

# city branding

HOW CITIES COMPETE IN THE 21ST CENTURY



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## FOREWORD

This booklet has been written to provide city stakeholders with an understanding of the latest insights in and learning about city branding. Its purpose is to inform, clarify and challenge people's views about an area that is rife with confusion and mystification.

City branding is a discipline that is developing fast and whose theoretical underpinnings have only been developed and put into full practice in recent years. In other words, there is a lot to learn from the experiences out there and this book provides the reader with information about pitfalls, best practice and lessons learned. Obviously, a small book like this one will not do justice to city branding as an entire discipline. Please consider this book as a primer - a form of initiation into a fascinating and important topic that will undoubtedly feature on an increasing number of cities' agendas in the near future.

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# CITY BRANDING



Increasingly, cities compete with other places for attention, investment, visitors, shoppers, talent, events, and the like. Accelerated and intensified globalisation has led to a situation where the main competition is no longer the city down the road or the town across the bay, but where competitors are places half a world away. And this global competition is no longer limited to the big cities that compete for the HQs of multinational corporations and UN bodies, or for large sports events. Thanks to technological advances and market deregulations, even smaller places can suddenly be confronted with competitors located on another continent. Entire towns in Italy have lost their raison d'être as their furniture making industry clusters are wiped out by towns in China who produce the same products at much lower costs. Alicante in Spain struggles to compete with sunny beach destinations ranging from Antalya in Turkey to Pattaya in Thailand. Bordeaux and its region face stiff competition from South Australia and the South African Cape Region for its traditional position of prime and premium winemaker. Traditional car making centres such as the West Midlands, Detroit, Stuttgart and Nagoya feel the heat from Bratislava and Shanghai.



How does a city cope with this new multitude of contenders? Competing on tax breaks, tax credits, free land, soft loans and other financial incentives to attract investors and to shore up local industries is clearly a race to the bottom and one that is impossible to sustain. Advertising on CNN and sending trade missions into the world to flog the existing offer of the city is both ineffective and a waste of precious financial resources. Shoring up the city's current offer with some new commercial, industrial or cultural development is not likely to turn the tide either (and perhaps Bilbao is the exception that proves the rule).

What is needed is a frank rethink about what the city offers and will offer in future. What can be created that is so valuable about the city that its businesses, institutions and residents want to remain, that will attract investors, visitors and talent, and that will make commentators and influencers recommend the city? Your city's brand is the promise of that value. City branding is about deliberately creating, developing and demonstrating that value through appropriate 'on brand' actions, which consist of investments, physical and economic plans, attraction programmes, events, communications, and the like.

City branding is not something that is the sole preserve of local government or any of its departments or agencies. It is a shared responsibility and practice of the city's main stakeholders. What is more powerful than having the stakeholders jointly define and realise the brand of their city, using their own particular strengths to ensure the world receives a compelling, joined-up and consistent message about the city? For this to be effective city branding requires new forms of leadership, strategy and creativity.

# LEADERSHIP



## **PARTNERSHIP - WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?**

For city branding to be successful, it is necessary for its key stakeholder organisations to come together in partnership. This is not your usual public-private partnership or a committee of wise men and women. This is a formal or informal body in which the key stakeholders jointly develop, create and lead on the implementation of the brand of the city, under shared responsibility. Creating such a partnership is the first step in changing the way the city operates, because it simultaneously crosses divides such as those between town and gown, government and business, arts and sports, and commerce and culture, the public and community sectors. The partnership should be one of equals between those stakeholders that can realise the brand of the city through their actions, investments, decisions and communications.

## ALL PARTNERS ARE EQUAL

City brand partnerships are not like central government departments, or local government or private companies or voluntary, community and charitable organisations. They are a hybrid form of organisation. Their characteristics are determined by those who set them up, the purpose for which they were created and by those who lead the work of the partnership. The form of partnership organisation and operation is rarely a given. It has to be negotiated and agreed by those who are going to be involved. All too often such partnerships are led by those with the largest chequebook or the most power. Such partnerships are rarely as effective as they could be. And in many respects they are not truly partnerships at all, merely collections of organisations who are working together to gain access to funding or to wield power. What is required is a partnership where all of the key stakeholders regard each other as equals, regardless of their power or resources, where their individual contributions are valued because, without them, the city will not realise its full potential.



## SHARED LEADERSHIP

Once the partnership is created, the challenge is to make it work effectively. The representatives of the stakeholder organisations that constitute the partnership have their own agendas and motivations for participating, as well as their own ways of working, of making decisions and of getting things done. They need to devise a whole new way of working together to reconcile their goals and practices and to make the partnership an effective vehicle for enhancing their city's competitiveness, taking the lead on finding or creating the resources required. If a partnership knits together diverse interests to undertake projects, that they cannot do by themselves, then the way they are run and who participates are of profound importance. Shared leadership in a brand partnership requires a far greater degree of common understanding and joint thinking than traditional forms of leadership in the public and private sectors.

## **KEEN, EAGER AND WILLING TO WORK TOGETHER**

During the city brand strategy development process, the members of the brand partnership need to understand and reconcile differing policies and strategies, decide on what the future of their city will look like, what it will offer of value to consumers, how it will be experienced and what it is they can jointly do to make that future a reality. This requires a willingness to come together and work through these matters even when that may be difficult due to conflicts of interest, different opinions, differing timescales and sometimes even personal dislikes. All in one common cause: to make the city better able to compete for the things that will make it a better, a more sustainable and a more competitive place.

## **BRAND MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION**

Once the city brand strategy has been agreed by the partnership, its task changes to ensuring that the right actions are taken to make the brand come alive. This requires decisions on how best to manage the city brand, taking into account that the required actions, policy changes, investments, attraction programmes, events and the like will be the responsibility of various city stakeholders, some of whom may not even have been represented on the original brand partnership and now need to be brought on board. Every city devises the brand management organisation that it needs to implement the brand strategy. However, there are a few lessons that can be applied in most places.

## BRAND MANAGEMENT LESSONS

**one** The first lesson is that the partnership cannot simply dump full responsibility for the city's brand on one of its partners or on a newly established entity. Once the strategy is agreed, the partnership must not consider its work as done. This is an on-going responsibility. A brand management organisation can be tasked to do [part of] the implementation, coordination and communications, but it is an executive body that cannot take important decisions in the way that they city's key stakeholders can.

**two** The second lesson is that the brand partnership should be open to new members. As the brand is taking shape, new and different partners will emerge to play a vital role in its realisation. A brand partnership should not be an "Old Boys Club", or the "usual suspects" of the city's establishment, but a body that responds to change by changing and reinventing itself.

**three** The third lesson is that the partnership must continuously reappraise the brand strategy: is it on course, is it doing what we expected it to, does it need adjustment? This means that both the brand partnership and its brand management remain attuned and responsive to changes in the city's environment and its offer.

**four** A fourth lesson is that the partnership needs to mobilise a large proportion of the community of the city to carry the message about its brand and to ensure that its local citizens remain aligned with and supportive of what the brand is designed to achieve.

STRATEGY



## ASSESSMENT OF STATUS QUO

A city's brand is its implicit or explicit promise of value to the world, a promise that must be kept. Creating such value requires an understanding of what the city's current brand is, because that provides a basis from which to start developing a strategy. The city's current brand is formed by its historic development and its policies and actions to date, the way it has presented itself to the world and the way the world (and specific audiences in particular) have formed a view of the city. Understanding this de-facto brand requires a thorough review of the city's public, private and civic policies, an examination of the way the key stakeholders of the city operate (together) and an assessment of how the city's internal and external audiences view the city and what it is that has shaped and perhaps informed their perceptions of the place. Only when we know what these perceptions are, can we start to determine how we wish to shape future perceptions in the city's favour. A few things are crucial when assessing the de-facto brand of a city.

**one** The need to obtain relevant plans, policies, strategy and research documentation from the city's stakeholders.

**two** To audit the stakeholders' communications about the city to determine what is being put out about the place and to whom it is being directed.

**three** The need to assess how both these matters impact on the perceptions of the city, among internal and external audiences. The difficulties we face are that it is laborious to wade through lots of stakeholder documentation, arduous to audit stakeholders' communications, and tricky to determine the effects these have on people's perceptions of the city; and this is a task that must not be shirked if the stakeholders are to understand how the city currently operates and is perceived.

## WHAT WILL THE PLACE BE LIKE IN 10/20/30 YEARS?

Simultaneously, the leaders of the brand partnership need to debate and decide a vision for the future of the city: what will the place be like in 10/20/30 years, to live, learn, work, play, visit, etc.? The leaders need to come together and share their views, goals, aspirations and fears for the city and jointly develop a vision that encapsulates and binds together their various views. This is not a search for the lowest common denominator, but rather for something that is a higher level of imagination and visualisation than individual stakeholder visions. When the leaders of the partnership are willing and able to share their goals, motivations and aspirations at the outset of this process, the debates about a shared future and vision are much easier than when people are cagey about their intentions. Openness, trust, mutual understanding and a willingness to share ideas are essential to develop an inspiring, aspirational, yet attainable vision for a city. It also means that the partnership gets off on the right foot, which makes the brand strategy, planning and implementation phases much easier.



## WHAT WILL THE KEY AUDIENCES EXPERIENCE?

Once we know both the de-facto brand and the vision for the city, it becomes possible to plot the city brand strategy. The brand strategy is aimed at determining the experience that we want key audiences to have of the city so as to influence their perceptions of and ultimately their behaviour towards the city (e.g. invest, visit, move, remain, spend, recommend). There is never just one possible brand strategy for a city. It is necessary to keep an open mind as to how the vision for the city may be realised and to apply the creativity and resourcefulness of all the members of the brand partnership to this issue. Brainstorming (im)possible routes ensures that more than just the obvious and safe themes are explored. Once the creation of all the great and the goofy options has been exhausted it is time to bring back rigour to the process and to check the various options for their realism, attainability and value. Once a brand strategy option is chosen for the city - often after first testing it among key audiences to make sure it resonates with them - it needs to be translated into actual actions, policies, plans, investments, joint-initiatives, cultural and sports events and the like. An important (and often overlooked) aspect of a city brand strategy is its impact on spatial and economic planning. If the brand is to come alive, the city must operate in a manner that is in-line with the agreed brand strategy, i.e. be 'on brand'. This has implications for the way the city deals with its masterplanning, its plans for making places, its existing and new architecture, its (public) transport, its management of public spaces, the way it tries to encourage, retain and attract specific businesses and institutions, and the way it seeks to attract and retain specific kinds of residents. These matters have a huge impact on the way the city is perceived both internally and externally. They demonstrate what the city is about, the way in which it operates and the way in which it seeks to develop economically, socially and culturally.



## 'ON BRAND' ACTIVITIES

Obviously, not every single action, policy, investment or event of the city will be fully 'on brand' and some of them will even likely be 'off brand'. It is important that the key stakeholders realise and identify which of the multitude of their activities have significant impact on the brand that they wish to realise. Only then can they choose the right 'on brand' activities and schedule them in such a manner that they have the most impact and build on each other for cumulative impact. This can only be achieved if all the city's key stakeholders are fully conversant with the brand and have learned what it means to be 'on brand' in their decisions, in their actions, in their communications and in their behaviour. This requires a good deal of training and informing of stakeholder staff to impress on them what it is they can contribute to realising the brand of the city.

## KEEPING IT ALIVE

The brand strategy also impacts on brand management, as its organisation needs to be fit for purpose. The difficulty for a city's brand management is to organise, motivate and align the key stakeholders and their activities. Despite any agreed implementation planning, stakeholder organisations often have a tendency to lapse into their old routines once the brand strategy development has finished. It is up to brand management to ensure that they actually honour their promises and obligations to the brand partnership and to keep them 'on brand'. How this is best done will differ between cities, but there are a few lessons about implementing strategy that apply to most cities.

**one** The first lesson is that the brand partnership must in some way remain involved in the execution of the strategy, simply because so much of it relies on stakeholders taking actions jointly or individually. This can mean that the partnership itself manages the brand or that the partnership has close oversight over and involvement in the brand management organisation.

**two** The second lesson is that strategy implementation must not be overly dependent on one stakeholder (e.g. local government). In such a case, the purpose of joint strategising is defeated (as the dominant stakeholder calls the shots) and the implementation will suffer from a lack of resources (as these are not being effectively pooled).

**three** The third lesson is that brand management must have the right to correct 'off brand' behaviour by the brand partners. No stakeholder should be above being rapped on the knuckles for violating the agreed brand strategy.

## MONITORING PROGRESS

Finally, the chosen strategy must be robust enough to withstand shocks and crises, but it must also not be static or inflexible. There must be an agreed method for monitoring the city brand's progress and evaluating the impacts of on brand investments, actions and initiatives. Usually the measures are a mixture of general indicators (e.g. social, economic), brand health appraisals and success factors for specific initiatives (e.g. numbers of visitors, amounts of investment, jobs created). The most important aspect of all this measuring is that the results are actively used to keep the brand of the city on its course and to tweak and amend the strategy and its implementation as and when necessary. In general, not everything that is planned is actually implemented (e.g. due to factors outside of the city's control), not all the plans are implemented in the way they were envisioned (e.g. due to changed facts and circumstances) and not everything goes to plan (e.g. because of unforeseen side-effects). Brand management must therefore be able to keep their eye on the ultimate destination while steering a (not always straight) course between the rocks and reefs of reality.



CREATIVITY



## SYSTEMIC CREATIVITY IMBEDDED IN THE BRAND PARTNERSHIP

Creativity has come to be accepted as an important aspect of competitiveness, and of relevance for cities. Creativity can be an important aspect of the brand of a city, but - more importantly - creativity must be recognised as a core element of a city brand strategy. The entire process needs to include and accommodate creativity in its various stages. The city brand strategy process requires initiative for its brand partnership creation, imagination for its vision, ingenuity for its brand options, innovation for its offer, resourcefulness for its implementation, and inspiration for its organisation. This systemic creativity must be imbedded in the brand partnership and its way of working. The fact that, often for the first time, a group of key stakeholders takes on the responsibility for the brand of their city leads to hitherto unknown cross fertilisation of ideas and practices. Understanding the creativity (or lack of it) that has gone into the brand partners' own policies and strategies, operations, marketing and communications and urban and economic plans provides powerful insights into how the current de-facto brand of the city has come about, and what room there is for improvements and new thinking. Asking a group of key stakeholders to imagine a future for their city requires new ways of combining visions, ambitions and aspirations into something totally new. Asking them to dream up a wide variety of brand options for their city requires independent thinking beyond the boundaries of their own organisations and into the realms of others. Devising marketing and implementation plans that will bring the brand of their city alive leads to entirely new product and service offers, innovative spatial planning and architecture, imaginative attraction programs for businesses and institutions, and entirely new ways of organising the city's offer, and arresting ways of communicating that offer.



## LOSE YOUR NATURAL INHIBITIONS!

All this creativity may seem a bit much. And it probably will not happen unless the brand partnership is organised along such lines that it allows its members to experiment together, encourages its members to take risks, and asks its members to come up with new initiatives, individually or jointly with other stakeholders. Creativity can only flourish when the right conditions are created for people to lose their natural and conditioned inhibitions, where ideas are not shot down on sight, where taking chances is rewarded and where people are given the opportunity to see new initiatives through. This has as much to do with structure as with culture within the brand partnership, and with its position among wider city stakeholder groups. This has as much to do with structure as with culture within the brand partnership, and with its position among wider city stakeholder groups.

CONCLUSION

POSTA



In the 21st century cities will increasingly compete on the value that they provide in terms of their physical and service offer, their heritage, their ambitions and their character. In short: they will compete on their brand and will develop in line with it.

City brands are exemplified and brought alive through the valuable experiences that they offer to consumers. It is these experiences that determine people's perceptions of the city. Too many people think that a city's identity is purely bound up with its built form and the construction of iconic buildings.

City branding is changing the way cities are planned and developed. Rather than being seen as an optional promotional add-on at the end of the city and masterplanning process, it is increasingly being recognised that city brand strategy drives the debate on the future purpose of places and their offer of value to consumers. The brand strategy needs to be agreed before new masterplans and detailed proposals for making places are decided. And, to be effective, the preparation of a city brand strategy requires the integration and alignment of brand strategy, marketing, communications, public policy, spatial and master planning, urban design, and economic and business development.

The implementation of a city brand strategy takes time, often between five and ten years and it cannot be rushed if it is to create lasting value. All key stakeholders, but especially elected politicians, need to recognise this and understand that its implementation will span several periods of elective office.

Key stakeholders who join city brand partnerships need to understand that collectively they have to operate as a leadership team and recognise that they might need to find effective ways of working together and sharing leadership. They also need to recognise the role that they play as ambassadors for the brand of the city and that they need to act in line with the brand in what they do and say and how they treat other stakeholders.



CASE STUDIES

# one

## OVERHOEKS

Just a few hundred metres across the river IJ from Amsterdam Central Station lies a large area which until recently was occupied by Shell Research. Shell's planned New Technology Centre (NTC) will require some 20 ha less space than the old facility, and the surplus land has been sold to the municipality of Amsterdam. A consortium consisting of ING Real Estate (the world's second largest real estate developer) and Ymere (a local housing corporation) have been awarded the contract to redevelop the area to provide, housing, offices, cultural and entertainment facilities. Vesteda (a private sector rental housing company) and the Dutch National Film Museum have also committed themselves to the area.

This eclectic group of stakeholders, while all having their own specific goals, needs, ambitions and plans for the area, realised that they had a common interest in seeing this regeneration succeed: its size and location make it of national as well as local importance. In 2004 Placebrands was appointed by ING Real Estate to work with the stakeholders to form and run a Brand Partnership, consisting of a Brand Leadership Team of senior decision-makers - which is responsible for vision and decision-making - and a Brand Development Team consisting of their key managers, which is responsible for strategy and management.

Working closely with the Brand Leadership Team, Placebrands formulated a shared vision for the future of the area as a lively, smart (in both senses of the word), progressive and creative area that complements the well-known assets of the Amsterdam inner city and challenges the conventional image of North Amsterdam as a dull, drab and deprived area. With the Brand Development Team, Placebrands designed a brand strategy that takes as its shorthand the expression 'alive & kicking'. This strategy describes a place that is differentiated from the rest of the city by its unique high-rise skyline and its waterfront park, is identified by its lively, buzzy atmosphere, and is personified by its friendly, creative and stimulating personality.

This brand strategy influenced the municipality's urban plan to incorporate restaurant facilities and a small harbour on the waterfront. It influenced the architecture to combine modern buildings and landscaping with a sense of Amsterdam authenticity as well as elements that surprise and encourage exploration of the area. It guides the development programme for the area to include new cultural institutions, a designer hotel and public spaces suited to small and medium-sized music, theatre and film events. It also helps the developers of the area to pick and choose businesses and institutions that are 'alive & kicking' themselves, ranging from TV production companies and dance events organisers to sustainable energy entrepreneurs and fashion designers.

“PLACEBRANDS HAS ENABLED OUR PARTNERSHIP OF DEVELOPERS AND PUBLIC BODIES TO REALISE A TRULY IMAGINATIVE AND REALISABLE STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OVERHOEKS THAT WILL RESULT IN THE CREATION OF AN AREA THAT WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ADD TO THE REPUTATION OF AMSTERDAM. THEY HAVE CREATED AN ENTIRELY NEW WAY OF ENVISAGING AND PLANNING FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF MAJOR CITY AREAS.”

**Anneke de Vries**

Managing Director, ING Real Estate Development



# two

## THE CITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

In 2004 the City of Southampton decided to re-assess its image and reputation in the light of its changing economic circumstances. The city, situated on the south coast of the UK, had never experienced major decline of the order of other port cities such as Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle, but was concerned about its future economic position with the decline in employment in the port and a slow but accumulating loss of jobs and businesses. In 2004, the City Council's Communications Department took a lead in assessing how this was changing the way people viewed the city and formed a City Identity Group with membership drawn from the public, private and community sectors and from the media. Its brief was to assess current perceptions of the city and what key stakeholders wanted from it in the future. The city was felt to be complacent about its identity and its economic position. It did not seem, collectively, to have a clear and shared vision for its future development and was unclear about its purpose in its region. At the same time city councillors were exploring what might give the city a "wow" factor to shake it out of this complacency and they concluded that action needed to be taken to improve its image and to capitalise on its major assets, beginning with events such as the annual Boat Show.

In February 2005 Placebrands was commissioned to create a business plan for the city to maximise the economic and communications impact that its annual Boat Show generates and, on the completion of this, concluded that the city needed to create a brand strategy. Placebrands was appointed to develop a brand strategy for the city in July of 2005.

Although a new Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had recently been created in the city to take responsibility for the assembly, allocation and delivery of public sector investment in its development, there had been little real and effective partnership activity in the city at the strategic level of developing a vision for its future and agreement on its purpose. And, although all of the key stakeholders knew each other, they did not commonly work together as a group on behalf of the city. In order to get a strategic approach to the development of a brand for the city, we quickly interviewed and brought together a small number of these stakeholders, people who recognised the challenges facing the city and who were prepared to put time and energy into developing a vision for its future development and a brand strategy to realise that vision. A Brand Leadership Team (BLT) was created consisting of representatives of the key stakeholders in the city - the Port Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, the two Universities, the City Health Authority, the LSP and the City Council itself.

The first challenge of this group was to create and agree a vision for the future development of the city from which a brand strategy could be constructed. Placebrands facilitated this process through a series of intensive workshops. The vision that emerged was that, as the major city in central southern England, Southampton will be recognised as the region's economic, social and cultural driver, building on its role as an international seaport and leading retail centre. It will be a centre of learning, have a varied and exciting cultural offer and be known for its innovative and creative businesses, leisure opportunities and fine parks and open spaces. The city will have a international profile, attracting visitors, new citizens and businesses by being the UK's premier cruise liner home port, home to a major European container port and the local city for one of the UK's top airports.



In parallel to this work Placebrands created a Brand Development Team (BDT) of senior managers drawn from the key stakeholders who assisted us in compiling a Status Quo Report on the current state of development of the city and its de-facto brand. The gap between the current position and the desired future place created the context, direction and pathway for the development of the brand strategy. The BDT developed a number of scenario options to realise the agreed vision for the future of the city which were presented to the BLT for selection and detailed development. These included “Water City”, a city fully focussed on its relationship with the sea, “Clockwork City”, a place that functioned very well and provided services of the highest standards, “Tate and Turner”, a city of the arts and culture” and “A Magnet for Innovation”, the chosen option for the development of the brand. This envisaged a city at the forefront of innovation, particularly in the area of marine engineering, but also in other manufacturing sectors, in the provision of health care and the provision of public services and in the provision of sports, entertainment, arts and cultural services.

A detailed Marketing Strategy was then prepared to capture the current and planned offer of the city that was “on brand” with the chosen emphasis on the city being a magnet for innovation, supplemented with outline proposals to build on and expand this offer with new and exciting facilities, programmes, courses, and events that would retain and attract innovators to the city, people and businesses, R&D organisations and institutions.

A major element of this strategy was a Communications Plan to promote the current and planned offer to people, businesses and institutions in target markets, a framework to monitor and evaluate the impact of these actions, and the development of proposals for an organisation to manage the implementation of the brand strategy and the communications plan. This is now the responsibility of Business Southampton, a new public-private partnership in the city whose remit includes the coordinated promotion and marketing of Southampton.

**“PLACEBRANDS’ APPROACH IS EXTREMELY INCLUSIVE WITH AN AGREED FRAMEWORK AND THEY LOOK TO DELIVER LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS - NOT QUICK FIXES AND TEMPORARY ANSWERS. THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE ROBUST SOLUTIONS TO, OFTEN, COMPLEX SITUATIONS AND ARE ABLE TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE AT ALL LEVELS.**

**I HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THEIR COMMITMENT TO THEIR WORK AND THE WIDER KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES - ALL OF WHICH AFFECT BRANDING AND IMAGE MAKING.”**

**Liz Kite**

Head of Communications, Southampton City Council



CREATIVITY

STRATEGY

LEADERSHIP

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Increasingly, cities and urban regions compete with other places for attention, investment, visitors, shoppers, talent, events, and the like. Accelerated and intensified globalisation has led to a situation where the main competition is no longer the city down the road or the town across the bay, but where competitors are places half a world away. And this global competition is no longer limited to the capital and big cities; it now directly affects all cities and concentrations of urban settlements.

A city brand is its promise of value, a promise that needs to be kept. Place branding is the practice of developing a strategy that defines the value the place offers its consumers (e.g residents, workers, employers, investors, tourists). Placebrands is the world's first company entirely dedicated to the development of brands for countries, regions and cities. The way we practice place branding brings together brand strategy, marketing, communications, public policy, masterplanning and urban design, transportation planning, retail, entertainment, arts and cultural planning. Placebrands integrates these disciplines to produce brand strategies tailored to the specific needs of places.



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