

Branding B&H - Sarajevo as a Touristic Destination

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Abstract

At a time when BiH is on the one of the lowest levels of development in Europe, and when most of economy branches are undeveloped, it is very hard to say what should be considered as starter of economic development. But I decided to consider tourism sector as a field that could contribute the most, and as a field that has biggest chances and opportunities to increase economic well-being of people in BiH. Tourism industry is one of the most important industries in the world, especially in Europe. Its contribution to total worlds GDP is about 7,5%, engages more than 75.000 employees that is about 7% of total world employment, more than 750 millions of international tourists arrive all around the world in 2011 and all these indicators increase every year.

BiH has all conditions to become tourism oriented European country. It is found in heart of Europe, on intersection of important communication and transportation roads. It has all necessary natural and social resources, favorable climate, geographic and geomorphologic conditions, to have good developed tourism sector. But for progress of any branch of economy good strategy and clear goals must be defined. In this research branding of BiH / Sarajevo will be taken as starting point of this progress.

Keywords: Brand, destination branding, image, globalization, GDP.

Introduction

“Places are products whose identities and values must be designed and marketed” (Kotler, 1999). Branding of the countries, cities, regions or places is very popular in marketing science during the last two or three decades. One of the most important reasons why destination branding became popular all around the world is very high level of competition between cities as a touristic destination. Because of globalization phenomena every place can become competitive and attract tourists, so this competition forced marketers to find out new strategies and models for attraction of the tourists.

Main goal of branding is to create an unique and distinctive concept to identify the brands higher value in relation to the competitors.¹ Destination branding is not very different from product or service branding, but its difference lies in the manner of crating the brand concept, revealing a common link in brand strategy when it comes to success. Many

¹Juan A. Garcia, Mar Gomez, Arturo Molina, *“A destination-branding model: An empirical analysis based on stakeholders”*, University of Castila La Mancha, Spain, 2012, page 647.

authors and economy experts tried to explain concept of destination branding. All of them described factors that are crucial for crating brand of the place.

Brand identity and destination image are two important indicators for a successful destination branding. Destination image is critical to crate the positive and recognizable brand identity.² Existing of strong relationship between destination image and satisfaction of tourists shows high importance of these two variables. Also brand identity, as a result of destination image can be part of the crating satisfaction of the visitors. It is sure that branding is important part of the marketing and can contribute a lot to reach goal, for all products, services or destinations. Functions of branding can be expressed by level of *identification and differentiation*. "Identification can be defined as a level of reorganization of the product or brand by consumers, while differentiation is creation or demonstration of unique characteristics in a company's products or brands compared to those of its competitors."³ *Brand association* is one more important element in process of branding a destination. It influences consumer, or tourist, evaluation toward the brand or brand choice. "Perceptions about a brand are reflections of the brand associations held in consumer memory"⁴ This element is considered as one of the most important parts of creating brand image. Brand associations are classified into three major parts: attributes, benefits and attitudes. According to Keller (1999), attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a brand. "In other words, an attribute is what a consumer thinks the brand is or has to offer and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. The benefits that may occur are the personal value consumers associate with the brand attributes in the form of functional, symbolic, experiential attachments. That is, what consumers think the brand can do for them? Brand attitudes are consumers' overall evaluations of the brand and are the basis for consumer behavior (e.g., brand choice)."⁵ To crate successful brand and image of the destination, different approaches can be used. Some of them are: creating of cultural mega events, heritage promotion or construction of iconic buildings. "Image of destination is also influenced by *cognitive and affective factors*. Cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object whereas affective evaluation refers to feelings about the object."⁶

It can be concluded that, for the good branding of the destination, accommodation quality, scenic view, friendly people, natural and social resources are not enough. Place needs to be unique and different from other places, to be selected as a final destination.

1. DESTINATION BRANDING MODELS

Because of its importance and contribution to economic development many cities developed strategy for branding of own places, events or manifestations. Some of them did it in a good way and sow benefits, but a lot of these cities failed in their mission. In literature it is possible to find several theoretical models for this topic, but their implementation into practice is harder part. Reasons for failure are different. Considering

²Hailin Qu, Lisa Hyunjung Kim , Holly Hyunjung, „*A model of destination branding: Integrating the concept of the branding and destination image*“, Jeonju University Srepublic of Corea, 2011, page 466.

³*Differentiation – definition*, Retrieved on February 3 2013, from <http://en.mimi.hu/marketingweb/differentiation.html>

⁴Keller, K.L. (2003). „*Strategic Brand Management*.“, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

⁵Hailin Qu, Lisa Hyunjung Kim , Holly Hyunjung, „*A model of destination branding: Integrating the concept of the branding and destination image*“, Jeonju University Srepublic of Corea, 2011, page 467.

⁶Hailin Qu, Lisa Hyunjung Kim , Holly Hyunjung, „*A model of destination branding: Integrating the concept of the branding and destination image*“, Jeonju University Srepublic of Corea, 2011, page 467.

BiH or Sarajevo as an advantageous region for branding, it would be good idea to compare it with branded destinations from the past. Bad examples are also useful to see mistakes and avoid them, or change the strategy.

1.1. Examples of Bad City Branding

Berlin

Since 1990, its planners, business leaders, and government officials made a strategy for branding of Berlin. They wanted to use city's painful history to create new, better image of the city – city that is good for everyone. Although Berlin is center of the German culture, one of the most progressive cities in Europe, place of very famous music and film fairs, it didn't help to create a good image and good brand of the city.⁷

High unemployment level and repositioning itself by building positive image on a negative past are unbridgeable barriers for branding of Berlin. City with all these advantages must change its strategy and start rebranding process.

Beijing

Beijing has won the race for hosting the Olympic Games in 2008 and authorities in the city tried to use this to brand Beijing. The process of Beijing branding involved promotion of the positive qualities of the city and a physical reconstruction of the city. It tried to present a cultural, modern, cosmopolitan, and people-based city.

The biggest mistake during the process of Beijing branding was mismatch of government and people. View of the authorities and view of the citizens and tourists about the city, were very different, so they couldn't overcome these differences. Also they wanted to see results of the branding very fast, but branding is long-term process.

Other examples of bad branding of the cities are:

- London – wrong strategy, poorly managed transport and unfocused brand values;
- Belfast – logo without clear idea and several branding strategy mistakes;
- Jerusalem – brand cannot be everything for everyone, what is tried to do with this city;
- Toronto – “Toronto Unlimited” campaign was not successful as it was expected. It didn't become 24-hour city; some other cities (Vancouver, New York, Las Vegas) had better results with similar ideas. Tourism and business of Toronto didn't have big progress.
- Birmingham and Bristol are other cities in Great Britain that tried to become world's brand, but they are still in shadow of Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool.

1.2. Examples of good city branding

Smile! You are in Spain
Colombia is passion!
I Love NY!
Oklahoma Native America!

⁷Julia Winfield-Pfefferkorn, “The branding of cities – Exploring city branding and importance of brand image”, Syracuse University. August 2005, page 79.

Paris – City of light!

All these maintained slogans are part of successful campaigns and branding missions of some cities or countries. If London's or Belfast's slogans were part of bad strategies, these ones are piece of successful and well done city/country brandings.

New York

In 1970, the State of New York decided to promote tourism to help offset a recession, and asked the Ad Agency Wells, Rich and Greene, and graphic artist Milton Glaser to develop a campaign, and the "I Love NY" slogan was created along with the campaign which is still one of the most recognized and successful campaigns in the history of great emotional branding.⁸ Authorities and people responsible for this mission had a clear directions and goals. On the beginning New York was presented as a city of different people that are able to reach their dreams. During 3 or 4 decades New York changed a lot because of the campaign. It was the place with very high housing costs, crime rate and density of living during 1970s and 1980s. A lot of citizens escaped from there. But during 1990s and after, it became one of the cities with the highest rate of immigration. Since 1990s it has added more than 685.000 people, which was the highest percentage of large cities during that period.⁹

Paris

City with a very long history and starting point of some of the most important events happened in the past, is still world's important destination. Six attractions in Paris draw more than 25 million visitors yearly. Disneyland in Paris, the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre are some of the most visited places in the world.¹⁰ Paris is European cultural and communication center, with famous fashion and manufacturing of luxury articles.¹¹ One of the cities with income mostly generated from tourism industry, and world tourism leading city.

It was not difficult for city's authorities to decide on branding Paris. The city had all qualities to become a brand. Unique culture, history, attractions and personality make Paris one of the most distinctive city brands in the World. Important events that were organized and incorporated in branding strategy helped in progress of the city. Football World Cup from 1998 was the most visited football manifestation in history. Paris fashion week and similar events attract thousands of tourists every year.

Other examples for good and successful branding strategy for the city branding are:

- Oklahoma – successful changing image of the city caused financial support and good strategy;¹²

⁸Landa, Robin. *Advertising by Design, Creating Visual Communications with Graphic Impact* John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey, 2004, page 28.

⁹Julia Winfield-Pfefferkorn, *"The branding of cities – Exploring city branding and importance of brand image"*, Syracuse University. August 2005, page 35.

¹⁰Julia Winfield-Pfefferkorn, *"The branding of cities – Exploring city branding and importance of brand image"*, Syracuse University. August 2005, page 44.

¹¹Phillip's *"Paris World Encyclopedia"*, 2004, page 176.

¹²Hailin Qu, Lisa Hyunjung Kim, Holly Hyunjung, *"A model of destination branding: Integrating the concepts of the branding and destination image"*, Jeonju University, Republic of Korea

- Sydney – Olympics 2000 were used in a good way. Progress in tourism, business and development of whole city could start.
- San Francisco – started a very successful “Only in San Francisco” city branding campaign. Strategy was good, sufficient funds were provided for advertising and result was economy and tourism growth.
- Liverpool – the city offers sense of real Britain culture, with many bars and clubs, many financial centers and dramatic architecture. Offers something to everyone.

2. POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR BIH / SARAJEVO BRANDING

From the examples analyzed before, their success and fails, good strategy for Sarajevo branding could be made. BiH as a country and its capital city Sarajevo, have all qualities and conditions for becoming one of the most famous country or city in region and Europe. Its multiculturalism, history, architecture, events and infrastructure are something that most cities in Europe don't have. Most of them aspire to have similar characteristics as Sarajevo and BiH already have. It is only necessary to use all these qualities and results would be seen.

Sarajevo has a very long history. The biggest world's empires, such as Ottoman (1463 - 1878) and Austria-Hungarian (1878-1918)¹³, left the stamp in BiH and Sarajevo. Buildings from these periods are still found and used as an important places in the city. Period before Ottomans was also very turbulent and active. A lot of castles and old houses were built during the period of Medieval Bosnia (1180 - 1463). Some of them are renovated and became museums. After the Austria-Hungarian monarchy, the country of South Slavs was established. It was called Republic of Yugoslavia. Some of the most important events from I and II World War happened in BiH and Sarajevo. Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sofia were killed on Latin bridge in Sarajevo in 1914. That was one of the reasons why I World War started. Sarajevo's museum was established and dedicated to this event, with the pictures, weapon and other materials originally preserved from the assassination. Sarajevo Winter Olympic Games from 1984 were the best organized and visited games in history of the Olympics until that year. Three mountains in the city got infrastructure for the winter Olympic sports, several sport halls were made and all of these were destroyed during the war 92-95. This war is another important event for BiH, Europe and whole world that occurred in BiH. All these important elements could be used for creating brand of BiH or Sarajevo.

Although BiH and its capital city have all these positive conditions, this process of branding would be very hard. There are few reasons why. First and maybe the most important is bad image of the country in the world. That image was created during the last war. Most of the people when heard word Bosnia or Sarajevo think about the war and all bad things happened then. It is said that branding process starts with the creating good image of the product in the mind of customers. So this point is very negative and should be changed. Second, all infrastructure must be renewed or build again. Transportation in the city and in the country is very old and residual. Winter sport infrastructure on the mountains is destroyed and unused. It means a lot of money and financial support is

¹³Stephen E. Sachs, “*Sarajevo: A Crossroads in History*”, 1994, Junior disunion.

needed to start the process, what also could be a huge problem and in this time unfortunately impossible. There are also some other problems, but these two are the biggest and the most important.

Model I – Sarajevo – European city of multiculturalism and coexistence of people with different religions

First possible solution for Sarajevo branding has many advantages. The city has all necessary resources. It is already multicultural place with all its advantages and disadvantages. Other important elements are buildings from several different periods, rising in the city as evidence of multiculturalism. More than 150 mosques, the most important places built during the Ottoman period, evidence of Islam and existence of Muslims. At the same time, a lot of catholic and orthodox churches rising at same places as mosques are rising. Jewish temples are also important buildings found in Sarajevo. Because of this Sarajevo is called “European Jerusalem”.

To use this model, good advertising strategy must be developed. Advertising and marketing are very expensive, but considering existence of all other resources, this could be the only expense. Of course as we mentioned before, image of the city should be changed and transportation infrastructure must be renewed.

Model II – Sarajevo – Olympic city

Idea about revival Olympic Games spirit already exist, but wrong strategy and reasons for doing this are used. Politics take place in the idea and there are not funds that could be enough to have success in this mission. Generally idea is good and there are good chances to make brand of Sarajevo based on this. But there are crucial things that should be done, and it would be very expensive process. All infrastructures from the Olympic Games must be renovated, because it was destroyed during the war. Process of branding Sarajevo as Olympic city would be very long. To do this a lot of financial support, good marketing strategy, support from the authorities and participation of all citizens must take place in the project.

Model III – Sarajevo – European center of culture, Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF)

Sarajevo Film Festival is already very important and famous event in the region and Europe. Many world famous stars visited this manifestations and it has all qualities to become leading event in the region. It is the reason why thousands of tourists come to Sarajevo during July and August. Organization of SFF started in 1995 and became traditional. It had a lot of success during the last years and attracts many visitors from the Europe, but with the financial support and enthusiasm of city authorities it could be much more then it is now. One of the disadvantages for this event is lack of accommodation capacities and infrastructure in city of Sarajevo. In next few years Sarajevo is planning to organize few very important manifestations and one of them is cultural event in 2014 called “Sarajevo, the bridge of cultures”.¹⁴ It is expected that city will host more tourists than 1984, for Olympic Games, and this could be chance for renewing and building of new tourism infrastructures.

¹⁴“Sarajevo, the bridge of cultures 2014“, retrieved 21th March 2013 from <http://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/iz-sarajeva-2014-godine-poruke-mira/120916032>

Model IV – BiH – See Olympic Mountains, nature, sea and different civilizations on one place

This model of branding BiH, not only Sarajevo, could have the most contribution for economy. As it is described before, all necessary resources exist, but BiH doesn't use all of them. Advantages for BiH are resources that are suitable for both winter and summer tourism. In the same time country owns mountains and sea and lakes, which are very important part of tourism. Disadvantage and threat for this model of BiH branding is competition. Most of the neighbor countries such as Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro, are tourism developed countries. They have good offerings and in this moment these countries are more developed in tourism sense than BiH is. They all have good strategies and started to implement them, so BiH as a country must think about something different and must invest much more to become competitive with them. This model could have the biggest direct and indirect influence on whole economy, and could contribute to increasing of well being of BiH citizens.

3. SURVEY

To support and proof important statements from this paper the survey was conducted. As it is maintained before, image of the country or place is important for its branding. There are also few elements that must be created for successful branding, such as: brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand recognition, positive brand feeling and perceived quality. To analyze these elements questionnaire with the appropriate questions was delivered to the respondents. The data for this study were gathered through mail questionnaires that were distributed to respondents on internet and directly, from February 15th to March 23th 2013. Answers on internet were collected by docs.google.com, and then all responds were statistically analyzed in SPSS program. The profile of respondents is shown in Table 1. The total respondents for this study are 335, but 32 of them are eliminated because of incomplete responds, so final sample size is 303. The study sample comprises respondents who vary on such characteristics as gender, age, marital status, education level, monthly income, nationality (BiH, UK, Germany, Italy, Serbia, Croatia and Turkey) and living area.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents of Destination Branding Survey

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	143	47.2
	Female	160	52.8
Age	15 – 25	165	54.5
	26 – 35	98	32.3
	36 – 55	26	8.6
	55+	14	4.6
Nationality	BiH	141	46.5
	Other	162	53.5
Marital status	Single	221	72.9
	Married (children)	64	21.1
	Married(No children)	14	4.6
	Divorced	4	1.3
Education	High school	70	23.1
	University	143	47.2
	Graduate school	81	26.7
	Other	9	3.0
Monthly income	0 €	45	14.9
	0 – 350 €	51	16.8
	350 – 550 €	102	33.7
	550 – 1000 €	102	33.7
	1000 €+	3	1.0
How often you travel	Once a year	155	51.2
	Twice a year	113	37.3
	More than 2 times	35	11.6
Average days stayed on the trip	1 – 3	28	9.2
	4 – 7	196	64.7
	8 – 14	56	18.5
	14+	23	7.6

Questionnaire was composed of three different types of questions: Yes/No questions, scale questions (from very high to very low) and multiple choice questions. Some of information that we got by the questionnaire are used for descriptive analyses, such as data from table 1. Other important piece of survey was in relation between the factors and mutual influence on each other. For this part correlation analyses were used.

3.1. Results

According to theoretical models of A. Friedman (2012), Risitano (2011) and M. Yasin (2007) destination brand depends on several different variables, but for this research 6 of them are chosen, and these are: brand recognition, brand awareness, image, brand quality, brand feeling and loyalty of the visitors. For every variable appropriate questions are composed and analyzed in statistical program, so results of the research will be described in the next few paragraphs.

3.1.1. Brand recognition

In this part it was necessary to see level of knowledge of tourists about BiH. The main question was how familiar with BiH are they. 63,7% of them answered that they know a lot about the country, 23,8% said they are familiar with the country, while less than 10% said they only heard about BiH from the friends. To support these answers few basic questions about BiH were structured and answers were satisfying. The respondents had 97,7% correct answers for question “where is BiH located”. More than 94% knew what religion of people live in BiH is.

3.1.2. Brand awareness

For brand awareness two main indicators are very important. First is perceptual of foreign tourists that knew the destination before they travel. More than 60% knew the destination and were familiar with it, while other read about the country and learned from the friends. Second indicator was the typology of communication channels through which tourists knew the destination. The most of the visitors learned about BiH on the internet (46%), heard from the friends (34%), while other's source of information were TV, newspaper and other sources.

3.1.3. Brand feelings and loyalty

While testing feeling and loyalty of tourists we wanted to know their opinion about the country. Most of the respondents, doesn't matter if they visited BiH or heard about friends that visited, have positive feeling about BiH. At the same time large percentage (80,1%) of them like or respect the country.

Table 2. Tourists Opinion About Bih / Sarajevo

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
I visited, and I have positive feeling	38	27,5	27.5
I visited, and I have negative feeling	5	3,6	31.1
My friend visited, and has positive feeling	41	29,7	60.8
My friend visited, and has negative feeling	7	5,1	65.9
I read about, and have positive feeling	39	28,3	94.2
I read about, and have negative feeling	8	5,8	100.0
Total	138	100,0	

3.1.4. Brand quality

Variables that are considered as important for respondent's opinion about destination quality were factors such as accommodation, restaurants, nature, architecture and general opinion about quality of trips in BiH. 90,8% of tourists think that BiH and Sarajevo have unique architecture and more than 95% of them think that country owns beautiful nature. It is important to notice that they are very satisfied with the quality of restaurants and accommodation. 44,9% said that quality is very good, 38% good and 16,7% think that accommodation and restaurants quality is normal. Although most of the respondents that visited BiH and Sarajevo agreed accommodation and restaurants quality is satisfying, they think that prices of the same are not very high. 46,9% answered prices are normal, 19,8% think prices are very high, while 25,4% said that prices of this factor are high.

3.1.5. Brand image

Brand image questions in questionnaire were related with the safeness of the country, perception of the foreign respondents about BiH and Sarajevo and general opinion in their minds. Result of 18,2% respondents that think that BiH is not a safe place, is bad for the country and contributes to a bad image.

Table 3. What associates you on BiH ?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
War	97	32.0	32.0
Many mosques and churches	22	7.3	39.3
Olympic Games	31	10.2	49.5
Sarajevo Film Festival	23	7.6	57.1
Nature	25	8.3	65.3
Old bridge in Mostar	77	25.4	90.8
Medugorje	10	3.3	94.1
Other	18	5.9	100.0
Total	303	100.0	

Answers from table 3 are also negative for the country. The war and Old Bridge in Mostar, which is also association on the war, are two things that are the biggest associations of BiH in people's mind. More than half of respondents choose war and Old Bridge as BiH associations.

3.1.6. Correlation analysis

The correlation concept gives a mathematical value for measuring the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. It can take values from -1 to +1 with: +1 representing absolute positive linear relationship (X increases, Y increases), 0 representing no linear relationship (X and Y have no pattern), -1 representing absolute inverse relationship (as X increases, Y decreases).¹⁵

¹⁵Zafer Konakli, „Research Methods with SPSS applications“, Sarajevo, 2012, page 99.

Table 4. Pearson correlations

	IMAGE	RECOGNITION	FEELINGS	AWARENESS	LOYALTY	QUALITY
IMAGE	1	.681**	.958**	.878**	.865**	.908**
RECOGNITION	.681**	1	.708**	.654**	.692**	.675**
FEELINGS	.958**	.708**	1	.817**	.826**	.846**
AWARENESS	.878**	.654**	.817**	1	.908**	.918**
LOYALTY	.865**	.692**	.826**	.908**	1	.927**
QUALITY	.908**	.675**	.846**	.918**	.927**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As it is explained before, if correlation is higher than 0, there is positive correlation between the variables. In this case, significance is 0 (0.0005) for all relationships, and there is very strong positive correlation between all variables. The strongest is between image and quality (0.908), while the weakest is between quality and recognition (0.675), but it is still strong positive correlation.

CONCLUSION

Through this research paper we tried to explain importance of destination branding, especially during the last 20 or 30 years, when globalization takes very important role in every business. For some it is disadvantage and threat, but for these who have successful and good defined strategy this phenomenon can be a chance and advantage. Another issue is global economic crisis, which is part of every branch during last 7 or 8 years. Influence of the crisis must be incorporated in all policies and strategies, and then its influence would be the lowest. Tourism and destination branding is one of the ways for overcoming both economy and political crisis in BiH. The country is in transition and that is another negative circumstance, but it is time to start the progress on all fields.

There are many things that must be changed in BiH to have success in tourism sector. First of them is to change political atmosphere. During the last 30 years the country is in phase of economic and political stagnation, and crisis is component of all economy segments. Political instability is reason why the crisis occurs for a many years in BiH. Another result of this instability is bad organization of tourism sector. Authorities are not supporting businesses and don't show any interest for the progress. Second element that must be changed is bad image of BiH in eyes of European people, mostly because of the war. Changing of this image could be very hard and long process, but without success in here, development of tourism is not real option. Image of destination is crucial factor in every well developed touristic place. To achieve this goal good marketing and promotion strategy must be conceived. It could be impossible in here, because of financial elements. In this situation BiH as a country is very far from progress in tourism.

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