

Who is Responsible for Preserving Heritage? (Un-)Successful Museums in the Future

Kimmo Levä

Secretary General



SUOMEN MUSEOLIITTO
FINLANDS MUSEIFÖRBUND
FINNISH MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

ICOM's answers ...



- A museum organisation is defined as a **non-profit-making permanent** institution, which is open to the public and which:
 - is **responsible** for natural and cultural heritage.
 - has the **duty** to preserve and promote collections.
 - has a **duty** to develop its educational role and to attract a wider audience.

... are not really answers at all

- The key questions arising from these statements are:
 - How is it possible for non-profit museums to take on permanent responsibilities?
 - To whom are museums responsible?



ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

TWO CASES

Case 1: Nokia



- Nokia promises to connect people, but does that mean that Nokia **itself** is responsible for doing so?

Case 2: F-Secure



Protecting the irreplaceable

We have the awesome responsibility of protecting what you value and care about. We understand how meaningful a photo can be, how important your work is and how indispensable online relationships really are. To us, nothing could be more important.

- F-Secure promises to protect the irreplaceable, but is F-Secure **itself** responsible for doing so?

Organisational responsibilities

- If Nokia is responsible for connecting people and F-Secure for protecting the irreplaceable, the key questions are: **for how long and to whom?**
- Permanent responsibilities?
- To society?

Of course not

Nokia and F-Secure are responsible for connecting people and protecting the irreplaceable data of their **customers**, as long as their **customers pay** the bills for these services.

Back to museums

A museum says that its mission is to preserve natural and cultural heritage, but is the museum **itself** responsible for doing so?



Of course not

A museum is responsible for preserving heritage as long as its **customers pay the bill** (for this service).

Museum customers

The way we define the customer actually differs for every museum.

1. The museum is a 'Rich' organisation
2. The museum is an 'Absolute Value' organisation
3. The museum is a 'Poor' organisation

Customers of 'Rich' museums

- A 'Rich' museum organisation has a huge amount of equity (money, stocks or other exchangeable capital).
- The **customer is the governing body.**

Customers of 'Absolute Value' museums

- An 'Absolute Value' museum has no equity (money, stocks or other exchangeable capital), but its maintenance and maintenance capital have been written into the law or other regulations.
- The **customers are representatives of state, cities or municipalities** (politicians, bureaucrats).



Customers of 'Poor' museums

- A 'Poor' museum organisation has no capital and its maintenance and maintenance status have not been written into the law or other regulations.
- The **customers are those who are willing to pay for its services.**
 - Direct payments (e.g. admission fees)
 - Indirect payments (grants)

UNSUCCESSFUL AND SUCCESSFUL MUSEUMS

The unsuccessful museum

Most museums are in the 'Poor' category and unfortunately they have the biggest risk of becoming unsuccessful organisations.



The unsuccessful museum

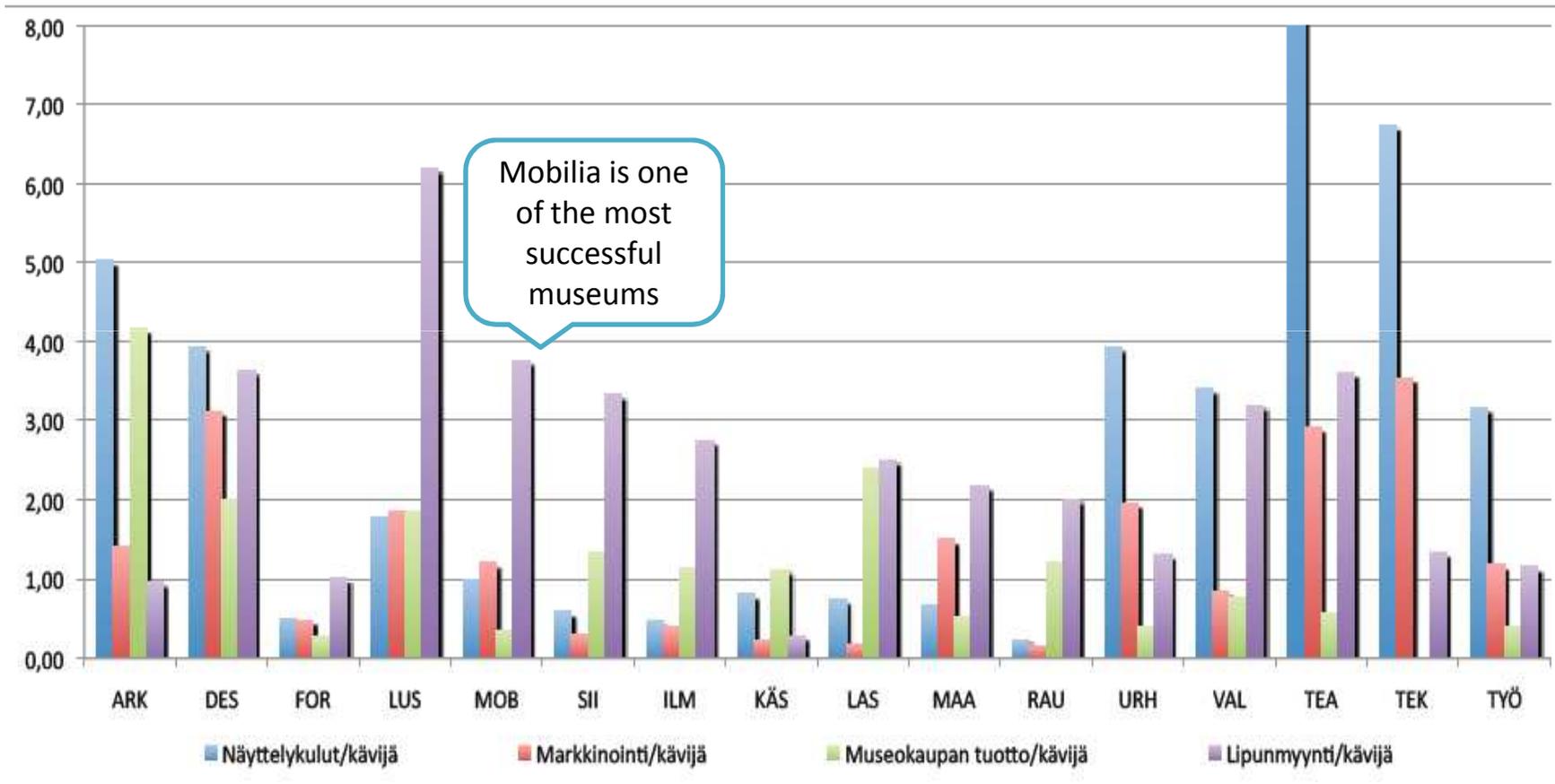
- The museums in this category will be unsuccessful organisations if they **act as if they were rich, and believe they have the same status as Absolute Value museums.**
 - no earnings philosophy
 - no calculations regarding how much it costs to acquire objects and preserve them
 - the museum takes new artefacts into its collection without adequate resources (money)
 - the museum employees and administration are passionate souls who consider the preservation of heritage as their duty
 - the museum has a lot of influential patrons, who like to help museums to acquire objects
 - the museum believes someone will save it if its economic problems grow too huge

And last, but not least

– The museum defines **visitors** as its only **customers**.



Direct costs and revenue of exhibitions in Finnish National Specialised museums



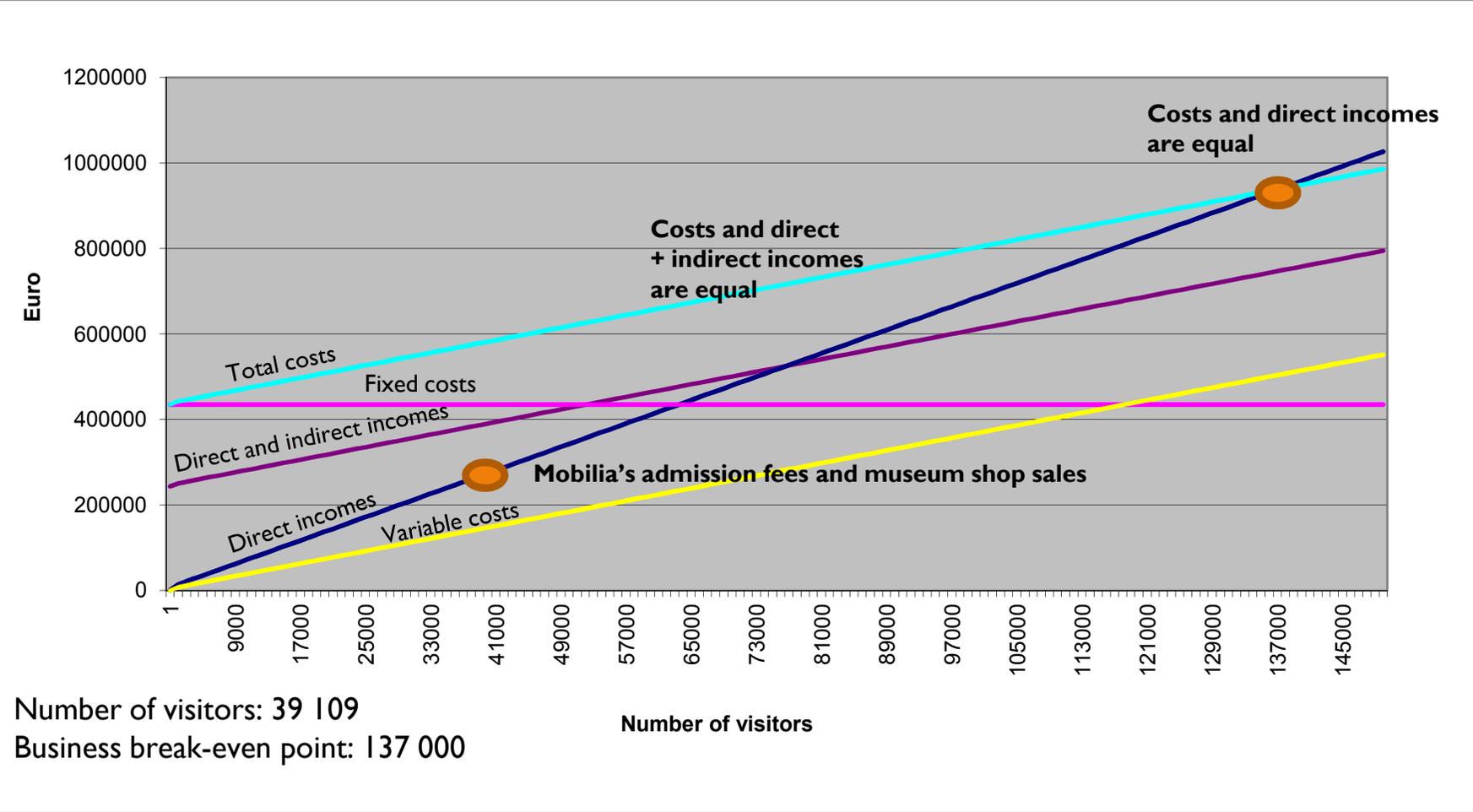
Exhibition put
on costs/visitor

Marketing
costs/visitor

Museum shop
incomes/visitor

Ticket sales incomes
/ visitor

Profitability of Mobilia's exhibitions



The unsuccessful museum

Does not recognise that visitors and exhibitions are unprofitable for museums.



The successful museum

A successful museum is customer-oriented and knows **who** its customers are.

The successful museum

A successful museum **doesn't**

- think it has general responsibilities
- think that its duty is to be a permanent museum – instead it has the duty to offer museum services to customers as long as they pay for them
- try to own its collections, but realizes that know-how concerning the preservation of heritage is its best line of business

In the future a successful museum will be a service organisation which helps its **customers** to fulfil their **needs and responsibilities in preserving heritage.**