Place branding and tourist destination image: a preliminary understanding of destination marketing organizational models¹

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Abstract: This paper applied the understanding of place branding and the concept of tourist destination image to consider how the destination marketing organizations from countries, cities and regions manage their promotional and branding efforts. Thus, it aims to identify the marketing management models of international tourist destinations to develop promotion actions for these locations. Documentary research and data were collect from the websites of the Top 10 Destination from MasterCard 2014 Global Destination Cities Index were used to select the destination. Understanding how the international tourism marketing works may help in the application and exportation of ideas and actions to national tourist destinations and organizations. In addition, the project will expand the range of research on tourism marketing related to organizational models to manage the destination marketing actions.

Keywords: Image. Marketing. Destination. Place Branding. DMO.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the sectors that involve different organizations with different aims, as public or private sectors non-governmental or tourist associations and even the community. As a multifaceted phenomenon, both private and public sectors have a part to play in this activity. The scenario of multiple stakeholders is even present for marketing issues and specifically for the efforts of promotion and branding a place (e.g. a city, a region or a country). Countries, cities and regions as tourist destinations compete among themselves to attract tourists, inhabitants and corporate investment. For them to be more attractive they must not only have a differential, but also promote and publicize what they have best (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009).

This paper aims to identify the marketing management models of international tourist destinations to understand how the world's leading tourist destinations (see MasterCard 2014 Global Destination Cities Index⁵) are managing their promotion and branding creating process for marketing campaigns. For instance it helps to spread these ideas and actions to promote Brazilian tourist destination at all levels and to map the stakeholder and their roles.

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⁵ Master Card 2014 Global Destination Cities Index. Available at http://goo.gl/qYG1jX. Access: Jan.7, 2015.

Destination management and destination marketing are two highly interrelated concepts in tourism. In fact, destination marketing is one of the functions within the broader concept of destination management and involves coordinated and integrated management of the destination mix (attractions and events, facilities, transportation, infrastructure and hospitality resources) (Morrison, 2013). For the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) a destination management organization plays four different roles and, marketing management is one of them (UNWTO, 2007). Thus this paper applies DMO only for designate what Presenza *et al.* (2005) suggest as an "external destination marketing" or a function that includes activities with an external orientation for destination promotion (as information services, web marketing and tourist campaigns) to achieve customers' needs and get visitors to the destination.

In order to identify the marketing management model this research used secondary or documentary data. The documentary data was collected and used mainly to define the 12 international destinations presented as well as their official marketing and promotion organizations. Along with theses documents the organizations, the destination marketing plans, websites and brands were identified. For the study, the Top 10 Global Destinations Cities in 2014 surveyed by MasterCard where used to identify the destinations that have received more international visitors in 2014. The cities are: 1) London, 2) Bangkok, 3) Paris, 4) Singapore, 5) Dubai, 6) New York, 7) Istanbul, 8) Kuala Lumpur, 9) Hong Kong and 10) Seoul. In addition, two other cities were chosen to compose the research, due to previous documents and contacts that the research group has with their official destination marketing organizations (Barcelona and Vienna). These two cities are also in Master Card index occupying positions 11 and 17 respectively.

Given the broad extent of DMO's models (as tourism marketing district, tourism office and convention and visitors bureau) this paper explores two main concepts for marketing management to explain these models: tourist destination image and place branding; before presenting data.

Place branding: a way to put up a destination?

In the past few years place branding is becoming an important academic field and popular practice for manage the attractiveness of countries, regions or cities. The rising quantities of place branding consultancies and correlate studies indicate its popularity as well as the development of city brand rankings such as the *Anholt-GMI City Brands Index* or the *Saffron European City Brand Barometer*⁶ (Hatch & Kavaratzis, 2013).

The process of branding is extremely common and important in large and small business. For Moilanen and Rainisto (2009, p. 6) a brand "(...) is an impression perceived in a client's mind of a product or a service. It is the sum of all tangible and intangible elements, which makes the selection unique". They also state that the brand is not merely a symbol, but it is "(...) all the attributes that come to the consumer's mind" when they think about the brand (Moilanen &

⁶ Anholt-GMI City Brands Index. Available at http://goo.gl/njJqoa, Access: Feb., 4, 2015 and Saffron European City Brand Barometer. Available at goo.gl/bCWziD, Access: Feb., 4, 2015.

Rainisto, 2009, p. 6). Johansson (2012, p. 3613) considers that a brand "(...) is not just an image created for consumption purposes, but is also a vehicle for suggesting appropriate ways of living the brand" and one of its goals is to create consumer engagement (JOHANSSON, 2012).

Moilanen & Rainisto (2009) present a thorough literature research on the benefits of the brand. These benefits also apply to the places, countries, cities and regions. The table 1 lists the main benefits of the brand that the authors considered essential for destination marketing ends.

The process of branding is an essential tool in marketing strategy. So, if goods and services are branded, places can also be promoted through branding strategies. This is the premise of place branding (Kemp *et al.*, 2012). For Govers and Go (2009, p. 17) a place brand represents the identity building name awareness through building a favorable internal and external image.

Table 1 – Literature research about branding benefits.

LITERATURE RESEARCH	BENEFITS			
Ambler and Styles, 1995.	A brand separates itself from competing products.			
Srinivasan, 1987.	A brand creates emotional benefits for the consumer.			
Jacoby and Kyner, 1973;	Brands facilitate the customer's decision-making, reduce information			
Kapferer, 1992; Jacoby et	retrieval and diminish risk.			
al, 1977; Murphy, 1998.				
Karakaya and Stahl, 1989;	A brand protects the organization's marketing and brings long-term strategic			
Murphy, 1998.	benefits.			
Keller, 1998.	A brand enables the connection of responsibility to the producer.			
Chernatony and	A brand can support innovations and be the 'main thread'.			
Dall'Olmo Riley, 1999.				
Murphy, 1998.	A strong company brand connects personnel and business partners so it is			
	possible to develop stronger relationships and ensure long-term			
	investments.			
Demsetz, 1973;	73; Brands increase the efficiency of marketing operations and strengthen th			
Wernerfelt, 1988;	process that creates more financial value.			
Murphy, 1998.				
Murphy, 1998.	A business brand connects all goodwill-value derived from doing business.			
Besanko et al, 1996.	A brand guarantees quality and gives protection if thing do not go as they			
	should.			
Broniarczyc and Alba,	A brand increases turnover.			
1994.				

Source: Moilanen & Rainisto (2009, p. 7-10)

Maheshwari and Bamber (2011, p. 200) consider the place branding "a perception that people have about a place, city, region or a country". They keep stating that the place brand is not only a marketing strategy, but "(...) the residual perception left in the recipient's mind about a place after encountering its varying facets through personal experience, media exposure, purchasing its products and services or receiving second-hand assessments through word of mouth".

The place branding has to present a sanitized and appealing image of the place, which means select particular elements to be included in official messages and exclude other elements (Johansson, 2012). However, she continues, "(...) applying marketing-based branding to places is a complex undertaking, as places are constituted by a multitude of identities and activities".

The complexity of branding a place shows up when we compare place branding with a company brand. The corporate branding is based on the internal organization and your objectives are to spread a positive image of the company among the customers. The place branding also aims at spreading the good reputation of a city and to increase place attachment among the residential population (Tobias and Wahl, 2012).

Another considerable challenge of place branding is to take into account all those responsible for the development of the brand, especially because places are often more multidimensional than products and services, so the stakeholders (politicians, companies, associations and, primarily, the residents) involved are typically more heterogeneous than consumer segments (Kemp et al., 2012; Schade, 2012). For example, fifty-two members compose the Paraná Consultive Tourism Board; those are entities (as Conventions Bureaux), private associations (of hotels or travel agencies) and public organizations that are direct or indirectly involved with tourism public policies (Massukado-Nakatani, 2011). Thus, it is important that place branding authorities build a strong identity with all relevant internal stakeholders of the place.

Schade (2012) makes an interesting explanation of the construction of symbols in the development of a local brand. For him, the construction of a locale brand starts with a difficulty, because the place already has a name, a history and reputation (it being good or bad), so there is a need to find other symbols which can be easily communicated and which express an identity for the internal stakeholders. One of the uses of symbolism in building a place brand is the logo that can be defined as the graphical counterpart of the place name (SCHADE, 2012). Even if the place logo has been criticized in place branding literature because of its limited ability to influence the external target group, the logo is not just an external branding instrument to communicate a brand promise to potential tourists.

According to Schade (2012, p. 86) the logo goes beyond that, because it is "a symbol of local identity which can be used to express membership to the group of residents of a place, to differentiate oneself from citizens of other places and to visualize a sense of home and belonging".

Therefore, the procedure for developing a brand or even a logo can be carried out with the co-creation. For Ind, Iglesias and Schultz (2013, p. 5) "this process brings consumers, managers, and employees together to participate in brand development". In other words, the public sector, private sector and local governing authorities must collaborate with the place's key stakeholders (inhabitants and visitors) to create a sustainable, unique and real brand to the destination (Maheshwari and Bamber, 2011).

The place branding planning implies several strategic decisions. As we have seen before it is necessary to co-create the brand among public and private sector, the society and other interested people. So, Azevedo (2004, p. 1782-1783) proposes a place branding theoretical

framework for public policy makers in four stages: a SWOT analysis, the definition of a brand identity system, the execution and building of this system and finally the benefits from place marketing are optimized in terms of economic development, namely through image transference from place branding to products/services brands of the economic activities developed within the city geographic boundaries.

Tourist destination image, building a label

Destination image has become an important element for understanding the tourist marketing management. As Pan and Li, (2011, p. 134) argued, "(...) the notion of image has been widely used by marketing and behavioral science scholars to refer to people's perception of a product, store, or corporate entity". This definition has been associated with the impress image that we see on flyers, folders or institutional campaigns to promote the destination. Nevertheless, the destination image is more than that. Pan and Li, (2011, p. 134) provide insights presenting a definition that exemplify the concept "...TDI [tourism destination image] consists of all that the destination evokes in the individual; any idea, belief, feeling or attitude that tourists associate with the place."

Thus what is the destination image? What does it mean to the models of marketing management? And even how official organizations of tourism can use it to promote itself?

The destination image can be understood with marketing and communication literature (PAN and LI, 2014; ROYO-VELA, 2009; JALILVAND, 2012; HOSANY; EKINCI; UYSAL, 2006; GALLARZA, GIL, CALDERÓN, 2002; QU, KIM, IM, 2011; B. CHERIFI ET AL., 2014; VEASNA, WU, HUANG, 2013) In these cases the destination marketing organization (an Official Organization of Tourism or a Convention and Visitors Bureau or a TD) is frequently responsible to promote the destination and create a brand that are an integrated part of this image. For example, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau or the London Convention & Visitors Bureau. Thailand have a Tourism Authority, Dubai a Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing, and in Brazil this promotion is commonly made by state/town tourism secretary like TurisRIO (Rio de Janeiro) or SPTuris (São Paulo).

The destination image exerts influences about the behavior of tourists, "(...) their process of choosing a destination, the subsequent evaluation of the trip and in their future intentions." (Jalilvand *et al.*, 2012, p. 134). Therefore, the destination image is more than place pictures or place conceptions, the destination image is a set of characteristics that transmits a place's core and has influence in the process of choice and purchase of a trip to a determined place. (Pan & Li, 2014; Royo-Vela, 2009; Jalilvand *et al.*, 2012).

However, the process of creation of a destination image involves some geographical, cultural and social concepts. An image or a brand can't be forged or even framed to a standard model. Pan and Li, (2011, p. 135) identify that "(...) depending on the local and scale, destinations in different places at different levels (country, state or province, or city) may demonstrate completely different characteristics". Jalivand *et al.* (2012, p. 136) also understand that a "destination's image

can be developed based on the estimation or understanding of a region's characteristics". Therefore, local characteristics as local culture, society, geography, folk customs, behaviors, history and climate are a relevant point to consider for creates the destination image.

The DMOs, tourists and other organizations also contribute to the process of image creation, and together conform an idea of local Royo-Vela, (2009, p. 1) affirm that "(...) the image of a destination is created through a combination of what is communicated by the destination and what is understood by the tourist". He also points that each tourist has his/her own filters of perception and different kind of emotional responses.

Jalilvand *et al.* (2012) exposed that besides the subjective perception, tourists also use this image to evaluate their trip and guide their future intentions. This future choice arise another question: the destination competitiveness. San Martín and Del Bosque (2007, p. 263) view that the mainly factor to compete is the perceived images relative to competitors in the marketplace. Considering that the destination image and the destination personality are related concepts (Hosany *et al.*, 2006, p. 5) "at least two of the destination image scales (affective and accessibility) were significantly related to the three destination personality scales (sincerity, excitement and conviviality)". This perceived image is related with the characteristics that were cited above in this paper, a destination image is formed by the geographical characteristics, the perceived image by the tourists of an institutional campaign and the DMO's promotional efforts.

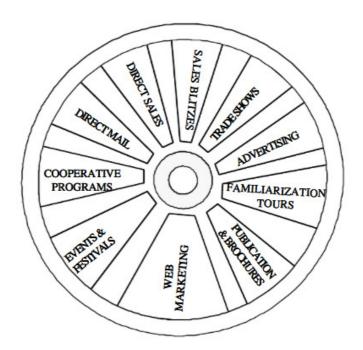
Therefore the destination image is a mix of many concepts that are linked with both managers and tourist perceptions of the destination together they will create a construct that reflects the interests and ambitions of both sides. Qu, Kim and Im (2011, p.467) affirm, "(...) consumers build a destination image in their minds based on the brand identity projected by the destination marketers'. So it is worth noting that there is no formula or a single concept on how to form the image of a destination B. Cherifi *et al.* (2014, p.199) say, "Destination images are formed through a wide range of sources. Credible sources that include novels, certain films and school have an unusually strong influence". Therefore, the destination image is a construction of many perceptions linked with emotive and cognitive process (Hosany *et al.*, 2006; B. CHERIFI *et al.*, 2014; Jalilvand *et al.*, 2012), that are influenced by factors like background, photos and movies, source of information and personal perceptions. To explain this process Veasna, Wu and Huang (2013, p. 513) say, "(...) destination image and its effect, by creating tourist perceptions of destination attachment toward a specific tourism destination, may cause them to form a destination image through destination source credibility."

Underlying the construction of a destination image concept, it was seen that this image depends on many factors for it to be created, cognitive and emotional processes by tourists, wide perception of space surrounding the destination and planning by the DMO. The destination image will then taking shape through these initiatives and personal constructions of tourists, making them as the identity/brand that conveys the destination.

The Marketing Management Models of International tourist destinations

The process of place branding helps to preserve the identity of a city, country or region and thus must be building with collaboration among all stakeholders (public, private and community). The preliminary approach presented at Table 2 identifies the marketing management models of international tourist destination. The 12 cities have their own Destination Marketing Organization figuring as public or private organizations (except the London & Partners, a public-private partnership), naming board, convention bureau, department, association, authority or even company. The actions presented are the destination marketing and promotional efforts and refers to Presenza *et al.* (2005) Destination Marketing Wheel (Figure 1), that consider the operational or tactical marketing activities of the DMO, including a broad range of activities drive to attract visitors to the destination.

Figure 1 – The Destination Marketing Wheel



Source: Presenza et al. (2005, p. 7).

The organization actions were describe in the documents and revealed that the most important were branding efforts and promoting the cities as a competitive tourism destination and attractive for visitors. The other activities were tourist information, brochure and promotional materials, public relation (events and festival) and bid support, research, information and data on tourist areas and planning and political marketing strategies.

Conclusion

In order to identify the marketing management models documentary data were collected. This paper also presents the main concepts related to image destination as, perception process of image destination, organizations that influence the creation of image destination and how tourists perceive the image destination thought previous experiences. On the other hand, the place should benefit in many sectors, as Moilanen & Rainisto (2009, p. 11) realize in their research: a strong place brand must a) attract business and investments; b) promote the goals of the tourism industry; c) promote public diplomacy; d) support the interests of exporting industries; e) strengthen national identity and increase self-respect.

To achieve the overall goal, this paper included: select the destinations and list the organizations responsible for the marketing of the chosen destination, and perform documentary research on the marketing management models of chosen destinations. The next step will be describe all those actions and map the stakeholders participation on tourism marketing management process by assisting in the application of the questionnaires with the destination marketing organizations of the chosen destinations. For now it was conclude that as Morrison (2013, p. 9) states the destination marketing include a "(...) continuous, sequential process through which management plans, researches, implements, controls and evaluates activities designed to meet customers' need and wants their own organizations "objectives".

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Table 2 – Cities, DMOs and Promotion Actions for Tourism Destination.

City	DMO	Public or Private	Actions	Other Organizations	Documents
London	London & Partners	Public Private Partnership	Official promotional company Help with all aspects of event planning Tourist information Strengthen London's position as a top destination	London Convention and Visitor Bureau (office within London & partners)	London Tourism Vision 2006 - 2016 Mayors Plan for Tourism Review of the year 2013-14 Strategy 2014-17
Bangok	The Tourism Authority of Thailand	Public Organization	Official promotional organization Conduct studies to develop tourism plans Supplies information and data on tourist areas Tourist information	Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau	Policy and Marketing Plan Online Marketing Plan - TCEB
Paris	Paris Convention Bureau	Public Private Partnership	Promoting the destination in France and abroad Welcome and informing visitors Everything for business tourism and congresses	lle-de-France Comité Régional du Tourisme	
Singapore	Singapore Tourism Board	Public Organization	Marketing and promotion of Singapore Strengthening industry competitivenes Regulatory environment for hotels, travel agents and tourist guides	Singapore Convention Bureau	Market Strategy Activities Report 2014
Dubai	Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing	Public Organization	Branding, promotion and marketing of Dubai Organise and improve festivals and events in Dubai Licensing and classification of the tourism industry	Convention and Events Bureau	Tourism Vision 2020
New York	NYC & Company	Private Organization	Promote the dynamic image of New York City NYC brand Services for planning meetings		Annual Summary 2013
Istanbul	Istanbul Convention e Visitor Bureau	Private Organization	Bid support Venue finding Promotional materials Consulting and advice	Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism	Marketing Plan ICVB Turkey Tourism Strategy
Kuala Lumpur	Kuala Lumpur Tourism Association	Private Organization	Promote, print, publish, sell, circulate and distribute badges, handbooks, guide books and publications	250	Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Tourism Board	Public Organization	Promote Hong Kong globally as a leading city Promote the improvement of facilities for visitors Hong Kong brand Conducts extensive research	Convention and Exhibition Centre Tourism Comission	Work Plan 2011-12 Tourism Facts About Hong Kong Tourism Board Annual Report 2013 - 2014
Seoul	Seoul Convention Bureau	Private Organization	Marketing and public relations for Seoul Business of Meetings, Conventions and Exhibitions	Seoul Tourism Association	Seoul Master Plan - 2030
Barcelona	Barcelona Turisme	Public Organization	Promotion, distribution and marketing of Barcelona Products sellings Convention Bureau	Barcelona Convention Bureau	Strategic Tourism Plan
Vienna	Vienna Tourist Board	Private Organization	Promotes the offers at each destination Maintains an information well for data Represents Vienna worldwide at trade fairs	Vienna Convention Bureau	Marketing for Vienna Tourism Industry Tourism Strategy 2020 Branding Campaign

Source: The authors (2015)