

UDC 339.13

Theoretical approaches to modeling a modern place brand**Sergei V. Bazhenov**

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Funding. This article was prepared with the financial support of the Russian Foundation for Humanities, the project № 15-02-00441/15 "Economic Identity of the Russian Regions: Conceptualizing the Notion, Development of Tools for Measuring and Comparison, and Inclusion in Regional Brand Management".

Abstract

The success of the promotion of the place, as well as the development of a place brand, depends on many factors and circumstances. The article deals with theoretical approaches to solving the main problem of branding of Russian places. First, the problem is related to insufficient understanding of the challenges that come from the place as a specific object of promotion. All this leads to significant mistakes in management processes, as well as to focus on developing visual components of the brand without first studying the identity and architecture of the brand. According to the authors, one of the ways to solve this problem is to develop a methodological apparatus that allows adapting the technology of place branding to the contemporary tasks facing the Russian places. The success of the promotion of the place, the development of its place brand depends on many factors and circumstances that the Russian regions either cannot manage or do not have the resources to study them, to combine positive and minimize negative conditions. The approaches described in the article can become the basis for developing a model of a place brand built on the principles of an integrative approach and aimed at accentuating precisely on such factors of place branding, which today, being key, remain, nevertheless, the most problematic in the geo-branding of Russian cities.

For citation

Bazhenov S.V., Bazhenova E.Yu. (2017) Teoreticheskiye podkhody k modelirovaniyu regional'nogo brenda [Theoretical approaches to modeling a modern place brand]. *Ekonomika: vchera, segodnya, zavtra* [Economics: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow], 7 (12A), pp. 5-14.

Keywords

Place branding, brand management, place brand models, interdisciplinarity, stakeholders, brand concept.

Introduction

By systematizing existing models of the place brand, it is possible to distinguish four types of models in the theory of place branding, depending on which components of the branding process of the place are modeled.

The basis of place branding is the so-called brand model of the place, which describes the content and structure of the place brand and provides a list of external attributes expressing this content. Such models are models of *the first type*, contain a list of elements that includes a place brand, and indicate the interrelations and structural subordination of these elements. These include the hexagon of the competitive identity of the country [Anholt, 2010, 2016], the model of the tourism brand [Hassan, Hamid, & Bohairy, 2010], the brand identity model [de Chernatony, 1999; Konecnik Ruzzier & de Chernatony, 2013]; model of the place brand [Cai, 2002; Vazhenina, 2013; Vizgalov, 2011], etc.

The second type of model is oriented to the representation of the algorithm of building a place brand and usually includes the enumeration of the stages of development and promotion of the brand of the place, target audiences of the brand and so-called stakeholders - audiences influencing the formation of the brand and/or taking part in its formation. The model of the second type can include a model of the first type, as it, in fact, describes, based on which content matrix should be implemented one of the stages of branding, namely the stage of brand development. These include the model of communication of urban image [Kavaratzis, 2004, 2005], a model of branding strategy for a tourist destination [Stephens Balakrishnan, 2009].

Models of *the third type* model the process of branding management, namely the brand management process. Such models include a description of the stages of branding and an indication of the groups involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of these stages, as well as the demonstration of the interrelationships between these groups. The most vivid example of such a model is the model of the city brand management [Gaggiotti, Low Kim Cheng, & Yunak, 2008], as well as the institutional model [Yuldasheva, O. Meshcheryakov, 2011], as they focus on existing institutions, capable of marketing the place. The model of the place brand [Khlebnikova, 2013] is aimed at solving the problem of expanding public participation in the development and promotion of the brand of the place, therefore its key concepts are the stages of branding, the target groups (groups of participation) and the forms of participation of social groups in the branding process.

Main part

Further development of place branding is associated with the development and development of integrated models, which include modeling the content and structure of the brand itself, modeling the algorithm for the process of developing and promoting the brand (that is, branding itself) and modeling the branding management process-that is, brand management. It should be noted that these models are the most systematic and consistent since they give a truly comprehensive picture of the process of building and promoting the place brand. That is why they are operational and effective in the development and development of place brands. One of the first steps to building such a model can be considered an integrative model [Hanna & Rowley, 2013].

As can be seen from the above models of the place brand, their structural elements can be divided into several blocks. They represent the brand resources that make up the quality of the place itself, and the communication built on the analysis of these resources. In addition, to resources can be attributed to individuals as a key link in social processes. The brand phenomenon has a purely mental nature because it is the result of the interpretation of reality. Therefore, such brand elements as values and

meanings that predetermine people's behavior, influencing their motivation and choice of communication tools, play a key role in the process of developing, translating and perceiving the brand of the place.

Key participants and target groups. Undoubtedly, the Russian practices of place branding should include the axiological aspect, namely, the identification of the value component in the behavior of the interested groups, conditioned not only by their social but also by their cultural affiliation. Value as a sociocultural phenomenon, included in the motivational basis of human behavior, has already become a subject of theoretical comprehension more than once [Kagan, 1974, 1997; Bennett, 1998; Nakayama & Halualani, 2011; Stier, 2006; Williams, 2011].

Thus, philosophical knowledge has offered a theory of value that allows one to explain the value motivational foundations of human behavior within the framework of various cultural systems.

Marketing, which constitutes branding as a communication strategy, always takes into account the values of consumers. However, in the branding of places, which is built on the involvement in the management of communication of various groups of people who act as subjects of branding, the value factor plays an equally important role. Moreover, without considering this, branding of places in Russian will always be doomed to failure. Lack of awareness of the value component in the management of communications in place branding when calculating Western approaches leads to the fact that the technology "*does not work*", stumbling over the value priorities of the Russian audience, from management practitioners to different groups of stakeholders.

In this regard, we propose to focus on such elements of the place brand as the values, identity, and management of stakeholders. Stakeholders act as subjects of various stages of the process of place branding, but it is the values and perceptions of themselves and their relationship with the place that determine the quality and direction of their participation in the process of place branding.

The problem of the participants and target audience of the place brand is one of the key areas in branding: "Building a place brand means starting with the factors that influence the experience, perception and satisfaction of the audience of the place brand, based on the principle of stakeholder orientation" [von Wallpach, Hemetsberger, & Espersen, 2016; Wagner Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2011]. Many authors point to the complex composition of participants in the advancement of the place.

That is why, in the branding of places, preference is given to groups potentially providing large financial flows: to tourists, investors, external buyers of goods and services, to residents. For each audience, the place offers its values: for example, if tourists can offer places to tourists and developed services, tourists leave money on the place, create new jobs and spread information about the place [Davcik, Vinhas da Silva, & Hair, 2015].

Therefore, in place branding all participate, either as subjects, or as objects, but more often, when combining both roles. Anholt and van Gelder (2003) consider the following basic communication channels for broadcasting information about the city: tourism, the private sector, domestic and foreign policy, investments and immigration, culture, education, and people, thinking about ways to involve stakeholders in place branding.

Kipnis et al. (2013) formulate a number of basic principles on which partnerships of ter place ritory branding coordinators with stakeholders should be built: inclusiveness and representativeness, long-term commitment, common vision, shared responsibility, mutual trust, focus and involvement, unity of communication, decision-making and activities "for the benefit of the brand", investing "for the sake of the brand", the willingness to assess the contribution and effectiveness.

The installation for trusting cooperation is developing: "The most effective initiatives are built on stimulating the activity of a wide range of local players", "effective stakeholder engagement is vital for

the city's branding as an important area of modern urban development" [Houghton & Stevens, 2010].

The engagement process itself expands the circle of informed "brand lawyers". At the same time, a number of starting points for successful interaction with stakeholders are singled out: (1) involvement in the branding process of various groups, including those that are not eager to participate in the branding of the place, but whose interests this process affects; (2) the desire to take into account a wide range of opportunities and interests, which will allow the developed brand to communicate the specified messages to different target audiences; (3) finding and using people who allow the place to function on a daily basis [Henninger, Foster, Alevizou, & Frohlich, 2016].

Andersen and Nielsen (2009) identify three phased successive models of the organization's relationship with stakeholders, modernist, postmodern and hypermodern. The modernist model is centric, the organization acts as a center in it, coordinating relations with unconnected stakeholders. In the postmodern model, the organization becomes part of a network in which it is integrated with stakeholders on an equal footing and takes an equal position with them. The organization ceases to be perceived as the holder of truth since it now recognizes the existence of a multitude of individually understood truths with which it has to reckon. The principles of building relations with stakeholders in the postmodern are independence, correlation, cooperation. If the modernist model of relations with stakeholders emphasizes the management of their behavior, the post-modernist model places emphasis on the organization of meetings with them. The third, modern model of relations with stakeholders is characterized by the phenomenon of network interaction between people, which allows them to join new communities and provides the opportunity for a variety of visual self-representation in networks.

In addition, Landry and Bianchini (1995), as an indispensable condition for the creation of innovations in the region, calls the active cultural environment, which creates opportunities for networking of active members of the urban community. Understanding the place as a medium of network communication, in which different stakeholders can equally speak and be heard, is the task facing the Russian regions.

The key element of the place brand is undoubtedly place identity. The subject of identity formation is the members of the community. Therefore, different versions of identity become possible. This idea was put in the basis of the concept of constructing social reality [Berger & Luckmann, 1966]. She considered identity as a phenomenon, formed depending on the direction and nature of the subjective view.

In relation to the place, identity is a form of place self-identification of local residents. Significant in urban identity are manifestations of the uniqueness of the city in comparison with other cities attributed to it by people who act as creators and recipients of identity. The region is a complex system of social interactions, so the question arises about the markers and factors of the formation of urban identity.

For the theory of place branding as a communication technology in the marketing of places, the concept of identity, as a rule, is used to characterize the real qualities of the place. If the analysis of place identity is based on the concept of identity in the form in which it was developed in psychological theory, the process of constructing an identity on the part of an individual or a social community will be the main thing for us. In this sense, identity is closest to such a category from the area of place branding as a place image [Vizgalov, 2011].

In the theory and practice of place branding, tasks of a pragmatic nature come first. Communication of the place with target audiences is considered to be managed in accordance with marketing objectives to attract a particular group of consumers.

This point of view forces the theoreticians and practitioners of place branding to consider the

identity of the place (that is, the natural perception of this place by the local community) as, firstly, highly significant for the advancement of the place and, secondly, not only as naturally formed, but also as consciously controlled reality. To solve the problem of managing the communications of the place by the method of forming its brand, theorists, and practitioners of place branding, it is necessary to identify the components of identity and take them into account as factors of the brand's formation of the place. For example, Kalandides (2011) identifies five components in place identity. This is a place image, that is, the perception of the place; this is the material dimension of the place (buildings, streets and other infrastructure), these are different institutions (laws, organizations, etc.), these are relations between people (gender, power, class, etc.), as well as the people themselves and their practices (traditions, repetitive actions, daily life, etc.).

Anholt (2016) identifies the concept of identity and place brand, considering the country's brand as a competitive identity. This opinion is shared [Kavaratzis, Warnaby, & Ashworth, 2015], according to which "the place needs to be differentiated by a unique brand identity, if it wants, first, to be recognized as existing, and secondly, to be perceived in the minds of consumers places as offering higher quality than its competitors, and third, to be consumed in accordance with its goals".

Diaghilev (2013) believes that the formation of urban identity is influenced by three kinds of factors: (1) stable factors (city location, climate, city history); (2) variable factors (the size and population of the city, the external appearance of the city, the well-being of residents, cultural traditions of the local community); (3) symbolic factors (urban symbols, political climate, cultural behavior codes of residents, landmark events, iconic individuals, fashion for individual goods and services, the nature of communications within the community, etc.)

In this classification of the factors of the formation of urban identity, the influence of the categories of hard (difficultly amenable to deliberate adjustment) and soft (relatively plastic) marketing factors of the place [Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993].

However, a separate group consists of symbolic factors, in which, apparently, the main communicative potential is concentrated. If to judge the identity of the place based on symbolic factors that symbolize the identification of the citizens of their place of residence, then the identification of a consensus on the symbols of the city will be the action that will make it possible to formalize the identity of the city. In constructivist theory, symbolic reality is regarded as one of the forms of the translation of identity: "identity theories are always included in a more general interpretation of reality; they are "embedded" in a symbolic universe with its theoretical legitimations and are mutated along with the character of the latter" [Berger & Luckmann, 1966, Gergen, 2009].

This idea of the symbolic nature of identity correlates with the interpretation of the symbol in the concept of P. Bourdieu, who in his analysis of the social field views the symbol as a key means of social integration: "symbols are instruments of par excellence of 'social integration': as instruments of knowledge and communication ...they make possible consensus on the meaning of social peace"[Bourdieu, 1989].

If we try to understand place identity as a set of pragmatically oriented symbolically represented realities, then we can distinguish three factors that influence the formation of identity: (1) relations (a complex of meaningful natural, economic, political, social, etc. processes that existed and exist in the place); (2) funds (architecture, literature and art, infrastructure and environment, the media as forms of representation (or middlemen of identity), often acting as symbolic carriers of identity); (3) subjects (groups motivated by their own interests, such as authorities, economic entities, residents, tracing the trajectories of social self-realization, each at its level).

The pragmatic model of place identity allows in general terms to interpret the identity of the place

because of the aggregate of relations between different actors, no matter how active they are in the communication space, which today has become recognized as a powerful factor in the construction of identity.

Summing up, we consider it necessary to emphasize the special importance for place branding of two factors, the conceptualization of place identity based on the diagnosis of actual local identity markers and effective management of the place brand stakeholders. In this case, they can act as its agents and (in the case of ignoring the requests of interested groups) by opponents sabotaging activities to promote the brand of the place. Also very important could be the application of the theory of economic identity of the region [Bazhenov & Bazhenova, 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Bazhenova & Bazhenov, 2016].

Conclusion

The success of the promotion of the place, the development of its place brand depends on many factors and circumstances that the Russian regions either cannot manage or do not have the resources to study them, to combine positive and minimize negative conditions.

The approaches described in the article can become the basis for developing a model of a place brand built on the principles of an integrative approach and aimed at accentuating precisely on such factors of place branding, which today, being key, remain, nevertheless, the most problematic in the geo-branding of Russian cities. The model thus constructed will have the potential of an effective methodological tool for practitioners in the sphere of place management and communications of Russian cities, as it relies on the study of the most acute problems they face when they think about the formation of their own regional brand.

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Теоретические подходы к моделированию регионального бренда

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Аннотация

Успех регионального брендинга, а также развитие регионального бренда места зависит от многих факторов и обстоятельств. В статье рассматриваются теоретические подходы к решению основной проблемы брендинга российских регионов и городов. Прежде всего, проблема связана с недостаточным пониманием проблем, возникающих, когда регион выступает в качестве конкретного объекта продвижения. Все это приводит к значительным ошибкам в процессах управления, а также к разработке визуальных компонентов бренда без предварительного изучения идентичности и архитектуры бренда. По мнению авторов, одним из способов решения этой проблемы является разработка методологического аппарата, который позволяет адаптировать технологию регионального брендинга к современным задачам, стоящим в актуальных российских условиях. Успех продвижения региона, развитие его фирменного бренда зависит от многих факторов и обстоятельств, которыми российские регионы либо не могут управлять, либо не имеют ресурсов для их изучения, чтобы создать для брендинга благоприятные условия. Подходы, описанные в статье, могут стать основой для разработки модели фирменного бренда, основанного на принципах интегративного подхода и направленного на то, чтобы акцентировать именно на таких факторах, которые сегодня, являясь ключевыми для успеха, остаются, тем не менее, наиболее проблематичными в гео-брендинге российских городов.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

Баженов С.В., Баженова Е.Ю. Теоретические подходы к моделированию регионального бренда // Экономика: вчера, сегодня, завтра. 2017. Том 7. № 12А. С. 5-14.

Ключевые слова

Региональный брендинг, бренд-менеджмент, региональные брендовые модели, междисциплинарность, заинтересованные стороны, концепция бренда.

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