspectives of both film festival managers (brand identity) and visitors (brand image), we were able to analyze the relevance of each perspective, as well as their strategic overlap. As such, our research has set the stage for a number of theoretical and managerial contributions. We explore each in the following sections.

5.2.1 Theoretical Contributions

Our study has contributed to the theoretical knowledge on cultural branding in a few main ways. First, it contributes to the knowledge on the nascent concept of cultural marketing, and, more specifically, that of cultural branding. Indeed, it suggests that these traditionally commercial concepts are positively perceived and actively used in the film festival context. It further contributes to the literature suggesting that a dual approach combining both a market-orientation and a product-orientation is to be favoured in the cultural context. Indeed, while the brand is valued, the quality product must be maintained to ensure success. Second, it broadens the discussion of cultural branding by providing a uniquely holistic approach.

Indeed, our research simultaneously considers the predominant stakeholders in the consumption context: management and consumers. This allows for a more valid and reliable understanding of the dynamic between strategic decisions and their impact on consumers. Third, our research helps further support the application of traditionally commercial concepts in the cultural sector. Indeed, in our study, we apply the concepts of brand identity, brand image, and brand position, value proposition, communications mix and brand equity. In doing so, we found further support for their use in the cultural context of film festivals – thereby also contributing to their validity and reliability. Fourth, our study contributes to cultural marketing literature by applying marketing concepts in the rarely studied context of film festivals. Fifth, taken together, our contributions allowed us to develop a model relating the traditionally commercial concepts in the cultural context. Indeed, though exploratory, it can serve as a basis for further research. Sixth, more globally, our research contributes to the general literature on marketing, branding and the intricacies of brand management and further extends the application of Aaker (1996) and Keller's (1993) branding frameworks. Seventh, some differences between managers and visitors may be attributed to visitors' inability to overtly recognize certain things that might be subconsciously impacting their behaviour like visuals and symbolism – something that managers strongly attribute to their brand equity – or even something as basic as the film genres (product scope in the brand-as-product perspective).

5.2.2 Managerial Contributions

Our study has contributed to the managerial knowledge on cultural branding in a few main ways. First, it helped us determine the strategic relevance of branding in film festival. Indeed, we determined that both managers and visitors positively perceive these concepts and believe that the active use of these traditionally commercial concepts is important in the success of film festivals to attract and maintain their audience bases. It is, therefore, recommended for film festival managers to consider create and strategically manage a brand in the film festival context. Second, our study offered insights into the brand identity associations and dimensions with the strongest strategic potential. Indeed, upon comparing both managers' and visitors' perceptions we found that the quality/value, product attributes, organizational attributes and brand personality dimensions were most emphasized by both

groups. It is, therefore, recommended to use these dimensions to frame future film festival brand managers' initial branding strategies or realign those that exist to generate additional value for visitors. Third, more specifically, we find that these dimensions principally center on the films' quality and their supporting experiences. It is therefore important for film festival managers to provide consistently quality films, as this is the primary reason for visitation. It is also important to complement these viewings with unique socialization experiences and atmospherics as visitors strongly value these aspects. Indeed, the primary reason for visitors' return is a positive initial visit and consistently quality films. Fourth, our study helped determine the strategically relevant communications practices generated by managers and actually used by visitors. We found that the website is unanimously predominantly used by film festival visitors and should, therefore, be the focal point of communication about films, the main reason for which attendees revisit film festivals. Fifth, we found that a primary contributor of initial film festival visitation is word-of-mouth from another friend. We, thereby, recommend that film festival managers nurture the relationship with current visitors and to provide them with promotions that would encourage them to invite their friends.

5.3 Limits

Our exploratory research attempted to reduce any limitations by using a holistic approach that considered both predominant sides of branding: managers and consumers. Despite our attempt to increase validity and reliability, our research methods were vulnerable to certain limitations regarding our sample selection and overall methodology.

Regarding our sample, we found five main limitations. First, the limited number of respondents in both groups may not have been sufficient to generate the most representative set of brand associations. This may have lead to low levels of reliability as the results cannot be generalized to the greater population, nor to all film festivals. Second, regarding our respondents, many had backgrounds in marketing and design, which may have biased their answers and generated an unrepresentative set of brand associations. Third, our study only considers visitors who had attended four or more films (mid-range and frequent visitors) and, therefore, omitted the perceptions of those who had rarely visited each festival or not at all,

and the reasons why they have done or not done so. Fourth, our sampling method was of convenience and relied on snowballing. As such, our sample was not necessarily a representative subsection of the studied population. Fifth, our study only considered large, well-established film festivals and is, therefore, unrepresentative of the range of existing ones. Indeed, in only looking at successful festivals, we cannot determine if branding is causally affecting film festival success. Further, in only considering film festivals, it is impossible to generalize our results to all cultural contexts. Findings can, therefore, not be generalized beyond the current context.

Regarding our overall methodology, we found four main limitations. First, the geographical dispersion of our study's film festivals remained in Montreal. While this helped us control for certain factors, it may not have accurately represented film festivals from different cities around the world. For this reason, our data was not reliable and limits their generalizability. Further, Montreal represents a particular cultural context in North America because it is known to be a cultural city. Second, we used prior literature to code our data which may have resulted in the danger of potentially force-fitting (Belk & Al., 2013). Third, prior to our interviews, we provided participants with a list of branding definitions to help increase consistency and reliability. This, however, could have oriented concept emergence during the interview process. Finally, given the qualitative nature of our study, there may have been researcher bias influenced by their personality and background (Johnson, 1997).

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This exploratory study has provided us with new avenues for future research. First, from a methodological perspective, it would be worth testing these findings with larger populations in both groups in a quantitative setting to control for any variables that may have influenced our exploratory interviews. For instance, in testing our new model (Figure 6), it would help ensure those links that are significant. Second, to get a more complete picture, it would be worth considering visitors who have not visited film festivals or who have done so rarely to understand their perceptions and why or why not they aren't attracted to film festivals. This would help gain deeper insight as to what attracts and retains visitors. Third, it

would be worth testing these findings in broader settings and contexts by considering a broader range of film festival, a variety of cultural institutions, and across various geographic locations to assess branding's strategic applicability to aid cultural institutions survive in a saturated market. Fourth, it would be worth building on our proposed model to include other behavioural links typically found in commercial marketing literature, like the notions of trust and satisfaction and their impact on attendance.

Conclusion

Our research explored the application of traditionally commercial branding concepts in the cultural context and considered their strategic implications from the perspectives of both film festival managers and visitors. The main objective was to contribute to the discussion on cultural branding by holistically applying the concepts of brand identity and brand image, while analyzing the impact of their relationship on value creation for both the film festival managers and customers. Our results allowed us to confirm that cultural branding was positively perceived by both population pools and that traditionally commercial concepts (brand identity, brand image, brand position, communications and brand identity) can be applied in our study's cultural context of film festivals. In exploring their content and comparing both groups, we found that those dimensions with the most strategic importance were the quality/value, product attributes, organizational attributes and brand personality dimensions. Further, we found that two aspects predominated in film festival managers' brand identity and visitors brand image: films and experiences. Indeed, quality films and unique experiences were core features of each group's brand perceptions. This further supports the dual approach to cultural branding (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Colbert, 2003; Hume, 2008; Jaworski, 2000; Unwin et al., 2007), as a balance between traditionally commercial concepts (brand and market-orientation) and the artistic products (product-orientation) is adopted from both the consumers and managerial points of view in the film festival context. Overall, we found that managers' and visitors' brand identity and image content are relatively congruent.

Regarding communications practices, to learn about the films and the supporting experiences, the website revealed to be one of the only methods through which return film festival visitors learn about each brand – something that managers have not considered as they equally diffuse their efforts through a number of channels including web and print. Interestingly, we found that our study's visitors unanimously visited film festivals for the first time through a friend's word-of-mouth. Afterwards, return visits were impacted by a positive initial experience, the quality of the presented films, and visitors' ability to conveniently find the information on the festival's website.

Regarding brand equity, we find that the brand is believed to play a role in film festival success by both groups. While, upon applying this notion to themselves, visitors were reluctant to admit it, they do believe it has a role to play in attracting visitors. Managers unwaveringly believe in the importance of the brand on film festival success. In practice, upon exploring visitors' reasons for visiting and re-visiting a film festival, we found that it highly depended on initial word-of-mouth and a positive first experience. As such, film festival success is highly related to the positive experience generated by the films and the supporting events and atmosphere – two core brand dimensions. Thus, per our exploratory research on the nascent topic of cultural branding, we find that its related commercial concepts can be applied in the film festival context and can have a positive impact on success.

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Annexe 1 Discussion guides

Annexe 1.1 Managers' Discussion Guide

FESTIVAL:
NOM / NAME:
DATE:
ENDROIT / LOCATION:
SIGNATURE DOCUMENT:

1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Avez-vous des questions par rapport aux définitions?

2 GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF BRANDING ACTIVITIES IN FILM FESTIVAL CONTEXT

2.1 Parlez-moi de vos impressions relatives au *branding* dans le contexte culturel des festivals de film.

Questions supplémentaires

- Est-ce quelque chose qui est beaucoup utilisé ?
- Devrait-il être utilisé ou évité ? Pourquoi ?
- De quelles manières pensez-vous que c'est similaire ou différent du contexte de branding commercial/traditionnel.

3 MANAGERS' BRAND IDENTITY

3.1 Quelles associations décrivent votre festival de film?
Figure 7.

Questions supplémentaires

- Associations au produit (étendue, attributs, qualité, valeur, utilité, personnes qui l'utilisent, origine des films)
- Associations à l'organisation (programmes offerts, valeurs promues au sein de l'organisme ex. focus sur visiteurs), local ou global)
- Associations humaines (personne) (traits de personnalité, création de relation entre la marque et les visiteurs)
- Associations symboliques (visuel, métaphores, héritage)
- Ou, qui, quand, comment, pourquoi?
- Est-ce une liste exhaustive?

3.2 Diriez-vous que certaines de ces associations font partie du coeur de la marque (essence intemporelle)?
Lesquelles? Pourquoi?

3.3 Diriez-vous que certaines de ces associations font partie de la périphérie de la marque (change avec temps et contexte)? Lesquelles? Pourquoi?

3.4 Quelles associations diriez-vous que vous communiquez actuellement? Pourquoi?

3.5 Parlez-moi de la proposition de valeur de votre festival de film.
Figure 8.

Questions supplémentaires

- Qu'offre votre festival qui serait de valeur aux yeux de vos visiteurs ? En quoi est-ce différent de d'autres festivals ?
- Quelle proposition de valeur communiquez-vous actuellement ?

4 COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Parlez-moi de vos pratiques de communications.

Questions supplémentaires

- Quels types de plateformes utilisez-vous pour faire la publicité de votre festival de film (médias sociaux, imprimé, etc.) ?
- Lesquels priorisez-vous ? Pourquoi ?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ou, qui, quand, comment, pourquoi ?</i>
4.2	<p>Utilisez vous vos communications pour activement communiquer de l'information de marque? Pourquoi? Comment?</p>
5	BRAND EQUITY
5.1	<p>Parlez-moi de vos croyances quant à l'influence de votre identité de marque pour attirer et retenir les visiteurs.</p> <p>Figure 9.</p> <p><i>Questions supplémentaires</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>De quelle(s) manière(s) sentez-vous que votre marque influence vos visiteurs?</i> • <i>Croyez-vous que vous avez une forte marque?</i> • <i>Croyez-vous que la performance de votre festival serait la même sans les activités de branding?</i>

Annexe 1.2 Visitors' Discussion Guide

Figure 10.

FESTIVAL:
NOM / NAME:
DATE:
ENDROIT / LOCATION:
SIGNATURE DOCUMENT:
Figure 11.

Figure 13.

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS

Figure 15.

1.1 Avez-vous des questions par rapport aux définitions?

2 GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF BRANDING ACTIVITIES IN FILM FESTIVAL CONTEXT

2.1 Parlez-moi de vos impressions relatives au *branding* dans le contexte culturel des festivals de film.

Figure 16.

Questions supplémentaires

- Est-ce quelque chose qui est beaucoup utilisé ?
- Devrait-il être utilisé ou évité ? Pourquoi ?
- De quelles manières pensez-vous que c'est similaire ou différent du contexte de branding commercial/traditionnel.

3 VISITORS' BRAND IMAGE CONTENT

3.1 Videz votre esprit. Quand vous pensez au festival de film X, que vous vient-il à l'esprit? Diriez-vous que ces associations sont comparativement aux autres festivals? Diriez-vous qu'elles sont?

3.2 Quand vous pensez au festival de film X, quelles autres associations vous viennent à l'esprit?

Questions supplémentaires

- Quelles caractéristiques ou qualités peuvent être utilisées pour le décrire?
- Ou, qui, quand, comment, pourquoi?
- Est-ce une list exhaustive?

4 COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Parlez-moi des communications que vous utilisez pour prendre connaissance du festival de film X.

Questions supplémentaires

- Quelles plateformes rappelez-vous avoir vu pour ce festival (ou, qui, quand, comment, pourquoi)?
- Quelles préférez-vous ? Pourquoi ?
- Ou, qui, quand, comment, pourquoi ?

4.2 Trouvez-vous que les communications du festival de film représentent bien la marque? Pourquoi?

5 BRAND EQUITY

5.1 Parlez-moi de la raison pour laquelle vous avez choisi ce festival au lieu d'un autre.

Questions supplémentaires

- Pourquoi êtes-vous venir à ce festival pour la première fois ?
- Pourquoi retournez-vous à ce festival ?
- Sentez-vous que la marque a joué un rôle dans votre décision ? Comment ?

Annexe 2 Recruitment E-mail

Annexe 2.1 Managers' Recruitment E-mail

Bonjour,

Mon nom est Jessica Hachey et je suis à la recherche de participants pour mon mémoire de Maîtrise en marketing au HEC Montréal. Plus particulièrement, je cherche à interviewer un membre de la direction du **festival de film X** qui travaille directement avec la marque ou qui la connaît très bien.

Étapes de l'étude :

1. Familiarisation avec une liste de **définitions** de *branding* (en attachement) ;
2. Réponse au court **questionnaire** web de cinq minutes en [cliquant ici](#) ;
3. **Entrevue** d'environ une heure.

Description de l'étude :

En vous rencontrant, j'espère acquérir une compréhension profonde de la marque de festival de film et des stratégies qui l'entourent. Je rencontrerai aussi des visiteurs de votre festival pour en obtenir leurs perceptions. L'objectif ultime est de comparer les deux perspectives pour vérifier l'utilité et l'efficacité de la marque pour les organismes culturelles comme la vôtre.

Les prochaines étapes :

Si vous acceptez de participer, vous aurez **une semaine** pour répondre au court questionnaire démographique. Suite à celui-ci, je vous contacterai pour déterminer un moment pour faire l'entrevue.

Au plaisir d'avoir de vos nouvelles,

Jessica Hachey

Étudiante M.Sc. Marketing, HEC Montréal

jessica.hachey@hec.ca

Annexe 2.2 Visitors' Recruitment E-mail

Bonjour,

Mon nom est Jessica Hachey et je suis à la recherche de participants pour mon mémoire de Maîtrise en marketing au HEC Montréal. Plus particulièrement, je cherche à interviewer quelqu'un qui a vu au moins quatre films du **festival de film X** dans les deux dernières années.

Étapes de l'étude :

1. Familiarisation avec une liste de **définitions** de *branding* (en attachement) ;
2. Réponse au court **questionnaire** web de cinq minutes en [cliquant ici](#) ;
3. **Entrevue** d'environ une heure.

Description de l'étude :

En vous rencontrant, j'espère acquérir une compréhension profonde de votre connaissance de la marque du festival de film. Je rencontrerai aussi un gestionnaire de ce même festival pour en obtenir son point de vue. L'objectif ultime sera d'étudier les deux perspectives afin de déterminer l'impact stratégique d'une marque pour les organismes culturels tels que les festivals de film.

Les prochaines étapes :

Si vous acceptez de participer, vous aurez **une semaine** pour répondre au court questionnaire démographique. Suite à celui-ci, je vous contacterai pour déterminer un moment pour faire l'entrevue.

Au plaisir d'avoir de vos nouvelles,

Jessica Hachey

Étudiante M.Sc. Marketing, HEC Montréal

jessica.hachey@hec.ca

Annexe 3 Branding Definitions

Marque : Le nom, terme, design, symbole ou tout autre élément qui identifie le bien ou service d'un vendeur par rapport aux autres. (AMA, 2016)

Identité de marque : La marque telle que stratégiquement conçue par la compagnie ou l'organisme. C'est la façon que la compagnie ou l'organisme espère se faire percevoir par ses clients potentiels et existants. (Aaker, 1996)

Image de marque : Les perceptions que possède le client par rapport à la marque ; les associations qu'il possède dans son esprit. (Keller, 1993)

Équité de marque : La valeur supplémentaire que donne une marque à un bien ou service. Une marque a une plus grande équité si elle possède des associations qui sont fortes, favorables et uniques. (Keller, 1993)

Proposition de valeur : Une déclaration mettant en évidence les bénéfices apportés aux clients. (Aaker, 1996)

Positionnement de la marque : Une portion de la marque qui est activement communiquée au public cible. (Aaker, 1996)

Communications : Toute méthode pour diffuser la marque au public cible afin d'influencer ses perceptions. (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993)

Annexe 4 Survey Monkey Questionnaires

Annexe 4.1 Managers' Survey Monkey Questionnaire

<https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/NYVSFSX>

Annexe 4.2 Visitors' Survey Monkey Questionnaire

<https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/XPQN6ZD>

