

OPTIMISING YOUR INVESTMENT IN DESTINATION BRANDS

Destinations are increasing their brand promotion spend, but consumers are not necessarily seeing or understanding any difference between messages. By focusing your efforts on targeting those consumers whose needs will be met by your destination with messages that will attract them, you will be rewarded with more and better quality visits.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers are increasingly exposed to messages from destination brands, with most common channels being TV, print or web advertising. Our research of over 13,000 interviews across 3 continents suggests that:

- More and more destinations are fighting for holiday makers.
- There are clearly defined leisure travel attitudinal segments, yet most destinations continue to try to attract everyone with generic, undifferentiated messages.
- It is important that the travel experience is consistent across all touch points, yet most destination brands are not consistent due to the wealth of stakeholders involved.

Holidays are important purchases that consumers enjoy talking about, yet few destination brands engage with their consumers during or after the visit, which in turn reduces recommendation and repeat visits.

DESTINATION BRANDS SHOULD RE-VISIT THEIR BRANDING AND MARKETING PROCESS

Branding your geography for developing your tourism industry is a specific process that should not be confused with other objectives, such as bringing investment into your destination.

For us, the term Destination branding encompasses places beyond Countries and Cities such as:

- Regions or Areas that share special characteristics which will benefit from marketing themselves together (e.g. Comprehensive leisure entertainment areas such as Sentosa in Singapore, cultural heritage areas such as wine country La Rioja in Spain, or beaches such as the Mayan Riviera, etc.).
- Real estate developments, resorts or large compound hotels, that cater to tourists with specific needs such as The Palm Jumeirah in Dubai or Atlantis in the Bahamas.

Creating a destination brand requires a strategic approach, because the effort should focus on generating business (i.e. bringing the desired profile

tourists) and not only on creating awareness (i.e. getting an ad-agency to churn out advertising). A strategic approach allows destination marketers to “do more with less”, by focusing the brand building efforts on those consumers which are most likely to visit and are most attractive financially for the destination. Also, it allows destinations to save on costly generic TV advertising which research proves to be extremely inefficient.

Lastly, like any brand, a destination brand demands consistency and a long-term investment, thus it is crucial to track results in order to evaluate efforts and correct as the brand matures.

Our experience with major brands provides a structured approach which allows destinations to become successful in generating business by investing only a small fraction of their media budget into strategic development.

DESTINATION BRANDS CAN DELIVER AND MEASURE BUSINESS RESULTS

By developing your destination through a strategic approach you will be able to:

- Attract the consumers which will most likely purchase your brand
- Differentiate your brand from competitors
- Align all stakeholders within your destination
- Provide a consistent experience across all touchpoints
- Engage with consumers for repeat visits or recommendations
- Manage your brand with operational results

Galleon Blue is a new type of consultancy that combines strategic business thinking with marketing and branding expertise. We help entities make their marketing, brands and customer relationships as effective as possible.

About the author

Luis Rodriguez Baptista is a managing partner at Galleon Blue's Madrid office. With over 20 years of experience in strategy and marketing Luis has helped destinations and businesses across continents develop and implement more customer-focused and business-driven marketing strategies. He can be reached at lrodriguez@galleonblue.com