

# The Application of Regional Culture in City Brand Design

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## ABSTRACT

**A city needs a brand as a "container" to pack up the assets. When the city creates the brand image system, it needs to explore a very rich field for brand positioning. This includes the city's cultural resources, geographical customs, cultural scenery, natural environment, etc. A city is like a creature, which is difficult to be identified. If it is represented in a figurative graph, people will feel hard to consider all its features. But a super symbol can put all the elements of regional culture in it and become the most explicit and powerful brand symbol. Starting with the development of Dalian's city brand image, this paper discusses how to use regional culture to spread the city's brand image by designing super symbols of brand and carrying out city advertising activities.**

*Keywords: city image, brand communication, regional culture, super symbol, brand design*

## I. INTRODUCTION

"Like products and people, geographical location or specific spatial areas can also become brands. The power of urban branding is to let people know about a particular area and connect its image and association with the city's existence, so that its spirit is integrated into every building in the city, allowing competition and life to coexist with the city."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Ding Junjie, dean of the Advertising School of Communication University of China, mentioned in the article "The Power of City Branding": "Good city brand design is more like a city's micro-management strategy for its citizens, and an easily identifiable brand logo will have a lasting impact on the public."

The visual symbol of city brand is the carrier of city spirit and culture, which can represent the characteristics of city culture. In the process of urban development, the overall image of a city not only affects the living environment of urban residents and their sense of belonging to the city, but also is an important part in the attraction of tourists. Creating a city brand image with regional cultural characteristics is

conducive to inheriting local culture and developing local economy.

## II. THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF CITY BRAND IMAGE CONSTRUCTION

The city image is the key to remembering the city. A good city image is like a great poem, from which every reader will have different experience and understand the city through the door of city brand image.

The shift from old to new drivers of growth has boosted economic growth. The transition to high-quality development has become the theme of China's economic and social development and is also the focus and trend of urban marketing and brand building. More and more cities are designing city brand image and establishing brand city, and the requirement of city brand image is increasing year by year, and the creative economy is becoming the trend. If a city can create wealth through culture without polluting the environment and consuming natural resources, then it can not only replace many products in traditional industries and reduce wastes, but also improve the quality of life of the whole city.

Whether a company brand or a city brand, must have a "container" to hold the brand equity, because the container is the symbol of the brand. Without brand, it is impossible to accumulate brand wealth for a long time. If people don't have symbolic images in their minds, it means that everything is scattered and can't gather power. A brands can concentrate all of the work

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Lane Keller. Strategic Brand Management [M]. Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2016 (8).

in a container of brand symbols, which is a piggy bank for brand equity. So every penny and every action invested in a brand affects the present and the future.

The "China City Marketing Development Report (2018)", jointly released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Financial Economics and China Social Sciences Press on October 31, 2018, pointed out that urban brand development index includes 289 urban cultural brands, tourism brands and investment brands. According to five themes, Dalian ranked 21st out of 289 cities, making it top of the list. Dalian is a famous coastal tourism city in northeast China, with mountains and sea facing each other, distinct four seasons, complete urban features, diverse cultural landscapes and rich tourism products. It is a city with a long history and profound culture, known as the city of romance. Therefore, it has rich and varied regional cultural materials in the process of building city brand image.

### **III. PROBLEMS EXISTING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF CITY BRAND IMAGE**

#### *A. Unclear brand image positioning*

At present, the uncertainty of city brand image has become the main problem facing the development of tourism cities in China. For example, in the process of building its own city brand image, Huizhou usually positions itself as a business travel destination and a leisure place with landscape characteristics and humanistic customs. In addition, Huizhou has a great advantage in related tourism industry due to its unique geographical location and relatively rich tourism resources. However, in the actual development process, Huizhou did not take the geographical factor as an important factor to shape the city brand image, nor did it develop the unique tourism and cultural industry according to its location of the relevant city brand image. It just stays in the development of tourism resources and image formation. In addition, the inaccurate position of the city's brand image will hinder the communication of the city's brand image, affect the mood of tourists and reduce the number of tourists. Therefore, in the development process, the city must have an accurate and clear brand image positioning.

#### *B. Imperfect brand vision system*

In the process of building the city brand image, Tokyo and other regions have systematically established the city brand image at an early stage. Therefore, in the future development process, they can maintain their unique tourism characteristics and become the best tourist destinations in the world. Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou and other places also carried out a system of urban brand image design. However, in some urban areas, with rich tourism resources, though; there is no unified expression of the overall image in

the process of building a tourist city due to the lack of a perfect city brand image system. As a result, the relevant tourism industry cannot effectively express the cultural characteristics of the city and leave a distinct impression on tourists.

### **IV. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE CITY'S BRAND IMAGE**

#### *A. Digging into the regional culture and defining the city positioning*

In order to effectively improve the city brand image in the promotion of the city brand image, it is necessary to accurately position the city brand image, and carry out the design and communication of brand overall visual identification system on the basis of accurate positioning. When designing city brand image, relevant government departments should employ well-known city brand image design units to comprehensively design and plan city brand image with advanced concepts and science and technology. In the process of promoting city brand, related image slogans and iconic products should be designed to further implant city brand image into people's hearts.

In 2017, the famous red tourist resort Jiaxing launched its tourism image logo. Through collecting and analyzing the elements of Jiaxing's red ship, smiling face, architecture and literature, the city brand of Jiaxing is positioned as "Red ship initiated dreams and travels to Jiaxing with heart". Cheng Zhaohui, professor of School of Design of China Academy of Art, said: "From the Jiangnan water town to thousand-facet Jiaxing, the super tourism brand symbol of Jiaxing presents the thousand-facet Jiaxing with a simple inclusive Jiaxing, highlighting the brand positioning of 'a city with heart'." A symbol conveys the image of a city that integrates tradition and modernity, presents to the world a city with lakes and mountains rich in regional culture and coexistence of various elements, and builds the brand power of Jiaxing in the whole region.

#### *B. Socializing with individuals to reach consensus with the public*

One of the main economic sources of tourist cities is tourist consumers. Therefore, in the process of urban brand image design and promotion, it is necessary to carry out effective research on the current tourism market. It is necessary to establish relevant tourism database, and further build the interaction model with consumers. It is also important to strengthen the understanding of consumer psychology, constantly improve the design of city brand image according to the current consumer market and the actual situation of tourism, so as to meet consumer demand for destination tourism. In addition, relevant government departments

should put research data on tourism market and competitor information into appropriate data platforms for analysis and statistics of the data in the database. In this way, they can help brand creatives to understand the change of consumer demand, to provide the market basis for the improvement of the city brand image. The cultural background of consumers must be taken into account when designing and promoting the city brand image. In the process of communication, it is necessary to communicate with citizens and tourists, and make deviation prediction in the process of designing and improving the brand image of the city. It is necessary to involve city residents and tourists in the design and communication process of city brand image, and finally reach an agreement. The city brand image must be established and spread with the opinions of designers, tourists and citizens gathered and integrated.

In 2019, Azerbaijan's Tourism Bureau released a brand new logo, which is a combination of circular and semi-circular symbols. The semicircle on the graphic looks like the lens cap that has been opened, and it also includes the Azerbaijani lowercase letter "A". Relevant photos and photographic works can be filled in the graphics window used as an extension according to different environments and locations. By implanting different images, the symbol has unlimited functional possibilities. The changing image is like a changing country. "We were immersed in history, landscape and the humanities and realized that this was a place that had to be seen in a different way," wrote the Landor design team in their introduction to the Azerbaijani brand building process. So we created super-symbols allowing people to see this place of enlightenment, where a new discovery can be hidden in every corner."

### *C. Popularizing urban brand concept and increasing urban cultural activities*

In order to spread the city brand image and promote the city regional culture in the current information technology era, communication technology and network software can be used to enhance the publicity, and the city brand image can be effectively spread to the target population through radio, television, newspaper, network and other media. At the same time, the city's brand image can be vertically integrated and disseminated to central or local TV stations, newspapers and online platforms to fully display the city's image. Government departments can first use the local mainstream media, urban radio and television or urban communication, network communication technology, urban development forum or related urban tourism and cultural resources and make interactive integration of brand image promotion, so as to display the city's brand image from different angles and create a harmonious public opinion environment. They can promote the composition of city brand image on social network platform, promote through mainstream, high-

traffic media, such as People.com.cn and Sina.com, or present the city brand advertisement in the city promotion video exhibition of CCTV Channel 3. In the process of promoting the city brand image, the media should actively promote the communication concept contained in the city brand advertising, play the role of city brand advertising and public opinion guidance, and actively promote the city brand image.

In the process of city brand promotion, festivals with rich regional cultural characteristics can more intensively display the city image to the outside world. Traditional folk festivals can be held according to local landmarks, such as temple fairs and Lantern Festival activities. In some regions with distinctive food culture, such as the Daijie Street in Dalian, Furong Alley in Jinan, the Muslim Street in Xi'an, food festivals can be held to attract more tourists. Combining the city image with folk festivals and food culture, this can promote the city brand image, promote the city development, and bring economic benefits to the city. In the process of carrying out relevant urban activities, attention should be paid to the importance of brand marketing strategies and in-depth exploration of the city's brand image. In the process of planning activities, attention should be paid not only to the innovation of relevant cities, but also to the effective maintenance of traditional cultural projects to enhance the audience's experience.

### *D. Improving the city's ability to innovate advertising and implementing preferential pricing policies*

The most important reason that the current city brand advertisement cannot give full play to its role in the city brand communication is the lack of timeliness in its creativity. In the future development of city brand image advertising, news media managers need to actively recruit planning and creative designers to enhance the innovation of city brand image advertising. For example, in the economic development of Beibu Gulf, People's Daily organized experts to plan the promotion report of Beibu Gulf, and published 14 reports on the environment of Beibu Gulf, within half a month, so as to comprehensively introduce the economic development status of Beibu Gulf and arouse great attention of the society. The introduction of professional brand planning and communication talents by media in the creative development of city brand image advertising is conducive to improving the influence of city brand image advertising.

The city brand image is usually planned by the government, and the advertising expenses in the promotion process of the city brand image are borne by the government. However, due to the variety of advertisers in the city and the different economic benefits, the government often suffers from lack of the city brand advertising communication funds. Therefore,

the government must implement specific policies towards these advertisers. The release and implementation of government preferential policies can not only ensure the role of city brand image advertising, but also promote the construction of city brand image and promote the development of city economy.

## V. CONCLUSION

The concept of regional tourism development has become a hot topic in the communication of Chinese city brand image, which needs more practice and thinking. While drawing lessons from excellent cases of brand image of other cities in China and abroad, it is necessary to be based on the local land and excavate the regional culture. In this regard, it is important to select the content that is popular among citizens and tourists, and combine with the professional brand image design team to create a city brand image rich in regional cultural characteristics and able to communicate with the public. In the fierce competition of city brand image, more excellent city brands with regional cultural characteristics and city personality are born and stand out.

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