

STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Assessing Your Place Brand

This section provides a comprehensive understanding of the current state of your place brand, its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

- **Place Identity Overview**

- What are the key characteristics that define your place (e.g., culture, history, economic development, geography)?
- Who are your competitors? Why?
- What makes your place unique from competitors?

- **Perception Analysis**

- How is your place currently perceived by residents, visitors, businesses, local media and external stakeholders?
- What are the common misconceptions or outdated perceptions about your place?

- **SWOT Analysis**

- Strengths (e.g., strong cultural heritage, growing tourism industry)
- Weaknesses (e.g., underdeveloped infrastructure, negative media portrayal)
- Opportunities (e.g., emerging markets, untapped cultural assets)
- Threats (e.g., competition from nearby cities, economic downturns, poor risk analyses)

- **Market Positioning**

- Where does your place stand in comparison to competitors?
- How do you differentiate from other cities or regions targeting the same audience?
- Consider 'place architecture': how can your place leverage its geographic or reputational positioning?

2. Building an Effective Team & Management Structure

Establish a leadership framework that can drive the place brand strategy effectively across multiple stakeholders and diverse constituencies.

- **Key Roles & Responsibilities**

- Who will lead the place branding initiative (e.g., Mayor, Council Leader, place brand manager, PR officer)?
- Who are the main decision-makers (e.g., local government officials, tourism boards)?
- What other departments or external agencies need to be involved (e.g., marketing teams, BIDs, local planning departments, creative agencies)?
- Who will the brand team report to?

- **Interdepartmental Collaboration**

- How will the branding team work with other municipal or governmental bodies?
- What are the structures for cross-functional communication and collaboration?

- **Advisory Committees or Stakeholder Groups**

- Should you set up a formal advisory board including community leaders, business owners, and residents?
- How often will these groups meet, and what is their role in decision-making?

3. Funding Models & Financial Planning

Plan for the financial sustainability of your place branding strategy, identifying potential sources of funding.

- **Budget Estimation**

- What are the projected costs of the branding initiative (e.g., research, products and services, marketing, events)?
- What are the fixed vs. variable costs?
- What is the timescale for each expenditure? Are there ongoing or on-off costs associated with each project?

- **Funding Sources**

- Government grants or regional development funds
- Public-private partnerships with local businesses
- Sponsorships from tourism or corporate investors
- Crowdfunding campaigns or community-driven fundraising

- **Financial Risk Assessment**

- What are the financial risks, and how can they be mitigated?
 - Are there contingency funds in place for unforeseen expenses?
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4. Measuring Audience Perceptions

Establish tools to assess how residents, businesses, and external audiences and media perceive your place and how these perceptions shift over time.

- **Baseline Research**

- Conduct surveys or focus groups to measure current perceptions.
- What key insights can be drawn from past visitor data, social media sentiment, or resident feedback?

- **Perception Metrics**

- Brand awareness: How well-known is your place nationally/internationally?
- Sentiment analysis: How positively or negatively is your place viewed by various audiences?
- Audience segmentation: What are the different perception patterns across residents, tourists, investors, and businesses?

- **Tracking Perception Changes**

- How frequently will you conduct surveys or perception audits?
 - What tools (e.g., social media listening tools, online reviews, visitor feedback) will you use to track changes in perception?
 - How will you report on the implications of perceptions changes to key stakeholders?
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5. Conducting a Strategy Action Audit

Review past and current strategies, identifying gaps and opportunities to refine your place brand approach.

- **Past Campaign Performance**

- What branding or marketing efforts have been conducted in the past?
- What worked well, and what were the challenges or failures?

- **Current Initiatives**

- What ongoing place branding projects are already in place?
 - Are there any overlapping strategies or areas of confusion that need alignment?
 - What projects satisfactorily appear to be ON-brand, and what are the specific factors that reflect that?
 - What current projects might be OFF-brand, but could be tweaked to better reflect brand values and the desired positioning?
 - Are there common criteria among ON-brand projects that can be captured and promoted?
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6. Creating Brand Action Guidelines

Develop clear guidelines to ensure consistency and cohesion in how your place brand is communicated across all platforms and touchpoints.

- **Core Brand Values**

- Define the core values your place brand represents (e.g., innovation, heritage, sustainability).
- Ensure these values align with the long-term vision for the place.

- **Visual Identity & Brand Assets**

- Logos, color schemes, typography, and other visual elements that represent the brand.
- Templates for consistent use across all marketing materials, websites, and social media platforms.

- **Tone of Voice**

- What is the tone of communication (e.g., friendly, professional, dynamic)?
 - How will this tone be reflected in media relations, social media posts, or public speeches?
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7. Activating Brand Touchpoints

Engage your audience by ensuring the brand is visible and active across multiple touchpoints.

- **Physical Touchpoints**

- Signage, landmarks, public art installations, and other on-the-ground activations.
- How will the brand be visible in public spaces (e.g., airports, transportation hubs, business districts)?

- **Digital Touchpoints**

- Website redesign, social media campaigns, digital advertising.
- What digital platforms are most relevant for your audience (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn)?

- **Events & Community Engagement**

- Festivals, public events, or promotional activities that bring the brand to life.
 - How will you involve local residents and businesses in these events?
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8. Using Data to Track Progress

Measure the success of your place branding efforts using qualitative and quantitative data. Remember to link your KPIs to your stated Goals and Objectives.

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**
 - Visitor numbers, investment inquiries and scale of investment, social media engagement, media coverage.
 - What growth metrics will indicate brand success (e.g., increased tourism revenue, better city rankings)?
 - **Data Collection Tools**
 - Google Analytics, social media analytics, CRM systems, visitor surveys.
 - How will you centralize data for ease of tracking and reporting?
 - **Real-Time Monitoring**
 - What tools can provide real-time feedback on campaign performance (e.g., digital dashboards, live social media sentiment tracking)?
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9. Communicating with Stakeholders

Maintain consistent, transparent communication with all key stakeholders throughout the branding process.

- **Stakeholder Engagement Plan**
 - Create a structured plan for communicating with local government, businesses, and community groups and local media. Be sure to include feedback loops and opportunities for stakeholder input - including the ways they prefer to communicate.
 - Set a schedule for regular updates and meetings (e.g., monthly newsletters, quarterly reports).

- **Crisis Communication Strategy**

- What is the protocol for responding to negative feedback or a branding crisis?
- Who will be the point of contact in case of PR issues?

- **Stakeholder Feedback Mechanisms**

- Set up feedback channels (e.g., town halls, surveys) to ensure stakeholders feel heard.
 - How will stakeholder input be integrated into the branding process?
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10. Long-Term Sustainability & Legacy

Ensure that the place branding strategy is sustainable and evolves over time.

- **Maintaining Brand Consistency**

- How will you ensure that the brand remains consistent over time, even with changes in leadership or funding?

- **Future-Proofing the Brand**

- What strategies will you use to adapt the brand to future trends and challenges (e.g., environmental sustainability, immigration, or technological advancements)?

- **Legacy Building**

- How can the place brand leave a lasting impact on future generations (e.g., through cultural programs, economic growth, social cohesion)?
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This **Place Branding Strategy Action Template** ensures that you cover every strategic and operational aspect of your place branding initiative, setting a clear path to elevate your place's identity, perception, and impact over the long term.