

# Using of Portfolio Brand Strategy – The Case Study of Łódzki Dom Kultury Wykorzystanie strategii portfolio marek – przykład Łódzkiego Domu Kultury

**Streszczenie.** Celem opracowania jest wskazanie użyteczności strategii zarządzania portfolio marek w odniesieniu do organizacji działających w skali lokalnej na rynku usług kulturalnych. Strategia portfolio marek jest standardowo uznawana za użyteczną dla firm produkcyjnych o zasięgu międzynarodowym, które mają w swoim asortymencie liczne linie produktów. Tymczasem specyfika instytucji, jaką jest dom kultury, również pozwala na prowadzenie w jednym miejscu wielu usług opatrzonych odrębnymi markami, z których każda ma własny wizerunek i własne grono nabywców. W opracowaniu wskazano jednocześnie nie tylko na sposób wdrożenia tejże strategii zarządzania marką w Łódzkim Domu Kultury, ale również na potencjalne mocne i słabe strony takiego rozwiązania strategicznego w obszarze współczesnego marketingu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zarządzanie marką, portfolio marek, instytucja kultury.

## 1. Introduction

Modern organization, which wants to maintain or strengthen its competitive position on the market, is forced to choose one of two strategies – either focus on one category of products or services and improve it, or develop its portfolio and offer customers many products, sometimes not related to each other. Whatever

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choice, the goal is to build brand awareness among consumers, effectively position of brand, build own potential and, albeit not always, generate financial benefits. With respect to the cultural institutions of interest in this study, the objectives may also relate to raising awareness of the artistic value of works, bringing the public closer to culture, or developing the organization. However, it should also be taken into account that the possibility of achieving these goals depends on the diversity of the audience.<sup>1</sup> In terms of non-institutional goals, this also corresponds to general cultural policy.<sup>2</sup> Decisions concerning brand portfolio building concern both organizations operating in more competitive sectors (e.g. food or cosmetics) and those where competition is mild, but also dynamically developing (e.g. on the cultural market). A similar dilemma is faced by the Łódzki Dom Kultury, which operates in Łódź. It seems that due to the current fragmentation of the offer of this institution, it is necessary to optimize its brand portfolio. The aim of the article is to analyze the theoretical and practical aspects of management in accordance with the brand portfolio strategy, to indicate the potential benefits and risks associated with it and propose improvements in the functioning of the Łódzki Dom Kultury in the studied area.

## 2. Strategy of brand portfolio management in the related literature

Among the product development strategies related to brand management decisions, the multi-brand strategy plays an important role. It can be mentioned that a company has a portfolio of brands when it has a corporate brand, but at the same time each of its products or product categories has a separate brand. The strategy based on the brand portfolio boils down to improving the positioning of the company and providing as comprehensive market service as possible through the share of each of the product brands.<sup>3</sup> Conventionally, the development of a brand portfolio is associated with international corporations that offer many different products and product categories and, in order to differentiate between

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1 Ł. Wróblewski, *Strategie marketingowe w instytucjach kultury*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2012, p. 66.

2 K. Lewandowska, *Sfera autonomii, sfera biurokracji. Relacje polskich teatrów publicznych i ich organizatorów w perspektywie międzynarodowej*, "Zarządzanie w Kulturze" 2017, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 413.

3 J.-N. Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*, Kogan Page, London 2008, [after:] M. Midovska, *Implementation of Brand-Portfolio Strategies as a Condition for Competitive Advantage (The Case of Macedonian Companies)*, "Horizons" 2014, vol. 12, no. 169, April, p. 170.

them, give them different brands. Meanwhile, a multi-brand strategy can also be applied to cultural services, especially where an organization offers a wide range of services to different segments of buyers. It can therefore be said that the geographic scope of a company's activities should not determine the choice as to the number of its brands.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to service organizations, the following advantages speak for the application of the multi-brand strategy: the prospect of keeping customers in a situation of weariness of services purchased so far, motivation to improve the offer of internally competing services and minimization of costs, e.g. in the area of promotion.<sup>5</sup> Benefits from the development of the brand portfolio also include the possibility of acquiring new customers and, in the case of manufacturing companies, ensuring proper exposure and space on the shelf and developing cooperation with retailers. On the other hand, the introduction of new products and brands to the offer, even if a corporate brand and other previously owned brands are successful, does not guarantee the market success of the new product. The new brand also requires numerous investments, especially in the early stages of the product life cycle.<sup>6</sup>

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- 4 S.P. Douglas, C.S. Craig, E.J. Nijssen, *Integrating Branding Strategy across Markets: Building International Brand Architecture*, "Journal of International Marketing" 2001, vol. 9 no. 2, pp. 97–114; N. Kumar, *Kill a Brand, Keep a Customer*, "Harvard Business Review" December 2003, pp. 86–95; I. Schuiling, J.-N. Kapferer, *Real Differences between Local and International Brands: Strategic Implications for International Marketers*, "Journal of International Marketing" 2004, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 97–112; A. Strebinger, *Strategic Brand Concepts and Brand Architecture Strategy – Theoretical Considerations*, AFM – IRG Congress on Branding Proceedings, Paris 2002, pp. 1–17, [after:] C. Chailan, *Brands Portfolios and Competitive Advantage: An Empirical Study*, "Journal of Product and Brand Management" 2008, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 254–264 (p. 254).
  - 5 D.A. Aaker, *Brand Portfolio Strategy: Creating Relevance, Differentiation, Energy, Leverage, and Clarity*, The Free Press, New York 2004, [after:] P. Kotler, K.L. Keller, *Marketing*, Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, Poznań 2018, pp. 285–286.
  - 6 G. Castellion, S.K. Markham, *Perspective: New Product Failure Rates: Influence of Argumentum ad Populum and Self-interest*, "Journal of Product. Innovation Management" 2013, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 976–979; R. Chimhundu, L.S. McNeill, R.P. Hamlin, *Manufacturer and Retailer Brands: Is Strategic Coexistence the Norm?*, "Australasian Marketing Journal" 2015, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 49–60; C.M. Christensen, *The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fall*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston 2013; A. Hubner, H. Kuhn, *Retail Category Management: State-of-the-art Review of Quantitative Research and Software Applications in Assortment and Shelf Space Management*, "Omega" 2012, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 199–209; J.-N. Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management: Advanced Insights and Strategic Thinking*, Kogan Page, London 2012; M. Martos-Partal, *Innovation and the Market Share of Private Labels*, "Journal of Marketing Management" 2012, vol. 28, no. 5–6, pp. 695–715; S.F. Slater, J.J. Mohr, S. Sengupta, *Radical Product Innovation Capability: Literature Review, Synthesis, and Illustrative Research Propositions*, "Journal of Product Innovation Management" 2014, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 552–566; H. Sorensen, *Inside the Mind of the Shopper*, Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River 2009, [after:] A. Tanusondjaja, M. Nenycz-Thiel, J. Dawes, R. Kennedy,

In the process of brand portfolio management, it is important to ensure that the market is served as comprehensively as possible (by reaching many customer segments) and that internal competition or even brand cannibalization is avoided. It is also necessary to systematically analyze the potential of brands and assess the rationale of their maintenance on the market.<sup>7</sup> In a situation of limited resources faced by each organization, sometimes it is better to limit the number of brands (or stop adding them).<sup>8</sup> It should be remembered that each brand should have its own “place” and “role” in building the competitive advantage of the organization.<sup>9</sup> It will be possible, however, if the brand portfolio management is consistent with the adopted strategy of the whole organization.<sup>10</sup> From the consumer’s point of view, an important role in brand portfolio management is also played by creating links between brands (of semantic, symbolic, name or geographical nature and others).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, brand portfolio management requires decision making in three areas:<sup>12</sup>

- Scope – the number of brands and the number of customer segments served;
- Competition between brands in the company’s portfolio;
- Positioning in the customers’ mind taking into account the quality and price of products.

However, regardless of the number of brands in the portfolio, it is worth taking care to ensure that if each of them is used, the corporate brand should also be appropriately exposed, which should clearly present the business model adopted

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*Portfolios: Patterns in Brand Penetration, Market Share, and Hero Product Variants*, “Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services” 2018, vol. 41, pp. 211–217 (p. 211).

- 7 J. Trout, *Differentiate or Die: Survival in Our Era of Killer Competition*, John Wiley & Sons, New York 2000; K. Ramdas, M.S. Sawhney, *A Cross-Functional Approach to Evaluating Multiple Line Extensions for Assembled Products*, “Management Science” 2001, vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 22–36; N. Kumar, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–95, [after:] P. Kotler, K.L. Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 286.
- 8 M. Midovska, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
- 9 N. Dawar, *What Are Brands Good for?*, “MIT Sloan Management Review” 2004, Fall, pp. 31–37; J.-N. Kapferer, *Remarques*, Les Éditions d’Organisation, Paris 2000, [after:] C. Chailan, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
- 10 M. Midovska, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
- 11 C.V. Dimofte, R.F. Yalch, *The Mere Association Effect and Brand Evaluation*, “Journal of Consumer Psychology” 2011, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 24–37; M. Petromilli, D. Morrison, M. Million, *Brand Architecture: Building Brand Portfolio Value*, “Strategy & Leadership” 2002, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 22–28, [after:] P. Åsberg, *A Dualistic View of Brand Portfolios: The Company’s versus the Customers’ View*, “Journal of Consumer Marketing” 2018, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 264–276 (p. 266).
- 12 A.D. Aaker, *Brand Portfolio Strategy: Creating Relevance, Differentiation, Energy, Leverage, and Clarity*, The Free Press, New York 2004; P.K. Chintagunta, *Heterogeneous Logit Model Implications for Brand Positioning*, “Journal of Marketing Research” 1994, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 304–311; M. Porter, *Competitive Strategy*, The Free Press, New York 1980, [after:] N.A. Morgan, L.L. Rego, *Brand Portfolio Strategy and Firm Performance*, “Journal of Marketing” 2009, vol. 73, no. 1, pp. 59–74 (p. 60).

by the organization.<sup>13</sup> We can therefore say that the main task of a corporate brand is to improve the coordination of the development of product brands. Meanwhile, the brands in the organization's portfolio can be, after D.A. Aaker divided into: strategic, strengthening, stars, winged, milking cows.<sup>14</sup>

Defining the category to which a given brand can be classified properly allows us to make decisions related to its development and functions in relation to other brands and corporate brands.

### 3. ŁÓDŹ CULTURAL MARKET

In 2017 (as of 31.12.2017) in Łódź voivodship there were 512 public libraries, 51 museums and museum branches, 25 cinemas, including 24 permanent cinemas and 3 multiplexes, 10 theatres and music institutions and 203 objects which can be classified as cultural center clubs and common rooms.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it allows to notice that the inhabitants of the voivodship, also taking into account their voluntary or forced professional mobility, have access to many facilities that offer their cultural services. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that they can also spend their free time on sport, recreation, additional education, spending time at home or with friends (e.g. in catering and entertainment establishments).

In the case of the Łódzki Dom Kultury selected for the analysis, it has to basically compete with both community centers in Łódź (with a multifaceted offer – e.g. district cultural centers) and with more specialized organizations. It seems that this forces the organization, i.e. the Łódzki Dom Kultury, to look strategically at the development of its own offer.

It should not be forgotten, however, that the activity of this cultural center is not determined only by the diversity and a number of competitors. Other significant factors include: an economic situation of the region and society, a demographic structure of the population, access to the latest technologies and the possibility of introducing modernizations as well as changing customer expectations, the possibility of cooperation with external partners, etc. It is also important that the cultural center's activity is not only determined by the diversity and a number of competitors, but also by the economic situation of the region and society, the demographic structure

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13 S. Knox, D. Bickerton, *The Six Conventions of Corporate Branding*, "European Journal of Marketing" 2003, vol. 37, no. 7/8, pp. 998–1116, [after:] K.J. Chmielewski, *Rola marki korporacyjnej w portfelu marek*, "Logistyka" 2015, vol. 2, pp. 1160–1165.

14 D.A. Aaker, *op.cit.*, [after:] M. Midovska, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

15 GUS, *Rocznik statystyczny województw 2018*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2018, pp. 361–366.

of the population, access to the latest technologies and a possibility of introducing modernizations. A factor of great importance for this and other cultural institutions in the region is also the source of funding, and thus political stability in the region. Like six other cultural institutions, the Łódzki Dom Kultury has the status of a Local Government Cultural Institution, which means that its organizer is the Marshal's Office in Łódź.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the organizer provides the Łódzki Dom Kultury with, among other things, financial resources. However, they are too small to be able to survive and therefore, it is necessary, e.g. to sell tickets for cultural events or charge for participation in meetings of thematic groups. A similar problem is faced by a big number of institutions in Łódź (27 entities), which are organized by the City Hall of Łódź.<sup>17</sup> Other cultural institutions are private organizations.

## 4. Case study of the Łódzki Dom Kultury

The Łódzki Dom Kultury is located in the center of Łódź, in close proximity to the Fabryczna Railway and Bus Station, near the major road junctions in the city. For location reasons, it is directly competitive with the philharmonic hall, two theatres and Piotrkowska Street, where a number of restaurants are located. The Łódzki Dom Kultury has been operating since 1953. However, the activities of the center are not limited to providing services to the city's residents or people who come to the center mainly or, among other things, to participate in cultural events organized there. The Łódzki Dom Kultury also organizes events in other localities of the Łódź voivodeship. The offer of this organization includes training courses for persons employed in cultural institutions and other self-government organizations operating in the Łódź voivodeship. However, the geographical scope of activities of this entity is wider, as the Łódzki Dom Kultury engages itself, or in cooperation with other organizations, in projects implemented at least on the scale of several voivodships.<sup>18</sup> As such, the Łódzki Dom Kultury is a corporate brand – it should be stressed that it performs a superior and representative function in relation to all the centers providing specialized cultural services, projects and groups.

The richness of product/service brands can be observed taking into account that they operate in the structures and building of the Łódzki Dom Kultury:

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16 Serwis Informacyjny Województwa Łódzkiego, *Samorządowe instytucje kultury*, <https://www.lodzkie.pl/kultura/samorzadowe-instytucje-kultury> (accessed: 26.01.2019).

17 Urząd Miasta Łodzi – Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej, *Rejestr instytucji kultury*, <http://archiwum.bip.uml.lodz.pl/index.php?str=16&id=10552> (accessed: 26.01.2019).

18 Łódzki Dom Kultury, *O nas*, <http://www.ldk.lodz.pl/o-nas-t2> (accessed: 26.01.2019).

- Cinemas: Szpulka and Przytulne;
- Galleries: Forum Fotografii, Imaginarium, Galeria Stara, Galeria Nowa, Galeria Kawiarnia;
- Publishers: Kalejdoskop, E-Kalejdoskop, Kwadratura, Kwadraturka, Region Kultury, O Regionie;<sup>19</sup>
- Ośrodek Teatralny ŁDK.

Apart from the indicated areas of activity with product brands, the Łódzki Dom Kultury offers additional activities – related to dance, recreation, sport, painting, theatre, etc. – in order to promote the cultural heritage of the city. Some of them have their own names (e.g. “Peron 323” – in the area of theatrical arts, theatrical workshop “Pod lupą” or “Pracownia 413”, which includes workshops related to the improvement of artistic and painting skills), and the part has a brand and a name indicating directly the field (e.g. Fitness, Social Dance Course or Tai Chi and Qi Gong). The Łódzki Dom Kultury also organizes a number of projects which do not include the name of the center in their name or contain the name of the center.<sup>20</sup>

## 5. Strategic problem of the Łódzki Dom Kultury and a proposal of solutions

Based on the analysis of the development of the cultural market, both on a national and local scale, and the identification of the areas of activity of the Łódzki Dom Kultury, it can be concluded that the institution is currently struggling with the problem of excessive dispersion and internal diversification of its brand portfolio, and it should seek methods to optimize the structure of its brand portfolio.

It can be noted that the following arguments speak in favor of the currently implemented strategy of managing the extended brand portfolio in the Łódzki Dom Kultury:

- the willingness to reach out to diverse customer segments;
- willingness to implement cultural education and disseminate culture among the inhabitants of Łódź and its surroundings, regardless of their material status and living situation;
- striving to diversify the offer to make it attractive to any buyer;

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<sup>19</sup> Serwis Informacyjny Województwa Łódzkiego, <https://www.lodzkie.pl/kultura/samorzadowe-instytucje-kultury/lodzki-dom-kultury> (accessed: 25.06.2019).

<sup>20</sup> Łódzki Dom Kultury, <http://www.ldk.lodz.pl/> (accessed: 26.01.2016).



- possible aspiration to build the image of a flagship cultural center on the scale of Łódź and surrounding towns (despite the existence of e.g. district cultural centers);
- striving to promote high and medium culture at the same time;
- enabling active, not only passive participation in culture.

Management of the extended portfolio of brands of the Łódzki Dom Kultury may be justified from the point of view of public administration and the organization itself, as it contributes to building the image of the city of Łódź, its cultural resources, as well as due to the fact that the institution is classified as a group of cultural institutions and centers, it does not impose any restrictions as to the areas of activity. The current structure of the brand portfolio also shows the dynamic development of this cultural institution, its versatility and strategic potential.

The arguments set out above are undeniably valid. However, taking into account the economic situation of a public entity such as the Łódzki Dom Kultury and the difficulty of managing so many product categories and responding to the expectations of many target customer segments, one should be aware of the risk of such a high fragmentation of the internal structure of the brand portfolio. This risk concerns in particular:

- blurring the image of the corporate brand of the Łódzki Dom Kultury;
- stimulating excessive expectations of customers in relation to the ability to satisfy them;
- existence of mutual cannibalization between brands within the same service category (e.g. between cinemas or galleries);
- problems with implementation of effective marketing communication, especially with regard to the use of modern Internet promotion tools;
- difficult coordination and management of the entire center at the highest level of an entity's director;
- lack of legibility of the offer for active and passive participants in cultural activities (for group participants and spectators);
- reducing an ability of individual service brands to compete with external competitors.

Taking into account the above advantages and disadvantages of the current extensive brand portfolio of the Łódzki Dom Kultury, it is possible to offer this cultural institution a grouping of the offered cultural services. This will mean that each of the types of services will be given a single brand, assuming that their internal differentiation will be maintained and possibly developed. Therefore, the following groups of services can be proposed:

- cinema – cinema consisting of two present rooms;
- related to the exhibition of works and their creation – a gallery consisting of several exhibitions (permanent or temporary) together with the organization of painting or other workshops related to the exhibition of works;



- theatrical – connections between the current theatre center and theatre workshops;
- dance – merging existing dance groups and groups within one dance center;
- recreational and sporting activities – a common center with an offer of various current sports activities, related to relaxation, etc.

In addition to the categories mentioned above, a joint publication can and should be operated, offering printed and electronic publications.

The division described above would lead to the creation of five centers and a publishing house. After implementing such changes, it would also be necessary to decide whether the names of the centers are to include a reference to the corporate brand name (ŁDK), whether a new name should be created for a given center (which does not currently exist), or whether it is possible to choose one of the current names of service groups. For example, a cinema center could have a name: “Kino ŁDK” or “Kino Szpulka” or “Kino Przytulne” or another new name.

The introduction of the above solutions would primarily result in greater integration of the current thematic centers (within the new centers), facilitation of management of the cultural institution as a whole, as well as support for building a clearer image of the Łódzki Dom Kultury and associations with this brand. At the same time, it would not eliminate the opportunities indicated earlier resulting from arguments concerning the current fragmentation and diversification of the offer.

The division into five cultural centers and a publishing house would also require the modification of promotion tools – or their introduction in a new, coherent and integrated form. For example, on the website of the Łódzki Dom Kultury or in information brochures, service sections should be clearly separated (e.g. with different bookmark colors) and all the organizations and groups that make up them should be indicated. Introducing a new brand structure would also require reorganizing the profile of the Łódzki Dom Kultury in social media, so that the division into types of services would be visible to customers and potential participants of the events. A profile may also be considered for individual centers (e.g. on Facebook), but due to the organization’s budget constraints and time requirements related to social media activity it is not necessary. The introduction of new and structured promotion tools would facilitate the search for information for people interested in only one area of services or those who would like to get acquainted with the offer of the whole Łódzki Dom Kultury quite quickly without any targeted interests.

Apart from the transparency of the offer and the facilitation of the current management of the institution, the division would facilitate strategic analyses (e.g. SWOT design for individual service centers or designing partial strategies in line with the ŁDK strategy as a whole) and evaluation of center brands divided into the aforementioned strategic and strengthening brands, stars, winged brands and milking cows. Moreover, if new ideas for detailed types of services (e.g. dance skills

training of a given type) are developed, decisions concerning the development of product lines or other decisions related to the development of a given brand will be easier to implement.

At the same time, if ŁDK makes decisions related to maintaining or liquidating services within given centers (assuming that it is not necessary to liquidate centers as a whole), it may be guided by the criteria of the current competitive position of a given service, its estimated growth potential (based on the estimated number of customers and its future changes) and the so-called “brand caliber”, i.e. the legitimacy of incurring investment expenditures for a given service in the marketing sense.<sup>21</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Analysis of the benefits and risks associated with managing a broadly developed portfolio of brands and the development of competition on the local cultural market in Łódź leads to the conclusion that in the situation of a limited budget of the Łódzki Dom Kultury and noticeable directions of strategic activities, there is a strong need to optimize its portfolio of service brands. The cultural institution currently under analysis offers its customers cinema services, galleries, theatre services, dance courses, numerous sports and recreation services, as well as paper and electronic publications. Such a solution allows to serve many target groups and meet the expectations of different stakeholders at the same time, but it can also lead to blurring of the image of the organization and a decrease in awareness of the existence of individual brands. In this situation, it has been proposed to reorganize the portfolio of brands by introducing cultural centers under a common brand (while maintaining the existing services and thematic groups). This may facilitate the day-to-day management of the Łódzki Dom Kultury, analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of actions taken, as well as making decisions related to the development of service brands and the corporate brand of a cultural center.

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21 N. Kumar, *Marketing as Strategy – Understanding the CEO’s Agenda for Driving Growth and Innovation*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston 2004, pp. 168–170, [after:] J. Kall, M. Hajdas, *Zarządzanie portfelem marek*, Wolters Kluwer, Warszawa 2010, p. 96.

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