Senses&Sensibility'13 Proceedings Book

CNPq
Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento
Científico e Tecnológico

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The Use of Place Branding Practices as a Means of Entering Florianopolis in the Global Innovation Context
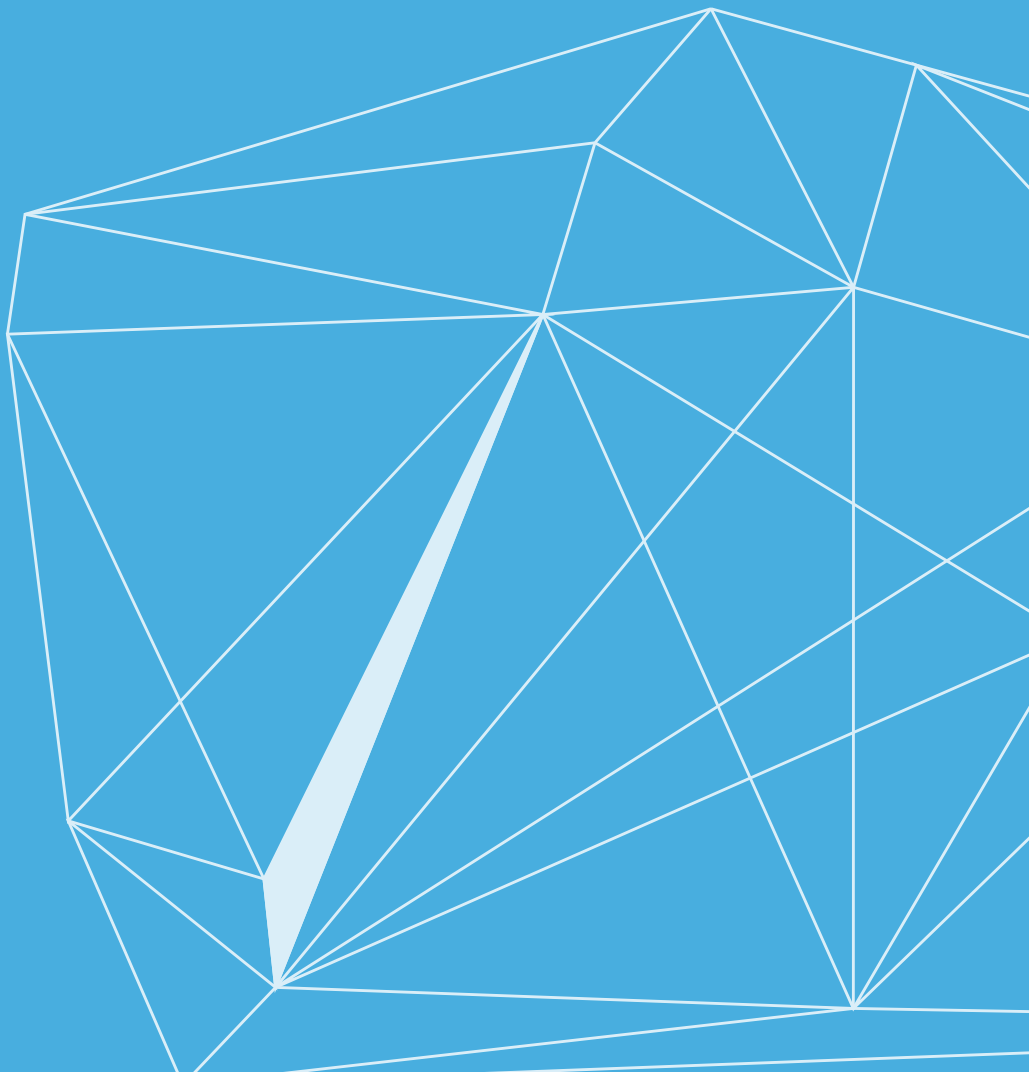
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Abstract — This article seeks to contextualize and conceptualize place branding and examines the opportunities for a successful brand for the city of Florianopolis as a center of innovation, mapping a route to be promoted through branding strategies. The objective of this research is to discover the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats to the brand through a SWOT analysis of the conceptual material generated by methodology applied which involves interviews with actors and opinion leaders related to the brand and the city. The theory section presents concepts related to place branding and discusses their characteristics based on literary review. The empirical part of the report consists of the results of the previous events of the SWOT analysis and the analysis process, specifically targeted to promote the innovative and technological characteristic of Florianopolis.

Index Terms — Branding, Place Branding, Innovation, SWOT Analysis, TVU Branding.

I. INTRODUCTION

A brand is much more than the visual identity, it represents a company or a product, a concept, and even cities, states and countries, as it encompasses all physical and imaginary aspects, from its name, through visual identity, as also its mission, posture and positioning.

Rather, in fact cities have always been brands, and this belief is supported by the fact that, like the most traditional brands, cities also compete for power, influence, sales, investments, for tourists or residents, among other objectives [1]. In order for a city to be a good brand, it must possess defining and distinctive characteristics which can be readily identified, and they can be functional or non-functional qualities.

Florianopolis is a Brazilian reference in innovation and technology. Within the island

of Florianopolis is a specific area that brings together several of the main centers of knowledge and innovation in the city.

II. BRANDING AND PLACE BRANDING

The brand is, in fact, the reference point of all positive and negative impressions formed by the user over time, constituting a fundamental part of their memory and facilitating their products and services consumption choices, as well as conceptualizing institutions, activities and spaces [2]. Brands must still reach an emotional level and captivate a unique relationship with its audience, involving them in very own and specific synaesthetic qualities [3]. The significant experiences of the brand can be created from the interaction between stakeholders and experts, which brings experience within an experience economy [4]. It is also claimed that a brand can be compared to a living being, with the peculiarity that, if well managed, a brand can be immortalized.

Place branding is the part of brand management that deals with the creation and the management of territories' identity, in a greater or lesser extent, by the combination of techniques that enable a place to build their capabilities, creating meaning for its current identity and building a future identity. This process has been emerging as the most appropriate tool for the design, management and promotion of public places among both internal (resident citizens, workers and organizations installed in the area) and external publics (non-residents, organizations with the potential to settle in the area, business visitors and tourists) [5]-[8]. Its function is to influence the audience to think and act positively in relation to products and services associated with a specific place, feeding the circle forward - action - satisfaction and taking itself as a dynamic process that is based on the identity and physical and psychological assets of the territory in all its complexity.

A place's brand must not only connect to the feelings experienced by its public [6], but also drive them to a continuous immersion to new experiences and rediscovering of the cultural, geographical and social spaces. Furthermore, a territorial brand should cyclically seek for placing on the market an integrated offering on the different areas, opportunities and assets, but always within the general concept previously generated, its brand ideology and as a key element of the implementation of the strategic marketing plan developed for the short, medium and long term.

III. FLORIANOPOLIS AND THE "ROUTE OF INNOVATION"

The creation of a territorial branding to Florianopolis proposes to enhance the city as a national and international reference in innovation and technology by applying branding strategies for the construction of a specific urban route (fig. 1), promoting various innovation points around town through a co-creative methodology.

Fig. 1 – Innovation Route schema

On the way there are institutions of education and research, business, government and institutions of excellence in the industry. The project intends to create a common vision of the innovative character and potential of the city, reviving awareness locally, regionally and globally, besides developing and implementing a visual identity for urban and sociocultural actions in order to provide a tool for promoting scientific and business tourism, in addition to attracting investments.

Florianopolis is widely known as the "tourism capital" due to its beautiful beaches and landscapes, but in fact the technology sector is its primary business. According to recent data [9] the technology and innovation sector in Florianopolis region is responsible for billings that should exceed U.S.$0,5 billion (one billion dollars) in 2013, surpassing the average growth of

16% in the last two years, and offering more than 5000 new job vacancies.

Thus, the brand and the urban path project, as signs, seek to highlight characteristics, actions and institutions that already exist in the city and unify them. The creation of a successful sign is not the result of an invention, but a meeting that provides the emergence of a collective identity in service of their constituents' imaginary and including the images of their respective contexts. Primary mission of this sign is to be accepted by the community itself and as a legitimate and inherent emblem, non-arbitrary or imposed [4].

IV. METHODOLOGY, TARGET GROUP AND CO-CREATION

TVU Branding methodology [10]-[11] guides the design of studies presented in this research. Its key steps are divided into Think, View and Use. First, it performs an exercise of thinking the brand, investigating its characteristics through the method Brand DNA Process® (fig. 2) that starts with the diagnosis, at which brand qualifications are traced from effective collection of information through research and interviews with the audience culminating with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses (internal elements) and opportunities and threats (external factors) that surround the brand. This process is called SWOT analysis.
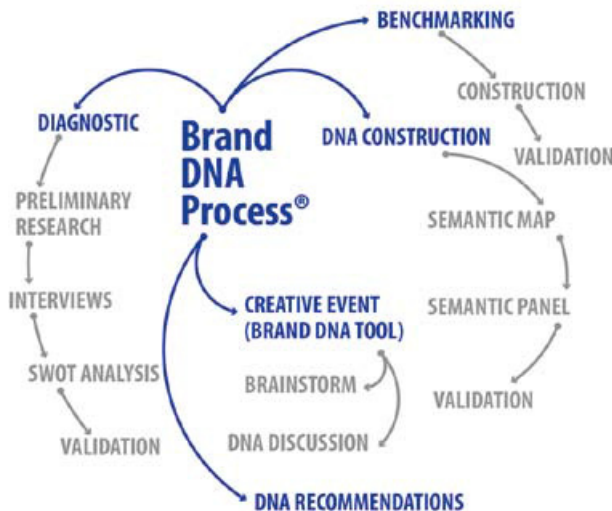

Fig. 2 - Brand DNA Process® diagram

The target audience is presented as the entire population of Florianopolis city. However, on the selection criteria for the most relevant data to the SWOT Analysis, the main stakeholders are

defined, as the city council and secretaries correlated to the project, and the opinion makers, as public leaders from communities involved. Complementarily, other inhabitants of the town are also involved, since the brand is built through a process of co-creation with the direct and indirect participation of citizens, whether through direct public participation in surveys or through social networks.

The concept of co-creation used comes from the agglutination of Prahalad and Ramaswamy and Howe studies. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy [12], the innovation on the scale of consumption of brands should happen by the format "consumer-to-business-to-consumer" (C2B2C), including consumers (target group) in an active and participatory way in the production of characteristics, values and concepts of institutions and their products. At a very close range, Howe highlights the crowdsourcing as a tool of "outsourcing" business thinking, attributing the crowd (final audience) an important role of choices and decisions as a collective intelligence that can provide data or directly suggest and propose new products [13].

V. SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis (acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a marketing tool widely applied in the corporate strategic planning, which maps its internal and external aspects aiding in their positioning [1][14]-[15]. Its main objectives are: (i) to list, locate and evaluate the issues and characteristics declared by the various groups of stakeholders and opinion makers; (ii) to identify problems and verify the existence of complementarity or contradiction; (iii) to gather its causes and consequences; and (iv) to select which critical causes subject to intervention.

In this perspective the analysis is divided into two stages, as shown in Figure 3: the verification of the internal and external capabilities of the city and the intersection of these capabilities in order to obtain strategic points to the future of the brand. Internal capabilities concern the strengths and weaknesses of the company, while the capabilities are represented by external opportunities and threats.

Fig. 3 - Analysis SWOT diagram

Internal capabilities concern the strengths and weaknesses related to the brand. The forces are internal advantages that can be controlled. Among them is the fact that the Florianopolis' technology sector is currently the largest city income, corresponding to ¼ of the current PIB*. Still, the city has several renowned institutions of research, development and innovation, as public and private universities, incubators and technological parks. Therefore, there is great interest of public and private initiatives to institutionalize the segment of technology and innovation to the local community and, together, promote this position internationally. These factors should be exploited to the maximum, in order to maintain a market position, exploring the qualities and regarding weaknesses. The perceived weaknesses are connected to the maintenance of a brand linked to a particular government management, which can make it a political platform and compromise its credibility among the population. Other sticking point for the project is urban infrastructural problems, such as urban mobility. These weaknesses affect the management of the project and can impair the achievement of its goals; therefore they must be constantly monitored and overcome.

The external look is complementary to the internal study in a SWOT analysis. It consists in the main evolution perspectives of the market in which the brand competes. The external analysis aims to identify through monitoring techniques the main opportunities and threats that the brand faces. They are factors from the market and the environment, decisions and circumstances outside the direct control of the brand, from which it should benefit or protect itself, building defensive barriers [14]. The main opportunities observed to the project are the possibilities of integrating and unifying information, managers and innovation institutions under the same perspective, promoting and expanding the scene and innovation actions in the city as

well as the dialogue among managers, community and institutions, besides of disseminating the innovative profile of the city to the local community, involving locals to actions and to society as a whole. The most threatening factors identified were the increasingly competition among territories, which requires constant updating and development to host events, projects and businesses, followed by the lack of adequate urban and touristic infrastructure to support growth of the sector. Another recurring threat in the speeches of stakeholders and opinion makers is the recognition of Florianopolis only as a summer tourism place. According to interviewed people, efforts should be aimed at strengthening the city's image as a center of innovation in both the internal and external community.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of the intersection of the strength and the opportunities showed that as Competitive Advantage for the innovation brand of the city, one should aim at integrating information and actions of the various institutions of the segment and uniting public and private interests enlarge them and use them to promote a new and effective positioning of Florianopolis. Considering the strong competition among global territories, the Defense Capability is presented as the union of public and private interest in the same perspective of exploitation and promotion, also in a touristic way, of the city through the business segment in innovation and technology as responsible for the higher income of the city, surpassing even summer tourism.

The Need for Guidance is about the brand awareness as an agent of unification and dissemination of information on these various activities in innovation and technology, since this profile is still dispersed or unknown by most citizens. Thus, internally promoting and exploring the identity of Florianopolis as an international innovation center. To be successful, however, this position must forecast certain vulnerabilities, such as the consequences of the brand's association with political actions. This can make it a symbol of responsibility of government actions or promise of solution sectors such as infrastructure or urban mobility, mischaracterizing its effective action that occurs in the mapping, dissemination and implementation of an innovation image and culture.

These considerations comply decisive role in the study and research process for the implementation of a successful territorial brand to Florianopolis. The data analysis performed

by the SWOT method, validated by appropriate literature review and qualitative research with stakeholders and opinion makers presents consistent with relevant studies in the segment of Place Branding applied to specific local conditions. This resulted in the guiding parameters for any future strategic action to be proposed to the brand - actions aimed at the promotion of a position that exalt and promote qualities and characteristics present in the city, still little explored locally and globally.

The studies also show favorable conclusion to the importance of valuing and recognizing the tourism focused on innovation businesses, attracting the creative class and entrepreneurs in order to promote the knowledge exchange and have a highly educated open minded population and crave innovation, working together with the communication department of the city. Finally, this study confirms the need to think about cities as global brands in the current context, in order to make them unique and competitive and, in the case of Florianopolis, to identify critical factors and thus deal with them accordingly for the success of a brand focused on innovation.

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