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City Branding: communication and marketing strategy for an island urban policy

Branding en ciudades turísticas: nuevas formas de comunicación y marketing para la política urbana de una isla

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Abstract

Nowadays, in our so-called "Information Society", no one can doubt that marketing and communication within a tourist city are crucial for its existence and development. Due to this, city branding research has gained interest in international literature in recent years. The current project focuses on the implementation of a place-branding competitive strategy in the case of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, a medium-sized island capital city, to explore the core mechanism of this phenomenon, from an applied perspective and as a result of the experience gained in several knowledge transfer projects led by the authors. More specifically, this research sought to analyze the current conditions prevailing in the capital of a peripheral island together with possible collaborations between actors. Extended bibliographical research in city branding, as well as successful case studies of other places, led to the formation of the panel discussion. Qualitative research, using in-depth interviews with local stakeholders, public administration opinion leaders and private entrepreneurs, was also carried out. The findings suggest that organizing broad stakeholder participation in the branding process on the site is an inescapable necessity in times of globalization and promoting the territory on the basis of that brand is a major component.

Keywords

Communication strategies; public relations; city marketing; city branding

Resumen

El presente proyecto se centra en la implementación de una estrategia competitiva de marca para Santa Cruz de Tenerife, una capital insular de tamaño medio para explorar el mecanismo central de este fenómeno, desde una perspectiva aplicada y como resultado de la experiencia adquirida en varios proyectos de transferencia de conocimiento liderados por los autores. El objetivo es analizar las condiciones actuales que prevalecen en la capital de una isla periférica junto con las posibles colaboraciones entre los interesados. La profunda revisión bibliográfica sobre la marca de la ciudad, así como los estudios de casos exitosos de otros lugares, llevaron a la formación del panel de discusión. También se lleva a cabo una investigación cualitativa, utilizando entrevistas en profundidad con actores locales, líderes de opinión de la administración pública y empresarios privados. Las conclusiones sugieren que gestionar una gran participación en el proceso de creación de marca de un destino es una necesidad imprescindible en tiempos de globalización.

Palabras clave

Estrategias de comunicación; Relaciones públicas; marketing de ciudad; marca de la ciudad

1. Introduction

The collapse of boundaries between institutions and the necessity of collaborative innovation to address current and future challenges demand a profession focused on innovative manners that would improve relationships with publics, and guide the social conversation. Traditionally, functional, postmodernist and critical approaches in PR/communication literature are aiming to find responses to the challenges. This track aims to fulfill a research agenda that shows new trends: how collaborative networks are built with a wide range of stakeholders, how communication improves the organizational decision-making process; what new leadership roles of professionals are being enacted; or what key indicators are being put into practice for the constituent communication organizations.

Nowadays, in our so-called "Information Society", no one can doubt that marketing and communication within a touristic city is crucial for its existence and development as places of all kinds can benefit from implementing coherent image and reputation strategies. In addition, brands direct their strategic and communicative efforts towards the search of a consumer more and more elusive, demanding and with a greater willingness to participate (Fernández-Gómez and Gordillo-Rodríguez, 2015). Due to this, city branding research has gained more interest in international academic literature and public authorities in recent years. Cities throughout Europe are paying more attention than ever to branding by using modern marketing tools and including branding strategies in their decisions in order to pursue wider urban management goals. Indeed, there is intense competition between cities (Kavaratzis, 2011; Warnaby, 2009) that prompts local policy makers to explore new ways to combine economic development with sustainable urban transformation, in order to reduce the growing gap between cities the richest and the most disadvantaged existing inhabitants in these cities. According to Martínez-Sala and Campillo-Alhama (2018), branding is based on being a communicative model resulting from a consumer who has taken an active role in the communication process with brands.

Many decision-makers have considered city branding as a key strategy to guide their cities' transformation process, because this brings many positive changes, especially in terms of quality of life and economic prosperity. However, controversies are also a current challenge that they have to face by involving local stakeholders in the process to balance branding versus marketing; places versus products; policy versus politics; and theory versus practice (Hospers, 2020).

The massification of media advertising, the proliferation of new technological tools for communication and the voracious competition for citizen attention are some of the circumstances that have caused a significant change in the communication landscape. Such substantive modifications affect the way to conceive strategic management of public relations and corporate communication in business. Today's PR reality requires a professional implementation of various actions based on innovative tactics which digital operation and effectiveness are not entirely legitimate, but need an urgent application in order to remain inside the global stage (Delponi, 2016). Another part of the complexity of city branding is the diverse target audience to work with and this is a challenge that is being discussed in a considerably proportion of city branding literature.

The current digitization process is also increasing interest in developed countries as it brings a revolution in the ways of doing, thinking and promoting places. This should be an incentive for academics to analyze this new approach to city branding. However, online branding studies are still descriptive as they explore city councils websites and mostly based on qualitative analysis of making campaigns. Cities are extremely competitive in trying to attract tourists, investors, and a more educated workforce and city branding is a useful tool to gain a competitive advantage. Experts insist that places should prove their uniqueness in order to promote and achieve various targets and that is the reason why the case study method is widely used to comprehend the state of this complex matter.

It is a fact that to gain popularity, it is important to keep public's appreciation and loyalty. Nevertheless, to convey a good image value within a context of global economic crisis and environmental collapse and totally dominated by social media, developing integral strategies regarding marketing, PR, and reputation analysis, is required. Likewise, offering different and special contents to satisfy the demands and needs of residents is also important, although, this is sometimes a little bit idealistic. Beside this, respecting the experience that public already has, as a digital information consumer is definitely the essential point.

The activity of promoting, positioning and managing the reputation is something that private companies have been doing for a long time and it has been in this private sphere where creation, development and brand management and reputation have emerged (Apolo *et al.*, 2017). At the local level, people create associations to the city brand and value these associations in the same way.

This paper focuses on a specific case of study: the implementation of a place branding competitive strategy in the case of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. We assume that public communication in local contexts

stand as a powerful tool in government's hands which allow explaining, justifying and, consequently, legitimizing the political decisions assumed in each governmental period. More specifically, the aim is to identify and analyze the current conditions prevailing in the island's capital city along with possible collaborations between stakeholders.

In this context, social networks and new forms of unconventional media play a starring role in changing the communication paradigm of local institutions. In fact, interest is growing due to the diminishing effectiveness of traditional media strategies, urban marketing or advertising. This is especially the case when the objective is to avoid confusion between the branding of the city and the simple creation of a visual territory. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Tourism grew by 5 % in 2018, reaching 1,400 million euros travelers two years earlier than expected.

The long-term estimate published in 2010 predicted 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals by 2020 however the strong economic growth, the more affordable air travel, technological changes, new business models and the simplification of visa's processing have accelerated growth in recent years.

Within this context of increasing tourist movement and urban process, city branding literature is experiencing a proportional growing interest within scholars and practitioners that find out in the tourism field, the instrument to manage and communicate the city's competitive advantages. Meanwhile, it is clearly observed that the concept of city, urban and place branding are used interchangeably and due to that academics are making efforts to clarify the terms. Hence, city branding is a complex phenomenon and a coherent consensus among scholars who keep theoretical distinctions between different terms according to their usage, is needed.

In the last decade, more and more public administrations, especially city councils, are showing interest in deploying this type of process not only with promotional intentions, but also as the first option for economic promotion and local development. This aspect becomes essential in order not to limit the extraordinary possibilities that the effective deployment of a brand gives to a territory (De-San-Eugenio and Ginesta, 2020).

"The people of Amsterdam are Amsterdam". The brand conveys both the diversity of people who live there, such as pride, trust, choice and support from the citizens themselves (Kavaratzis, 2011). Moreover, the city brand will be the name of the city, in addition to the logo (if they exist), associated with a group of attributes that, perceived by the target audience, will cause positive or negative reactions. It's been frequently observed that if a city treats the brand as a mere name, it then fails in the strategy, so the challenge of brand name is to create a series of deep positive associations that reflect its promise and this is the one of the focuses of city brand literature.

One of the most recent and ample contributions is the summary made by Oguztimur and Akturan (2015) that, even assuming the limitation of analyzing only international publications, the study generated several conclusions. In fact, it explores the articles published between, 1988-2014 in scholarly journals using, inductive methods of thematic analysis. The usage of secondary sources such as documents, statistics and other researches are also popular methods for data collection and the outcome of these investigations are spread in conceptual papers. Interviews in depth are used as well, especially in qualitative studies concerning specific experiences or case studies.

The main stream states that city branding can be classified under four research areas: (1) City branding concept, processes and measurement; (2) branding strategies; (3) social urbanism and (4) branding culture and tourism. For these delimited extents on city branding concept and due to its interdisciplinary character, it is possible to make two different approaches: marketing oriented and planning oriented. The first one is severely criticized by academics that consider this slant as superficial and far from reality. These two distinct approaches and the short-term promotion-oriented practices of urban policy-makers are the main reasons for not generating a robust theory in city branding literature. Therefore, "a more holistic viewpoint, combining marketing and planning-oriented approaches, is needed" (Oguztimur and Akturan, 2015: 368).

Following this path, recent studies (Kavaratzis) make an interesting reflection about transferring marketing knowledge to the operational environment of cities and develop a theoretical frame studying the fluencies from city marketing to city branding. According to him the background in which marketing became accessible to city administrators was provided by the rise of what he calls 'entrepreneurial city', and the marketing of places has been one of the defining features of the entrepreneurial modes of urban governance that have come to prominence since the 1970s. This is the case of Helsinki, the capital of Finland, which shows with its new brand concept that city branding and urban entrepreneurialism can be part of the same concept by bringing together in the related marketing strategy "different actors to rethink urban governance in terms of experimentation and empowerment of the self" (Jokela, 2020: 2033). This is the model that we expect while we revise in Santa Cruz City.

City branding provides the basis for developing policy to pursue economic development and, following Kavaratzis perspective; it serves as a conduit for city residents to identify with their city. In this sense, the relevance and the need for a framework describing and clarifying the processes involved in city branding are equally strong for two reasons, a) facing increasing competition for resources, investment and tourism and b) for addressing urgent social issues like social exclusion and cultural diversity. The framework focuses on the use of city branding and its potential effects on city residents and the way residents associate with and experience their city (2004, p. 58). Likewise, the complexity of urban development shows that there are so many overpowering factors that can reduce hopes of branding expectative, unless it is an effective policy instrument with a lot of potential for cities (Hospers, 2020). Actually, there are successful examples like the case of Turin where deepening the role played by urban branding policies, helped to modify its former image of an industrial city, by not only promoting the city image but also in refusing some particular urban representations (Mehan, 2017).

On the other hand, Braun (2012) identify eight factors that include city resident's perspective, as they believe that it would help marketing professionals to avoid mistakes previously made with the introduction of city marketing. The first four factors are governance issues relating to shaping the city brand within the broader political framework of the city to reinforce the importance of the city brand in relation to traditional city policies. At the same time, the strategic branding choices of city marketers could have a direct impact on the political decision-making process as well. The last four factors are intrinsically linked to the concept and application of branding itself. Hence, city branding requires the combination of marketing excellence with the sensitivity of operating in a political environment (Braun, 2012: 257).

Andrea Insch shares with Kavaratzis the focus on residents and states in Keith Dinnie's book called City branding that « apart from the economic advantages of urban concentration, cities offer their residents many social and emotional benefits, including opportunities to share information, form close social bonds, and to engage in a range of activities matching their interests » Furthermore, she insists, that economic, social, cultural and environmental vibrancy of a city lie in the level of satisfaction of their residents where more satisfaction will result in a lower risk of disenchantment and downward spiral (Insch, 2011: 9).

At this point, the most challenging issue of city branding is to communicate with the multiple stakeholders in a relevant, consistent and coherent way. Cities that try to capture their complexity in a single brand promise, often fail and the risk of becoming vague, weak, or even meaningless is high (Insch, 2011: 11).

Since residents are the essence of the community it is clear that they should be involved in determining the city's long-term economic, social and environmental direction. In fact, the majority of academics are convinced that the effectiveness of city brands depends on the support and commitment of local residents, local business operators and community groups. At the same time, it is also crucial to engage potential residents who self-identify with the city and specifically those stakeholders that naturally defend the brand such as city authorities, tourism agencies and chambers of commerce, in developing and implementing the strategy as part of the co-creative process (Insch, 2011).

On the other hand, and regarding social participation, it is also important to remark that according to the article 105.b) of the Spanish Constitution and several Spanish laws, everyone has the right to access public information. All content or documents, regardless of the format, held by any town hall and those that have been prepared or acquired as such, are considered public information.

Many authors agree that articulating a shared vision for the city's future is the starting point for crafting the city brand strategy because if they are developed behind closed doors and do not reach out to the required range of stakeholders, the strategy will fail. Therefore, the current discussions lie on the participation of citizens in governance processes as highlighted in the urban governance works. Due to this, recent literature examines the different roles that residents play in the formation and communication of place brands and explores the implications for place brand management. In fact, "residents are largely neglected by place branding practice and their priorities are often misunderstood, even though they are not passive beneficiaries but are active partners and co-producers of public goods, services and policies" (Braun *et al.*, 2013).

Another line of study asserts that branding a city through culture, history, events and entertainment are some of the increasingly growing trends in this field. Culture in the form of cultural facilities and events, architecture and urban history plays an important role in forming and sharpening the city image, thus becomes a strategic tool for the ones who are benefiting from the positive reflections of a city brand (Kavaratzis, 2004; Lucarelli and Berg, 2011). For instance, the case of Barcelona with a very successful cultural branding strategy: the public activity around the film *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2007) and the association between the film maker's prestige, Woody Allen and Barcelona city. The film is presented as an example of "cinematic advertising", and public participation in its production was part of a

place branding strategy based on the cultural industry and urban heritage, particularly architectural modernism (Zamorano, 2020).

As we can see there are many and complex approaches in place or city branding research, and people know and understand the city through their own perceptions and those perceptions are processed through the image that the city offers them. Therefore, we suggest using a combination of methods to try to reveal the brand elements that reside in an inhabitant's mind.

2. Methodology

In this article we study the importance that Santa Cruz de Tenerife City council gives to city brand, PR strategies and city reputation building as a new field to develop, by analyzing its tactics, ways of doing and communication channels management to place the city brand.

In order to address the aspects mentioned above about the value of the brand for cities and places, this scientific contribution presents the results of a case study based on content analysis and an inductive approach of theme identification via thematic analysis, discussed from an applied perspective and as a result of the experience gained from several knowledge transfer projects led by the authors. This is because we agree with Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) which states that scientific truth also results from the act of observation and emerging consensus in a community of observers in accordance with the sense that they give to their observation.

In this understanding process and due to the complex phenomenon studied, several and different nature aspects converge. Hence, to explain those issues that have been poorly addressed and consequently, there are no substantial theories available, Glaser and Strauss proposed this theory as a way of approaching social reality in a different way. In opposition to the hypothetical-deductive approaches, Glaser and Strauss defined this theory as an "inductive approach in which immersion in the data serves as a starting point for the development of a theory about a phenomenon" (Guillemette, 2006: 33).

We started with a systematic review of the existing bibliography in the field of city branding published in the main scientific journals of Tourism and Communication. The transdisciplinary nature of the subject studied requires that researchers consider different perspectives and case studies from other cities to establish theoretical contributions and understand the evolution of the state of the question.

Qualitative research, using panel discussion and in depth interviews with local stakeholders, public administration opinion leaders and entrepreneurs in private sector was also carried out. In addition to the interviews, this investigation uses documents study in order to identify SWOT of The Heart of Tenerife slogan, as the city branding claim of Santa Cruz city.

The current project focuses on the implementation of a place branding competitive strategy in the case of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. More specifically, the aim of this research was to identify and analyze the current conditions prevailing in the island's capital city along with possible collaborations between stakeholders. Moreover, the objective is to assess these conditions and the efficient articulation of the cooperation between the parts involved.

In addition, we used deductive analysis developed on the basis of the researcher's theoretical interest and we compared contents of various interviews and observation episodes with the theoretical concepts resulting from the effort to identify the fundamental issues.

The process outlined intends to describe the full complexity of Santa Cruz branding, which stems to a great extent from the need to simultaneously address the needs of different stakeholders that were deeply interviewed.

3. Case Study: Santa Cruz de Tenerife's Town Hall

There has been much skepticism about Santa Cruz's policies towards place marking, as they have been criticized as an unrealistic or unintellectual attempt. Achieving an interdisciplinary process and not just marketing campaign has been a continuous challenge to Santa Cruz's authorities that have been responsible for the management of city brand since 2016. In fact, since the last two decades different city branding initiatives and concepts have been developed by city council, but most of them were political campaigns with limited stakeholders focus. This is probably the reason why very little attention has been dedicated to branding in Santa Cruz in Spanish academic literature, which is not surprising, given the city's limited experience in city branding.

3.1. Santa Cruz, capital of the island

Santa Cruz de Tenerife is the capital of the largest island of the Canary archipelago and is located in the northeast. The municipality covers an area of 150.56 square meters and has a population of 209.984 inhabitants. This population is distributed unevenly throughout the municipality due to the fact that a large area is constituted by the highland mountains of the Macizo de Anaga, where the density of population is very low because of the orographic difficulties to establish populated areas.

Before the Castilian conquerors arrived, the territory where the current city is found, was an area of wild vegetation, and belonged to the Menceyato (Canarian kingdom) of Anaga, ruled by the Mencey (Canarian king) Beneharo. The pre-Hispanic history of the city is characterized by the legacy of the Guanches (aboriginal inhabitants of the Canary Islands) and by some foreign expeditions that reached the coast. The Castilians arrived in 1494, establishing their base camp in Santa Cruz during the conquest of the island, which lasted until 1496, the year in which Tenerife was incorporated to the Crown of Castile.

A heterogeneous society began to form at the end of the fifteenth century, composed of soldiers, sailors, merchants and even Guanches. The first square and new defensive castles were built along the coast in the second half of the sixteenth century, as Santa Cruz inhabitants needed to defend themselves against frequent corsair and pirate attacks; including Berber, Gallic and English pirates.

The first expansion of Santa Cruz took place in the eighteenth century as a result of numerous factors. One of them was the new residence of the general, who moved from the city of La Laguna to the castle of San Cristobal. This change in the capital's location brought about a new administrative dimension. The growing population soon started to demand services and leisure areas.

The Twentieth century brought modernization and a demographic boom, allowing the city to extend its limits and become the great city that it is today. It also expanded geographically, resulting in ambiguous borders as the growth of urban agglomerations of neighboring municipalities lead to the formation of the metropolitan area of Tenerife; integrated today, in addition to Santa Cruz and La Laguna, by El Rosario and Tegueste. At the end of the twentieth century, these four municipalities accounted for more than half (52%) of the island's population, revealing the disproportionate demographic magnitude existent on the island. As the capital, the heart of the municipality of Santa Cruz has exerted a special attraction from a residential and economic point of view, always favored by the clear population gap that exists.

The repercussion that the decentralization of activities towards adjacent municipalities is having, and the strong tourist and economic development taking place in southwest areas of the island, have caused the moderation of the population's growth in the City of Santa Cruz.

3.2. Antecedents: challenges at branding Santa Cruz

As it can be seen, Santa Cruz was traditionally a commercial and administrative city that left the touristic profit to be developed by the north or the south of the island. In fact, the efforts to promote tourism were shyly made with some actions for internal target, by attending some local promotional events, fairs or meetings. Moreover, although hosting one of the world's most important Carnival fest, there was no accommodation platforms ready to receive tourists, except the 2 traditional trade hotels, the majority of international visitors use to stay in the south or the north of the island. Carnival is the most popular festivity in Santa Cruz and the most participative of those held on the Canary Islands. In 1980, it was declared "Fiesta of International Tourist Interest", and in 1987, it entered the Guinness World Record Book as the largest gathering of people in an outdoor plaza to attend a concert with more than 200.000 people.

Hosting large events like Carnival play a vital role not only in the regeneration of Santa Cruz city, but also in significantly contributing to its branding. This is because Carnival, as a mega international event, starts branding campaigns that help to position the brand. While some events attract only particular audiences, Santa Cruz Carnival fest joins the entire population of the city together with visitors and this attracts the national media's attention.

On the other hand, Santa Cruz Film Commission (another public resource with touristic aims) has been developed to assist with film permits, locations, and it provides information on crew, equipment and support services for feature films, commercials, television, and still photography shootings. In addition to its permits and administrative management, Santa Cruz Film Commission, offers a diversity of locations, including majestic redwood forests, winding mountain roads, charming rustic towns, a historic narrow-gauge railroad at Roaring Camp Railroads, old Victorian neighborhoods, colorful seaside villages, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, lush agricultural fields, dramatic coastal bluffs, and 29 miles of coastline, all within just a few hundred square miles. Santa Cruz Film Commission also assists production companies with a wide range of lodging and dining options for every budget.

3.3. Santa Cruz Master plan for tourism and city brand development

There are four necessary conditions to develop a city brand plan with a tourist vocation:

- a) Differentiation. The element of local identity (values, environmental, landscape, history, culture, traditions, the sea and gastronomy).
- b) Cooperation: harmony and coordination between the different agents that convey in Santa Cruz tourism sector.
- c) Expertise: the competence of tourism agents to modern times, training and recycling.
- d) Satisfaction: the quality of resources is not enough nowadays, it is necessary a step forward to innovation.

According to the ideas mentioned above, a tourism Master Plan should integrate in the same framework and within a consensual and orderly manner, the strategic operational plans of the most relevant entities and institutions in a unique and practical strategy that identify the role of each entity.

In Spain, Strategic Tourism Plans have imposed themselves as the administrative reference instruments for management territories that have tourism as their economic pillars. These plans, generally, have clear objectives, guidelines and actions that must be carried out within a specific schedule. In Santa Cruz's case a core group of businessmen and resident population, together with local administration, are committed to impulse tourism as an integrating economic activity within different productive model. This posture is framed in a difficult economic situation of public budgets containment and financial decrease in private sector, so the principles of austerity, efficiency and maximum added value are the most important elements to be considered.

The plan has as its main objective to act as a reference frame for tourism decision making, both in the public and private side of Santa Cruz city and due to that, it focuses on the competitive improvement of the tourist destination. A collaborative process has been opened, for its development, one that considers the city as an integral system involving all actors and sectors.

With the aim of tourism becoming the backbone of the socio-economy of Santa Cruz city, the strategic plan considers that exercising a leadership position and pushing inter sectorial integration is fundamental for success; as well as the creation of platforms to develop initiatives that improve resident's quality of life and tourist's experiences. To achieve this goal the plan outlines that the tourism system should be conceived as a lever for economic revitalization, architectural recovery, conservation and enhancement of existing goods and resources.

In this sense, the strategic plan promotes itself as the starting point of Santa Cruz City Brand by defining the following aims:

- To start a collaborative-open process among all actors of the island's capital city, with an active and constant reflection approach which allows Santa Cruz to position itself as a solid tourist destination in the coming two years.
- To provide an insular-urban tourism reference model in the Atlantic that helps to increase accommodation rates in the city.
- To improve local population's quality of life by extending and making residents aware of the importance of tourism and its real benefits.

At the same time, the strategic plan also determines key lines for city development

- Santa Cruz: being Tenerife's central node of transportation and communications.
 - Mobility and accessibility between city center and neighborhoods from the city
 - Opening the city to the sea
 - Supporting port business being compatible with opening the city to the sea
- Commercial and services
 - Updating sales and trade activities
 - Consolidating real estate services
 - Tourism and health services
- Solidarity: Integration and social cohesion
- Cultural and international events city.
- Natural site.

3.4. Santa Cruz Town Hall's Press Office

This municipal entity has, like almost every Spanish town hall, a specific department dedicated to working with the media. The press office is made up of a director of communications and a team of 6 journalists who distribute the work based on the topics and councils. The press office is in charge of the dissemination of news generated by the Town Hall throughout tasks such as sending out press releases to the media, organizing interviews and special features; as well as the publication of news articles on the website, local radio and television programs. The type of work carried out in the press office is framed within the traditional Press agent model described by Grunning and Hunt (2000), where the flow of communication, although bi directional, concentrates its effort in providing more support to the person issuing the information. Also, the repercussions of the press releases published in the local media are closely monitored.

In this context of technological development, and given the widespread growth of advertisement in the media, as well as the voracious competition among institutional and private brands trying to attract the attention of the public; the Town Hall of Santa Cruz de Tenerife has implemented a pioneer system in Spain. Apart from the press office, a specific department has been created to deal with corporate communication and relations with the citizens.

The main goal of this new bureau is to become a resource that facilitates communication between the Town Hall and its citizens. To do so, a combination of communication strategies and resources, that are closer to institutional marketing than to traditional press management, have been applied. The available technological resources have also been taken into account with the model of Smart Cities as an objective. Among the tasks that this new department has put into place you'll find:

- Corporate social media guidelines
- City Brand development and launch
- Facilitate public information through the institutional transparency portal
- Resource optimization during institutional campaign management
- Design of communication strategies for citizen awareness
- Creation of a unified corporate image
- Implementation of technological tools that facilitate multi-directional communication with citizens

These actions mark the road map of the department's goals to establish a fluid communication between the institution and the citizens. Bridging this gap is possible thanks to the implementation of technological innovation tools, such as, the modernization of the communication channels with the citizens. In this sense, the Town Hall's technological infrastructures have all been renewed. A special section has been created on the website enabling the public to obtain specific information about the municipality; facilitating the exercise of institutional transparency and citizen participation which will lead to promote innovation in the city.

3.5. Citybrand and tourism repositioning: the marketing plan

The measurements taken according to the local tourism policies are join in one document that develops the following actions.

In first place, the definition of the touristic offer in order to improve its positioning in the market having always a unique selling point: mild weather all year round, safety and Europeans standards services. This can imply the following tourist products developments, which are not exclusive from others that could be defined:

- Santa Cruz as a meeting point (for business and congresses)
- Santa Cruz as a cultural experience
- Santa Cruz as a scale for cruise ships
- Santa Cruz as a place to enjoy Nature Tourism (Anaga Forest Reserve)
- Santa Cruz as a Sportive tourism
- Santa Cruz as a senior tourism destination

Following this path that means the reactivation of the city, the Historic Centre of Santa Cruz was declared by the Government of the Canary Islands as a Tourist Interest Zone and this implies that it is allowed to open shops, leisure areas and restaurants outside the general regime of business hours by coordinating schedules and responsibilities.

The main objective of this decision is to enable the entrepreneurs to carry out their activity within the Historic District, a necessary instrument to be competitive in current times and make the capital of Tenerife a focus of business attraction, adding value to the city.

Another important element for positioning is the improvement of road signs, which has been articulated to bring the main tourist and commercial centers closer to the city. Also, the signals guide the tourist, identifying the main popular attractions, museums and cultural, as well as historical and scientific offer. This action has been combined with the improvement of pedestrian sidewalks for local residents as well as visitors.

Organizing monthly itinerant fairs such as Come to Santa Cruz's, are initiatives conceived for commercial revitalization, restoration and leisure activities for all audiences and they take place on the first Sundays of each month within the area of the city's great tourist influx.

Referring to stimulus demand, the city council together with employer associations organized and share costs for advertising season campaigns joining both interests; public and private. These campaigns focus promotions at key points such as the airports, the port, local hotels and public transport vehicles (buses, trolley car, taxis). In many cases, these advertising campaigns show a friendly and peaceful image of the city and visually nice.

3.6. Santa Cruz City graphic design: the role of logo and claim

Building communities and cultivating relationships among these geographical and virtual communities is an emerging dimension of the branding process. Santa Cruz, The heart of Tenerife branding program started in 2016 with the aim of gathering and uniting committed individuals who are willing to do something for Santa Cruz city and to make it a better place to live and to promote. This drive was the key message spread by the Mayor of the City Council who led several awareness campaigns to clean the city, such as Santa Cruz Graffiti – free initiatives and removing illegal posters throughout the capital.

These proposals are from the bottom-up rather than a marketer's approach that could force an artificial brand concept upon the citizens and its city. Moreover, these civic and participatory initiatives have been essential for branding the city and helped to redefine the brand as a home to share.

One of the first actions taken was the development of a detailed brand guidebook for Santa Cruz that outlines the visual elements of the official logo and how it ought to be used by all the employees and institutions that belonged to the city council. This guideline is freely available on the city council's website. Then, the identification of the brand values took place, based on organic and induced values such as architectural heritage, the sea, Anaga Forest reserve, the beach and cultural attractions, all of them integrated in the brand.

Figure 1. Oficial Brand Santa Cruz de Tenerife



Source: <https://www.elcorazondetenerife.com/>

Santa Cruz is the point of departure and arrival and the place where decisions are made and a more urban offer. The central "A" is replaced by an inverted heart as an arrowhead and another one equally faced generating a speech about centrality, dialogue, interaction, pointing out that there is the center

of Tenerife or the kilometer 0 of the island. Regarding the font size of the words in the logo is considerably big and it is built in capital letters. The size refers to the point of emphasis while here it is Santa Cruz being a kind of 'capital' where nature and ocean stands behind. There seems to be an association with the central power of the city being a commercial capital throughout the history. Commenting on the color preference, the basic shade of the logo is turquoise blue and green; blue is a natural color that represents the sea and the sky, it has a calming effect. Green refers to Anaga, the green lung of the island.

In many cultures blue is significant in religious beliefs but not in Spanish one. In the logo a specific tone of blue turquoise- is chosen which has a connotation that the logo not only represents the city of Santa Cruz but also the Canaries, as a fortunate archipelago surrounded by the sea and with soft weather all year round. The meaning might be extracted considering the touristic position of the Canaries in the touristic imaginary of the European Union as it's one of the most demanded destinations.

The claim *The heart of Tenerife* positions the brand as the center of the destination, as well as it reinforces its main differentiator value and authenticity.

3.7. Corporate good practices guidelines for social media

During the last years, digital social networks have undergone a rapid process of implantation in the public administrations and have become an essential information exchange channel for the development of a compromised society. In this sense, local public administrations have also started using these technologies to improve the communication with their citizens and promote a more accessible institution. In order to do so it is necessary to apply a cohesive communication policy, with a clear strategy and defined objectives of what is expected from social media presence (Delponti and Rodríguez, 2017).

In order to check if Santa Cruz implemented the mentioned strategy, taking into account that there are no precise operating guidelines for the existing social media linked to the institution, a specific observation has been carried out. As a result of the initial observations shared with the city council communication department, multiple corrective measures have been implemented in order to ensure a more effective communication strategy with the city's residents, attending to their concerns and comments regarding management. The use of an inclusive, non-sexist language that allows a more horizontal dialogue with social media followers has also been applied.

Nobody disagree considering Social media as fundamental platforms in creating virtual communities and websites are the primary, most popular and obligatory tool in branding places. It not only helps to increase place awareness or familiarity, but also to shape city's image (Delponti, 2014). Santa Cruz website includes general information of the city, a photo gallery, city councils projects and plans, as well as accommodation information and maps. Through this website, Santa Cruz develops its brand by presenting the system of identification (logo, advertising claim), the city's offer (attraction lists, calendar of events ad maps), behavior (news, plans, policies, projects), as well as interacting channels as social media or the citizens inbox.

3.8. Technological innovation and institutional transparency

In order that citizens can access all the information necessary to exercise the right of access to public information, the Town Hall has created a prominent section on the website where all the information is added in accordance with the law.

Technological progress is essential in order to develop transparency and administrative modernization, leading to better and greater access to information by the citizenship (Delponti and Rodríguez, 2017). In this sense, the Town Hall has implemented several systems for every department that facilitate this role and interaction with the citizen, such as the electronic signature system that facilitates the flow of information within the administration. Only in 2016, 94,000 electronically signed documents were achieved. In addition, the Office of Virtual Registration (ORVE for its acronym in Spanish) has been implemented, exchanging more than 10,000 electronic registrations with other administrations.

The implementation of electronic invoices also enables a better knowledge of public expenditure and investment in different projects. During 2016, around 3.391 electronic invoices were presented.

In this same line of administrative simplification and being environmentally responsible, it was decided that certificates were no longer going to be issued using paper format. During just one year (2016), 35.000€ were saved with more than 7.000 certificate exchanges with other administrations.

These are just some examples of the various actions in technological innovation being carried out, making it possible to advance and reach corporate communication goals and relationships with

local citizenship by open data and with the idea of creating a smart city atmosphere, that ensures progressive compliance with the law on institutional transparency, access to public information and good governance. All these aspirations are part of the city brand promise.

4. Results discussion

Considering different perspectives on city branding scientific literature and the review of case studies from other cities helped to establish theoretical contributions and to understand the evolving the state of the art, which contributed to meet the proposed objectives. We succeeded assessing the current conditions prevailing in the branding of the island's capital along with possible efficient collaborations between stakeholders.

Difficulties related to various disciplinary approaches, terminologies, and unclear measurements have characterized the major difficulties in accomplishing this study. However, analyzing the identification of one city from others combining its name and characteristics that make it unique and exclusive is what we focus on in this case study.

After observing the behavior of corporate communication and taking into account that after the economic crisis of 2008, organizations understood the value of communication and Public Relations (Almansa Martínez and Fernández Souto, 2020), it is clear that it is a sector that has a growing consideration within the different entities. It seems also clear that the definition and the use of a symbol created for branding Santa Cruz city does not only helped to recognize this particular place, but also it favored the efforts for strengthening a common citizen awareness about the city, as well as promoting its tourist appeal to exterior investors and visitors.

One of the most interesting aspects of this study is what actually takes place in Tenerife may reflect the result of tourist transformation patterns in other Canary Islands as well as in other Atlantic African Coast destinations that follow its steps. At the same time, we emphasize the need to investigate a greater number of medium-sized islands in future investigations to verify our findings.

Another inference we found as a result of this case study has to do with the city as a tourist destination, with reference to current and potential tourists, regardless of their place of residence, and associated with tangible and intangible city attractions that Santa Cruz has to offer.

Focusing on the actions directed to the resident public or to those more connected to the city (neighbors, groups, possible investors, etc.), it is possible to conclude that the several communication, PR and marketing actions put into place positively worked to familiarize the interested groups with the philosophy behind the new brand. To achieve this goal, the corporate communication office worked on promoting this city brand in resident audiences, in order to get to know it and make them feel it as theirs, according to the values and attributes that define it.

Apart from traditional advertising campaigns that include ads in newspapers, radio and television, street marketing and digital marketing campaigns were also positively carried out. Clear examples would be the placement of billboards on the motorway, airports and places with high population.

In addition, a corporeal sculpture of the brand logo was placed in the area with the highest tourist influx. This sculpture is used as the city's emblem, and both locals and tourists take self-pictures of and share them on social media.

Although the above positive results, it is also possible to bode that as long as branding Santa Cruz City turns into campaign-driven rather than policy driven the process and engages a wide range of stakeholders and interest groups, the city brand could become vague and waken.

5. Conclusions

Findings from the case study suggest that organizing broad stakeholder participation in the branding process on site is an unavoidable necessity in times of globalization, and promoting the territory on the basis of that branding, is not an issue less.

Only coordinating organization that strategically oversees this process and creating synergies between the Island/region brand with city brand and not only focusing on economic interests, the project will succeed. Cultural and social goals should be also considered, especially in developing city brand communities.

We can also note that after observing the case and interpreting stakeholders points of view, the purpose of Santa Cruz de Tenerife city in having its own brand has led it to identify an element of those characteristics that will help in the future to achieve a greater social cohesion and connection between

neighbors and citizens with their place of residence. A positive attitude towards the city, as well as a better coexistence between inhabitants and an impulse in business, culture and work is also expected by stakeholders, as a result.

Future studies will tell how far Santa Cruz's corporate communications office will get in terms of implementing and coordinating the city branding project, but the theory and practice of branding cities in East and South Europe are lagging forward those of the Central, West and Northern, that often serve as a benchmark for the rest of the world.

Finally, although local academics were skeptical about the launch of the brand of the city of Santa Cruz, the international position of the city is different, since it is considered one of the most livable cities in the Canary Islands and the brand achieves a segmentation by consistency and objectives for developing policies that play an important role in the political, economic and cultural spheres.

6. Contributions

Contributions	Name
Conception and design of the study	Patricia Delponti & Almudena Barrientos-Báez
Documentary research	David Caldevilla-Domínguez
Data collection	Patricia Delponti & Almudena Barrientos-Báez
Analysis and critical interpretation of data	David Caldevilla-Domínguez & Patricia Delponti
Review and validation of versions	Almudena Barrientos-Báez & David Caldevilla-Domínguez

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