

# A Study on a Strategic Place Brand-Management Model

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**ABSTRACT:** *This article proposes a multi-level conceptual model of strategic place brand management based on previous study into place branding-management processes in order to assist managers in adopting a holistic approach to place brand management. Place brand assessment; brand infrastructure connections, including infrastructure (regeneration) and stakeholder involvement (management); place brand articulation; and brand communications are identified as components for attention and action in the approach. The model highlights the effects and action processes that affect customer experiences between various components, such as brand identity and design. Existing place branding models use various approaches to the branding process – relationship management, communications, and strategic planning, for example – but none of them are complete, nor have they been extensively accepted or evaluated. This article offers an integrated model that expands on and incorporates these previous models, as well as being based on a larger body of research on branding and place branding concepts and processes.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Holistic Branding, Conceptual Model, Place Branding, Place Brand Management.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Place branding, as well as related fields like destination branding, location branding, and place image creation, are gaining popularity. There is a case to be made that place branding has its roots in tourist marketing, but places increasingly need to think about branding in a variety of settings and in terms of managing brand image and brand experience for a variety of stakeholders. As a result, interest in place image and branding is no longer limited to tourism locations such as townships, cities, districts, and countries. With enhanced complementarity and competing powered by advancements in public transportation and free movement of goods and people, places must provide a climate that not only successfully competes for new resources, foreign investment, residents, and visitors, but also sustains and satisfies existing economic, commercial, and racial and ethnic groups. Some observers argue that as many towns' economic bases deteriorate, they are forced to compete with one another for existence. It seems that the issue at hand is not whether or not to brand, but rather how to brand. Place branding has become a developing field of practice and study[1].

The following are recurring themes in the various disciplines that discuss place branding: comparisons between branding a product/service and destinations/cities; impressions between place branding and (re)positioning; image building and reconstruction; the importance of unique identity and use of branding. Nonetheless, being a new area of study, there seems to be a dearth of empirical research. A more in-depth examination of commonalities and contrasts utilizing methods recommended by consultants or discovered in practice or theory this demand for further theoretical advancement in the area is also backed up by evidence. A broad variety of insights on elements of the place branding process are embedded in the literature. Such insights, on the other hand, are usually unique to elements of the process, such as stakeholders, image development, communication, and repositioning, and are frequently addressed in case-study settings. Only six academics have provided explicit place branding-management models or suggested wider models of the place branding process[2].

These models look at the branding process from three distinct angles: relationship management, communications, and strategic planning. None of these models has been extensively referenced, adopted, or modified, and the majority of them are new. While such models are very helpful in highlighting the many views on place branding that may be taken and are an essential foundation for future study and practice, none are comprehensive since they are restricted to the context of the viewpoints they represent. The purpose of this article is to offer a paradigm for strategic place brand management (SPBM). This model is meant to serve as a framework for contextualizing different streams of place branding research, as well as to educate and assist place marketers and brand managers. The article begins with an overview of current place branding methods and a discussion of the place branding idea. The suggested brand-management approach is then presented and explained. The next section, based on previous models and other relevant research, argues for the inclusion of each of the components in the location brand-management model. In order to inform future study and practice in the field of strategic brand management, conclusions and suggestions are provided[3].

### 1.1 Concepts and models for place branding:

The process of applying brand strategy and other marketing methods to the economic and sociopolitical growth of towns, cities, regions, and nations is referred to as place branding. More precisely, holistic place branding "encompasses everything a location wants to market," and "understandings and experiences of places are mediated by a variety of daily texts through which landscapes are offered," demonstrating that place brands have evolved into a composite construct. The requirement for place branding to go beyond image production to include a knowledge of how the promised experience will be delivered. While a number of writers have commented on the process of place brand management, typically in the context of a particular case study, the majority of prior research has not attempted to provide a comprehensive model of brand management that may guide practice and theory development in this area. There is an urgent need to gather and evaluate these various ideas in order to create a new generation of an overarching framework. Furthermore, although there are a few more specific models of place branding in the literature, none are comprehensive, and the degree to which they are either based in prior theory or transferable to settings other than that in which they were created is unknown. To present the SPBM model, this paper relies on both these prior explicit models and additional insights into the place branding process[4].

The relationship network brand, city image communications, a model of destination branding, destination branding process, the 7A destination branding model, and city brand management are some of the previous models of place branding that have influenced the development of the model in this article. As you can see from the labels, various models take diverse approaches to the branding process. The relational network brand views brand management as a progressive ripple effect relational exchange between the brand and stakeholder groups, based on stakeholder connections. Consumer, brand infrastructure, media, and main service are among the connections identified. The 'core brand,' with its personality, positioning, and reality, is at the heart of the concept, and it is created and expanded via a process of progressive interaction amongst stakeholders, each supporting the core brand's reality through continuous communication and service delivery. The model detects brand development influences and encompasses both the brand communication and brand experience elements of brand development.

As the name implies, city image communications is concerned with the city's image and how it is communicated, claiming that "the beginning rests in the understanding that all interactions with the city take place via perceptions and image[5]." Primary communication (which includes landscape, infrastructure, structure, and behavior components), secondary communication, and tertiary communication are the three kinds of communication identified by the model. Primary communication refers to the communicative effects of a city's actions when communication is not the primary goal of the actions, whereas secondary communication refers to formal intentional marketing communications like advertising and public relations, and tertiary communication refers to word-of-mouth reinforced by media and competitors' communications. Primary and secondary communications eliciting and reinforcing good tertiary communications are addressed in the process of place brand management. Although the concept of "image" is important in this approach, the term "brand" does not occur.

A dotted line connects components in this model when the connection is not managed by marketers, while a complete line connects components when marketers may be anticipated to influence the relationship. The development of brand identity and image is the emphasis of a destination branding model, which is based on the understanding that destination branding is a collaborative process, although the model makes minimal direct reference to stakeholder groups. Rather, this model, like the relational network brand model, places brand – in this instance, brand identity – at the center of the equation. This model is the most firmly rooted in branding theory of all the models examined[6]. It demonstrates a link between brand image development and brand element mix by focusing on brand identity.

The components of a brand – attributes, affective, and attitude (3As) – are defined on the one hand, and the processes for brand development – marketing programs, marketing communication, and controlling secondary associations – are identified on the other. When the approach was applied to the Old West Country, it was discovered that cooperative branding amongst rural destinations resulted in attribute-based pictures that were more closely linked to brand identity. The model, on the other hand, is complicated, and it's difficult to see how it might be used in reality. The 7A destination branding model is similar to the destination branding process model, except the latter includes adoption and attitudes. Both approaches are centered on destination branding and provide a step-by-step procedure similar to that of many other marketing strategic planning methods. Indeed, in particular, contains very general stages, and the term "brand" is never used in the model. The 7A destination branding model's mnemonics are attractive, but it avoids using the term brand, despite the fact that

steps like "articulate" and "adoption and attitudes" hint to the concept of brand underlying a number of stages in the model. Table 1 compares the two models and shows that they both represent the same components and phases, making it fair to claim that the 7A destination branding model replaces the destination branding process model. As a result, we exclude the destination branding process model from further examination in this article[7].

The strategic place brand-management model is as follows:

The conceptual models related to place brand management were discussed in the preceding section. They help to identify some of the components of a more holistic place brand-management model, but none of them are complete, and each has a unique viewpoint on place branding. As a result, a new model of place brand management procedures is required to support the advancement of both practice and research in the area of place branding. This article offers a model based on these previous models and influenced by a broader study of the literature[8].

### 1.3. Arrange brand-management elements in the following order:

The components of the model are defined and described in this section. It also makes a justification for each of the components' inclusion and highlights important findings from previous research on activities related with the components. However, before going through the various components of the model, it's important to understand the fundamental importance of the area indicated by the phrase "brand infrastructure connections and leadership" in Figure 1. This is where the brand identity is developed, as well as the complicated interactions between stakeholders, their involvement, and their interests and infrastructure. The ability of brand leadership to engage and manage stakeholders around agreed goals is critical to the development of brand identity. Management is responsible for involving all levels of stakeholders in capital development. Because of the varied character of places, leadership is required to pervade; the process of place brand management requires collaboration rather than force. Infrastructure plans must take into account a wide range of stakeholder demands as well as the place brand's constraints in terms of infrastructure and environment. As a result, leadership's job should be to facilitate the formation of partnerships and networks by giving focus and encouraging commitment[9].

Both the physical and intangible aspects of the brand are addressed by the infrastructure component. Physical and environmental infrastructure initiatives, such as those related to regeneration, are critical in driving the place brand's functional characteristics. On the other side, in order to deliver on the brand's experience characteristics, it's also necessary to create the symbolic traits of location. The necessity of conceiving the place brand as both image and experience, (b) the fundamental relevance of the physical environment on the brand experience, and (c) the complicated but important role of stakeholders in the brand development process are all implicit in this model.

### 1.4 Evaluation of the brand:

The methods used to collect feedback on a brand's image and experience are referred to as brand assessment. To guarantee that brand infrastructure meets and exceeds expectations, constant cooperation with stakeholders is required to monitor expectations and satisfaction. Brand assessment is crucial to the brand's development and experience. According to the literature, "effective management begins with excellent measurement." Despite this, there has been little research done to monitor the strategic success of location branding efforts. There is a lot of consumer-based brand image assessment research out there. Place branding, on the other hand, has been recognized as a composite construct. As a result, image assessment alone is no longer adequate, which is why the suggested model includes brand evaluation rather than image evaluation[10].

## 2. DISCUSSION

Because place brands are complicated constructions, creating a model of place-branding processes is difficult. However, it is critical to make progress toward a general and comprehensive model of place brand management in the interest of successful theory development and practice benchmarking. This article offers an SPBM model based on previous models and other insights into place brand management and branding. This holistic approach is meant to serve as a framework for contextualizing different streams of place branding research, as well as to educate and assist place marketers and brand managers. Brand assessment; brand infrastructure connection, including infrastructure (regeneration) and stakeholder involvement (management); brand identity; brand articulation; brand architecture; brand communications; word of mouth; and brand experience are all components of the SPBM model. The model's fundamental concept is divided into four distinct threads.

The SPBM model, for starters, depicts the process of place branding and its many components. Places and its stakeholders have a choice: they may either try to control these processes directly or let them run their course on their own. In other words, many of the model's operations will occur without human involvement, and tourists, residents, companies, and others will have an experience of a place, whether or not it is controlled. Active place branding should: improve the experience's coherence; support the efficient use of resources to maximize the experience's enjoyability and appropriateness; facilitate the evolution of the experience in response to changing circumstances; and, in general, engender "pride of place" that is effectively shared and communicated among key stakeholders. Second, branding is a collaborative and iterative process. In other words, it is not a project that will be completed once and for all. The integration of the feedback loop via brand assessment is a good example of this. The brand experience and brand infrastructure connections contribute into this feedback loop, which affects brand identity.

The majority of managed branding procedures start with a brand assessment to audit and evaluate the existing condition. Two-headed arrows appear elsewhere in the model to indicate a continuous connection between components, such as place brand engagement and place brand infrastructure. Third, stakeholder involvement and place brand infrastructure are critical to place branding, and it is this element of place brand management that sets place branding apart from product and corporate branding approaches. These two elements are inextricably linked, with stakeholder commitment and interests, as well as possible conflicts, playing a critical role in both the explicit brand-creation process and the development of place brand infrastructure via suitable regeneration operations. The connection between stakeholder involvement and place brand infrastructure, which is shown in this model as place brand infrastructure relationships, is critical to brand identity development. In other words, brand identity is defined by the 'location' and its stakeholders to a larger degree than in other branding settings, and it is the essence of the place. Brand communications contribute to the development of the brand experience and word of mouth on this foundation.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Finally, brand experience, not brand image, is the most important result of the branding process. Brand efforts must be founded on the 'brand reality,' not just the image communication. Furthermore, brand performance assessment should include the brand's experience. This viewpoint is consistent with previous research on place branding, which emphasizes the significance of experience characteristics while also acknowledging that experiential attributes are rooted in both functional and service features. As a result, locations must emphasize the role of experiential characteristics and customer touch points, particularly people, in delivering the experience. The approach is designed to help brand managers connect place brand development initiatives, such as regeneration, with brand identity and experience, and vice versa. It aims to help place managers understand the main areas of activity and procedures by defining the eight essential components of the branding process. Furthermore, as a strategic and comprehensive approach, it will assist different stakeholders in the branding process in comprehending their role in the whole process.

Finally, via benchmarking and comparison, the model will encourage the creation of best practices. Spectra: it distinguishes the place-branding process from product, service, and corporate branding processes, providing a solid foundation for place branding theory development. It offers a branding approach that includes stakeholders in the branding process; this viewpoint is based on stakeholder and cooperation theory. It provides a chance to assess practice and combine knowledge bases in place branding as a holistic model influenced by previous work in fields like as branding, marketing communication, regeneration, and tourism. The SPBM model is intended to urge the creators of previous models, which are important for their discipline emphasis, to evaluate and improve their models, particularly those that, although suggesting assessment, fail to clearly reflect and investigate brand evaluation. While the SPBM approach adds to the theory and practice of place branding, there is still a lot of need for further study and theory to help locations manage their brands.

The authors are presently conducting an empirical research to assess the SPBM model's applicability in a variety of settings. Beyond that, both individual case studies and cross-case comparisons may help us understand how to manage place brands. Such studies might: Investigate the relative importance of each place brand component, as well as any new components that may emerge when the place-brand process is elaborated in various settings. – Concentrate on particular brand components in order to acquire a better knowledge of the sub-processes of those components, as well as their "agents," connections, and interactions. – Test the models discussed in this paper in a variety of case-study contexts to assess their applicability and adaptability, and, if necessary, develop more explicit and detailed models of branding for various types of places, such as countries, cities, and towns, or to achieve various branding objectives. If the goal is economic development, for example, the brand management approach may be especially useful, but it must be used with full understanding of its strengths and

limits. – Conduct targeted research studies that focus on (a) location brand assessment metrics and (b) brand infrastructure connections, with an emphasis on the impact of organizational boundaries. – Examine the impact of external factors such as the economics, resources, and the natural environment on the image, brand, and branding of a location.

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