KEY ELEMENTS IN CREATING AND MARKETING A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM BRAND FOR ROMANIA

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Abstract: The branding is the key to success for any tourist destination and Romania has started, in this very direction, the process for repositioning itself on the international market. The creation of a tourism brand for Romania shall open the gates for the eyes and hearts of foreigners and it shall become a historic accomplishment for the future of our tourism industry.

The competitiveness of a country is also influenced by the image of that country and, in turns, the image of the country is mostly accomplished by the competitiveness of that country. The brand / trademark / image of a nation depends on aspects such as the competitiveness of its people, its economy, geography, politics, as well as on the interpretation performed by the international media regarding these aspects.

A country with a positive image is favoured twice at an international level: its products and services benefit from the good name of the country, on the one hand, and the fact that the international press decides to present subjects with a positive connotation about that country, on the other hand. For a country with an unfavorable image at an international level, it is twice as difficult to enter the international competition. For Romania, the image of the country is essential for the international activity and, at the same time, the behavior of the country is essential for the creation at its image at an international level.

Key words: tourism, brand, image, identity, marketing.

1. Introduction

The problem of the national identity is very delicate, first of all due to the difficulty in defining this concept. The national identity refers both to the identity of the individual (personal), and to a series of other identities (territorial, religious, tourist, ethnic, etc.).

In determining the national identity of a person or of a group, a very important role is played by the attitude and behavior of the individuals regarding certain traditions and customs specific to the region they belong to.

As we all know, we live in a period when many of the old customs, as time goes bye, have disappeared or have been changed. People have adapted their preferences depending on the natural evolution of the society and have became more interested in more current aspects of the environment they live in. There are few places in our country where inhabitants wear traditional costumes or where people still gather to dance “hora” on various occasions. For more than 150 years, the main subject of the intellectual debate for Romanians is the national identity and, recently, we participate to miraculous “debates” which are inefficient as finality, regarding the tourism brand of Romania. Or tourism can become a factor of economic, social, and cultural revival1 and not only that!

The “national specificity” remains one of the essential matters that can serve for the organization of a whole national intellectual and political history. Ever since the folklore studies during the revolution of 1848, up to the debates on TV of the 21st century, the

common denominator is provided by the attraction of the interrogations regarding identity. Since the Revolution in 1989, the communist façade fell, together with the false values promoted by it. The issue, especially for the our generation, is the direction of the new values, the social representation, and our identity as a people - its valuing or devaluing, benchmarks in outlining an authentic tourism brand.

At present, there is actually noticed a crises of values at a macro- and micro-social level, which also reverberates over the collective identity of Romanians. Some of us may have believed that, after our official integration on January 1st, 2007, Romania should miraculously become an authentic European country, impregnated with a European spirit and European values. Waited with a naïve hope, the miracle has not occurred, and the insipid counter-morality and the individual egoism prevail, they are still encouraged, supported, and promoted. The constant pressure laid upon Romania and the Romanians from all points of view: economic, politic, social, ideological, they can encourage in our minds the oblivion, superficiality, ignorance. Through this article I would like to establish/reestablish, without claiming to be exhaustive, the importance of our national identity in the context of the accelerated globalization, but also the main dimensions of the contemporary Romanian spirit and of the authentic national values, essential benchmarks in outlining a tourism brand, since “The identity. The official mask of each of us!” (Valeriu Butulescu, Noroi aurifer.)

Regarding the imperative aspect of issuing a strategy to reestablish the balance of the authentic Romanian values, to stimulate the process of regaining and raising awareness of our national identity, and to consolidate the foundations of the Romanian society that, during the last few years, loses ground to the consumerist values, I believe that this process can only be performed in a democratic Romania that guarantees the rights and the liberties of all its citizens. Or, the present events around the day of the Great Union, on the Romanian soil, from a social and political point of view, can only infirm the fact that we are a democratic country, where the freedom of speech is officially granted, but where the state authorities no longer prove their role or utility in supporting the fundamental citizen rights.

The strategies intend to be, as well, medium and long-term solutions for the national rebirth process and for the marketing of the values of the Romanian citizens. The main question remains: what is the meaning of the national identity in a global world, or what does the Romanian character, integrated in universality, means? And how can we, on such uncertain foundations, outline a tourism brand?

The national pride and conscience are present in customs and traditions, in the traditional costumes and art, in the national colors, in the conduit of the Romanian army as protector of our country, in the music of the great Romanian composers, as well as in the works of the great writers and poets of our people, in all the scientific innovations of the Romanian researchers, famous all over the world.

Along with the current diversity, cross-breading, and globalization, the national identity is paradoxically, strengthened as reaction.

More interesting, and also exciting for the conceptual debate and for the final message under the form of effective slogans, is the action performed in this direction by the Association Inspired, under the form of a contest with the theme: “The Creation of the Tourism Brand: Romania”, and the created brand was supposed to increase the sentimental value of the Romanians regarding their country and to generate the desire to purchase for the tourists. The promoted themes and logos are also quite interesting. The classification and the score obtained after the analysis of the members of the jury are presented below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Competitor</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ana - Ramona Tanasa - ROMANIA</td>
<td>explore the infinit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Balaita Alex - Romania - You might like it</td>
<td>7.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lung Sorina - Creatia Brand-ului turistic: Romania (the creation of the tourism brand: Romania)</td>
<td>7.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cristea Ovidiu - de la munte la mare (from the mountains to the see)</td>
<td>6.91</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Asafti Stefan - Brand Turism Romania (tourism brand Romania)</td>
<td>6.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Robu Ciprian - Tiberiu - Identitate vizuala Romania turistica (the visual identity of the tourist Romania)</td>
<td>6.36</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Nagy Raluca - Brand Romania</td>
<td>6.28</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Andrei Cotovanu - # LOGO ROMANIA</td>
<td>6.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ungur Gabriela - &quot;Creatia Brand-ului turistic: Romania&quot; (the creation of the tourism brand: Romania)</td>
<td>5.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bulea Liviu - Your local fairytale</td>
<td>5.93</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Simona Simon - Mapa</td>
<td>5.93</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Cristina Silvania Catalinescu - Logo Romania Eterna (logo for eternal Romania)</td>
<td>5.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Marius Pantea - Romania - Acest trecut a fost candva viitor. (this past used to be a future)</td>
<td>5.72</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Kato Tas - See the Unseen - Romania</td>
<td>5.70</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Margoi Andra Diana - Brand de tara: Romania (country brand: Romania)</td>
<td>5.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Popa Liviana - RO.redescopera traditia (RO. Rediscover tradition)</td>
<td>5.54</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Bostan Elena - Creatia brandului turistic Romania (the creation of the tourism brand for Romania)</td>
<td>5.49</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Cristian Andrei Farcas - Brand turistic: România (the tourism brand: Romania)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Vatavu Mircea - Romanian Values Logo</td>
<td>5.48</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Diana Bujorianu - Brand turistic Romania (tourism brand: Romania)</td>
<td>5.44</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Ani - Silvia Cismaru - Forever, always Romania-brand turistic pentru tara (Forever, always Romania - tourism brand for Romania)</td>
<td>5.43</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Mocanu George - An Adventure of Self. Romania.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Kutukova Victoria - Logo turistic Romania</td>
<td>5.37</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Popescu Maria - brand turistic romania (tourism brand: Romania)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Teodor Constantin Turcanu - Brand Romania</td>
<td>5.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Popa Carina - Romania-love, sun, beauty</td>
<td>5.17</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Adrian Leonte - Logo</td>
<td>5.15</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Alexandru Nae - Romania - The treasure land</td>
<td>4.90</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Adriana Dragusel - Brand turism Romania (tourism brand: Romania)</td>
<td>4.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Stan Elisabeta - BRAND TURISTIC ROMANIA (tourism brand: Romania)</td>
<td>4.78</td>
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Our country has a large number of tourist attractions, from the traditional villages, the medieval towns, the cultural elements, the monasteries, the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube Delta, the Black Sea, the traditions, the hospitality, the gastronomy or the Romanian "ţuica" (a specific plum brandy) up to the famous Dracula, each of them contributing to the creation of the Romanian tourist identity.

**Brand Turism Romania (Romanian tourism brand) Asafti Ștefan, with a score of 6.81, considers that "The starting point was to identify the elements that the Romanians generally use to promote their country, reaching the conclusion that the first and most encountered elements is the traditional costume. It is the most representative and forthcoming element, always based on a tradition, which always manages to surprise, arising both the admiration and the curiosity and the desire to find out more details, starting with the moment it was created and up to the situations when it is worn.

The logo selected in the end is the peacock feather, an element that is part of the hat of the Romanian traditional costume in Transylvania. Its colors suggest diversity and the multitude of the Romanian tourist attractions, also leading to the idea of tradition, bringing additional value and originality, arousing the interest and the desire to find out more. Regarded from another angle, the logo represents an eye, urging the potential tourists to consider our country from their own perspective.

The concept of the slogan started form the idea that each person comes to Romania to satisfy their own curiosities, guided by the passions for the various tourist attractions that our country can provide. “Capture the story” advises the people to chose all by themselves the places they wish to visit, presenting what they want from the multitude of available tourist attractions, forming their own story and image regarding Romania.
I also consider that the logo “A story to tell. The visual identity for the tourist Romania”, score: 6.36 presented by Robu Ciprian Tiberiu, considering that: "In order to reach the two essential aspects of the Romania tourism brand: the increase of the sentimental value of the inhabitants and the germination of the desire to buy for tourists, I selected two defining elements for the country The first element is nature, as we take pride in the beautiful and unaltered landscapes that attract adventurous tourists, and the second element used is “draco”, the creature that is half dragon, half wolf, the sacred and mysterious symbol of the Dacians, which was the source of numerous legends. I believe that the latter element would recall the Romanians their origins and the people that we actually represent. Combining the two elements, I obtained a representation of the landforms of Romania, which also forms the figure of the Dacian symbol.

The slogan “A story to tell” underlines the fact that Romania has many fascinating places to be visited, each having its own legend, its own story, which was orally transmitted throughout the centuries. http://www.concurs-inspired.ro/node/664

RO - redescoperă tradiţia (RO – rediscover the tradition) - Popa Liviana score : 5.54 who states that "In order to really go forward towards a better future, we must consider the past. Most Romanians need to remember or to discover the past of our people, the traditions, and the history, bearing all these in mind and soul, to confront each day/obstacle with another state of mind. Although Romania is a country that is interesting especially due to the point of view of the natural resources, but also as far as culture is concerned, with numerous personalities that have become famous over the years, I decide, for my project, to turn towards the Romanian tradition and towards its impressive visual richness, as they represent the embedment of all elements that matter. The logo is inspired by the archaic Romanian script, deriving from the Cyrillic alphabet, used mostly by the Church. The interchangeable pattern of the structure supports the slogan: rediscover the tradition. (Popa Liviana)

http://www.concurs-inspired.ro/node/751

Romania - the Treasure Land with a score of 4.90. (author: Alexandru Nae)

http://www.concurs-inspired.ro/node/774
Romania. Exotic, amazing, natural, a logo promoted by Corcoz Alexandra; the author addresses: curious and adventurous tourist, considering that, Romania implies a certain type of unconventional travelers, with average and above-average incomes, always ready to discover new tourist attractions. Romania represents a complex system as paradoxical as exotic, potential and divers. Romania is hospitable, infusing love for the healthy life spirit, fresh mountain air, traditional food, and traditional dances. Romania smiles back to you, if you open your heart and discover it.

Warm people, undiscovered places, the Danube Delta, the natural biodiversity, the preservation of the specific Romanian traditions and costumes, they all contrast with the modernity and the commercial aspect of the large cosmopolite cities, such as Cluj or Bucharest, that propose tourist services at European standards. All these places seem to be frozen in a mythical time, giving birth to a feeling of longing, specific for Romania, which determined you to come back. Romania shall take you by surprise each time. (Corcoz Alexandra)

Branding Turism Romania, (branding the Romanian tourism), another logo, with score of only 4.28, in exchange the appreciation of the author is pertinent: "Romania has an doubtful, confuse, contrasting both in the minds of the Romanians, and in the minds of the foreigners. On the other hand, Romania is considered to be a country with a tradition, culture, history, and landforms that deserve to be known. A visual image of the brand that shall transmit Romania as it is, as the tourist shall discover it, an honest and challenging communication, shall arouse the curiosity, respect, and desire to come back. (Otilia Chitic)

The logo “Dracula, Romania brand turistic” (Dracula, a tourism Romanian brand) is also interesting, as well as the reasons provided by the author: "Since everybody connects the image of a country with an impenetrable forest, and the only creature living in these Carpatho – Danubian – Pontic lands is an evil being that feeds with the blood of those it encountered, known as species as vampire. It became famous under the name of Count Dracula; initiated by Bram Stoker the idea of vampire has influenced the culture to such extent that there are numerous books and movies with this subject: vampires. I would like to try to sell this image because it is not offensive, since vampires probably do not exist and they have never existed, but the mirage continues and it can be promoted, and I believe that the main tourist attraction of the country, centered upon the image of Dracula, can promote the Romanian mountains (including the castles of Vlad Țepeș, often associated with Dracula) and, in parallel, a small commercial for the sea and the unique delta of the Danube would not harm the country ". (Ghergheș Sandrin Ilie)

Adrian Leonte with the logo Romania"Aspiring Heights”, has as purpose "to promote the mountain Romanian tourism as well as the Romanian traditional art. By simplifying these two elements, I created a logo illustrating the authenticity of the Romanian traditional art and also the place preferred by most tourists. The colors used help the person watching them create an image about the richness of the flora, presenting a place where nature is the only one that has intervened; the slogan "Aspiring Heights" has the role of assimilating the place where we all want to go in the near future, of course.
Romania-You might like it, with a score of 7.10, second position, author Bălăiță Alex. (http://www.concurs-inspired.ro/node/704) which, starting from an avalanche rhetoric question “In a society moving towards globalization, is the preservation of the national identity still essential? Who are we? Who are our ancestors? How have we got here? What are our values, as people?, also try to provide the answer: "These are just some of the questions that a national brand has to answer. Whatever happens, certain symbols are deeply graved into the collective conscience and, whether we want it or not, they define us as a people. If we were to define Romania, we could say that it represents a large number of items, and yet none of them, as some might say, obviously influenced by the current economic situation, less favorable for the rime being, or by our image at an international level.

That is why the tagline “You might like it” incite both the Romanians and the foreigners to open their eyes and to taste the "goodies" that Romania has to offer. It is simple. You may like it or not, but you have to try. And you might even smile.

As visual style, the symbol takes over lines and geometric forms from the popular art, and it illustrates an ancient practice of Romanians all over the world, i.e.: Hora (the round dance). Whether we are happy or sad, the “hora” is a occasion of cheerfulness in any circumstances, and the origin of this dance is lost among the delicate chords of time. The symbol presents the traditional couple dancing, forming the smile, the first and most basic form of expression of a positive state of mind.”

The statement of Mocanu George and the proposed logo: "An Adventure of Self. Romania.” 5.40, is remarked due to its originality: "Romania gives up the common tourist, architectural, gastronomic attractions. But it engages the power of reaction, it provides a light adventure, but that can arouse latent human instincts, which can tell stories near a cup of coffee”. The winner of the competition is the theme: România - explore the Infinite, with a score of 8.40 presented by Ana Ramona Tănăsă. In deed, the restoration of a symbol of excellence of the Romanian culture, Brâncuși’s Column of the Infinite, wins by far as a tourism brand. Culture and tourism are mutually inter-conditioned elements, tourism and culture have always been very close in Europe, and in Romania the latter has always been an important destination for those attracted by its rich culture and by the historical and cultural heritage. Moreover, the cultural heritage of Romania represents one of the oldest and most important tourism producing heritages.

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Romania has recently received the "Excellence Award" during the tourism fair in Munich, for the attractiveness of the exhibition space and for the visual identity of the national tourism brand, “that expresses the for appreciation for nature and the concerns regarding the environment protection” according to a press release from the Ministry of Tourism. The discussions during the presentation of the strategic and organizational marketing plan for Romanian tourism for the period 2011 – 2015 highlighted the first instrument of this type that shall be used for the tourism industry in Romania.

The finalization of the strategic and organizational marketing plan marks the accomplishment of the second important stage of the process regarding the creation and promotion of the tourism brand of Romania.

“The marketing plan establishes the objective we follow to reach a competitive tourist destination. It is very important to understand that the plan must be implemented not only by the Ministry, but it also addresses the local public authorities, as well as the tourism industry, that we still want to be on our side, as active partner of the ministry”, declared the ministry of regional development and tourism. Or, this competition, whose results were presented above, clearly proves the deliberate implication of the civil society in the "tourist aspects".

The marketing plan proposes for the next period, among other elements, the specialization and diversification of tourism products and services, the development of the six key products (each of them benefiting into the future from their own marketing operational plan), and the extension of the tourist season. In order to rationalize the marketing efforts, the promoting actions shall be mostly directed towards the following source markets: Germany, Italy, France, Great Britain, Austria, Russia, USA and Hungary.

Other actions shall be performed on other markets, such as Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Belgium, Sweden, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Serbia, Moldova, China or Japan, who are part of the current geographic portfolio of the visitors of Romania. The internal markets aims at activities mainly oriented towards the construction of a marketing system for the Romanian tourism, especially for the creation of a central web portal for the Romanian tourism, with an adjacent reservations system.

In the near future, communication shall be focused on the construction of notoriety, through TV campaigns to raise the awareness, through a media innovation strategy through nontraditional media channels, as well as through the creation of a communication platform of the brand for the interested parties. Out of the communication budget, 49% shall be for the online promotion, 32% for TV commercials, and 19% for printed advertisements.

The application of the Marketing Plan shall stimulate the tourist area and it shall support the increase recorded by this area last year.

According to the data supplied by the National Institute of Statistics, during the fourth quarter of 2011, the Sector of Services - hotels and restaurants domain, recorded an increase of 16.3%, and the domain Activities of the tourist agencies, tour-operators, recorded an increase of 37.2%, compared to the same period of 2010.
People talk a lot about the economic crises we are crossing, and the debates increase as number after the new financial measures that seem to lead to a dramatic decrease of consumption, with potential negative influences over the increase. A vicious circle. The basic question of the day is “how much, madam, how much?... over there it was cheaper”, and the marketers have become, as well as the consumers, extremely cautious with any expense. Even without these speculative measures, during the last year there could be detected two major trends in the marketing activities, trends that are likely to continue. One suggests precaution, the reduction of budgets and marketing activities, considered to be a cost that can wait, in the spirit of the Moromeți family (specific for the Romanian spirit), "we should wait and see, until the spring is over". The other one focuses on the optimization of ROI (return on investment), immediately implying that “the marketing expenses represent in fact an investment and not a cost” - suggesting the opposite and presenting the opportunity of maintaining and even increasing the market quotas during the crises, the influence of a potential larger “share-of-voice” over the value of the brand, and the possibility of a position consolidated after the crises.

Of course, I support the second trend, not just due to the belief that marketing should demonstrate leadership in any company that focuses its activity around a brand. Having in view the fact that the optimization of the ROI should be part of the DNA, nor just to remember it when a crises occurs and, of course, with another belief consolidated along the years, that the optimization of the budgets and of the ROI require a careful analysis for each particular case, since solutions differ considerably depending on industry, category, segment, the life cycle of the product, competition, etc. Especially during a crises, when it must also include a constant analysis of the changes that occur faster than in regular times regarding the consumption and purchase habits.

Sometimes we notice in marketing budget cuts just for the sake of reductions (based on famous examples in the political life, with severe impacts over the standard of living of the population) or tactics applied ad-hoc under the light of diminishing sales. At the opposite end there occur brand diversifications or extensions that could make full sense under normal circumstances, but that might not bring about the optimization of the portfolio and of the brand value under the current conditions, when the consumers reduce their range of options. In the race for crisis tactics sometimes there are omitted major long-term objectives that are supposed to transcend the crises, and the strategic context of the brand value is ignored.

A premium-positioned brand can also be successful in this confuse times, if it succeeds to maintain at a high and balanced level the sum of the components of its value, as compared to the apparently cheaper alternatives. Yet, there exists a limit to the price difference that a premium brand can maintain in order to not create the perception of too expensive and not to provide the opportunity to develop the cheaper alternatives. The other way round, the permanent discount can bring about success in certain categories of products and consumers for a limited period of time, but sometimes it can ruin the total performance of the brand. The value of a tourism brand, as perceived by the consumer, is the result of a complex of basic elements that interact dynamically: quality, performance, prominence, communication, price, emotional value, presence on the market, interaction with the consumer, etc. If we accept this definition, there derive at least two logic consequences: First of all, the value of a brand is not given only by the price. Then, the brand manager is not the

only person responsible for the creation and maintenance or the increase of this value, as the subject is a strategic one for the company and connected to its assembly vision over that brand.

Even more for the successful brand, premium positioned, for which millions of euros are spent for communication, development of variants, or qualitative improvements, in the attempt to form the perception of the consumers about the expected positioning.

If an important part of the brand equity is influenced by the contribution of a variety of effects of the marketing activities and brand-building, including here the quality of the product, the packaging, the name, the quality of the advertising and communication in general, etc.; a part just as important of the perceived value of the brand is given by the perception of the market performance and by the ease with which the consumer can get in touch with the favorite brand, "within an arm’s reach of desire”, as master Sergio Zyman\(^4\) used to teach us.

I would insist on the idea that the equation of the perceived value of a brand depends on the strategic level of marketing, since it traces the coordinates of the development of a brand in the direction of the strategic vision, i.e. on the long run. Besides, in close relationship with the general resources of the company and with its capability level at a certain moment in time, it can show the order of priority in the concrete action over these factors over a certain period of time, another discussion of strategic level.

Conclusions

Romania does not have a well-defined image regarding the tourism brand at an international level: in certain places we are in position of being totally unknown, which can represent an advantage as we can create an image from scratch the way we want; in other places the image of Romania is a negative one, but there are also countries where we have a positive image. The unfavorable image of Romania is due mostly to the negative actions of some of the Romanians gone abroad and to a continuous input in this direction performed by the international press, due on the lack of reactions from the Romanian authorities. Many people believe that the foreigners that come into contact with the Romanians and the ones visiting Romania tend to have a positive opinion about our country. Under such circumstances the need for a country or nation branding strategy is even more stringent, a need that should represent one of the main concerns of the authorities, as well as of the civil society

\[\text{The Official Tourism Brand}\]

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“\text{The new tourism brand shall address to the so-called “discerning travelers” (informed travelers, with discernment). For them, Romania represents an adequate niche, as resulting from the studies performed by the branding company. It comprises persons between 25 and 34, or over 54 years old, without very large incomes, who want to experiment the}\]

\text{\footnotesize Sergio Zyman is the former Chief Marketing Officer of The Coca-Cola Company and the author of the bestseller The End of Marketing As We Know It. Zyman founded and managed the Zyman Marketing Group, a top company in the field of strategic counseling, of software applications, and of educational resources.}\]
culture of a country, are interested in nature, have an active life. The cultural circuits, the exploration of landscapes that are not visited by tourists, the adventures in nature, the balneal tourism or several days spent in a city (”city breaks”) are best suited for them. The Carpathians and the Danube Delta, the well-preserved traditions or the objectives in the UNESCO patrimony⁵.

Romania is ironized by the weekly The Economist⁵ regarding the leaf in the country brand. “The attraction of tourists through a campaign that started with a scandal regarding plagiarism is not the most orthodox way, but in Romania it might work”, says the publication, referring to the logo presented at the Shanghai exhibition.

A Belgian designer assigned, two years ago, to a data base with visual images, the copyrights for the drawing, on which the central element of the logo for the new tourist marketing campaign for Romania is based upon. The logo can be bought for 250 euros and it has already been used by several companies in Europe.

The scandal of the “unfortunate leaf” occurred within less than a month after the report of the European Commission where the EU severely criticized the judicial reforms and the anticorruption measures in Romania, warning the Government that they violate the commitments undertaken upon adhering, in January 2007, underlines the publication.

The company responsible for the promotion of Romania, THR-TNS, a Spanish-British association, claims that the similitude between the two images is just a “coincidence”. But the Romania Minister of Tourism, Elena Udrea, decided to freeze the payments towards the company until the problem is solved (although the image continued to be used for the time being).

We need to continuously research the existing image of the tourism brand (recently ironized in the street manifestations in January 2012 in Piaţa universităţii, ”Explode Carpathian garden”) both within and outside the country, and to use the results of the studies in various domains, their coagulation, in a natural image describing the national identity, that should coincide with the tourist identity we desire and that should represent us in taking the decision regarding the creation/repositioning of the country image for Romania. Before launching any strategy for the creation of a country image, of the tourism brand, we must identify the existing image, by measuring and understanding the existing perceptions and by analyzing the differences existing between perception and reality for each target-group. The current image must be analyzed to decide how it should be changed in the future. That is why the country image for Romania must be constantly monitored, inside and outside the country.

References


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⁵ http://www.economist.com/node/16743965?story_id=16743965


