Place branding

Instructor: Sara Vinyals Mirabent

Course description

In a world that is 'flat', quoting Thomas L. Friedman, creating strong place brands becomes more relevant than ever. Nations, regions, cities, or even neighborhoods apply branding strategies to enhance the place's attractiveness to compete in a global world. One may wonder: What are places competing for? Are governments' efforts building the brands alone? Who can benefit from these efforts? Do place brands interact with other brands? These questions and more are addressed in the place branding course. This course aims not only to give tools to future place brand managers but also to communication specialists within private companies that can benefit from the attractiveness of the place brands they are associated with.

ECTS Credits

4 ECTS Credits

Specific competences

At the end of the course, the student will be able to…

›   To understand the role branding plays in shaping the territory.
›   To identify the challenges that affect place brands compared to other brands.
›   To analyze brands from a functional and symbolic perspective.
›   To identify useful tools to overcome the challenges faced by place brands.
›   To use place brands as a strategic tool to enhance stakeholders' attractiveness

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the student…

›   Will have acquired knowledge on the specificities that affect place brands: key concepts.
›   Will have learned the advantages and challenges of building a place brand.
›   Will be able to identify strong and weak place brands in a local and a global context.
›   Will have developed a critical eye to link the stakeholders' communication to the most potent place brand possible.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

This course contributes to achieve quality education; gender equality; decent work and economic growth; responsible production and consumption.

Content

1. The place: definition and complexity.
2. Place making and place branding: different but bonded together.
3. Reputation, tools, and metrics.
4. Types of place brands in a global context.
5. Stakeholders: tourism and civic pride.
6. Stakeholders: talent and culture.
7. Place branding campaigns, media, and events.

Method of presentation

The course follows an LCP dynamic: lecture, case study, and project. Sessions start with a lecture presenting the main theories and concepts associated with the session's topic. Afterward, a case study is proposed in class, and students and teachers collaborate to identify the case's strengths and pitfalls in light of the theory given. Finally, the students will work in class on their own project about a place brand of their choice (the projects must be led by the students; the teacher will only provide guidance and perspective).

Course assessment

This course is evaluated based on three different grades: participation, methodological assignment, and final project. First, the students are required to participate in activities related to the case study, such as unfolding the case, discussing, debating, etc. Second, the students will work on a methodological strategy to analyze the communication of a place brand of their choice. This work will be conducted in pairs. Finally, in pairs, the students will also conduct an in-depth analysis of the brand image of the selected place brand. Also, readings and other materials will be provided to the students to prepare them beforehand at home.

The different activities' weight in the final grade is the following:

› Attendance and participation: 25%
› Milestone 1: methodological strategy: 25%
› Final project: 50%

Late Assignments

If you are unable to turn in an assignment on time because of a documented illness or family tragedy, you will not be penalized for turning in work late, provided you present your written excuse within one week of returning to class. If you must turn in work late for other reasons, 2 points will be deducted from the grade on the assignment for each day (each weekday, not class day) that it is turned in late. The first late day begins right after the assignment's deadline, unless another time is designated. Thus, if an assignment's deadline is at 19:00h, a student submitting his/her assignment at 19:01 will lose 2 points. This policy applies to all assignments, including the research proposal. As per the syllabus, I will not accept any assignments emailed to me. You can always upload an assignment after the due date, and I will mark it late as appropriate.

Plagiarism

All written work submitted in this course is to be expressed in your own words. Text copied from a book, a website, another student's paper, your own previous work or any other source is not acceptable if not clearly quoted. In any individual or group assignment or presentation, you must indicate the sources of all borrowed texts, ideas or facts that go beyond common knowledge. Using third-party sources without being duly attributed would be considered plagiarism, be it intentional or not. Any work written, developed, created, or inspired by artificial intelligence (AI) is considered plagiarism and will not be accepted, unless otherwise instructed. For quoting sources you must always use the recommendations of the APA style. Penalties for plagiarism may range from a failing grade on the assignment with no make-up opportunity, to a failing overall grade in the course and notification to the BSM Dean.

Course schedule

Weeks	Content of the class	Case study
Week 1	The place: definition and complexity.	Barcelona
Week 2	Place making and place branding: different but bonded together.	Turkey
Week 3	Place making and place branding: different but bonded together.	Amsterdam
Week 4	Reputation, tools, and metrics.	Qatar
Week 5	Milestone 1: methodological strategy.	Curridabat
Week 6	Types of place brands in a global context.	South Africa
Week 7	Stakeholders: tourism and civic pride.	Venice
Week 8	Stakeholders: talent and culture.	Egypt
Week 9	Place branding campaigns, media, and events.	Kazakhstan
Week 10	Final project defense and discussion.	-

Course readings

Bloom Consulting (Nov. 2020). 14 steps to Nation Branding. Retrieved from: https://www.bloom-consulting.com/journal/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Bloom_Consulting_14_Steps_To_Nation_Branding.pdf

De Rosa, A.S., Bocci, E., & Dryjanska, L. (2019). Social representations of the European capitals and destination e-branding via multi-channel web communication. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*. 11, 150-165

Eshuis, J., Klijn, E. H., & Braun, E. (2014). Place marketing and citizen participation: branding as strategy to address the emotional dimension of policy making?. *International review of administrative sciences*, 80(1), 151-171.

Eugenio-Vela, J. D. S., Ginesta, X., & Kavaratzis, M. (2020). The critical role of stakeholder engagement in a place branding strategy: a case study of the Empordà brand. *European Planning Studies*, 28(7), 1393-1412.

Fernández-Cavia, J., Kavaratzis, M., & Morgan, N. (2018). Place branding: A communication perspective. *Communication & Society*, 31(4), 1-7.

Jamalian, M., Kavaratzis, M., & Saren, M. (2020). A happy experience of a dark place: Consuming and performing the Jallianwala Bagh. *Tourism Management*, 81, 104168.

Kavaratzis, M. (2004). From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. Place branding, 1, 58-73.

Kavaratzis, M., & Florek, M. (2021). The future of place branding. Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 17(1), 63.

Taecharungroj, V., & Stoica, I. S. (2024). Assessing place experiences in Luton and Darlington on Twitter with topic modelling and AI-generated lexicons. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 17(1), 49-73.

Vinyals-Mirabent, S., & Mohammadi, L. (2018). City brand projected personality: A new measure to assess the consistency of projected personality across messages. *Communication & Society*, 31 (4), 91-108.

Bedside book:

Mihalis, K., Giovanardi, M., & Lichrou, M. (2018). *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives in Theory and Practice.*