



Quick Guide

The Five Steps of Successful Place Branding Initiatives

The Place Brand Observer

<http://placebrandobserver.com>

What is Place Branding?

Place Branding is NOT just about logos, slogans, and advertising campaigns...

...it is a **PROCESS** which involves different steps.

But what exactly are these steps?

Read this Quick Guide to learn:

- ✓ **The 5-steps approach to Place Branding** developed by Robert Govers, Erik van 't Klooster and Gerard Van Keken
- ✓ The elements of each step

Step 1: Formulate Project Goals

Develop a vision, mission and the objectives of your Place Branding initiative. Those need to be crisp clear before you start.

Vision

Develop a realistic, yet inspiring vision for your place. Do this together with key local stakeholders to ensure their support. Focus on unique, distinctive resources or core competencies of your city or destination that are difficult to imitate.



Mission

Write a mission statement to summarize the vision and purpose of your Place Branding project. Focus on your competitive advantage (place assets), your target audience (tourists, investors, students,...), and the desired benefits for your local community.



Objectives

Break down the mission statement into individual, measurable goals. Make objectives SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely.

Step 2: Analyze Current Place Brand

Examine:

1. Place identity
2. Perceived place image
3. Projected place image



Those three perspectives need to be aligned

Why?

- So you can develop a strong, authentic and consistent **brand positioning**.
- And build a **reputation** based on a coherent, compelling and unique sense of place.

Step 3: Design the New Place

Brand Essence

Once place brand analysis results are in, it's all about designing the new brand **essence**: values, narrative, visual identity, name and scope. Make sure those fit the characteristics of the place and the services offered, and the audience you want to reach (=brand positioning).

Formulate authentic brand values that create a sense of belonging and purpose; authenticity; consistency and sensory appeal.

Make sure the values of your place brand match those of your targeted audience!

Think about **experiences** when designing your place brand essence and positioning your brand. Different visitors want different experiences. How are you going to offer those?

Step 4: Implement the New Place Brand

Caution: Place Branding won't succeed if based on communication alone. It requires actual place development = place making. Place marketers tend to focus on 'only' promoting places to target markets. This is much different from the Place Branding approach advocated by The Place Brand Observer.

Construction

The experience concept requires actual **place development**, e.g. through infrastructure, investments in substance, policies.

Cultural projects are very valuable: events, museum collections; films, travelling exhibition,...



Communication

Manage your place brand **narratives**. Present consistent, customized messages and images through the right channels. Requires understanding of SEO, online marketing, mobile communications, online social networks and community building.



Cooperation

Creating a consistent experience and presentation of the brand essence requires **cooperation with different stakeholders**. Create and nurture a community of practice which 'lives the brand'.

Step 5: Monitor the Place Brand



Measure your place brand's equity (brand value) periodically to assess the effectiveness of your branding work.

Awareness:

Are your target audiences aware of your place (brand)? Conduct surveys: Do target groups mention the brand? Do people recognise the name of the place when mentioned?

Perceived image and loyalty:

Find out what do investors, visitors, etc. think about your place (brand)? Such research should be ongoing and across all sectors of your target audience, so you can compare over time and with competing place brands.

Projected image:

What are people saying about your place (brand)? Monitor media coverage, press, online communities. Ask opinion leaders in interviews. Check place brand rankings.

In a nutshell...

A good Place Branding strategy includes **five steps**:

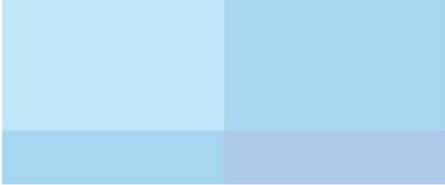
- ✓ **Step 1: Formulate clear and achievable project goals**, including vision, mission and objectives.
- ✓ **Step 2: Analyze current place brand**: place identity, perceived place image and projected place image.
- ✓ **Step 3: Design essence of new place brand** by formulating authentic brand values which can be lived and supported by the brand community.
- ✓ **Step 4: Implement new place brand**: construction, communication, cooperation.
- ✓ **Step 5: Monitor the place brand** across sectors and over time.



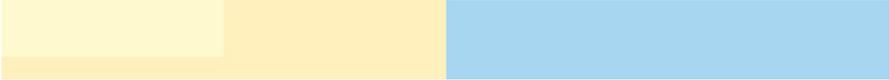
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