

Book Review

“Wish You Were Here: The Branding of Stockholm and Destinations”

Reviewer:

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Wish You Were Here: The Branding of Stockholm and Destinations:

The book, *Wish You Were Here: The Branding of Stockholm and Destinations*, written by Julian Stubbs examines some of the critical elements that need to be put into consideration when developing a destination brand program. The author’s main argument is that selling a destination, as a brand, just like doing so for any other product, requires identifying a unique element that such a destination has and using this as a unique marketing point for the brand. Amongst the elements that the author considers to have boosted the need for destination branding are globalization and the use of the internet. Notably, globalization has made the world be a global village and coupled with the power of the internet, distance between different civilizations feels shorter. In this aspect, presenting a destination as a brand must appreciate the fact that each destination or place is just one amongst many competitors (p. 26), hence a destination must just create its own competitive advantage.

Stubbs does well in presenting different case studies that exemplify typical cases of successful destination branding. The author uses examples such as Barcelona, New York, Liverpool, The Ice Hotel, Barcelona, and Hollywood, amongst others, laying special consideration to Stockholm. However, his illustration using the New York case identify two critical aspects of destination branding, 1) that it requires something that people resonate with and which makes them passionate, and 2) that destination branding must be more than slogans, which are evidently characteristics elements of branding. Integrating these

elements in destination branding have proven, in the case of New York, that a destination can curve itself as a self-sustaining brand for years when it relates to people. Additionally, his argument that events such as Olympics are crucial to create awareness and encourage tourism and inward investment summarizes the essence of destination branding, i.e., to attract people and money/investment (p. 25). Most importantly, attendance of such events kicks off the process of marketing such destinations through visitors'/ tourists own account. However, I think this can work against other strategies of marketing, especially if the image portrayed of a place is not the same as the real experience. Therefore, it can be gleaned from this point that how people perceive of a place is an integral part of destination branding.

The author also highlights some of the challenges that come with destination branding, and which apparently distinguish destination-branding from other product branding. Notably, to brand a destination, one tries to present/market a place as a product, yet this place could have various outstanding challenges such as lack of a unified control of things that define the place. However, I think by taking the reader through an informative session of the branding of Stockholm, Stubbs does not only succeed in marketing Stockholm, but his strategies of destination branding as well. Taking into consideration the fact that the author is a brand strategist, I think the book is helpful to both cities and other destinations that need to create themselves as brands, and strategists who may wish to succeed in destination branding.

Stubbs' book befits its time because in the contemporary time, tourism is emerging amongst the major contributors to the world's revenue. Destination branding, therefore, is an emerging field in the contemporary world that every destination aiming to succeed must do. Apart from being timely, it effectively communicates using case studies and remarks from notable personalities hence making the author's strategies real and practically possible.

Reference:

- Stubbs, J. (2011). *Wish you were here the branding of Stockholm and destinations.*

S.l.: Up there, everywhere.