

Measuring Success in City Marketing and Branding

-Master's Thesis-

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore how success is measured within the place marketing and branding industry.

The main issue surrounding this activity is the lack of a universally accepted framework that hinders practitioners from being able to justify the efficiency of their spending. In order to be able to efficiently approach this issue, from a practical standpoint research has been made in directions to better understand factors such as: the actual meaning success to practitioners, challenges that are experienced in the industry, and assessing successful measurement cases.

From a theoretical standpoint, efforts have been allocated to exploring current work within the place marketing and branding industry, while also tapping into traditional product marketing and the afferent success measurements used within that industry. Furthermore, attention has been given also to how other types of institutions measure success within their industries.

The approach is based on literature research and on the results of the performed expert interview that are meant to give insights both from a practitioner's and a scholar's point of view.

Apart from identifying the various ways success is being measured within place marketing and branding, the findings presented and addressed various related pain-points met by practitioners and scholars alike in an attempt to give a different perspective on these negative aspects and stimulate further research.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
2 Theoretical Background.....	3
2.1 The Place Marketing Concept.....	3
2.2 The Place Branding Concept.....	4
2.3 Success in Place Marketing and Branding.....	5
2.4 The Success Measurement Conundrum.....	6
2.5 Success Measurement.....	7
2.5.1: Within Place Marketing and Branding.....	7
2.5.2: Within Traditional Marketing and Branding.....	18
2.5.3: Within Companies.....	27
2.5.4 Within Public Administration.....	33
2.6 Research Purpose.....	36
3. Empirical Study – Expert Interviews.....	37
3.1. Methodology.....	37
3.2 Clustering.....	40
3.3 Results.....	40
3.2.1 Sub Question 1.1 – How do you define ‘Success’ in Place Marketing and Branding?.....	40
3.2.2 Sub Question 1.2 – How can we measure success in Place Marketing and Branding?.....	44
3.2.3 Sub Question 2.1 – Where do you see challenges in Place Marketing and Branding?.....	49
3.2.4 Sub-Question 2.2 – How to overcome these challenges?.....	53
3.2.5 Question 3 – What are good examples of success measurement in place marketing and branding?.....	56
4 Discussion.....	60
4.1 General Discussion.....	60
4.2 Theoretical Implication.....	70
4.2 Practical Implication.....	71
4.4 Limitations.....	72
5 Conclusions.....	73
6 Reference List.....	74

1 Introduction

Trade globalization, highly mobile investment and labour markets, as well as the deregulation of a large number of industries has found cities having to face a highly volatile macro-economic environment (Jacobsen, 2009). Places increasingly compete with each other in an effort to attract tourists, investors, companies, new citizens, and qualified workforce (Anholt, 2004; Kavaratzis, 2005; Zenker, 2009).

This competition trend has been growing exponentially in the past decades as obtaining the above-mentioned resources can provide a significant boost to economies that recognize the importance of such development activities (Jacobsen, 2009). This creates new opportunities for economies but at the same time opens up a new stage where places can compete using various tools and methods (Jacobsen, 2009).

Acknowledging the importance of these developments, places have given more attention to creating and associating a positive brand to themselves (Braun, 2008) through place branding, using place marketing as a tool to promote their offerings to various target groups. Consequently, places invest large amounts of taxpayer money in such activities per year (Jacobsen, 2009) raising questions on the efficient use of resources (Jacobsen, 2009; Zenker and Martin, 2011).

The difficulties in measuring the effects of these initiatives, as a prerequisite to enable accounting for the spendings, are presented throughout literature (Jacobsen, 2009; Kotler et al., 1999; Oguztimur and Akturan, 2016; Rianisto, 2003; Zenker & Martin, 2011).

Place marketing and branding are still considered as being a rather new branch of marketing, researchers having pointed out that there is no single, universally accepted definition for any of these two concepts (Hankinson, 2015; Skinner, 2008). Similarly, there is also no generally accepted interpretation for what success in place marketing and branding is, due to the high contextuality with which the parameters of success are set for each place (Rianisto, 2003). This furthers the need of an explorative research on this topic as the presence of gray areas is evident.

The urgency with which these issues should be addressed is high, as place marketing practitioners find themselves in challenging situations due to the complex goals they must achieve and the overall complexity that comes with performing such activities. Adding to the issue, the monetary aspect is

also considered as place marketing budgets are limited (Jacobsen, 2009), and the costs associated with such activities is high.

As will be illustrated in this research, a lot of concepts have been adapted, some more successfully than others, from traditional product marketing to place marketing. However, the issue here is that unlike typical products, place have in fact a lot of particularities that affect the overall validity of the imported product marketing methodologies.

One aspect has been illustrated by Florek et. al., (2006) who considers places as mega-products due to the fact that a place can be represented by more than one physical locations (countries, regions, cities, localities). Competition between the places is also not the only addressed factor by place marketing and branding. Collaborations between places with similar interest are increasing in popularity as practitioners acknowledge the common interests and the potential gains that can surface if pooling resources in a beneficial direction, leading to a complex multi-stakeholder approach.

The complexity of place marketing and branding is vast, reason for which scholars need to attempt to make success and its measurement clearer, in order to provide a solid base that can support further developments on the domain, but also maintain a critical review towards business approaches and their application in place marketing and branding.

Recent academic research shows that most of the work on this topic is composed of single case studies, analysed qualitatively and which draw unreliable conclusions Vuignier (2017). The change of view from place marketing's simple promotion function, towards redefining it as a proper integrated management tool (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2009) has not been properly acknowledged still by experts in the domain, reason for which the limited approaches towards success measurement are still predominant (Zenker and Martin 2011).

Considering the above, the justified aim of this explorative research is to identify and critically reflect on how success is measured within place marketing and branding.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 The Place Marketing Concept

In general, a marketing initiative's main objective is to make proper use of allocated resources in order to achieve a set of marketing goals, satisfying customer needs through generating value. Strict focus should not be allocated to customer satisfaction, as it should be the inherently larger goals of the entire marketing strategy (Kotler, 1997; Weilbacher, 1993).

Places and their economies are now considered strong assets (Clark, 2002), as having many thriving places within a country would consequently contribute to national level development. Tackling place branding and marketing on a smaller scale means that each place needs to identify and address their own issues using local resources (Rianisto, 2003).

A distinction between the two terms place marketing and place branding is made by Zenker and Martin (2011) describing place branding as addressing the perceived reputation of a certain city or area, tasked with attempting to create name awareness and associate it with qualities that present attraction towards foreign interest. The authors further describe place marketing as encompassing the activities meant to promote the economic and social values of a place, such as satisfaction indices and place identification, to the potential entities of interest. Hospers (2011) provides a more holistic illustration of place marketing, describing it as being the existing linkage between the management of city policy areas, like employment, housing, or infrastructure, towards the various desired target groups.

Whether aiming to build a brand-new image or positively alter a negative one, place marketing attempts to tailor the place's product offering to better fit the requirements of the target customers (Holcomb, 1994). This is done by establishing a place identity from the positive elements rooted in the essence of that particular place and presenting it to the desired audience (Tureman et al., 2001; Hankinson, 2001).

Segmentation within place marketing is emphasized by Kotler et al. (1999) who outlines four main target markets for place branding: visitors, residents and employees, business and industry, as well as export markets. The visitors' segment is split into two major groups: business and non-business

visitors (Kotler et al., 1999). Businesses are also increasingly becoming more selective when choosing a location for their operations, considering the various benefits a place can bring (Rianisto, 2003). Export markets are of importance to the place offering as they encourage the domestic production of goods and services that are of international demand, thus favoring export and increasing external appeal (Rianisto, 2003). Having 'ready business' is a strong feature for a place, a factor that should be considered by companies when deciding on matters regarding location. Collaboration between public and private sector stakeholders can consolidate a positive external perception that will prove beneficial for both sides, a process described in the literature by Kotler et al. (1999, p.50) as "co-branding" (Rianisto, 2003).

Researchers throughout literature agree on the fact that places can be indeed branded like products and services (Hankinson, 2001; Keller, 1998; Killingbeck and Trueman 2002; Kotler et al., 1999). A place that creates a brand aims to emphasize positive associations with its target markets (Keller, 1998).

2.2 The Place Branding Concept

Place branding has initially been met with skepticism due to disbelief in the ability to actually create a brand for a location; an assumption that was analyzed and rejected by Hankinson (2001) through a study, concluding that there is absolutely no reason for the branding of a particular location to be impossible, even more, it is considered highly recommended. However, in order to perform a successful place branding initiative, understanding key concepts such as brand identity, personality and differentiation towards other brands in the same segment is of high importance (Aaker, 1996; Kotler, 1997).

Zenker and Braun (2010, p. 5) present a more contemporary view on the place branding phenomenon addressing it as "a network of associations in the minds of the consumers, based on the visual, verbal, and behavioral expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place stakeholders and the overall place design". In consequence, the brand of a place is not necessarily reflected in a good presentation of the place attributes, but rather the perception of those attributes and their compatibility in the eyes of their respective target audience. These perceptions can lead to the ability to measure the effects

of a place brands through enabling indicators like willingness to stay or resident satisfaction (Zenker and Gollan, 2010; Zenker et al., 2009).

Place branding has been the tool of choice for economic development professionals to avoid the visible homogeneity in approaching the way places are seen and how they proceed to attract international interest, regardless if referring to tourism, business opportunities, or individual relocation (Jacobsen, 2009).

2.3 Success in Place Marketing and Branding

Kotler et al. (2002) described place marketing as the ways of crafting a place that satisfies the demands of its set target audience; success being fulfilled when the local habitants and businesses are satisfied with their environment and the same environment meets the expectations of travelers and potential investors. However, the contextual notion of success is also taken into consideration by researchers that refrain themselves from clearly defining success in place marketing. (Khondkar, 2012).

In general terms `success` refers to achieving one or more objectives, whether of implicit or explicit nature, using a certain acceptance criterion Rainisto (2003). A differentiation must be set however between the business marketing and place marketing interpretation of success and how to achieve it. In corporate marketing, success is associated with financial objectives such as a net increase in sales, and abstract objectives such as improved brand perception. The criteria on how to achieve these goals are well defined and in concordance with industry averages. When evaluating the performance, a company's financial indices are a very solid source of feedback (Doyle, 1992). However, In the absence of such defined criteria within place marketing, most of the success falls into the contextual sphere, varying from different points of view Rainisto (2003).

Rainisto (2003) also argued that several other variables such as the commitment and involvement of the institution, the qualitative abilities of the individual actors performing the marketing activities, together with the time factor, and professional expertise, play an important role in the overall success, underlining the importance of the learning curve within the body that is performing place marketing activities. In this regard, it is stated that there is possibility of improvements relating to

knowledge, through experience and carefully evaluated feedback. This method of success improvement is challenging to assess but nevertheless can prove to be a valid option for measurement.

2.4 The Success Measurement Conundrum

Cities and regions often spend substantial resources in place marketing activities and, as any other corporate expense, the results should be accurately calculated, measured and evaluated (Jacobsen, 2009). This is meant to ensure the efficiency of the allocated funds in concordance with the various marketing objectives set by each city. To also be noted, the objectives for place marketing agencies are very ambitious in comparison to the allocated resources, sometimes aiming to achieve complex things such as for example an altering of human perception towards a particular city or area. This is a time and resource consuming process as it involves a vast array of target groups and sub-groups and, especially when involving taxpayer money, the success of these activities needs to be even transparent and clear.

Marketers in the industry cannot fully account for success questions, as regular evaluation of their activities is required but comes with high resource costs. This situation differs from classic product marketing because the very few available key performance indicators, such as for example tourist overnight stays, are simply insufficient to justify the invested resources (Zenker and Martin, 2011). This disables a clear direct correlation between a particular marketing or branding activity and the changes in the brand image of a place following marketing efforts.

Place branding and place marketing activities tend to be highly susceptible to politics (Place Brand Observer, 2016; Holden, 2005) meaning that resource allocation is highly dependent on negotiations and political agendas. This fact in turn leads to a general lack of interest in identifying indicators that might 'risk' proving to find inefficient allocation of resources, which might reflect negatively on the political actors.

In recent literature there have been a number of researchers who attempted to break through the roadblocks associated with measuring success in place marketing, either through attempting complex benchmarking models, performing deep and thorough case studies or finding various ways

to integrate traditional marketing approaches; however, it can be argued that there is no one clear way of measuring success in place marketing.

2.5 Success Measurement

2.5.1: Within Place Marketing and Branding

A definition of a place brand was previously presented as “a network of association in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design” (Zenker and Braun, 2010, p. 3). The same authors proceed to point out that a place brand does not contain the communicated expressions or the illustration of place physics, but more how the minds of the target audiences perceive these expressions. These perceptions can help in identifying quantifiable brand effects such as resident satisfaction (Insch and Florek, 2008) or willingness to commit to inhabiting a place (Zenker and Gollan, 2010).

Place marketing and branding have a large array of target groups that include visitors, residents and workers, business and industry as presented by Kotler et al. (1993). However, upon summarizing

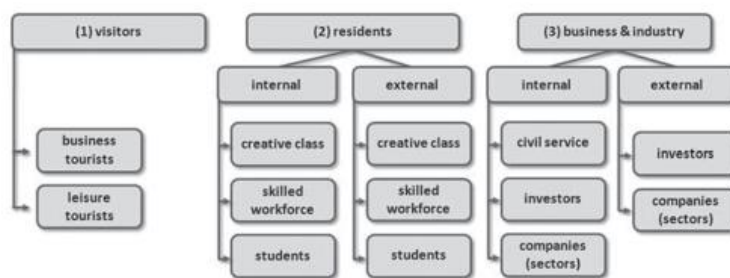


Figure 1- Different target groups for place marketing (Zenker and Martin, 2011, p. 34)

recent use in marketing practice, Zenker and Martin (2011) elaborate a more in-depth illustration for the complex variety of target groups (Figure 1) to attempt to further differentiate the particular needs and demands of these target groups and also to emphasize that a potent success

measurement should consider the diversity of these demands as cross-target groups measurements will need to be performed.

Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) argue that there is a change of focus regarding place marketing and its primary use for promotion purposes towards fully comprehending the phenomenon as an integrated measurement tool to maximize its utility. This fact has not been fully accepted by scholars (Grabow et al., 2006), reason for which not too much focus has been allocated to the research on success measurements. Zenker and Martin (2011) identified that current measurements are not complex enough, ignoring the previously mentioned characteristics of places (target group and product complexity), underlining that practitioners should employ not one, but more distinct approaches when attempting complex success measurement.

Zenker and Martin (2011) accept the definition of place marketing elaborated by Braun (2008 p. 43) as "the coordinated use of marketing tools supported by a shared customer-oriented philosophy for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging urban offerings that have value for a city's customers and the city's community at large". The authors also acknowledge the interpretation of Ashworth and Voogd (1990) that place marketing's aim should be to boost the efficient social functioning (e.g. citizen satisfaction) and economic functioning of a particular place, in line with other broader set goals, thus it should be consumer-oriented of nature. The customer-centered orientation should be considered by place marketing professionals as it does not only focus on the simple selling of a product but rather on generating value for both the consumer and institutions itself, Shah et al. (2006) calling this phenomenon dual value creation. Zenker and Martin (2011) analyse two customer-centered metrics: citizen equity and citizen satisfaction and their use as potential success metrics in place marketing.

Customer equity in traditional marketing is described the sum of lifetime values of all existing and potential customers Rust et. al. (2004), concept that Zenker and Martin (2011) argue can offer a new perspective on the efficiency and effectiveness of place marketing initiative measurement. The two authors proceed to expand this argument, detailing that citizen equity should monitor and evaluate the value of a citizen to a place, founded on estimated future transactions (for example tax revenues from the source of income) and comparing them to estimated future costs (for example healthcare or social benefits). Subtracting the residency costs and marketing-specific costs necessary to attract an individual to become a resident of the place results in the average gross contribution; thus defining citizen equity as "the sum of cumulative cash flows of all customers or customer segments over the entire time of residency" (Zenker and Martin, 2011, p. 36)

When invoking customer-centricity, it is of utmost importance to be able to quantify the value a place represents to the customer. Resident satisfaction will reflect in the economic and social functioning of an area, reason for which next to the fairly direct approach to economic measurements, there is a need for new indexes that can account for the social the aspects of the place (Zenker and Martin, 2011). Furthermore, the authors point out that neither census data nor simple indicators can suffice for satisfaction measurement, as they only illustrate the behaviour of the target group, instead of arguing the reason why that behaviour is taking place.

Customer loyalty represents the relationship between an actor and a separate entity in which the actor presents an emotional or behaviour connection with the entity, regardless of alternative options (Melnyk et al. 2009). This element can, for example, be included when observing the relationship between a citizen and a place, befitting also for performance measurement (Zenker et al., 2011). The notion of trust and its measurement, due to its connection to identification and satisfaction (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999), could also be included when attempting to elaborate a comprehensive success measurement method, Zenker et al. (2011) underlying the absence of a model that can encompass the above-mentioned constructs and particularities.

A second relevant dimension for evaluation, next to the customer-centricity perspective is the brand perspective (Zenker and Martin, 2011). Brand equity has been described by Keller (1993) as a brand metric of utmost importance, defining the customer-based brand equity as the deference-making effect of brand knowledge reflected in the consumer behaviour, as a result of the brand marketing efforts.

The brand value drivers influence the response consumers have towards a particular brand and can prove to be another potent source of non-economic information on the brand knowledge structure. Variables such as brand image and brand awareness can be assessed and provide important data for brand management (Keller, 1993). Identifying and measuring over time the aforementioned brand value drivers can prove essential in the decision-making process of place brand managers (Zenker et al., 2011).

Even though place-brand equity is a strong performance indicator that can provide essential information on place marketing spending, the absence of a standard for its measurement has found companies reluctant using this concept (Zenker and Martin, 2011). When attempting to calculate brand equity, each target groups' customer-brand variables need to be assessed, this becomes even more difficult when considering the monetary aspects of brand equity such as cash flows, costs and

brand specific risk factors; as educated estimations for these variables need to be calculated (Zenker and Martin, 2011).

When managing place marketing activities, practitioners should constantly assess the influence a brand has on the customer-brand relationship (Zenker et al., 2011). Some of the first scholars that proved the utility of place brand equity from the point of view of the investors were Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) which converted the concept of country brand equity for products to country brand equity for investors. Jacobsen (2009) furthered research on this topic elaborating of a conceptual framework called the Investor-based Place Brand Equity Model (IPE) focusing on the correlation between brand value drivers and the commitment to invest in a place.

The importance of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) for the economic development of a place, especially in creative industries, has been presented by Kotler et al. (1999)/ Even though there is a consensus that obtaining FDIs positively affect the economic development of a place (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2002), the efficiency of the efforts required to attract these investments need to be justified by a customer-oriented urban policy (Jacobsen, 2009).

As a place, knowing the location selection process of foreign investors is desired in order to know when and how to influence their decision. Kotler et al. (1999) invokes the consumer decision-making process when describing the location selection process. As Jacobsen (2009, p. 72) presents it “enterprises go through a five-stage refinement process including the creation of a total set of potential investment locations, a cognitively and affectively driven creation of the awareness set, a primarily cognitively driven formation of the consolidation set and a largely affectively influenced development of the choice set to reach a final decision”.

Practitioners should attempt to transmit the marketing instruments in the awareness building stages as this, and the choice building process are the stages that are not yet completely cognitively driven (Van de Laar and Neubourg, 2002), thus the level of receptiveness is highest and the decision-making process can be influenced. Generally, in the market introduction phase decisions are made with high consideration towards rational factors, however in markets that have a multitude of products with similar characteristics the emotional factors start to play a key role (Communication Group, 2006). These emotional factors have been addressed by the creation of brands. The concept of this approach can also be used to attract companies going through a decision-making process on FDI location by developing place brands (Jacobsen, 2009). This fact is also underlined by Florida (2002) and Jansson and Power (2006) who found that places that have established strong brands attract foreign companies much easier, Pantzalis and Rodrigues (1999) mentioning the foreign investment

Commented [CN1]: Communication Group (2006), “The power of destinations: why it matters to be different”, available at:
<http://www.thecommunicationgroup.co.uk/news/downloads/Power%20of%20Destinations%20Report.pdf>

capital is heavily influenced by the brand perception of places. As Anholt (1999) points out, the value of brands is reflected mostly in the minds of the consumers and not in the product itself, Florek (2005) also connecting emotions to goods, services, and places. For this reason, companies have adjusted their focus from only on the actual products, to consumers and their willingness to purchase or pay a premium for products and services that have meaning, identity and aesthetics (Stigel and Frimann, 2006). Meffert (2000) identifies three major functions for place brands as follows: the confidence building function where high awareness levels and a positive reputation create confidence which results in uncertainty avoidance and diminished purchasing risk in the mind of the potential consumer (Balderjahn, 2004). The symbolic function concerns the customer interaction with the social environment, attempting to potentially associate the prestige and distinction with the customer and his organization. The orientation and information function involves the commoditisation of places, fact that is optimal for a customer in selecting the most matching place product (Meffert, 2000).

The brand efficiency can be measured by brand equity, which is based on brand value and refers to the premium customers are willing to pay for a branded product in detriment of a non-branded one (Jacobsen, 2009).

Two standpoints for measuring brand equity are identified by Dinnie (2008): the customer perspective that has as an output customer-based brand equity accounting for perceptions of customer behaviour and the financial perspective that has as an output firm-based brand equity accounting for the financial indicators of the brand itself.

Limited research has been performed on the resemblances in accounting for product brand equity and place brand equity (Jacobsen, 2009), reason for which Jacobsen (2009) attempts to elaborate a theoretical framework to measure investor-based place brand equity and its impact on location the preferences of foreign investors that are facing a dilemma on where to invest. This framework attempts to deepen the knowledge of the connections between the place investor and his decision-making process, the nature of the place brand and the place brand strategy.

The product brand model elaborated by Keller (1993) is used as a starting point for the IPE model, furthering its interpretation of a brand containing tangible and intangible brand attributes (place brand assets), as well as the cognitive and affective brand benefits (place brand values). Jacobsen (2009) underlines the fact that the IPE framework should not only illustrate the perception of a place brand but also the customer behaviour and the connection between assessing the place brand values and decision to invest. The author uses place brand equity as means of connecting the

aforementioned elements, having as an ultimate goal to aid in the strategic decision of place brand management. By considering both the place brand values and the assets, the model includes place brand actuators in order to justify the actions of the investor.

The theoretical framework for place brands consists of two parts, the perceived place brand assets which show the expectations for functional and psychological benefits of a place (Jacobsen, 2009). The influence of these benefits on the decision of FDI allocation is covered in the second part of the framework where, considering the effect on the FDI allocation, the effectiveness of the actuators can be calculated (Jacobsen, 2009).

The place brand assets illustrate the investor's perception towards a place, and can be split into two major categories, tangible and intangible (Jacobsen, 2009). The first tangible place brand asset is composed by the perceived quality of the place brands and includes the history of a place (Skinner, 2006), the degree of safety (Anholt, 2005b) and the political climate (Pantzalis and Rodriguez, 1999). Secondly, the impressions which contain macro elements such as urban appearance (Anholt, 2005b), micro elements such as physical elements (Kavaratzis, 2007) and the geography of the place location (Kubacki and Skinner, 2006). Promotion is the last tangible brand asset and is composed according to Metaxas (2002) of slogans, campaigns and the appropriate application of cyberspace elements.

The intangible assets contain, to begin with the brand awareness, which generally represents the number of potential customers that are aware of the existence of the brand, the higher the number the more chances these customers will engage with the brand. Place brand awareness is represented, among others, by how familiar individuals are with the culture of a place (Johansson and Moinpour, 1977), the recognizability of its famous citizens (Kubacki and Skinner, 2006) or a place's entertainment industry (Kubacki and Skinner, 2006). *The brand heritage* expresses the brand's past values and traditions (Jacobsen, 2009) and, in a place branding perspective, can be represented by things such as branded exports (Dinnie, 2008) and its political and economic past (Kubacki and Skinner, 2006). The next considered intangible asset used in the model is brand personality. Jacobsen (2009) identifies the lack of consistency of what this attribute actually represents, one accepted interpretation being presented however by Aaker (1997) who described it as the group of characteristics applicable to humans and brands alike. In a place branding perspective, the personality would show the international status of the place (Anholt, 2005) and would contain excitement and respect towards the place and also the perception towards the community and its consideration towards the environment (Fombrun and van Riel, 1997). The intangible asset list is completed by the trustworthiness of a brand, as it consists of the incentive

factor for customer loyalty generation (Lassar et al., 1995). As Jacobsen (2009) points out himself, this factor has only been analysed in a place branding perspective in the research of Fombrun and van Riel (1997).

Given that there are no studies dedicated to the place brand assets and their influence on the IPE model, the assumptions presented by the various scholars above can support the idea that place brand assets are indeed important actuators of place brand equity (Jacobsen, 2009).

According to Jacobsen (2009), the place brand values for the IPE model assume that the main objective of place brands from the investor perspective is risk reduction and the simplification of processing information. Given that purchasing behaviour is generally both cognitive and affectively driven, the place brand values selected should address both of these criteria. However, the IPE model only takes into consideration the functional values as the main place brand equity actuators, aiming to minimize the risk felt by the investor while at the same time framing a trustworthy investment location (Jacobsen, 2009). The author further proceeds to classify the place brand values as follows: "Considering this classification, place brand values include inward-directed (intrinsic) as well as outward-directed (extrinsic) non-material (social) values" (Jacobsen, 2009, p.79).

Values that are included in the framework are, the prestige value, which is based on the fact that individual behaviour (i.e. selecting a branded location) is influenced by peer group behaviour (Hyman, 1942). Considering the above, companies often invest in particular locations (i.e. Silicon Valley) to associate themselves with a particular user group, reason for which extrinsic value is so relevant. Another extrinsic value included in the model is the distinction value, representing the need a customer has to differentiate from other peers. The distinction value illustrates how a brand satisfies the needs of uniqueness a customer might have (Jacobsen, 2009). The identity value is the final variable included in the IPE model, intrinsic by nature, describing the connection between the customer identity and the place identity (Jacobsen, 2009). As presented by Antonoff (1971), if a brand wants to provide identity value it needs to allow investors to identify with the place and the business environment.

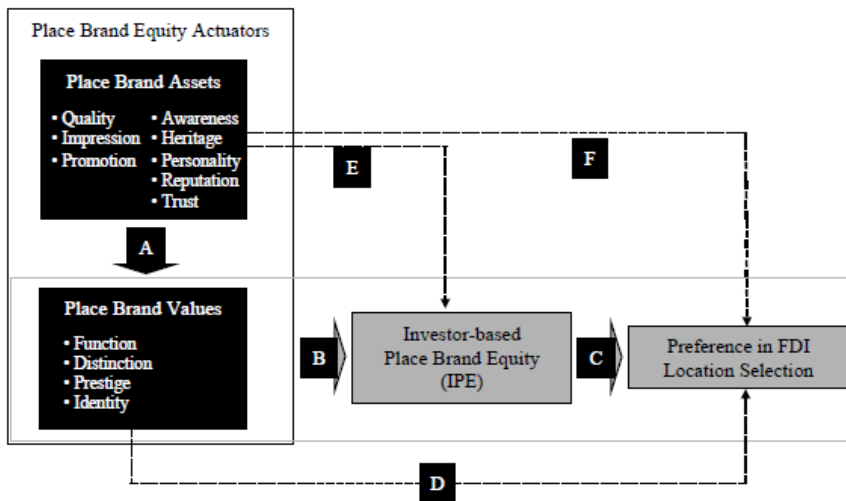


Figure 2 - "Investor-based place brand equity framework" - Jacobsen (2009, p. 80)

Observing the framework above (Figure 2), Jacobsen (2009) suggests empirical investigations between the following relations:

- (A) place brand assets and place brand values
- (B) place brand values and investor-based place brand equity
- (C) investor-based place brand equity and choice of FDI location selection
- (D) place brand values and choice of FDI location selection
- (E) place-brand assets and investor-based place brand equity
- (F) place-brand assets and choice of FDI location selection

Analysing these relations might result in identifying relevant preferences for FDI attraction through determining the appropriate investor-based place brand equities (Jacobsen 2009). The IPE model for accounting place brand equity fully theory-based, future research needing to be performed to further adjust the selected actuators.

Companies are recently increasing their focus towards the balance sheet value of brands, which is addressed as brand equity (Jørgensen, 2014). However, as James (2007) concludes, the brand value cannot be introduced in a balance sheet unless the sole purpose of acquiring a brand was the

financial aspect. In place branding literature the place attributes, and the resulting changes from branding initiatives are cramped together under the brand equity umbrella (Jørgensen, 2014).

Baker (2007) presents brand equity as the total gained loyalty, awareness and financial value of a brand in time. He also proceeds to acknowledge that performance measurement should consider the brand adoption by stakeholders, society pride levels, consistency of the brand, media attention and also stakeholder assessment on the attitudes towards the place; mentioning also the physical attributes of a place as tangible and people as intangible place attributes (brand elements) for measurement purposes. Other brand elements include events, heritage, spatial planning, institutions as well as graphics and symbols (Lucarelli, 2012). The impact of a brand on a place considers measurements based on the effects of branding initiatives, and can be labelled in three ways: identity and image, socio-political and economic impacts (Lucarelli, 2012).

Place marketing needs further research in the tracking systems in order to be able to identify the main brand value drivers, relevant for particular target groups and to be able draw the complexity of the place (Zenker & Martin, 2011).

The image of a place in a consumer point of view, is based on attributes, expected benefits, the symbolic interpretations of psychological characteristics that can be connected with that particular place, influencing the place positioning and the behaviour (Anholt, 2007). Individuals' perception of a place image is formed by two components: cognitive which reflects the knowledge of the place attributes, and affective which reflect the feelings toward a place (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). According to Gallarza et al, (2002) images become more important than reality so positioning a desired image of a place in the digital environment has the potential to greatly influence the perceived place image (Pike, 2012).

The influencing ability of a place image is a vital component of the marketing strategy, having the power to reach investors, new residents and visitors (Jørgensen, 2014). Given the aforementioned, it is not uncommon to attempt to correct a negative image. This can be done by either ignoring it, attempting to turn the negative factors into positive ones through rebranding and repositioning, or adding new positive characteristics and use marketing tools to accurately deliver the message (Jørgensen, 2014).

Braun (2008) sees city marketing as part of the urban governance as well as the political activities that contain a multitude of stakeholders with particular objectives but does not consider politicians as shareholders. Klausen (2013) acknowledges the fact that politicians are actually the most relevant

stakeholders since they represent the public sector for the citizens. Place brand literature has not accounted for the political stakeholder perspective (Jørgensen, 2014). Eisenchitz (2010) support the idea that place marketing should be considered as a political activity and Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) observe that the elaboration and promotion of place image is more part of place management and urban policy in the detriment of place marketing.

Braun (2011) is the first scholar that acknowledged that the implementation of city branding is rooted with urban governance as it is heavily influenced by political decisions that cannot be separated from politics themselves nor for the administrative system; thus, city branding is conclusively part of the political process. Thus, aligning the city branding goals together with the political goals and views could considerably aid branding practitioners as they will potentially be working together with the city and not as a third party (Braun, 2011).

From a public management perspective, Jørgensen (2014, p.151) observes that “ investments in a city brand process initiated by city councils, wholly or partly financed by the taxpayer, orchestrated and managed by or in close cooperation with city administration, and being dependent upon political support and engagement, have politicians as shareholders, and the return on investment should be accountable for and found in the city brand equity”.

Increased attention has been given to stakeholders and their importance, engagement, relations support and interests (Hanna and Rowley, 2011; Zenker and Beckman, 2013). Effective place brands are based on stakeholder involvement (Kavaratzis, 2012) and the importance of the residents' segment of stakeholders has been argued that it should be of utmost importance due to the fact that they are the ones living the impacts of place branding on a day-to-day basis (Braun et. al. 2013).

Residents are considered to be an essential part of the place brand due to their characteristics and behaviour. Their role as place ambassadors is also mentioned as well as their attributes as citizens and voters (Braun et. al. 2013). The emphasis here is desired to be on involving the citizens in the process of place branding (co-creation) (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000). Jørgensen (2014) underlines that there is a gap in understanding how residents create value in the branding process and how this contribution can be accounted for in the brand equity measurements.

Competition for capital between places is the sole existence of place marketing according to Niedomysl and Johansson (2012), which further proceed to explain that this interpretation does not account for measures taken to retain the capital that is already in place. Jørgensen (2014) points out that the aforementioned approach is lacking focus on the initiatives of changing a negative image of

a place, lacking comprehension of the political importance of intangible assets, as well as not acknowledging that when a multitude of city councils engage in marketing initiatives, most likely the first objective is to protect the capital already in place.

Upon performing a study case on the image change campaign of the city of Horsens, Jørgensen (2014) signals that there is a need for a more systematic approach to understanding the importance of the key success factors in city branding. The author proceeds to elaborate the City brand balance sheet (Figure 3)

Investments – Shareholder perspective	Return on investment – Shareholder and stakeholder perspective		
	First-order effects	Second-order effects – impacts	
Public money spent on brand project Private money spent on brand project Investments in architecture, service and facilities in relation to the project Necessary ex-ante surveys to clarify baseline position Costs for auditing including citizens surveys and so on during the project Mobilizing stakeholders and shareholders Internal and external information during the project	Estimate of readers, listeners and viewers Line counts in newspapers and magazines and so on Minutes and seconds on TV and in radio Number of visitors to Websites Size and quality of news stories	<i>Intangible assets within the city</i> Feeling of ownership, city pride. Storytelling among citizens Volunteers involved in the process Residential satisfaction Network building <i>Tangible assets within the city</i> Population increase Changes in income (tax, private company turnover and so on) New customers to private companies Changes in employment rate Ability to attract Masacens, private and public investment funds	<i>Intangible assets outside the city</i> Top-of-mind awareness and associations toward the city – The city image ‘Open window’ to new initiatives from the city Storytelling among citizens outside the city Top ranks in national or international ratings <i>Tangible assets outside the city</i> Development of branch companies from parent companies Sale of hotel rights Increase in employment will typically also affect neighbor cities

Figure 3 – The City Brand Balance Sheet - Jørgensen (2014, p. 150)

The model assumes that reason behind investing in a city brand process is to create, maintain, change or evolve the city brand. Investments (Investment – Shareholder perspective) for these purposes are usually made with a combination of taxpayer money and collaboration between public and private investors (Jørgensen, 2014). The underlying fact of a city brand balance sheet should contain data about the resources invested in the campaign throughout the timeline, including investments in infrastructure and specific related services; investors having to be comprehended as shareholders (Jørgensen, 2014). This part of the model is considered the domain of private and political stakeholders, whereas the upcoming two parts of the model, the first-order effects and the second-order effects (impact) will be of utmost relevance for both the stakeholders and the shareholders.

The costs for ex-ante surveys, information and communication, organizing stakeholders and shareholders, citizen evaluation surveys are considered common factors in the brand investment but not a part of the brand equity (Jørgensen, 2014).

The first-order effects section of the model covers the first results that can be observed from a branding initiative. Jørgensen (2014) provides some examples of such results like line counts from newspapers, minutes and seconds of radio and television exposure, homepage clicks and social media following; but he also emphasizes the fact that these are indeed just examples. The data provided by these variables is extremely relevant both for stakeholders and shareholders, but it should not be enough to ensure the success of the initiative (Jørgensen, 2014).

The second-order effects concern the impacts, as an outcome from city branding initiatives, which should be measured considering whether the assets are tangible or intangible of nature. Regardless of the measurement methodology used, the results will be difficult to convert into purely financial data, especially the intangible assets like attitude of the citizens. The impact and brand equity should be evaluated inside and also outside the city as the branding initiatives can include collaborations between places for mutual benefit (Jørgensen, 2014). The author proceeds to further underline the need for time series of data planned for in the starting stage of the project, the quality of the data also being an important factor when attempting to reach reliable results.

The city brand balance sheet is aimed at adding credibility and information to city brand managers in the attempt to achieve the desired causality between the initiative and its impact. Having previously emphasized the political implications of such marketing and branding activities, this framework could increase the visibility of the intangible assets which could have indeed very strong political influence (Jørgensen, 2014).

2.5.2: Within Traditional Marketing and Branding

2.5.2.1 Brand Equity

There are a large number of definitions throughout literature for Brand Equity (Swait et al., 1993; Keller, 1993; Lassar et al., 1995) but most likely still amongst the most referenced ones is provided by Aaker (1991) who stated that brand equity is nothing more than “the value consumers associate with a brand, as reflected in the dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand asset”.

The study of this element has grown more in relevancy as researchers discovered that a strong brand equity can positively influence customer buying behaviour (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995), increase return on stocks (Aaker and Jacobson, 1994) and can also provide advantages against competitors (Farquhar, 1989). Brand equity in contemporary times is the most prized attribute for many companies and is the principal marketing asset (Ambler and Riley, 2000; Kokkinaki and Ambler, 1999). Initially, brand equity was attempted to be measured using financial practices (Farquhar et al., 1991; Swait et al., 1993) and only in more recent times has it been associated within a more customer-based spectrum, including brand preference and purchase intent (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Van Osselaer and Alba, 2000).

Having stated the above, there are two main, separate angles taken by academics to study brand equity. The first one is from a *financial market* standpoint where the value of brand assets is assessed (Farquhar et al., 1991) and the second one is from a *customer-based* standpoint where evaluations and measurements revolve around the consumer response to the brand (Keller, 1993; Shocker et al., 1994).

When measuring brand equity, throughout the years several different dimensions have been considered, but even so, one commonality these measurement frameworks share is one or more dimensions of the Aaker (1991) model (Figure 4) (Keller 1993).

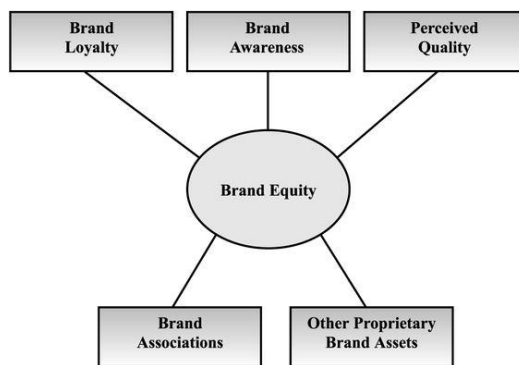


Figure 4 - Brand Equity Model - Aaker's (1991, p. 108)

The consumer-based brand equity is composed of four dimensions in the shape of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. (Chieng, Fayrene and Lee, 2011). Using

these dimensions Chieng, Fayrene and Lee, (2011) elaborated a conceptual framework (Figure 5) attempting to measure customer-based brand equity, basing the model on the fact that brand equity is more focused on consumer perception as opposed to objective indicators. (Lassar et al., 1995)

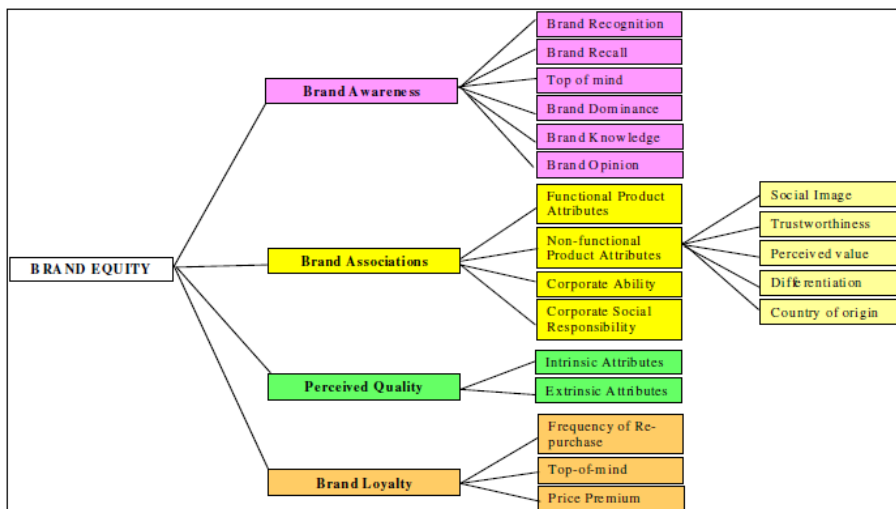


Figure 5 - A Framework for Measuring Customer-Based Brand Equity - Chieng, Fayrene and Lee, (2011, p.36)

Awareness (*brand*) is one of the most used determinants in models that attempt to measure brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1999), defined by (Keller, 2003, p.76) as “the customers’ ability to recall and recognize the brand as reflected by their ability to identify the brand under different conditions and to link the brand name, logo, symbol, and so forth to certain associations in memory”. Initially Aaker (1991) identifies ‘Brand Recognition’ and ‘Brand Recall’ adding further ‘Top-of-mind’, ‘Brand Dominance’, ‘Brand Knowledge’ and ‘Brand Opinion’. (Aaker, 1996)

Brand associations, as Kotler and Keller (2006) describe them are “all the brand-related thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs and attitudes”, basically anything connected in the mind of the consumer to the brand. (Chieng, Fayrene and Lee, 2011). These associations constitute the cornerstone of brand loyalty and buying behaviour. (Aaker, 1991, p.109)

The Perceived quality is also of focus in the model, its view as a separate dimension of brand equity and not a sub-class of the previously presented brand association has been acknowledged

throughout literature (Aaker, 1991; Feldwick, 1996; Keller, 1992). Perceived quality represents the customer's opinions about the product, different from the objective quality; the objective one represents as stated by Anselmsson et al. (2007) "the technical, measurable and verifiable nature of products and services ... that does not necessarily contribute to brand equity".

The final of the four core dimensions of the model is Brand loyalty – "the attachment that a customer has to a particular brand" (Aaker, 1991, p. 39). Brand loyalty takes into account several variables such as behavioural loyalty which is indicated by the amount of repurchases from a customer (Keller, 1998) and cognitive loyalty representing the very important aspect of how often a particular brand comes first in the mind of the potential buyer (Chieng, Fayrene and Lee, 2011).

2.5.2.2. Customer Equity

Marketing managers and executives are struggling to compare various marketing initiatives such as for example the return gained from an advertising campaign compared to a return from a website update; this is particularly difficult because obtaining profitability is not direct, surfacing from complex variables such as customer perceptions, attitudes and buying behaviour (Rust et al., 2011). Considering the marketing consequences on individual customer lifetime value (the total stream of cash flows of an existing customer - Villanueva, Julian, Hanssens and Dominique (2007)), one can measure and account for the marketing effects of an initiative (Rust et al. 2011). By not focusing on the impact of the total marketing expenditures and more on the impacts on individual customers, a company can bloom a customer-centred perspective towards brand management (Rust, Zeitaml and Lemon, 2004) and marketing strategy (Rust, Lemon and Narayadas, 2005)

Having stated the above, customer equity can be defined as the total customer lifetime values of all company's clients, both current and future, and thus increasing this variable should be a consequence of any marketing initiative (Rust et al., 2011). As stated by the same author, customer equity has been used more and more by companies for marketing accountability purposes all across the globe, acknowledging thus its importance.

There are four categories of models proposed by Rust et al. (2011) to assess customer equity, each of them optimal for a particular situation as presented in *(Figure 6)* Any business entity can follow the map and use the corresponding model.

The Direct Marketing/CRM (customer relationship management) models constitute a widely accepted approach to modelling customer equity where a company attempts to store in a database individual customer purchasing activity and associate it with marketing initiatives that have been performed for a target group (Rust and Verhoef, 2015; Venkatesan and Kumar, 2004). According to Rust et al. (2011) the benefit of using these models is that customer trends and behaviour are analysed directly, but the main downfalls they bring is the lack of consideration towards consumer choices for other brands and not accounting for the reason why the client chose to purchase the particular product.

Acquisition vs Retention Models are used where customer equity is considered as a result of customer acquisition and retention initiatives (Blattberg & Deighton, 1996) having also one key prerequisite the firm should already possess a customer behaviour and past customer- company touchpoints database (Thomas, 2001). There are similarities between these types of models and the CRM models' presented above regarding their advantages and disadvantages. One extra disadvantage the Acquisition vs Retention Models presents is that knowing optimal acquisition as opposed to retention costs will not provide accurate enough information to triangulate the consequences of a particular acquisition or retention initiative (Rust et al. 2011).

Customer Retention Based Models are used when companies consider customer lifetime value and customer equity as a result of analysing customer retention (Gupta et al. 2004). However, the assumption of this type of models is that once a customer interrupts their loyalty to the brand products, they do so for good, research by Rust, Zeitaml and Lemon (2004) heavily contradicting this fact. This failure to consider a pretty common behaviour of the customer to re-entering the purchasing loop is the exact downfall of these models and needs to be kept in mind when using Rust et al. (2011).

The Brand Switching Based Models focus on the brand-switching behaviour of customers (Rust, Zeitaml and Lemon, 2004). Companies use these models to attempt to evaluate and change these behavioural patterns in their favour but in order for this to happen they need to grasp the reasons behind this customer activity Rust et al. (2011). In order for this to be possible companies need to perform customer-level evaluations on what are the exact difference-making elements related to the product that ultimately convince the customer to purchase, analysis which requires survey data Rust, Zeitaml and Lemon, 2004).

Having presented this pallet of possibilities a company can use when adopting customer equity evaluation as an approach to marketing strategy and accountability, Rust et al. (2011) proceeds to draw a situational map illustrating which type of model can be used in which scenario (Figure 6)

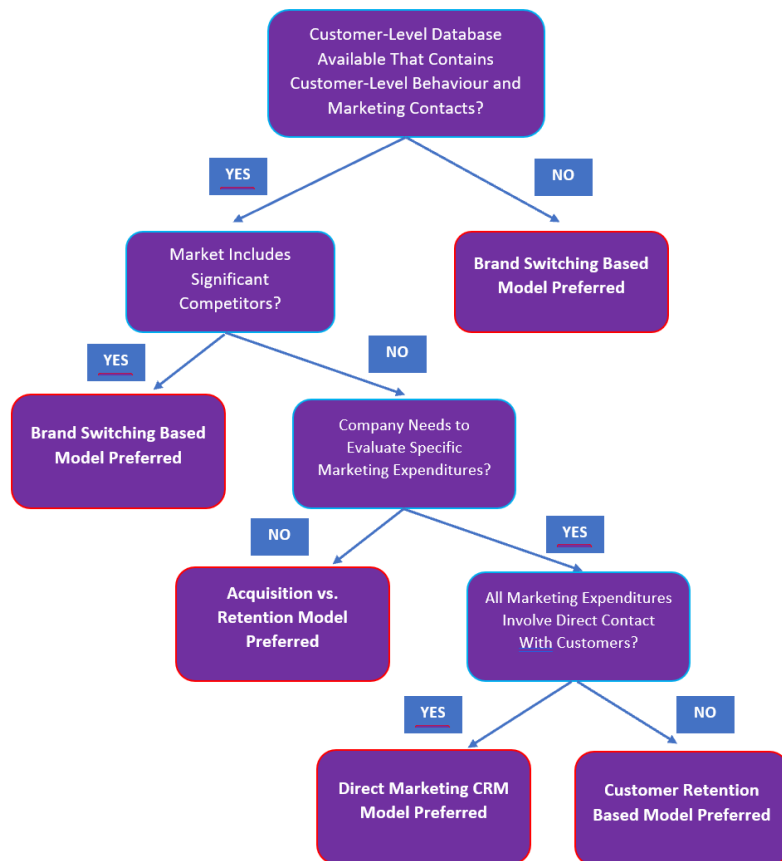


Figure 6 – When to choose each model – Rust et.al (2011, p. 6), Own creation

This map and its models could surface potential benefits in place marketing and branding as well, depending on the available resources of the entity performing the marketing initiative, considering that place marketing is supported by a shared customer-oriented ideology in providing a place product for the city's customers. (Braun, 2008)

2.5.2.3 Social Media

Social Media (SoMe) consists “the online tools that are based on social interactions and user-generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p.9) and can be differentiated from other web-based instruments through three characteristics: communication is done in real-time interactions are ‘many-to-many’ and the content is created by the user (Peters et al., 2013). Social media has proven to be one of the main tools for companies’ marketing initiatives due to its inherent ability to facilitate communication with entities of interest, promoting of products or services, retention of customers and market penetration (McCaughey et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2014).

Marketing managers acknowledged the need to quantify the contribution of SoMe initiatives in business, both for financial reason and also to exploit the relevant data these platforms can generate (Agostino, D. and Sidorova, Y. (2016). The data aspect enables the possibility to utilize this resource to support the purposes of marketing activities, amongst others, through informal learning (Raybourn, 2014), supporting calculated business development (El-Sayed and Westrup, 2011) and helping with assessing initiative performance (Senior, 2015).

Explorative studies have emerged on how to measure the contribution of social media, but they are mostly directed at specific variables and methods to download and analyse the data (Yan et al., 2014), setting for a volatile, inconsistent base of how and what should be measured. This fact surfaces the need for a universal performance measurement system (PMS) that can evaluate and utilize the already existing metrics, from financial and also non-financial spectrums, in an attempt to quantify the social media contributions (Agostino, D. and Sidorova, Y., 2016). A performance measurement system is a long-term oriented tool, elaborated to comprehend how activities are executed by individuals or companies (Chong, 2013). These systems having been adopted in all types of companies to oversee organization progress and aid the decision-making process, motivate employees and enable accurate external accountability (Meekings and Briault, 2013)

In an attempt to quantify SoMe activities’ contribution, Agostino, D. and Sidorova, Y. (2016) elaborated a PMS framework comprised of two main elements: metrics (quantifying indicators) and methods (approaches used to gather and analyse data that is later introduces in the PMS). The indicators used in this framework are varied and can encompass financial, network structure, interactions, content and even sentiment (feelings) indicators as can be seen in **Figure x.x**.

<i>Type of social media contribution</i>	<i>PMS metrics</i>	<i>Data collection</i>	<i>PMS methods</i> <i>Data analysis</i>
Financial	<i>Financial indicators</i> Social media ROI	Traditional approaches	
Network structure	<i>Network structure indicators</i> Multiplexity Density Centrality Closeness		<i>Statistical analysis</i> Network analysis
Interactions	<i>Interactions indicators</i> Awareness Engagement Word-of-mouth Virality		Statistical analysis
Social media conversation	<i>Content indicators</i> Relevance Uniqueness	<i>Ad hoc social media data download</i> Default	<i>Natural language processing</i> Semantic web
Users' opinion	<i>Sentiment indicators</i> Subjectivity Polarity Sentiment divergence metrics	Manual Automated	<i>Supervised classification</i> Semi-supervised classification Unsupervised classification

Figure 7 PMS Metrics and Methods - Agostino, D. and Sidorova, (2016 p.41).

The financial indicators when measuring SoMe performance tend to provide an inaccurate evaluation of the monetary contributions resulted from social media activities in terms of how profitable the investment in these efforts were (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016). A financial indicator mentioned in the framework is social media return on investment (ROI), observed also throughout literature (Fisher, 2009; Powell et al., 2011; Cumpston, 2014). This indicator represents a way companies agreed to measure their ability to efficiently use social media, but its measurement is still considered a challenge (Fisher, 2009; Romero, 2011). The social media ROI is not problematic to calculate for a particular SoMe campaign where the expenses and the benefits are clearly defined and can be calculated (Romero, 2011). This metric meets difficulties when having to measure key attributes of social media, such as community reactions and interactions with the company, not being able to present an accurate overall evaluation (Crumpton, 2014; Jobs and Gilfoil, 2014). For this reason, Agostino and Sidorova, (2016) introduced in their framework a considerable number of indicators that are not concerned with financial data.

The network structure indicators aid in the measurement of the network generated contribution by users of social media platforms. The indicators under this section start from the assumption that every network is composed of a set of nodes interconnected by ties (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016) and are composed by multiplexity, density, centrality and closeness (Ellison and Boyd, 2013; Kane et al., 2014). Analysing these indicators can help companies to identify influencers as nodes in the

network, that directly or indirectly influence other individuals on the platform (Li et al., 2014; Bernabe-Moreno et al., 2015).

The interaction indicators attempt to quantify the interactions within the network in order to account the activity of social media users; they include awareness, engagement, word-of-mouth and virality. Awareness measures the capability of a company to send the desired information to their users via SoMe (Agostino, 2013), while engagement measures the ability to actually stimulate communication and interaction with the users on the platform, quantifying the responses to the posts (Agostino, 2013; Bronson and Ratkai, 2013). Word-of-mouth represents the assessment of the ability possessed by users to communicate their point of view to other platform users, thus affecting the traction of the post (Bronson and Ratkai, 2013), whereas virality represents the ability of a social media post to propagate and spread with high intensity throughout the platform (Bronson and Ratkai, 2013). Measuring these indicators cannot be done without the collection of platform specific data like i.e. Facebook – Likes, Shares, or Youtube – Subscribers, Likes, Dislikes (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016).

The content indicators intend to evaluate social media conversations through accounting the topics of social media dialogues through identifying and evaluating categories to cluster images, themes, features, links and exchanges within conversations (Herring, 2010). Two major indicators were included in the framework: relevance, which measures the importance of a particular word and uniqueness, which measures the frequency of a word or sentence (Diakopoulos et al., 2010).

The sentiment indicators aim to quantify the user opinions (positive, neutral or negative) and their contribution to social media (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016). One proposed and accepted metric is the subjectivity – polarity ratio elaborated by Asur and Huberman (2010); subjectivity assess and calculates the ratio between positive and negative posts, tweets or content, whereas polarity proceeds to generalize the overall sentiment of a social media entry. Sentiment divergent metrics have been proposed as a solution to find sentiment revealers in free text by elaborating ways to account for the rating and review of entries in social media (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016).

Having previously presented the metrics part of the framework, the PMS system methods will follow as the next logical step, presenting the possible approaches to interpret the social media data, further separated by data collection and data analysis (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016).

Data collection refers to the possibilities to download social media data, having identified in literature three main methods how this can be done. Default data collection consists of simply

accessing information that is offered for free by the SoMe platform (i.e. Facebook Insights, Twitter analytics) (Ngai et al., 2015). Manual data collection refers to the collection of unstructured texts and other data such as likes, dislikes, shares, subscribers etc. from the social media provider and implies a time-consuming effort that is optimal for SoMe pages or channels where the number of users is low (Furraguia et al., 2012). Lastly, data collection can be automated, using programs that have been designed to retrieve web page content through algorithms (Pinkerton, 1994), adjusted throughout time to fit the needs of contemporary big data. (Agostino, D. and Sidorova, Y. 2016)

Data analysis addresses the possibility to use the previously collected data and transpose it into usable data that can be computed through the social media indicators (Agostino, D. and Sidorova, Y. 2016). Methods that can be used for this purpose identified by (Dzvpatsva et al., 2014) are correlation, regression or cluster analysis and network theory to unravel influencing bodies on the platforms and interconnection strength (Li et al., 2014). Another commonly used method is novel data analysis, which refers to extensions of the data mining methods mentioned previously to consider both content but also sentiment indicators (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016).

The model elaborated by Agostino and Sidorova (2016) addresses practitioners that are either not using SoMe at the full capacity or are facing issues in quantifying the financial and relational gains as well as contribution that can surface when considering conversation and user opinions.

The social media relevance in place marketing and branding cannot be ignored in these technology-based times, municipalities having to use these tools in order to further gain insight and manage their market competitiveness (Solis, 2011). These platforms even being considered by some a main component of the overall world-wide web's recent shape (O'Connor, Wang and Li, 2011). The municipal offices in general use simplistic or anecdotal measures of SoMe effectiveness (Cleave et al., 2017) and for this reason the model presented by Agostino and Sidorova (2016) could at the very least provide the responsible bodies with new ideas and perspectives on how to make more use of social media in their daily place marketing activities.

2.5.3: Within Companies

When considering performance measurements within a company, indicators such as revenue, return on investment or net profits are the first being considered (AICPA, 2001). However, some

researchers argue that in recent times relying only on these traditional approaches to performance measurement is heavily obsolete when attempting to elaborate an effective performance measurement system (PMS). (Ittner and Larcker, 2001; Hoque and James, 2000)

Studies have shown that using financial measures has critical limitations due to their inherent focus on past data (Kaplan and Norton, 2001). A more efficient performance measurement system should be connected to the organizational objectives and vision of the institution as well as to consider basic characteristics of a company such as dimensions or nature (Ittner and Larcker 2001; Chenhall, 2003).

A framework was developed by Lynch and Cross (1991) called the Performance Pyramid in an attempt to surpass the aforementioned shortcomings. The same authors signalled the misalignment between performance management on operational and managerial levels failing to fully support the corporate strategy. Even though this model has been widely used in companies due to its dual lens approach towards hierarchical and business process views (Neely, Bourne and Kennerley, 2000), it lacks the ability to triangulate specific measures and further keep up with the ongoing development of the company. (Striteska and Spickova, 2012)

One decade later Neely, Adams and Crowe (2001) developed a framework called the Performance Prism. This approach is composed of five interconnected elements namely: stakeholder satisfaction, strategies, capabilities, processes and stakeholder contribution. Overcoming a major setback of the previous model through acknowledging and including new stakeholders such as employees, suppliers and intermediaries in the equation and recognizing their contribution to performance and performance measurement in general (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016). Even though it can be considered a step in the right direction this approach also has its drawback due to its lacking performance measurement implementation and unconvincing linkage between outcomes and drivers (Striteska and Spickova, 2012).

The most recognizable and widely used framework, the Balanced Scorecard, was elaborated by Kaplan and Norton (1992) and used on a large scale in worldwide companies until the early 2000s (Downing, 2001). The Balanced Scorecard has certain limitations as well, one of the major ones is that it covers only four perspectives (financial, customer, internal business processes and learning and growth), enough for a company in the 1990 when globalisation was not so pronounced and the business environment was not so competitive (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016). Nowadays new, complex challenges need to be tackled and that is why other perspectives need to be accounted for such as for example sustainability (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016). The

balanced scorecard is criticised as being incomplete due to not considering factors such as employee contribution, community or suppliers when defining the operating environment and also not considering the importance of the stakeholders' contribution in its performance measures (Atkinson, Waterhouse and Wells, 1997).

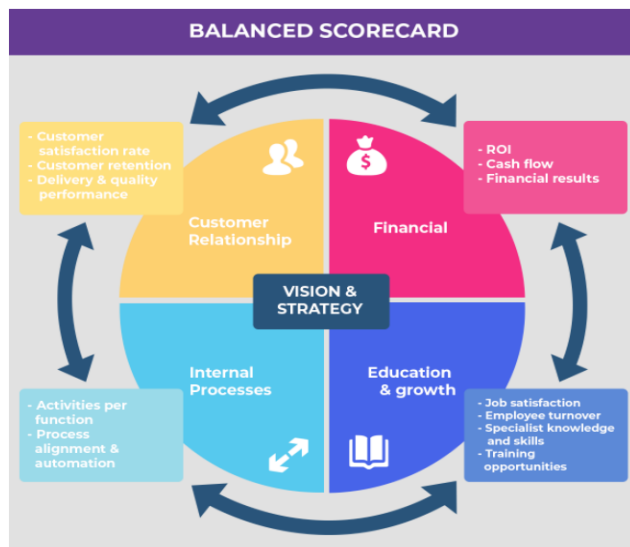


Figure 8 - *The Balanced Scorecard* – Professional Academy - Marketing Theories: Balanced Scorecard (accessible at: <https://www.professionalacademy.com/blogs-and-advice/marketing-theories--balanced-scorecard>)

All the frameworks presented above share the fact that they include analysis of financial variables (lagging indicators) and non-financial variables (leading indicators) that connect the performance measurements of an organisation to its vision and strategy (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus ,2016) and can be used in certain situations. However, none of them address the immense importance of stakeholders or the proper consideration of risk factors (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016).

A sustainable performance measurement system is oriented for the long run, taking into account all the factors that are needed to ensure this lengthy approach while continually striving for the fulfilment of the company's strategic goals. (Epstein, 2008).

In order to develop such a sustainable, modern performance measurement framework and potentially attempt to assess its implication in the place marketing field, stakeholders' impact and satisfaction need to be measured and included as their importance is hard to contest (Waddock and Bodwell, 2007; Laszlo, 2003; Epstein and Wisner, 2006).

Another key element in attempting to ensure a sustainable performance measurement system is the inclusion of risk management within the framework, something that companies often choose to look over or analyse anecdotally (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016; Likierman, 2005). A large number of researchers have proved through their work that the relationship between risk and performance is of utmost significance and it is vital to be considered when conceiving a sustainable performance measurement system (Miller and Bromiley, 1990; Walters and Olson, 2002).

Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus (2016) elaborated a model called the Performance-Risk Linkage Model (PRLM) (*Figure 9*), based on the balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992) and its four perspectives mentioned above. The PRLM model attempts to include the two major gaps of the BSC and the previous models by adding relevant stakeholders and the afferent risk factors of achieving KPIs (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016). To tackle the first gap, a stakeholder identification process should be performed as well as associating them with the corresponding internal business processes (IBP), ensuring in this way that the company does not take into account only the customer's perspective (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016).

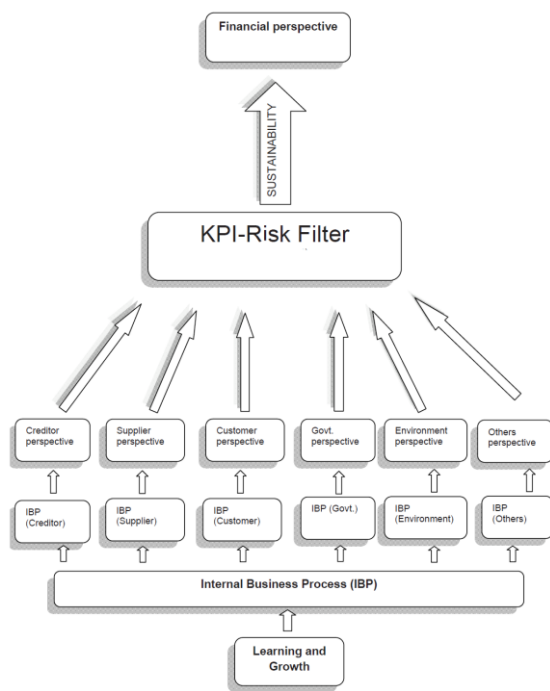


Figure 9 - Performance-Risk Linkage Model - Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus (2016, p. 206)

The second gap concerning the risk management would be filled through installing a KPI-Risk Filter (Figure 10) within the framework (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016). Upon identifying the relevant stakeholders, the company needs to map the according internal business processes (IBP) to match each stakeholders' set KPIs, the rationale employed by the authors is that if all these KPIs are met then this will automatically transition in the company reaching its financial and non-financial objectives sustainably.

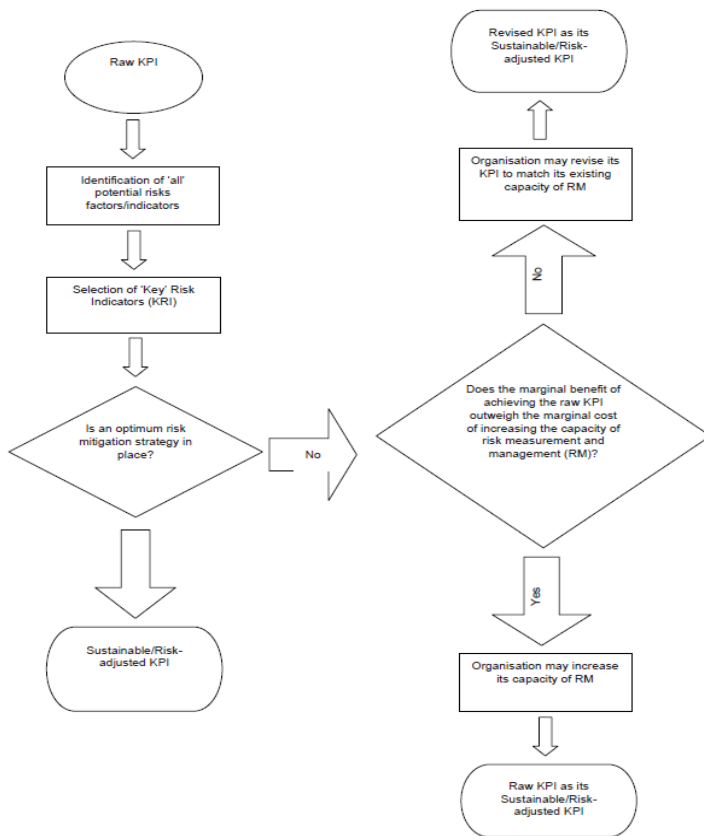


Figure 10 – Process Flowchart KPI Risk Filter - Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus (2016, p. 207)

The reason behind introducing the KPI-risk filter in the framework is because indeed the BSC delivers similar results when the customer specific KPIs are achieved, meeting the set goals of the company. However, the studies performed by Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus (2016) show that this is indeed not sustainable and only a short-term solution, thus making the introduction of the risk filter desired. Two types or of KPIs are considered in the filter, first one being called `raw` which refer to those KPIs elaborated by the afferent performance measurement (PM) body within the company and assigned to the relevant stakeholders (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016). The raw KPIs would then be assessed by the afferent risk measurement body (RM) in an attempt to identify key risk indicators (KRI). Once the RM body decides on an accurate risk mitigation strategy, if one is

necessary, then the raw KPIs can be labelled as sustainable/risk adjusted KPIs (the second type considered in the risk filter) given that the risk they present has already been accounted for (Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016).

As the authors themselves acknowledge, the PRLM model might not be fit for every situation and is lacking large scale use, however indeed incorporating the relevant stakeholders, identifying and tackling risk could ensure a sustainable performance measurement system. This approach could prove beneficial in place marketing and branding also, as the cooperation with stakeholders has been presented as being paramount in literature (Anholt, 2008; Buss, 2013; Rauhut and Kompaniets, 2018). Furthermore, when evaluating brand equity, amongst other things, risk factors have to be estimated as well (Zenker and Martin, 2011), inviting thus possible solutions for this conundrum.

2.5.4 Within Public Administration

Two impactful papers are still cited to this day by scholars when assessing the importance of research on performance measurement and management Gao (2015). Blodgett and Newfarmer (1996) concluded that performance measurement is one of the most debated subjects in government development, and Behn (1995) underlined the importance of this subject by considering it one of the biggest questions in public administration.

In recent times, the desire for government improvement with performance measurement as a main focal point continues to be of high interest, a trend of slowly shifting from measurement to management (performance) emerging (Gao 2015). This is reflected in researchers' interest for the implementation of performance-oriented management reforms within governments (Bouckaert and Halligan, 2008). All of these reforms, however, revolve around the performance indicators of quantitative nature for government work such as targets or rankings (Hood, 2007).

Specialized literature has addressed the progress of the performance assessing strategies and difficulties connected with the reforms (Brundey et al., 1999; Holzer and Yang, 2014; Holzer et al. 2009). However, the work of Holzer and Yang (2004) is of particular relevance due to a study performed on the improvement of performance measurement and improvement reforms in the United States. The study confirms the desirability of performance improvements due to the potential of providing long term solutions. Furthermore, the authors establish through the analysis

of citizen participation in the process of performance measurement itself that citizens involvement is in fact a conceptually valid tool that should be used with frequency (citizen-driven government performance measurement) (Holzer and Yang, 2004). This conclusion reinforced by a more recent research by Holzer et al. (2009) on the trends in the advancement on public service quality, that found a clear pattern in citizen-focus.

Gao (2015) analysed and deduced that recent studies on public performance measurement systems have shown which of the public organizational performance efforts are working, concluding the fact that indeed research is still focused on evaluating the role of measurement, both using subjective and objective measurements as well as noticing a transition from performance measurement to performance management.

Objective measurements encompass measures that supply data in supporting judgements and decisions that are independent from the particular characteristics of individual perceivers usually focusing on analysing models, tools, goals, or assessment indicators (Schachten, 2010). A number of three conclusions regarding these measurements have been drawn by Gao (2015), first being contextual specificness, indicators needing to be carefully selected and adjusted for the particular context of usage. The variety of policy areas makes it difficult to set a predefined set of measures that will deliver optimal results in every scenario.

The second conclusion drawn by Gao (2015) concerns the direct connection between properties of the performance targets (goals) and organizational performance improvements, Jung and Lee (2013) also supporting this conclusion, identifying that the vagueness of set goals has a definite negative correlation with the performance of a public organization. Another supporting argument was found when Jung (2011) concluded that a large number of set goals for public organization will also diminish the overall level of performance. The final conclusion concerns identifying the proper evaluation tool for these measurements Gao (2015). The balanced scorecard (BSC) has been predominantly used in the various areas of public sector organizations such as healthcare (Radnor and Lovell, 2003), education (Chan, 2007) and government (Askim, 2004) due to its ability to select a multitude of performance measures that combine financial and non-financial measures (Herath et al., 2010). However, the shortcomings of the BSC have been discussed in the previous sections of this paper.

The subjective measurements evaluate the perception and attitudes citizens have in regard to the public service delivery, usually taking the shape of various types of surveys (Brown and Coulter, 1983). These measurements face two issues, as identified by Gao (2015), first one is whether they

can accurately evaluate the change in public performance and if the conclusions are in alignment with the objective measurements; second one being how can surveys be designed in order to better evaluate the subjective perceptions of citizens.

The relevancy of surveys in providing usable data about government performance has been acknowledged by Van Ryzing et al. (2008) through a study performed, in which they mentioned that as long as the surveyed citizens are inquired about things that are clearly visible and regularly experienced, the accuracy of their assessment is in high. Regarding the design of the aforementioned surveys, Van De Walle and Van Ryzin (2011) underline the fact that questionnaires, samples, patterns, and contexts need to be extremely similar across surveys in order for the satisfaction scores to be valid.

The shift from performance measurement to performance management is desired because no matter how efficient the performance measurement methods are, they will never have a direct contribution to the progress and performance of management (Gao, 2015), as in essence they continue concern past activities. The same author identifies that “there is a clear shift in the discussion focus from performance measurement to its broader political and administrative context and to alternative or supplementary approaches, or, in short to things that can be generally categorized as performance management” (Gao, 2015 p.89). The factors mentioned above have an extremely vast range and include examples such as culture, learning ability, employee empowerment and training, reward and disciplinary internal flows, planning, leadership and more.

Organizational learning for example has proven to be a potent approach to increase performance, as instead of utilizing measurement only to identify wrongs (*control-oriented performance accountability*) and attribute blame to the responsible bodies, an institution can learn from performance evaluation (Greiling and Halachmi, 2013). However, other researchers even if not negating the benefit of the learning aspect, suggest that the learning and measurement should supplement each other (Lewis and Triantafillou 2012; Newcomer et al., 2013).

Literature also suggest employee empowerment as a successful tool for the shift to performance management, indicating that decentralizing the decision-making process is in fact critical to long-term performance improvement through increasing innovation, work satisfaction, commitment and involvement levels (Fernandez and Moldogaziev, 2011; Davies et al., 2006; Guthrie, 2001).

Gao (2015) also identifies that demanding more information on performance evolution, increases the actual use of the data in decision making, thus providing a solid base for activities that follow the

measurement process. However, Ammonds and Rivenbark (2008) signalled that governments are often not responsive enough to utilize this data while its potential utility is still maximized immediately after it is gathered.

2.6 Research Purpose

Place marketing and branding are in a phase of evolution. Their importance is acknowledged by more and more practitioners in the domain and this is reflected in the upward trend of usage as well as in the desire to integrate these tools in the overall strategies of place development (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2009).

The vast majority of grey areas revolve around the efficient use of resources allocated to these activities, and thus research needs to be directed on attempting to add extra clarity in the direction of developing a universally accepted success measurement framework which is lacking.

This explorative research has as a main goal to address the question: *“How is success measured in place marketing and branding?”*. Through the literature review, a theoretical approach is adopted in an attempt to comprehend how place marketing and branding academia understands success measurement and to get a general view on how the progress of scholars towards elaborating the previously mentioned universal measurement framework. Part of the performed interview on experts in the domain (practitioners) is aimed directly at the main question, thus attempting a practical point of view on how success measurement activities are performed within the industry on a day-to-day basis.

Given the overall complexity of place marketing and branding activities (Zenker and Martin, 2011), challenges are expected to surface and need to be addressed accordingly. For this reason, a research sub- purpose is to identify: *“What are challenges for measuring success in place marketing and branding?”*. Having a dual-lens approach from theoretical and practical views, the research will strive to find similarities and differences in the perceived challenges related to the topic, but also attempt to identify the major obstacles (critical pain points) that hinder progress.

Furthermore, traditional product marketing and branding is considered a much more consolidated science than that of places, primarily due to the longer activity time, extended research, and global

acknowledgement of importance. Regardless, clear similarities can be drawn between the two. The places themselves are considered products, and the entities of interest (companies or individuals) are the potential customers. Depending on the objectives, peer places with similar target groups are considered the competitors while the marketplace can be represented on a local, national or international level.

These acknowledged similarities have prompted researchers to attempt to adapt various approaches from traditional marketing to place marketing, at least as a basis for stimulating future research and keep the interest in the evolution of place marketing and branding.

Acknowledging the fact that similarities do exist between place marketing and branding and other types of marketing, but also attempting to observe how other entities such as businesses and public administration measure, or approach the measurement of success for their own activities, has prompted this explorative research to address as the second research sub-focus: *“What success measurement concepts (or part of concepts) from other areas could potentially be adapted to place marketing and branding?”*.

Answering the main addressed question, together with analysing the two sub-research focuses, should provide a clear understanding on success measurement within place marketing and branding.

3. Empirical Study – Expert Interviews

3.1. Methodology

There are a number of data collection methods that can be used in qualitative research such as observations, textual or visual assessment and interviews. The aforementioned category can, in essence be of three types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Gill et al., 2008). For the purpose of this paper, expert interviews of structured nature have been used as the data collection procedure, characterized by directly addressing predetermined questions to a sample of respondents with minimum or no variation in the formulation (Gill et al., 2008). The expert attribute of this interview refers to the selected sample of interviewees, all experts with the domain of place marketing and branding.

Content analysis literature dates back more than half a century ago when Holsti (1969) described it as being a technique for making educated deductions by objectively identifying characteristics of messages. Inferences have a very stand-out role in this context due to the fact that moving from a text to a meaningful content has to be done using analytical constructs or rules of inference (Whyte and Marsh 2006). More recently, Stemler (2000, p. 5) presented this research method as “a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based of explicit rules of coding”. In essence, content analysis is a malleable research method, with a variety of positive uses, applicable to a multitude of information analysis cases, either individually or in combination with other methods (Whyte and Marsh, 2006).

Researchers tend to opt for content analysis due to a multitude of reasons such as result pattern mapping, understanding the purpose of the answers, signalling propaganda conflicts and biases, observing communication variations in particular contexts or inspecting the flow of information within the responses (Luo, 2019). This method can be applied in qualitative research framework using a variety of techniques for analysis in order to unveil findings (Whyte and Marsh, 2006).

The data that is gathered prior to performing this analysis needs to attain to several criterions of validity, first one being that it should of course present functional evidence that can be used as raw material for the researcher to enable answering the various research questions. The importance of validity has been pointed out in the works of Krippendorff (2004, p. 44) where the author stated that “because the raison d’etre of content analysis is the absence of direct observational evidence, validation may be difficult or infeasible, if not impossible, in practice.”

In conformity with the above-mentioned validity expectations, the data was gathered prior to the research and the validity concerns have been minimized by default due to the sample of selected interviewees. A total number of twenty-two individuals from all over the world have been inquired about the subject, all of them having the status of experts in the field of place marketing and branding and are active participants in The Place Brand Observer (TPBO) community. The Place Brand Observer is an online platform launched in 2014 that supports access to research insights and expert knowledge, with the help of its collaborators and contributors managing to become the top research library and collector of place branding articles and data, frequently using expert interviews within the community to reflect on industry trends, new findings and opportunities. Further validity evaluation has been performed within the content analysis process and certain biases or out-of-scope information has been pointed out and not weighed in the overall outcome.

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The first step that needs to be considered when attempting to perform qualitative content analysis is the elaboration of research questions; meaning open questions that have the role of steering the research in the wanted direction. The answered content itself provides the information for the researcher to examine in order to elaborate patterns and postulations, but at any time new patterns that can provide different insights might surface that can justifiably shift the interests and research questions into new directions (Whyte and Marsh, 2006).

Following the first step, a sample text is chosen, which for qualitative content analysis the researcher needs to be constantly attentive to a variety of meanings that can be interpreted upon close evaluation, since the objective is not necessarily to generalize the results but more to be able to transfer them to different context or settings. Consequently, it is beyond the scope of sampling that all analysed elements have an equal probability of inclusion in the sample (Whyte and Marsh, 2006). Coding follows the two previous steps, which in this context refers to an operationalisation of the initial shapeless concepts, which means allocating them in categories that enable the evaluation of ability to answer the raised research questions. Mandatory to point out, these questions are meant to guide the beginning of the data analysis process; but this is an inductive process, shaping a generalized conclusion from specific answers (Krippendorff, 2004; Whyte and Marsh, 2006). The end goal of quality content analysis is to depict an image of a phenomenon in a particular context and not necessarily to present a rigid reality (Whyte and Marsh, 2006).

The use of computer software to aid in the analysis of data (even qualitative) has made work easier for researchers since the 1950s (Sebok and Zeps, 1958). The reason for this is that it minimizes and automizes tedious work such as word counting, indexing clustering and relationship building around data Krippendorff (2004).

Due to technological advancements, it has become a common practice to use computer software as tool to facilitate qualitative or quantitative content analysis. The reasons for this are that it makes the entire process much more visual through the software interface, simplifies the manipulation and maintaining of data while at the same time enabling replication. Minimizing human error and allowing the exporting of data and statistics in various formats while also being more time efficient.

The software that will be used in order to efficiently analyse the data is NVivo: a qualitative data analysis program designed to organize, evaluate and provide insights from qualitative data (NVivo, About Us)

Due to the vast, complex and somewhat scattered collected answers from our panel of experts, a separate tool has been used in order to simplify the visualisation of the data through creation of a

'Weighed Mind Map', a cluster relationship illustration that uses the single numerical metric that can be drawn from the performed research: number of references. This metric will aid in observing how many of the interview respondents agree on certain aspects as well as showing areas that are predominated by uncertainty.

3.2 Clustering

In order to be able to accurately draw conclusions from the received information, it was mandatory to implement a mode of data standardization in the analysis. Clustering, as a concept, fulfils forming a whole from pieces, by pooling data together that is connected or has similar meaning, while at the same time eliminating other data where the connection seems anecdotal or without meaning Krippendorff (2004). This methodology is preferred for content analysis in detriment of others due to it being based on, as Krippendorff (2004, p. 206) states "intuitively meaningful similarities among units of analysis, and its resulting hierarchies resemble the conceptualization of text on various levels of abstraction."

A bottom up clustering approach (Reference) was used for the data analysis meaning that interviewee data with the same underlying message or content have been attributed to the same cluster, where it will be subjected to further analysis and conclusion drawing.

3.3 Results

3.2.1 Sub Question 1.1 – How do you define 'Success' in Place Marketing and Branding?

The question was answered by a total of twenty-two experts, some presenting more than one usable definition (explanation) of what success in place marketing and branding is and some with no academically viable response that could be included in the analysis. A total of twenty-nine explanations of what success is were presented and analysed in the research for this sub-question. As can be noticed in *Figure 11, Q.1* the number of viable responses has been presented and colour coded within the Weighted Mind Map as the number connected to the assigned question or

clustered category, meant to serve as a potency reinforcement considering how many experts agreed on the same idea.

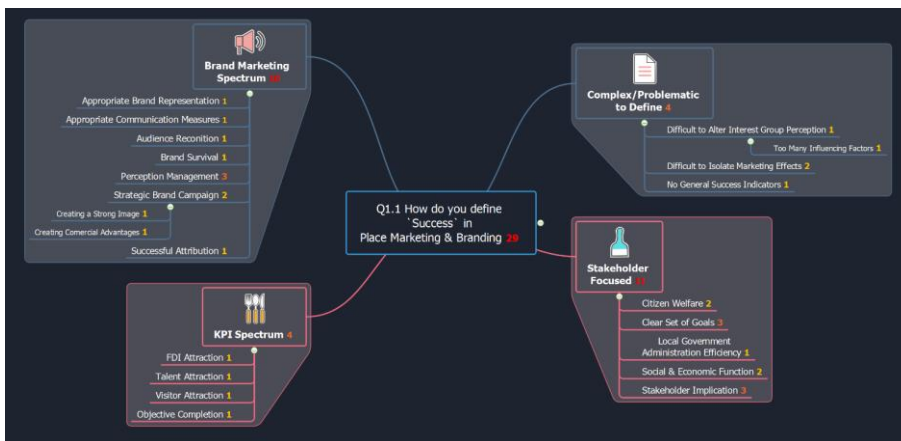


Figure 11 - Q1.1. Weighted Mind Map (own development)

The response clustering process for this sub-question has resulted in four major categories, most of which contain secondary or even tertiary sub-categories that are meant to give the research an overview on different levels, when attempting to perform a discussion in the later stages of the paper. The Brand Marketing Spectrum was one of the four clusters identified, pooling a large number of responses, and cementing it as one of the two major focus categories when defining success. Brand Marketing, in general, consists of promoting products or services strategically in order to emphasize the overall brand, connecting it to the values and identity of a product (place in the case at hand) and communicating this appropriately to its target audience.

The Appropriate Brand Representation presents success as being heavily focused on the actual and potential strengths of a city, incorporating these in the brand while at the same time representing the city/place to its core and not just the positive surface, including all groups of inhabitants (Expert 5, Q 1.1). This is a rather idealistic approach that requires constant self-reflection on the marketed place and that might also require having a society of groups that tolerate, accept, and enjoy equal opportunities within the community. In the majority of situations however, this is highly unlikely, and its application might be limited to just a few developed cities that can show and sustain this societal balance.

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What could be considered a pre-requisite to the above-mentioned perception of what is success was clustered as *Appropriate Communication Measures*, where one opinion was that success revolves around communication measures such as awareness, understanding and perceptions about a place and the associations in the eyes of the target audience (Expert 9, Q 1.1). Being aware of these factors should be essential to individuals working within the place marketing domain as such information could prove key when building a brand marketing campaign. This could in turn lead to the next defined success interpretation within the cluster: *Audience Recognition*. This variable is aimed at measuring the level of awareness the place has on the market and its relevance should not be neglected as no matter how good the place product is, no recognition will most likely lead to no possibility to attract interest in the offering. *Brand Survival* was also presented as a minimalistic definition for success, being argued as being a foundational task of place branding since if indeed the brand does not survive by logical assumption it cannot achieve any of its objectives (Expert 10, Q 1.1).

Perception Management has been the most agreed on from the various interpretations within the Brand Marketing Spectrum cluster. Experts seemingly concur to the importance of this factor, whether when trying to shift perception in a certain direction as a main goal (Expert 20, Q 1.1), evaluating perceptions following a communication or marketing initiative (Expert 18, Q 1.1) or simply being aware of their existence and using them as a tool for shaping future effort.

Creating a *Strategic Brand Campaign* has also been addressed by more than one expert as being an incremental success factor, arguing that if a campaign indeed fulfils creating competitive advantages, attract international interest (by creating a strong and positive image) and also appeal to foreign investors, then the marketing effort can be considered indeed triumphant (Expert 3, Expert 21; Q 1.1).

Successful attribution refers to the correlation between the name of the place and certain words, feelings or values, being acknowledged by one expert as being of utmost relevancy. However, successful attribution could be considered truly successful if the attribution part is indeed positive. If the place/city is stigmatized by certain tragic or negative events, it will of course be considered negative, and a successful attribution of such elements might not be the ideal starting scenario for a place marketer (Expert 13, Q 1.1).

Some experts also expressed their difficulty in defining success in place marketing and branding and have stated this directly in their replies. These were included in the second cluster: *Complex, Problematic to Define*. It should be noted that several more have also pointed out that they are

indeed sceptical to defining this success due to its complexity but have still proceeded to provide a factual interpretation. One respondent expressed that “there is no such thing as general success indicators in place marketing and branding” (Expert 1, Q 1.1). Among the reasons provided were the difficulty to positively alter the perception of such a large number of interest groups and the difficulties connected to the isolation of marketing effects when attempting to triangulate which part of the marketing effort were in fact the ones that had the most impact. Both reasons have been presented repeatedly in the literature. (TPBO 2016 ; Holden, 2005),

The third category, *KPI Spectrum*, contains the definitions that revolve around more analytical elements and that have been clustered accordingly. Some key performance indicators such as total foreign direct investment, talent attraction, objective completion and visitor counts have been included. While the importance of having positive KPIs is high and this could in some cases prove the initiative was success, researchers like Zenker and Martins (2011) argue that the above mentioned KPI’s will not enable the triangulation of particular marketing effects that have indeed led to these positive numbers.

The most addressed success definitions cluster is the *Stakeholder Spectrum*, where half of the total replies have referenced and acknowledged the stakeholders’ relevance when defining success. The importance of this element has been also signalled throughout the literature (Atkinson, Waterhouse and Wells, 1997; Epstein and Wisner, 2006; Neely, Adams and Crowe, 2001) who identified this as one of the most important issues the reasonable bodies should be aware of, fact with which the experts seem to agree.

Citizen Welfare and creating a better place in general would serve as living proof of the place offering which as Expert 21, (Q 1.1) suggests, should be combined with enabling strong identification between the inhabitants and the place. The *Stakeholder Implication* reinforces the prior idea due to the involvement of satisfied citizens that could lead to them becoming brand ambassadors, directly or indirectly (Expert 1, Q 1.1), and even pooling towards a satisfied collective (civic society). This could further prove to become an endless spring of views and voices (Expert 12, Q 1.1) that can help influence further marketing decisions.

When referring to stakeholders, one must also consider the institutions behind the decision-making process for place marketing and branding activities. Several experts’ definitions were addressed to this category of stakeholders and can be allocated into several sub-clusters. First one acknowledges the importance of having *Clear Goals and Aims*, both as a stand-alone characteristic of success (Expert 21, Q 1.1; Expert 7, Q 1.1) as well as a pre-requisite to success measurement (Expert 3, Q

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1.1). Second sub-cluster, *Local Government Administration Efficiency* is also acknowledged and understandably so, often it is the leading body in the place marketing decision making process and its efficiency or inefficiency could translate into the overall success of the initiative. Finally, the *Social, Economic Functioning* sub-cluster was established, which could have been considered also an umbrella for some of the previous expert definitions. The importance of this conjunction of two types of functions has been presented by Ashworth and Voogd (1990, p. 41), who argued that place marketing should aim to “maximize the social and economic functioning of the area concerned, in accordance with whatever wider goals have been established”, underlined also by Expert 21, (Q 1.1). This can be considered one of the most challenging objectives to achieve within place marketing due to its sheer complexity and having to be accomplished while also focusing at the same time on other short-term objectives, afferent to a place marketing campaign.

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3.2.2 Sub Question 1.2 – How can we measure success in Place Marketing and Branding?

The second part of the first question has been answered by all of the experts, some of which also had multiple replies that were clustered accordingly. A total number of thirty-six answers were formulated and split into eight clusters. A discrepancy can be observed between the number of replies when defining success (26) compared to the number of replies considering success measurement (36). This could mean that experts have their own preferred ways of measuring success and, given the large number of interpretations of what success actually is, having even more ideas on how to measure it seems only natural.

The first cluster that will be focused is *Before/After Evaluation* which contains sub-clusters with all the replies that directly or indirectly implied ex ante/ex post analysis on a certain variable related to place marketing and branding. Starting the analysis of according sub-clusters, *Brand Equity Monitoring* is a complex metric used to track relative brand preference considering all rational as well as emotional perceptions of the offered products or services, having as a main goal to provide in time, strategic value to the decision makers.

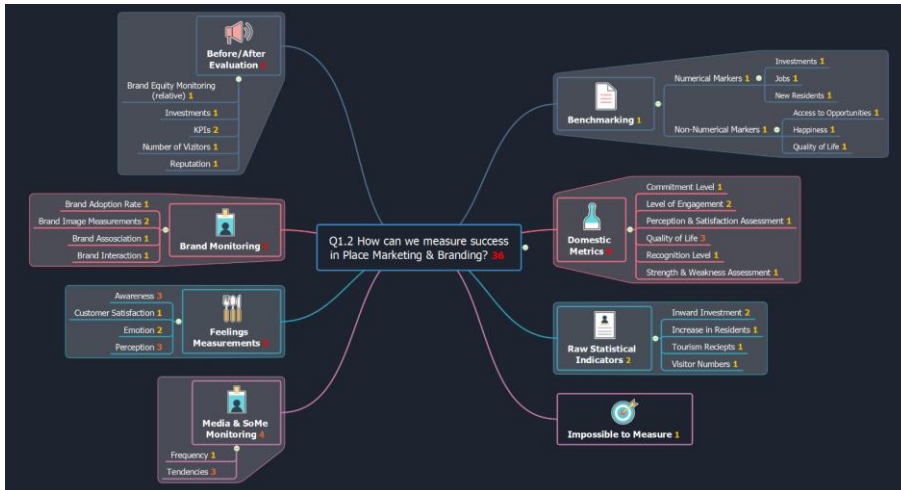


Figure 11 - Q1.2. Weighted Mind Map (own development)

Frequently, the place would select a competitive set of peer cities and compare the results that should present some measurable differences in attribute scores and identify strong and weak points within the brand strategy (Expert 6, Q 1.2). However, establishing a brand equity monitor to benchmark would only prove successful if other peer cities employ the same strategy. The before and after measurement of Investments and Number of Visitors are the next two sub-clusters, both of them implying quantitative approach to evaluating the amount of foreign investment and visitors before and after an afferent branding or marketing effort, resulting in positive or negative numbers, as underlined by Expert 14 (Q 1.2).

The next sub-cluster under before/after evaluation is Key Performance Indicators. KPIs that are clearly defined and measured, such as for example investment inquiries and their conversion rate (Expert 19, Q 1.2), or any other relevant inputs, outputs and outcomes, could lead to measurements that aid in determining if the marketing initiative was successful or not (Expert 7, Q 1.2). The issue that arises when attempting to perform such a KPI analysis is in fact actually determining these highly relevant, clear and measurable KPIs that can be used (Kotler et al., 1993; Metaxas, 2010; Zenker and Martin, 2011). The last suggested sub-cluster is *Reputation Change*. In some situations, due to environmental challenges, a reputation adjustment is needed. This would require before and

after market research combined with statistics on change, both on commercial and cultural levels (Expert 3, Q 1.2).

The general issues of before–after evaluation is that the focus in the majority of cases is more on how to achieve the objectives on a theoretical level, neglecting thus proper resource allocation on the practical attempt to achieve them. This means that often the outcome of such comparison leads to promising ideas on what good and bad practices would be, but not on actually enabling the researcher to understand why (Kompaniets and Rauhut, 2016).

Benchmarking is the next defined major cluster for performance measurement and, as previously stated, would be a suitable option for measurement. Peer competitors however need to use similar benchmarking methods and numbers, and as Expert 3 (Q 1.2) acknowledged: “numbers are not the only measures ... some are much harder to quantify i.e. happiness, quality of life and access to opportunities”.

This leads the research to the next major cluster of answers, the *Domestic Metrics*, aimed at pooling together suggest success measurements that are more in the social sphere of variables and that directly involve the entities that are located within the geographical boundaries of the place.

The first two sub-clusters Commitment Level and Level of Engagement both measure social variables regarding the citizens of the place. The commitment level is important to evaluate when dealing with smaller societies that could be aware of issues that need to be changed for the good of their community and might be willing to influence the trajectory of their place (Expert, Q 1.2). The level of engagement can be measured for the various local stakeholders, observing how many people were actually involved in the marketing effort, both directly and indirectly (Expert 8, Q 1.2). Having these aforementioned two variables positive, can be considered a strong asset to any place marketing initiative, however reaching a high level of commitment and engagement for large communities could prove to challenging.

The third sub-cluster Perception and Satisfaction complements the previous two sub-clusters as being a possible prerequisite measurement for commitment and engagement. Surveying residents on their personal perception and satisfaction towards the marketing and branding efforts could give the responsible bodies valuable information on whether or not these expectations match what is trying to be achieved by the efforts themselves (Expert 15, Q 1.2). Positive perception and satisfaction measurements could prompt follow-up strategies that could focus on trying to integrate more commitment and engagement from the population for further efforts. The same principle can

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be applied to the fourth sub-cluster Strength & Weakness Assessment where one expert argued for honest-dialogue based assessment of local strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of the people that experience the place product on a daily basis. Benefits can surface after this assessment such as from finding out new issues that the locals or local institutions are facing as well as showing initiative to improve certain aspects of the place (Expert 15, Q 1.2).

The most agreed upon sub-cluster from the domestic metrics is in fact Quality of Life measurement. Even though this is usually strongly linked to economic improvement (Expert 15, Q 1.2), citizen well-being is acknowledged as being of much more importance than any visitor interest coefficient (Expert 4, Q 1.2).

To complete the set of responses associated to this cluster, assessing *Recognition Levels* following a marketing initiative could prove useful when measuring the success (Expert 15, Q 1.2). The higher the recognition levels, the more aware inhabitants should be of the positive initiatives of place marketing.

Brand Monitoring is the next major cluster identified under this sub-question and *brand image measurements* is the first sub-cluster. Expert 21 (Q 1.2) argues that next to the more common awareness and SoMe measurements, practitioners should start routinizing focusing on other variables such as customer satisfactions, engagement and identification as brand image measurement indicators. The second sub-cluster identified suggests monitoring the *brand adoption rate* and whether or not it has been accepted by stakeholders, decision makers, local NGOs and also inhabitants alike (Expert 10, Q 1.2). The level of *association* (sub-cluster) should also be tracked; analysing the chatter regarding the marketed place on various channels, following a branding campaign, could also prove to be a valuable way of generating information that can be measured (Expert 7, Q 1.2)

The next identified cluster on success measurement contains replies that focus on the measurement of statistical indicators. The part economic nature of success measurement cannot be ignored as it gives the place marketing practitioners a good idea on the progress of the effort through objectively assessed statistical indicators. These variables include amongst others: inward investment, tourism receipts, visitor numbers or increase in residents (Expert 10, Expert 16, Q 1.2)

Feelings measurement is the next elaborated cluster summing up the measurement replies that consider more subjective variables into the measurement equation. *Awareness* (sub-cluster) is amongst the most mentioned ones as high top-of-mind awareness levels for example can act as a

connector between the target customer and the place offering. Hosting international events or creating a positive story around the brand can act as awareness level stimulants as well (Expert 12, Expert 19, Q 1.2). The second sub-cluster relates to *emotion* evaluation on how the brand influences this variable in the minds of the target audience. The difficulty lies in the fact that there is no proven index to measure emotional interest, especially since its highly dependent on the particular goals and objectives of the place brand strategy (Expert 19, Q 1.2). *Perception* (sub-cluster) is the second variable in the feelings measurement spectrum. Often times branding attempts to shift perceptions are being performed due to some places having an inherent stigmatized outside perception. Its measurement, even though costly, can be done through qualitative perception research (Expert 20, Q 1.2). Positive changes in perception can lead to an increase in the willingness to explore the product offerings of a place (Expert 19, Q 1.2). The final sub-cluster is *customer satisfaction*, which is also a measurement of feelings (Expert 21, Q 1.2). This customer evaluation should be performed once the marketing initiative is over as valuable information can be gathered that can be considered a base for future initiatives.

The next cluster addresses *media and social media* as a measurement tool for success. The data collection possibilities SoMe platforms offer (default, manual and automated) can prove to be a relevant source of information (Agostino and Sidorova, 2016) that can be used also by place marketing practitioners. The experts address two elements that can be evaluated through media and SoMe monitoring: *frequency* and *tendencies* (sub-clusters). Frequency accounts for how often the place is mentioned on the platforms, observing also pre-set keywords associated in the same sentence (Expert 13, Q 1.2). Measuring fluctuations in this variable bring value as well since certain tendencies can be mapped and acted upon accordingly in short time (Expert 14, Expert 6 Q 1.2).

The last cluster contains the reply of one expert directly acknowledging that at this time it is *impossible to measure* the outcome of place marketing initiatives in a meaningful way (Expert 7, Q 1.2).

The difficulty of measuring the impacts (as a prerequisite for success) of place marketing initiatives is presented throughout literature as being challenging (Eshuis et al., 2013; Kotler et al., 1993, 1999; Metaxas, 2010; Rianisto, 2003). However, at least in theory there seem to be ideas and directions, suggested by domain experts in which research can be directed. The most challenging aspect seems to be evaluating what goes on the minds and hearts of the target audience (Klijn et al., 2012) as that particular type of information can make a large difference in the success of a place marketing or branding initiative.

3.2.3 Sub Question 2.1 – Where do you see challenges in Place Marketing and Branding?

Similar to the first question, question number two (*Where do you see challenges of success measurement in place marketing and branding and how to overcome these challenges?*) has also been split into two sub-questions, first one totalling twenty-eight usable answers, which can be noticed in the mind map *Figure 12 Q2.1* for illustrative purposes. A total number of ten major clusters have been identified, each with their own sub-clusters to further the depth of the argument into specifics.

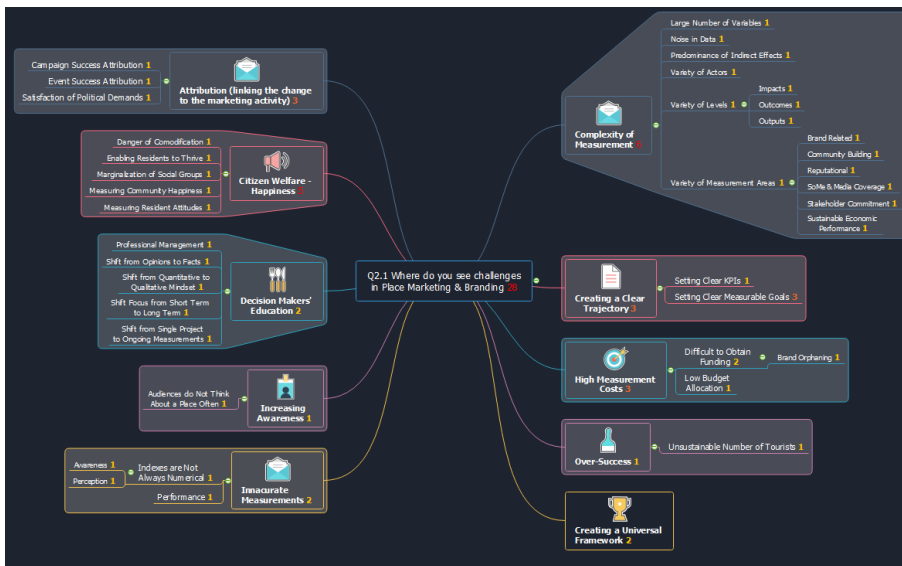


Figure 12 - Q2.1. Weighted Mind Map (own development)

The first cluster *Attribution* refers to the difficulty of linking the desired change to a particular place marketing initiative. There are three activities that lead to the same issues faced by the experts, first of them concerning the use of “off-the-shelf” measurement techniques for the impact of events (*Event Success Attribution sub-cluster*). The lack of attribution is felt when place marketers perform for example a social media initiative and afterwards attempt to account if the result was due to the

Some effort or other factors. Unfortunately, off-the-shelf measuring products fail to provide enough information to enable answering similar inquiries (Expert 22, Q 2.1). The second activity where lack of attribution is similar to the first and it concerns marketing campaigns (Campaign Success Attribution sub-cluster) facing the exact same issues (Expert 6, Q 2.1). Finally, the political demands have been presented as an issue previously and are indeed considered a solid challenge by the experts due to the impossibility of measuring their impact and attribution especially on usual short timelines (Expert 15, Q 2.1) potentially creating friction between political and marketing bodies (Satisfaction of Political Demands sub-cluster).

Following, the second major cluster is Citizen Welfare-Happiness where the experts emphasized how important and how difficult it is to maintain the high level of this variable. One challenge is identified as aligning on the meaningful attributes that shape resident aspirations (Expert 5, Q 2.1) in order to be able attempt to positively influence their welfare (enabling residents to thrive). The next sub-cluster marginalisation of social groups is something to be avoided as it can become an issue due to ignoring input from certain social groups. This can result in inequalities (Expert 10, Q 2.1) and social instability within the community, negatively influencing the welfare and happiness.

Other issues, according to the experts, is constituted by the next two sub-clusters measuring Community Happiness and Resident Attitudes. The lack of more qualitative oriented methods of evaluation is presented as a challenge (Expert 3, Q 2.1), while at the same time signalling that qualitative and quantitative mentalities should still work together in order to evaluate the general citizen sentiment towards a place (Expert 14, Q 2.1). On the opposite spectrum, having a place with a large, positive cultural heritage makes the place marketing and branding activities much easier in theory which in some cases resulting in the commodification of stakeholders, leading in turn to disinterest in investing time and resources in success measurement (Expert 10, Q 2.1).

Complexity of Measurement is one of the most difficult challenges in success measurement (Metaxas, 2010; Ward, 2004) agreed on by some of the experts, thus a separate cluster was created to analyse the reasons behind this fact. To start with, the general Large Number of Variables (sub-cluster) is an issue, place marketing and branding being composed of a very high number of such variables, making it increasingly difficult to measure and keep track of (Expert 12, Q 2.1). The previously mentioned fact raises further issues around the Noise in Data (sub-cluster), meaning that certain information might be misleading. For example, marketed cities are part of a country, the country part of a region and so on. While the brand for the city might seem to be positive, the bigger picture could prove to be quite the opposite (Expert 9, Q 2.1) and might require careful strategy

adjustments. Furthermore, place marketing and branding as an activity is Predominated by the Indirect Effects (sub-cluster) of interventions, meaning that the majority of instances practices only attempt to increase the impact of some events or campaigns, instead of directly affecting the brand (Expert 21, Q 2.1).

The large number of actors (Variety of Actors sub-cluster) involved when attempting a marketing or branding initiative makes the measurement of single effects nearly impossible (Expert 21, Q 2.1). The Variety of Levels (sub-cluster) due to the dynamism of places and other factors such as the geographical size of a place raises further roadblocks as different dimensions need to be considered (Expert 13, Q 2.1). The last sub-cluster addresses the *Variety of Measurement Areas* that place marketers are facing. In order to measure the success of a place marketing or branding initiative, the responsible bodies need to tap into various areas of measurements such as sustainable economic performance, community building, stakeholder commitment, social media chatter, news coverage (both national and international) or brand communication (Expert 20, Q 2.1). It is difficult to argue with the variety that place marketing specialists are facing when attempting to measure success, this being one of the main reasons invoked in literature for the predominant difficulties of success evaluation.

The fourth cluster for this question is consisted of the challenge to Create a Clear Trajectory (sub-cluster). According to the experts this is difficult to achieve due to two major things; First is *The Absence of Clear KPIs* (sub-cluster) for accountability purposes as described also by TPBO (2015) which can have as a consequence a general lack of initiative from the involved entities, being aware that there is no clear way for them to be held accountable (Expert 9, Q 2.1) . The Absence of Clear and Measurable Goals (sub-cluster) is the second roadblock to achieving a clear trajectory, being pointed out that not having a clear criteria or clarity around goals and targets often leads to the failure of marketing initiatives (Expert 2, Q 2.1)

One of the main reasons for this research as a whole is the Absence of a Universal Framework (sub-cluster) that can be applied successfully to any of the cities or regions that perform place branding activities (Rianisto, 2003). This has been acknowledged as probably the apex of challenges and, even though most of the experts did not mention this fact, such a framework would fix the majority of the other challenges on a macro level. Creating a multidimensional measurement that can assess the results of marketing activities in real time and check beyond economic results (Expert 16, Q 2.1) would be heavily embraced by practitioners in the domain.

The place marketing and branding activities' execution is usually decided upon by a variety of entities depending on the case. As in any situation regardless of the industry, the decision makers should be educated (Decision Makers Education cluster) on the topic to the best of their ability before taking actions, in order to make sure that the right decision has been made. Experts point this out as a challenge as officials are used to having success presented in quantitative metrics (Shift from Quantitative to Qualitative sub-cluster) as for instance overnights-stays, but especially for place marketing activities, measuring certain variables requires trust and knowledge in qualitative measurement methodologies (Expert 19, Q 2.1). Funding is also an issue (Place Brand Observer, 2016) especially for measurement as the majority of the decision makers in the public sector consider this an unnecessary and irrelevant spending due to the lack of education on the subject (Expert 19, Q 2.1). Stakeholders should be aware that success measurement, especially in brand tracking, is an ongoing process and most times just performing it as a one-off project is insufficient (Shift from Single Project to Ongoing sub-cluster) to fully grasp the trajectory of progress (Expert 19, Q 2.1). Lastly, general professional management (sub-cluster) of the marketing initiative is a must, even though some places have been resilient in hiring top marketing professionals due to cost saving. This basic concept can make a difference in proper success measurement and even more, the survival of the project itself (Expert 9, Q 2.1).

Another cluster containing success and measurement challenges is represented by high measurement costs associated with place marketing initiatives (Zenker and Martin, 2011). The high price associated with such activities and the general lack of awareness when it comes to the importance of performing success measurements on a constant basis can lead to difficulties in finding influential sponsor. Projects risk becoming stillborn or even orphaned due to this lack of funding (Expert 9, Q 2.1).

Another challenge faced by the experts is to *increase awareness* (sub-cluster) amongst the target audience for the place brand product, element. Successful brands should have high awareness from citizens and investors in order to create confidence (Meffert, 2000). The reality presented by Expert 9 (Q 2.1) is in fact that "audiences don't think about places with frequency, including their hometowns". Some measures should be taken to assess and address potential opportunities to increase the frequency with which people think about places as this is directly correlated to confidence building, minimizing uncertainty and purchasing risk (Balderjahn, 2004). High awareness and a positive reputation increase confidence which in turn acts as a key factor in positively influencing foreign investors to invest in a certain place (Meffert and Ebert, 2003)

When considering relevant place marketing variables such as awareness, perception or performance, individuals working in the domain need to be aware of the fact that such indexes are not necessarily measured by numbers (Expert 11, Q 2.1). Omitting this fact can lead to what has been clustered next as inaccurate measurements (sub-cluster) and unravels the challenge of creating more qualitative oriented measurement criteria Expert 11 (Q 2.1).

The last cluster for this sub-question is Over-Success as a challenge, and while indeed this lies a bit in the opposite spectrum of what has been presented before, in some situations success passes the borders of sustainability and can become a real issue like (Expert 11, Q 2.1). This can be avoided with careful planning and execution while being aware of the sustainable limits for the particular place.

There are numerous challenges when it comes to place marketing and branding, either in the form of macro-level challenges such as trade globalisation or the increase of investment mobility (Jacobsen, 2009), or challenges on a more micro-level such as for example the difficulty to measure the impacts of place marketing and branding activities (Kotler et al., 1993, 1999; Metaxas, 2010). By analysing the experts' replies it can be observed that the answers vary on a vast array of levels and areas with different underlying issues. The first step in surpassing these challenges is identifying them and, judging by the complexity and the variation of the responses, the experts have a realistic, objective sight of their existence.

3.2.4 Sub-Question 2.2 – How to overcome these challenges?

The second part of Question 2 concerns how the experts could overcome the challenges mentioned above. Right from the get-go it can be noticed that the total number of analysable answers for the challenges mentioned are almost reduced to half, totalling a mere fifteen solution ideas. This furthers the idea that there are not that many clear solutions for the issues presented, not even

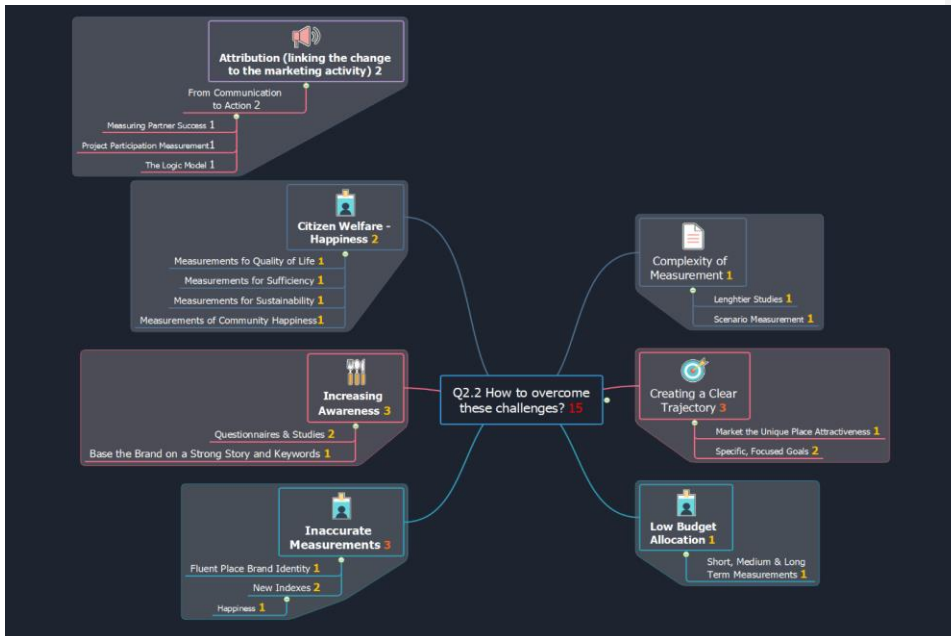


Figure 12, Q2.2 – Own Development

from a theoretical standpoint. The cluster naming for overcoming the challenges (sub-question 2.2) will mimic the clustering of the previously addressed challenge clusters (sub-question 2.1) in order to attempt to enable a ‘challenge-solution’ association.

The first cluster contains solutions to the attribution challenges presented previously. One potential solution is “moving from communication to action” (Expert 22, Q 2.2), measuring project participation and assessing the brand component of the partners’ success when considering labour, student or investment attraction. The second solution invokes the Logic Model – a tool presented by McCawley (2001, p. 1) as “describing logical linkages among program resources, activities, outputs, audiences, and short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes related to a specific problem or situation”. Even with this model, the complexity of the place brands would make still make measurements very difficult (Expert 6, Q 2.1).

The second cluster of potential solutions citizen welfare – happiness was also addressed in the replies. Success measurements should be based more on quality of life, sustainability and sufficiency indicators instead of only focusing on the economic aspect (Expert 10, Q 2.2). Also, a shift in approaches from quantitative to qualitative with more focus on the subjective aspects of the

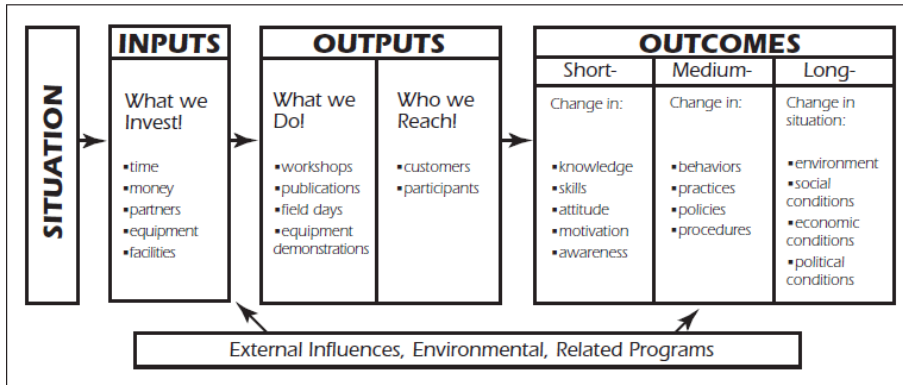


Figure 13 – Elements of the Logic Model - McCawley – (2001, p. 1)

community variables could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the community itself, potentially increasing the overall level of welfare-happiness.

The next cluster addresses solutions on how to attenuate parts of the complexity of measurement conundrum. First one attempts to tackle the delayed effect of marketing initiatives through extended time-series and longitudinal studies (Expert 21, Q 2.2). The second issue addresses the complexity of calculating single effects of marketing activities, which has a proposed solution founded on chaos theory logic, rethinking of the situation from a scenario approach. This chaos theory methodology was introduced to untangle complex optimization challenges with a very large number of variables, basically tailored for when dealing with heavily uncertain situations (Campi et al., 2009). Using this approach would translate into calculating forecasts without including any of the marketing initiative estimates and then benchmarking those variables with the ones that actually result from when the marketing initiative has been consumed (Expert 21, Q 2.2).

The following clustered collection of solutions address the challenge of creating a clear trajectory. Two solutions have been presented, the first one revolving around marketing of the unique place attractiveness, which should in turn lead to focused marketing and branding objectives resulting more direct, simple measurement efforts (Expert 13, Q 2.2). The second solution combines the opinions of two experts, which agree on the fact that the goals and the target audience of the marketing and branding initiatives should be as specific as possible and the activities themselves should be elaborated clearly and with a direct focus. A clear purpose and a specific set of measurable success metrics can enable the elaboration of a plan to increase growth and development, which should be a underlying objective on any branding or marketing initiative. (Expert 13, Q 2.2; Expert 2, Q 2.2).

The following cluster contains several solutions for the challenge of increasing awareness, having as focus points questionnaires, keywords, surveys and social data. Questionnaires should be sent to visitors and residents alike before and after the marketing initiative has been conducted in order to compare changes in their awareness and recognition levels (Expert 13, Q 2.2). Also, a combination of surveys and social data with constant monitoring studies could help understand how to further improve these key variables that could indeed increase awareness (Expert 13, Q 2.2). Lastly, Expert 12 (Q 2.2) suggests basing the brand on a strong story and keywords in order to be able to measure the growth of these elements and their correlation to the growth of place awareness.

Inaccurate measurements is the next cluster of solutions addressing the issue with the same name. Several suggestions have been presented but with a certain lack for specifics and depth, more as general ideas and directions. One solution could be represented by attempting to identify factors that are not yet considered as indexes but which could lead to new measurement criteria that would be able to quantify success in place marketing (Expert 13, Q 2.2); one example being the construct of happiness, variable already being used by the government in Bhutan (Expert 16, Q 2.2). A second solution could be ensuring the prerequisites for place marketing and branding success measurements are met. having the right people for the job, specialized in place brand identity as well as proper time and budget allocation (Expert 18, Q 2.2).

The last cluster addresses the issue of low budget allocation for place marketing initiatives, having as a proposed solution the performing of short-, medium- and long-term success measurements. This should account for the progress and momentum of the marketing initiative in the early stages, and last show whether or not a marketing effort is impactful or not so that adjustments could be made (Expert 16, Q 2.2). The downfall for this solution might actually be the same issue it is addressing. It has been discussed in research that success measurement is a costly activity (Rianisto, 2003; Zenker and Martin, 2011) and if the budget is a problem, measuring success on short-, medium- and long-term does not seem feasible anymore.

3.2.5 Question 3 – What are good examples of success measurement in place marketing and branding?

The final question addressed to the experts is a direct inquiry asking for concrete examples of places that have successfully managed to perform success measurement initiatives for place marketing and branding. This aims at aiding further focus into the success formulas of some places. Also, to get a

general idea of the sheer existence of such cases and what level of success do the experts accept in order to consider a place marketing campaign 'successful'.

Unfortunately, there are just fifteen experts out of the total of twenty-three, who answered the last question. This shows either there was a general lack of interest in exemplifying a known success scenario, or that the experts in the domain are simply not confident with the existence of any good examples regarding this topic. Some of them actually stated that they are not aware of any such case (Expert 13, Q3; Expert 14, Q3). The majority of the replies are generic, just exemplifying a successful case in their personal opinion without providing any kind of detail on why they consider it a success. None of the expert shared a common example.

The first presented success case is Berlin, Germany due to its set of very clear goals and trajectory, positioning and promoting the city as a paradise for start-ups and focusing on a very specific international target audience (Expert 1, Q3). Having narrowed down the scope of the place marketing and branding activities to just promote Berlin for start-ups led to clearer objectives. As Zenker and Martin (2011) point out one of the main challenges place marketing practitioners are

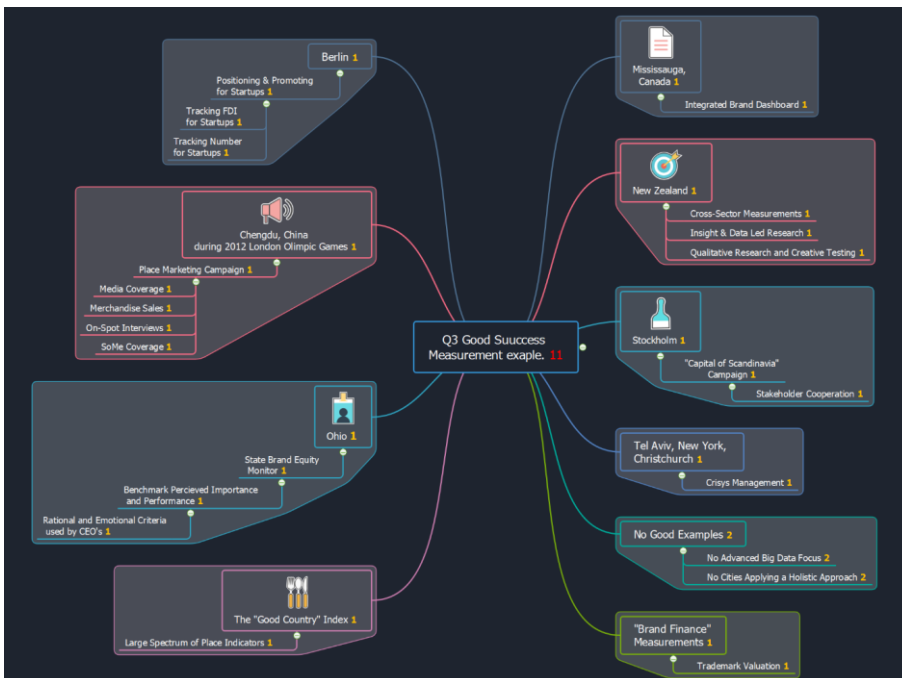


Figure 14, Q3 – Own development

facing is the complexity of their set goals. Having simplified the goals consequently simplifies the measurement of the campaign success due to the focus on accounting for the number of new start-ups and amount of foreign investment (Expert 1, Q 3). Indeed, one could consider this a success case but parts of the success are due to narrowing down on the vast capabilities of place branding and marketing. Berlin has been acknowledged as a good example also in the works of Jacobsen (2009) and Zenker and Martin (2011).

Another case mentioned is the city of Chengdu, China and their marketing events during the 2012 London Olympic Games aimed at promoting the city in highly focusing on one of its key attractions: Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Using on-spot interviews with the spectators as well as in-depth analysis of the media and SoMe coverage and spreading merchandise promoting the association of the city name with pandas have made this event, according to Expert 7 (Q 3), a positive story of success measurement. Using social media as a tool for analysis of awareness (Agostino, 2013) and engagement (Bronson and Rakai, 2013) yielded immediate results due to its inherent automated aspect from the algorithms used. The fact that it was such a short campaign with short-term clear goals as well as having selected some appropriate measurement tools befitting for this situation most likely is the reason why this was considered indeed a successful case. The simplification of the goals, similar to that of the Berlin case, had a contribution in simplifying the overall difficulty for practitioners (Zenker and Martin 2011)

Next, Mississauga, Canada and its creation of a 'brand dashboard' was mentioned by Expert 8 (Q 3). The brand story of this city revolves around focusing on social, cultural, and economic life and combining them together in providing a very desirable package for its target audience. The city proudly presents their branding process that includes brand audit, municipal best practices (benchmarking with 16 peer cities), stakeholder interviews, resident and small business surveys and brand workshops. The importance of the stakeholder and the large contributions that they can bring if taken into account has been thoroughly analysed in the works of Jørgensen, (2014), thus, including this aspect into a brand dashboard could prove to be the key for the successful outcome of Mississauga. Mississauga.

New Zealand is the next example presented as a measurement success case due to its focus on qualitative research, creative testing and constant stakeholder collaboration. All of the work in the area of place marketing and branding is data lead, enabling thus a long-term approach as well as gaining and maintaining trust and confidence of the stakeholder (public and private) in order to benefit from their support (Expert 12, Q 3). Furthermore, the same expert transmits that countries

that managed to collect all measures across sectors into one dashboard are in fact much more likely to be a successful case since they can use the attention of all stakeholders and make sure everyone is on the same page for the efficiency of the marketing or branding initiative. Similar to the previous case, the stakeholder acknowledgement (Jørgensen, 2014) seems to be also the difference maker in the success of New Zealand.

The state of Ohio is considered as another success example, due to its apparent ability to have created a state brand equity monitor in order to improve the brand and image of the place (Expert Nr.3, Q 3). Through qualitative research Ohio constantly benchmarks itself with peer states considering rational and emotional variables used by CEO's when making large financial decisions. The resulting information surfaced state level choices of capital investment, potential infrastructure changes and public policy decisions. This strategy led to Ohio being on top of the nation's ranking in new capital investments (Expert 3, Q 3).

Stockholm's Capital of Scandinavia campaign was considered a success due to how much attention it has raised, both good from the international stage and bad from the fellow Nordic countries. Heavy marketing from the city as the 'capital' of the Nordic countries was intended to raise awareness in the minds of the target audience as the best place to invest if interested in the Nordic countries. One of the main reasons for the campaign success was most likely the aggressive, disruptive strategy but also the fact that the idea was backed up by strong stakeholders such as multinational companies, the government and municipalities from around the city (Expert 4, Q 3). Meffert (2000) found that raising awareness contributes to the confidence building function of place brands, trait that is essential for any place wanting to attract. This fact was most likely kept in mind by the bodies responsible for the place marketing and branding efforts.

Examples of cities or regions that have been affected by particular disasters, conflicts or crises and still managed to surface a positive image could also be considered as good examples of place marketing and branding (Expert 3, Q 3). Even though possibly not as relevant in terms of the success measurement focus area, one cannot deny that a lot of effort, coordination and proper marketing initiatives have been conducted to 'save' and even more increase the foreign perception towards these places. Examples included in the interview are New York, Tel Aviv and Christchurch (Expert 3, Q 3). As Gallarza (2002) pointed out, images of places become more important than the actual reality; fact acknowledged by the responsible practitioners that have posted a desired place image in the digital environment in the attempt to change stigmatized perceptions of the place (Pike, 2002).

Some experts consider success examples as not being limited to the concrete case of place in and around itself, but more towards a particular set of criteria that benchmarks certain features and key elements, outputting a ranking. One example presented by Expert 10 (Q 3) is the 'Good Country Index', a practitioner's measurement of what each country is contributing to the common welfare of humanity compared to what it takes away, considering also the size, using data and working in collaboration with the United Nations and other institutions. This is considered a good illustration of success as it takes into account a larger number of different indicators.

Another mentioned case is the Brand Finance and its nation branding annual top 100 list (Expert 11, Q 3). The Brand Finance Nation Brands attempts to measure the strength and value of the nation brands of 100 leading countries using a method based on the royalty relief mechanism that Brand Finance uses to value the world's largest companies. The report provides each country with a measure of its brand strength in addition to its nation brand value.

4 Discussion

4.1 General Discussion

Two aspects from the results of the expert interviews are deemed highly relevant for the discussion part of this explorative research performed within this paper. The first one is the direct inquiring of the experts on how success is measured within place marketing and branding (Q1.2 from the results section). The answers clustered for Q1.2 are meant to address the main research purpose of the paper by giving a practical insight on how practitioners perform success measurement on a day-to-day basis.

The second aspect of high relevancy is the first part of the second question (Q2.1 from the results section) where the experts were inquired on where they see challenges (pain points) in measuring place marketing and branding success. This exercise attempts to identify throughout the results, which pain points have been addressed in the reviewed literature and which pain points still need attention for further research (critical pain points).

In order to address the main research purpose of the paper, focus has been allocated to the works of Zenker and Martin (2011) which observed and argued that the current metrics accounted for by practitioners in place marketing and branding are simply insufficient for an appropriate evaluation, further arguing that basic characteristics of places are ignored such as the complexity of the target groups and the product itself.

The authors propose two place marketing and branding models, first of which being the Citizen Equity Model, that attempts to measure the value a citizen can bring to a place (citizen equity) based on estimating future transactions and costs. Creating an average gross contribution by estimating future transactions and subtracting the predicted costs afferent to residency while also considering the marketing costs associated to attract or retain citizen within a place could be considered a straightforward approach to measuring citizen equity.

This customer-centred perspective aimed at evaluating citizen equity, can offer a perspective on how effective and efficient place marketing and branding spending are. In other words, the higher the citizen equity is, the more efficient the spending are. This is reflected in traditional marketing literature where a trend can be noticed of enhancing marketing activities centred around the customer, having as a target improving traditional marketing efficiency of spending.

However, difficulties might appear when attempting these estimates as the accuracy can come into question. The complexity of the influencing factors could alter the realistic aspect of the data from the moment of estimation to the actual consumption of the product offering. The high cost of performing such measurements was presented as a major challenge by experts in the domain (Expert 15, 19, Q 2.1), thus one of the issues that might appear when using this model is the low funding aspect.

Compiling the marketing costs associated with motivating individuals to move to or stay in a place can also be difficult to perform. The attribution challenge, signalled by the experts (Expert 6, 15, Q 2.1), consisting of difficulties in identify which place marketing initiative was the actual deciding factor that contributed to the positive purchasing behaviour. This difficulty would reflect in a potential inefficient calculation of associated marketing costs that would in turn affect the accuracy of the overall average gross contribution and ultimately the overall customer equity.

A non-iron-clad solution to the attribution conundrum could come from surveys, a basic yet efficient tool used also for subjective measuring in public administration success measurement. A brief, well-elaborated survey could be addressed to all the successful cases (i.e. individuals who have relocated

already to the place) in which an inquiry would be made on what was the deciding factor that consolidated their decision. Experts express the importance of using surveys through their examples of successful place marketing and branding. The case of the city of Chengdu (China) during the London Olympic Games (Expert 7, Q 3) and the city of Mississauga (Canada) through its creation of the brand dashboard (Expert 8, Q 3) are indeed proof that the use of surveys can generate significant value. Adding to the benefits, performing surveys is not considered a high cost activity.

As also shown by the authors, another obstacle that stands in the way of practitioners' acknowledgement of the Citizen Equity model is estimating the potential time of residency. Due to the degree of openness in today's business and living environment, accurate estimates on the time an individual will stay located within a place are very difficult to perform, which again could reflect inaccuracies the overall gross contribution calculations.

The second model presented by Zenker and Martin (2011) that has been included in the explorative research is the Citizen Satisfaction model, which attempts to evaluate the behaviour of the citizens (target group), in an attempt to identify their satisfaction levels with the current place of residence (citizen satisfaction). This model is based on the assumption that the first incentive an individual has to move to a different place is the potential increase in satisfaction. Thus, assessing the underlying factors to their satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) prior to a potential move would give a competitive advantage in tailoring the place brand offer to better fit the needs needs. Capturing the value, a place offers to a customer is important in the attempt to maximize the social functioning of that place, additional variables being needed next to economic ones to enable measurement.

The importance of citizen satisfaction (citizen welfare) is expressed also by the experts, some of which consider this aspect the main factor of success in place marketing and branding (Expert 17,21 Q 1.1). Citizen satisfaction has direct implications in the perception of the place-brand equity and further implications in performance measurement due to the fact that high citizen satisfaction is considered also a consequence of successful place marketing and branding initiatives.

A different perspective towards success measurement in place marketing and branding is presented by Jacobsen (2009) through his research in elaborating the Investor-Based Place brand equity (IPE) framework. This structure is aimed at analysing place brand equity from the point of view of the investor, having as a final goal the identification of place brand actuators which contribute to a higher place brand efficiency (Jacobsen, 2009). Additionally, the importance of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and their benefits to the place has been discussed in the earlier stages of the paper, confirmed also by Expert 14, (Q1.1).

The fact that brands can indeed increase investment inflows is emphasized, fact also acknowledged in place marketing literature where places that have built a strong brand find less difficulties in attracting FDIs. The IPE model contains place brand assets (tangible and intangible brand attributes) and place brand values (cognitively and affectively brand benefits). A linkage between the perception of the place brand and the behaviour of the customer is made using place brand equity. Considering place brand values and assets together (as place brand actuators) the framework could potentially justify the investor behaviour towards the place brand.

Even though the selected place brand assets and values are not deemed final by the author, the importance of their recognition based the expert interview data could address their inherent validity issues and potentially stimulate adjustments for this framework. The variables whose relevancy was confirmed by the experts will be presented below.

The most relevant brand asset from the ones proposed in the IPE Model is the perceived quality (perception), which in the context of place branding can be represented by the political and economic history of the place. Appropriate perception management has been presented by the experts as one of the aspects that define success in place marketing (Expert 9, 18, 20; Q 1.1). Whereas perception, as a way of measuring the emotional aspects of success, has also acknowledged in the expert interview data (Expert 16,19,20; Q 1.2). Consequently, the importance of this brand asset cannot be denied and should be a consideration for every practitioner.

The relations between various elements of the IPE framework (Figure x.x) still lack empirical validation, as mentioned by the author himself. However, the relevance of understanding the behaviour of a foreign investor prior to taking a decision on investment cannot be denied. The importance of FDI attraction has been presented in the literature review section, even considered the definition of success in place marketing and branding by Expert 14 (Q1.1)

Attracting large amounts of foreign investment can be considered a solid consequence of the successful use of place marketing and branding initiatives. justifying thus the spending on these initiatives through the highly quantifiable return that FDIs bring. The question of association between the marketing and branding activities and the FDI investors decisions still stands, however methods such as surveys can be used to attempt to tackle this aspect.

Jørgensen (2014) proposed elaborating a City-brand balance sheet that considers the return on investment and the impact towards tangible and intangible assets inside and outside the city. Several gaps were pointed out where a systematic approach would be needed, that include topics

such as acknowledging the importance of city councils and companies as stakeholders, interest of politicians and the attribution conundrum identified throughout the explorative research.

The city councils being considered stakeholders is underlined by Expert 8 and 14 (Q 1.1) who argue for the importance of having an effective and involved local government. Other experts also stress the importance of not only identifying all the relevant stakeholders but also getting them included and actively involved in the place branding process (Expert 8,10,21; Q1.1.).

The City Brand balance sheet model assumes the objective of investing in a city brand is to create, consolidate, alter, or develop the brand of the city (Jørgensen, 2014). It proceeds to acknowledge and address the fact that city branding processes are non-obligatory investments, having to challenge for legitimacy and financial resources obligatory public activities such as healthcare, infrastructure or educational. This further justifies the major challenge felt by practitioners when they expressed the cost-related issues within the expert interview (Expert 9,19; Q 2.1).

The investment-shareholder perspective section of the model illustrates data about the money invested in the project overtime (including obligatory public activities) by all investors that should be considered stakeholders. Even though not exhaustive, the examples provided by the author within this section of the framework seem to lead to potential roadblocks that have been previously signalled by practitioners, such as for example the monetary issues. These examples also assume a transparent relationship between the stakeholders due to the necessary willingness to collaborate and share information; a commonality maybe for developed countries but not so much for ones that struggle with corruption or do not have a fluent, trust based, governmental system.

The first-order effects and the second-order effects both are of direct interest to stakeholders; first of which represents the collection of initial results that can be accounted for following a place branding initiative. The importance of these indicators is high but considered insufficient enough to account for the successful measurement of such a lengthy process. Indicators such a SoMe coverage, newspaper lines and media minutes have been deemed relevant by experts and discussed previously.

The second-order effects differentiate between the character of the asset (tangible and intangible) as well as the geographical characteristics (within the city and outside of the city).

To be noted, the proposed intangible and tangible assets match to a large extent what was covered by the experts when inquired about how can success be measured, however a different perspective

is brought by the model: the accounting for assets outside the city, not introduced in other analysed models and not mentioned by the experts.

The potential benefits in assessing brand equity when considering outside the city variables is high, however the study performed by the author when elaborating the City Brand balance sheet involved a collaboration between two cities (Aarhus and Horsens) with common agreements on the potential benefits each could obtain. The collaboration itself can be considered a prerequisite for enabling access to outside of city information, and while the relevancy of this data does not come into question, partnerships of this sort are not yet a commonality in place marketing and branding.

The intention of this model is to increase credibility in the marketing and branding activities, adding information to the causality issue deemed so important by the experts. Increasing the visibility of the intangible assets especially, can potentially address accountability problems, which in such a political environment could indeed prove to improve credibility in the place marketing and branding activities.

The first sub-research purpose is assessing challenges for measuring success in place marketing and branding. One issue is considered the obvious major roadblock for practitioners and scholars alike, and that is the elaboration of a generally accepted framework that can efficiently measure and account for the success of place marketing and branding initiatives. The results of the expert interview also underlining the absence of such a framework and the difficulty to account for the various, complex indicators associated with place marketing and branding (Expert 7, Q 1.2; Expert 12, 20, 21, Q 2.1). In order to even attempt to elaborate such a framework, different variables need to be found that can be measured and reflect the underlying success of place marketing activities. The examples presented in the literature review show that such variables can include citizen equity, citizen satisfaction, place brand equity (as a means to attract foreign direct investment) or place brand equity (as return on investment). All these variables are resulted from ambitious research efforts performed in various areas of marketing, while tapping into how other entities perform success measurement.

The political aspect of place marketing and branding and the issues that come with this characteristic have been presented throughout the paper, but this aspect is only considered an attribution challenge by one expert that expressed difficulties in meeting short term political demands (Expert 15, Q 2.1). Whether or not the experts are aware of the seemingly obvious impacts politics have on place marketing and branding activities should also be addressed.

Literature has presented the fact that city branding activities are considered non-mandatory investments, practitioners having to dispute for funding obligatory public activities such as healthcare, infrastructure or education. This consists a major challenge face by practitioners, that cannot be fully surpassed until place marketing and branding activities gain the needed legitimacy and resolve the general aspect of accounting for the spendings. Once these issues are addressed, place marketing and branding could finally completely prove the benefits they can bring to a city and its development.

Scholars have been attempting to address the gaps withing this new phenomenon that is place marketing and branding by delving into traditional product marketing and attempting to implement models or parts of models that could transition in functionality to place marketing.

Discussions about place brand equity and its importance in assessing success in place marketing and branding have prompted the analysis of the framework elaborated by Chieng, Fayrene and Lee, (2011) (Figure X – A framework for measuring C-B brand eq.).

Looking into the expert interview data, a conclusion can be drawn from the fact that out of a total of thirty-six answers on how success can be measured in place marketing and branding, only fourteen refer to elements of the brand equity.

The framework presented above encompass a large number of dimensions and sub-dimensions for brand equity and its measurement, being particularly useful in examining the contribution of the four associated brand equity core dimensions. This framework can be used, by practitioners that perhaps do not yet fully acknowledge the importance of this concept, as a starting point for place brand equity evaluation purposes as it helps in making sure that no aspects of the brand equity are overlooked. The drawback of this framework is that it does not contribute to the actual measurement of the challenging variables involved in brand equity measurement.

Companies have used customer equity extensively for marketing accountability purposes. An interesting approach to assessing customer equity has been presented by Rust et al. (2011) who proposes, in a customer-centred perspective, using four types of models each with their optimal use for a particular situation and then providing a causal map for when to use which.

The adaptation of the first category of models in place marketing, namely the Direct Marketing/CRM models, could prove difficult due to prerequisite of to storing individual customer behaviour within a database and associate it with marketing initiatives. The sheer complexity of a place product and its target markets might prove elaborating such a data base challenging. The high number of purchasing

activities from traditional product marketing does not necessarily transition to place marketing as there are substantially less purchases happening due to their magnitude and implications. In place marketing a purchase is consumed when for example qualified labour force chooses to relocate, companies choose to migrate or expand or when investors choose to invest in that particular place. A possible adaptation would be to measure for example customer interest levels and their fluctuations when compared to place marketing and branding initiatives.

Similarly to the previous category of models, the use of the Acquisition vs Retention Models to measure customer equity can be criticized due to their inherent need of a customer behaviour and past customer-company interactions database. However, a potential solution, as presented by (Expert 1, Q 3) in the success case of Berlin, could be narrowing down objectives and focusing only on the customer segment of start-ups, thus making the elaboration of such a database much easier.

Customer-Retention Based Models could prove to be of interest if transitioned accordingly to place marketing and branding, as judging by the experts' perspectives the aspect of retention seems to be overlooked. An efficient transition could attempt to remove the downfall of not accounting for the possibility of a customer re-entering the loyalty loop.

The Brand-Switching Models focus on evaluating brand-switching patterns. Brand switching, as a concept, could prove to be quite different if approached through place marketing and branding lenses. A basic translation to place marketing would be illustrated in an initial investment in the desired place, followed up by an investment in a different location, thus exiting the loyalty loop, and then re-investing in the initial place.

The brand-switching customer behaviour is not impossible to map, but it is much more uncommon to potentially happen in comparison to a brand switch in purchasing of simple product. While it could prove to be valuable research, place marketing and branding could argue for attention towards more pressing issues practitioners and scholars are facing.

Social media and its potential benefits have been widely acknowledged in traditional marketing and also deemed relevant as a success measuring tool in place marketing and branding. However, questions can be raised if this tool is in fact used to its fullest potential by practitioners in place marketing and branding. Based on the results from the expert interviews, the use of social media serves only for measuring the frequency with which the place is being mentioned on the platforms (Expert 13, Q 1.2) and the tendencies of the place related chatter (Expert 14,16; Q 1.2).

Observing the PMS Metrics and Methods illustration elaborated by Agostino and Sidorova (2016) the variety of metrics that social media can help in evaluating is large. Even though these metrics can be calculated only through the use of the social media platforms, considering the continuous upward trend in their capabilities, complexities and usage, any place marketing and branding practitioner should at least explore the full potential these platforms offer. If for example place awareness measurement is desired, instead of performing costly, lengthy, complex studies on this variable, one can explore an approach to collect this data from SoMe platforms, while at the same time taking advantage of platform-specific analysis programs that can even interpret the data to the simplest of forms. Also, a consideration needs to be given to the fact that all place marketing practitioners have access to exactly the same tools, options and possibilities with the use of SoMe platforms. This makes the efficient use of the available tools paramount in making sure that no competitive advantage is wasted.

Research has been performed also on how companies evaluate their performances (success) in general, the findings pointing to the most widely used framework, The Balanced Scorecard (BSC). An observation has been discussed previously in respect to key aspects that are not incorporated within the BSC such as: employee contribution, suppliers, stakeholders' contribution and sustainability (Atkinson, Waterhouse and Wells, 1997; Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus, 2016)

The sustainability aspect has been addressed by Yahanpath, Noel, Islam and Syrus (2016) who proposed the Performance-Risk Linkage Model (PRLM) in which, based on the BSC, the authors would attempt to address and include stakeholders' impact and satisfaction, and risk management within the framework. The stakeholder aspect was addressed through a stakeholder identification process followed by their association to the corresponding internal business processes. Such an identification process should be considered by practitioners in place marketing and branding as strictly acknowledging their importance is not sufficient if they are not identified correctly.

The risk aspect was fixed through the introduction of the KPI-Risk filter which would perform an evaluation on the risks associated with each KPI in a workflow manner. This way, risk mitigation strategies are in place on a constant basis increasing the chances of KPIs being achieved, which would eventually transition into the goals of the company being met in a sustainable way.

The BSC by itself does not represent a success measurement tool, its use is more to evaluate and provide data for the responsible management bodies. Its use could prove beneficial to the organizations performing performance measurement in place marketing and branding themselves, as given the complexity of the place product, vast number of actors that take part in the process and

the vast areas which need to be covered when performing place marketing and branding initiatives, could prompt difficulties and misalignments on the internal strategy and objectives, further hindering the difficulties faced by practitioners on a day-to-day basis.

Assessing literature on the success measurement within public administration has surfaced some important facts about a transition period through which the performance management in the industry is going through. A shift from performance measurement to performance management is desired, specialists in the domain acknowledging the predominance of quantitative indicators in their performance measurement methodologies, underlining the fact that it is not an optimal solution for long term focus. The shift of decision makers' mindset from quantitative to qualitative has been presented as a challenge by Expert 19 (Q 2.1) who underlined the fact that such a transition would require substantial changes in the mindset of decision makers. taking time and education.

A more qualitative approach would allow evaluating other variables such as citizen involvement which was deemed as an essential focus in the advancement on public service quality delivery (Holzer and Yang, 2004). The focus towards citizens should be a commonality between public administration and place marketing and branding alike, as both have, or should have as an underlying goal citizen welfare. The difficulty would then come in the form of how to actually measure these variables, the panel of experts observing at least three challenges regarding this issue: how to efficiently measure happiness levels due to the ambiguity and individual interpretation of the term 'happy', how to efficiently measure the attitudes residents have towards the place and finally, how to ensure that no social groups are marginalized in the measurement process.

Public administration seems to answer these subjective measurements through the use of surveys, their relevancy being confirmed by Van Ryzing et al. (2008). The wide acknowledgements of surveys among public administration practitioners has determined an extended focus on how to better use this method for performance measurement. The findings include two major aspects: the surveys should inquire about things that citizens are familiar with and experience often, and secondly the questionnaire particularities such as samples, patterns and context need to be as similar as possible to confirm the validity of the results.

Having previously stated and acknowledged the importance of surveys within place marketing and branding, a consideration towards the extended attention public administration has given to this measurement method could prove useful for practitioners when considering using this tool for place marketing and branding purposes.

Given the early stage place marketing and branding are in, a complete shift from measurement to management might not be possible. However, based on the complexity and variety of subjective success measurement, it is clear that experts in the domain acknowledge the undeniable necessity to account for these non-financial indicators.

4.2 Theoretical Implication

Based on the explorative research performed on how success is measured within place marketing and branding several possible directions, on various topics, have surfaced where research could be pointed towards.

The Citizen Equity Model attempts to measure the value citizens can bring to a place and quantify it to serve as a success metric. This model relies heavily on long term estimates for future transaction costs, predicted costs and marketing costs, which in today's extremely volatile environment could prove to have serious accuracy issues. There are a large number of external factors that can negatively affect the accuracy the estimates at any time, thus decreasing the perceived validity in the eyes of decision-makers. The logical approach to this model is solid, but research is required in the direction of attempting tailor the calculations of the estimates in such a way that the potential impact of external factors is accounted for. The concern presented by the authors themselves regarding the difficulty to estimate how long citizens will stay in the place is by far the most pressing issue face by this model.

The Citizen Satisfaction Model's focus on the behaviour of target groups attempts to estimate and quantify citizen satisfaction (social functioning of the area), offering a perspective on the efficiency of place marketing spending. The higher the citizen satisfaction, the more proof towards the efficient spending of place marketing and branding budgets. One issue faced by this model is the absence of a generally accepted index of citizen satisfaction that would easily provide the necessary data. Even though there are several elaborated such indexes, research could be aimed at attempting the universal acceptance of one of them. Considering insight from public administration performance measurement and their focus on surveys, this method for assessing citizen satisfaction could prove beneficial, even though lacking the innovative aspect.

Several observations towards the **IPE Mode Several** can be noted. The first aspect considered in the basis on which this framework functions is identifying the general location selection process of a foreign investor when receptiveness to place marketing initiatives is at its peak. Even though a good theoretical aspect, approach the investor at a single stage in his decision-making process might ignore opportunities. Even though receptiveness to marketing material is not at its peak, the decision of the investor can be altered continuously until the actual investment is made. This approach could prove to be beneficial if considered a future development of the IPE model. As stated by the author himself the variables within the framework lack verification, however a lengthier analysis (as has been performed for quality – perception in the discussion section) of all the variables, considering the results from the experts interviews could confirm or infirm some of their relevancy.

The City-Brand Balance sheet model aims at increasing the credibility of place marketing through underlining the importance of intangible assets. The author's acknowledgement of city councils and private companies as stakeholders is essential as decision makers education and involvement are seen a challenge by practitioners. By models struggles in identifying the causality and impact of the brand project, a common issue shared amongst the models evaluated in this paper. The City-Brand Balance sheet brings a relevant contribution in dedicating part of the framework to a possible co-creation between two cities. As stated in the discussion section, the co-creation concept requires transparency and trust, commonalities met mostly in developed countries. As the potential of achieving complex objectives rises when more than one city is involved in the place marketing and branding process, a possible direction in which research can be aimed would be to further elaborate on the benefits co-creation could bring.

4.2 Practical Implication

The practical implications with which the explorative research was performed were aimed at attempting to address the various pain points experienced by the practitioners using the theoretical constructs discussed in the previous sections.

One of the major pain points that surfaced from a practitioner perspective was the measurement of citizen welfare and happiness. While indeed a complex issue that cannot be answered with simple indicators, The Citizen Satisfaction model could prove an effective tool to address this issue. One step that could be taken by practitioners in this direction would be to check the various place

satisfaction models elaborated by practitioners and assess whether or not they can make use in their quest to measure the welfare of the citizens.

The decision makers' education pain point could be addressed by acknowledging city councils as stakeholder and making them active participants in the place branding process as suggested by Jorgensen (2014).

Awareness building has been seen as a challenge by practitioners. The research done within this paper on SoMe could prove beneficial in showing practitioners how to maximize the potential benefits that can arise from their use of the platforms. The PMS Metrics and Methods framework presented in the works of Agostino and Sidorova (2016) would give a very solid starting point on how awareness can be increased using social media.

The final pain point that could be addressed with the analysed theoretical constructs is the high measurement costs associated with place marketing and branding. While the theory does not provide a direct way on how the cost of these activities can be reduced, tapping into the performance measurement in public administration literature can offer practitioners further insight on surveys and their efficient use, as an alternative method.

The attribution and the complexity of measurement represent the most critical pain points and have been pointed out as challenges for scholars alike. Even though the place branding models and frameworks evaluated attempt to address these issues, the authors themselves acknowledge that there is still

4.4 Limitations

In spite of the best attempts made towards making sure the conceptual and methodological appropriateness of the paper, a number of limitations have influenced the research of the study.

The first limitation is considered as a result of using a qualitative approach towards the research and considers the subjective interpretation of the data. This can have direct implications on the outcomes of the expert interviews' clustering process, on the final conclusions drawn from the answers provided, and also the potential of overlooking certain aspects.

The second limitation involves the literature on the topic of success marketing and branding. It has been signalled in the majority of the explored sources how fragmented and full of various interpretations of basic concepts the literature is. Apart from posing difficulties in comprehension, this aspect proved to make the identification of correlations between concepts of place marketing and concepts from other types of marketing or industries rather challenging.

The third limitation of the study is the online, written aspect of the expert interview. A consequence of this action can be noticed in some of the answers received from the experts that lack accuracy towards the inquiry, or simply do not provide the requested information. If the interview would have been conducted in a conversational scenario (via phone or face-to-face) further laddering techniques could have been used to increase the overall accuracy of replies, minimizing the risk of wrong interpretation.

The fourth limitation concerns the allocated space. The overall broadness of the chosen subject, together with the lengthy requirements to analyse and illustrate each of the findings resulted from the expert interview while at the same time respecting the academic formalities has proved to affect the inclusion of certain aspects within the paper.

5 Conclusions

The main research purpose of this paper was to explore ways of measuring success within place marketing and branding. This aspect has been approached from both practical and theoretical points of view in an attempt to observe the connection between the practitioners' and scholars' points of view. While commonalities can be observed, a conclusion can be drawn towards a general lack of inclusion of theoretical constructs within the way practitioners choose to measure success. A reason for this would be the fragmented aspect of the literature review that is still lacking appropriate empirical validation.

Aspects such as citizen equity, citizen satisfaction, place-brand equity as well as the ability to attract foreign direct investments are all considered new concepts that if calculated accurately could ultimately reflect the efficiency of place marketing and branding spendings.

Various ways on how practitioners perform success measurement are presented in the clustered results of the expert interviews, however the clear absence of agreement can be observed. The

absence of a universal framework seems to lead practitioners to revert to traditional, simple measurement concept such as before/after evaluation, statistical indicators' evaluation, and media/SoMe monitoring. Although these are valid approaches to success measurement in general, their feasibility in place marketing and branding can be questionable due to the particularities place have and which need to be considered.

The first research sub-focus was aimed at identifying challenges for measuring success in place marketing and branding. The main pain-point experienced by practitioners and scholars alike is the struggle to account for the efficient use of spendings. This aspect has served as the main reason for pursuing this explorative research. An interesting fact that surfaced was that the majority of the other identified pain-points can be considered as secondary the main pain-point. Solving these secondary challenges would greatly contribute to solving the accountability issues.

Two of the identified pain points are particularly problematic (the attribution and the complexity of measurement) as they are identified both in the expert interviews but also in the literatures. The absence of universally accepted solutions for these issues consider a particular issue and will continue to prove so until a solution is been provided.

The second research sub-focus attempted to identify if any concepts, or part of concepts, from other areas could be implemented in place marketing and branding. Research in the domain justifiably tends to address the gaps within place marketing and branding literature by observing how success is measured in different industries. This explorative research has identified and discussed several concepts that could potentially be adapted to address particular gaps or issues that are faced by practitioners, but not so much towards the ones faced by scholars.

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7 Appendix

Expert Interview Results – Question 1. How do you define success in place marketing and branding (excluding tourism) and how can we measure it?

R1

In my opinion, there is no such thing as general success indicators in place marketing and branding. They must always serve to support the socio-economic development of places (cities, regions, countries). Depending on the context and purposes they are used in, their impact and benefits will be described as success. And they will always be specific to each place.

In addition, success indicators must be separated for marketing and branding activities (in the literature there are hundreds of indicators to use). However, at the end of the day, the effects of both (which of course often intertwine) must be embedded in the social and economic purposes of the place.

R2

I do think it is appropriate to tell how I define success, or failure. Rather success, as for failure should be agreed upon and not normatively presented, regardless is presented by a scholars, practitioners, or consultancy firms. Success, or indicators of success, should be agreed by each city, region or nation and tailored according to different necessity or strategy. And this is the same for measurement.

R3

Success can be defined as a highly strategic brand or campaign that creates competitive commercial advantages, communicating why people should visit, open a business in a place or invest money there. A successful place brand should drive investment, tourism and talent attraction and strengthen the prominence of the place and its services and/or exports. The right outcome will also deliver the optimum reputation and increased civic pride.

1. Measuring success is to determine a very clear set of goals at the outset of the exercise and see if those were, in a specific timeframe, met. Putting in place the parameters and methods of measurement is part of this process. This sounds simple but you'd be amazed how often this isn't done or is done badly.
2. Benchmark yourself against other comparative cities or destinations. These may involve numerical markers, such as the local economy, investment, jobs, and the number of people moving to your city. Numbers are not the only measures, though, and some are much harder to quantify, including happiness, quality of life and access to opportunities.

With the advent of a new wave of benchmarks, urban growth and management agendas have become far more holistic. Today, we look at factors like resident and long-term liveability, national and international identity and perceptions, smartness, culture and neighbourhood vibrancy, resilience, business and institutional investment, social cohesion and integration, leadership and institutions, plus innovation ecosystems. These all help to understand whether a city has the ingredients required to attract and stimulate growth.

At times a very specific goal may have necessitated a place branding exercise, one linked to 'reputational change'. This could be tied to specific social, economic, cultural or environmental challenges experienced by a place. Measuring success in this situation requires market research before and after the work has taken place alongside straightforward statistics on changes - commercially or culturally - in the relevant spheres.

For instance, if a city is keen to position itself as a "start-up capital" then statistics on how many start-ups have eventually established themselves is mandatory. Similarly, if a place has undergone dramatic environmental damage (think bushfires) and wants to reassert its position as "open for business", then tourist numbers and spend will be measurable. In both cases, one could argue positive media coverage around these topics would also be pertinent.

R4

If we imagine that place branding is something beyond the image of the place, we can conclude that the success criteria must go beyond the external perception. When I work with the private sector in new

neighborhoods or cities, I always insist that it is necessary to change the traditional approach, where success is measured exclusively by the commercial result.

It is necessary to include in the equation the quality of life, and why not, the happiness of the people who relate to this place. It seems that it still lacks an understanding that the locals are so, and often more, important than the visitor or any external interest.

R5

Success in 2THINKNOW view is a well-established city brand that represents the city in all its elements. So, a successful brand ties to the strengths (and potential strengths) of the city in our 162-indicator framework.

Importantly, a great city brand does not promote one sector of society or a city above others. A successful city brand truly represents the city, not just a small group.

In our view, people should say 'aha, that is so obvious;' for the great city brands! We help people uncover what they should be in our method.

R6

Start with the definition: Place Branding = Place Making + Place Marketing.

Success can then, in general, be defined as creating a place where residents can thrive and ensuring both residents and possible residents understand why. From a measurement perspective that means creating a brand equity monitor and routinely (think annually) evaluating progress.

A brand equity monitor is a comprehensive metric that evaluates relative preference based on both rational and emotional attributes of the place brand. Emphasis is placed on the term "relative". This requires selection of a competitive cohort of locations to compare against.

Statistically significant differences in attribute scores help identify points of parity and points of +/- differences. Points of negative difference are addressed with strategic choices to reduce competitive disadvantage and points of positive difference are addressed with strategies designed to expand competitive advantage.

R7

The answer really depends on the project - it is all about whether the marketing and branding campaigns reach the pre-set objectives. And places can use branding campaigns for a range of objectives, such as increasing resident satisfaction and attracting businesses.

I am a firm-supporter of the logic model. A proper place branding campaign should have clearly laid out objectives and tactics. It is, then, possible to look at the inputs, outputs, and outcomes to assess whether our intervention (branding campaign) has been successful or not.

In my research, I rely heavily on semantic and social network analysis. At the end of the day, place brands are - as Prof. Zenker has defined a few years ago - all about networks of associations in people's minds. So, I look at who says what to whom about given places. I see whether tone, topic, or participants of conversations change following a branding campaign.

R8

I believe there are only two fundamental interesting ways of measuring success in place marketing.

1. How many people were involved? (most important how many participated in workshops), but also participating in different surveys.
2. How many stakeholders are ambassadors of the key messages brought forward by the branding/place marketing-campaign?

Successful place marketing needs a broad variety of stakeholders from the city hall, business community, civic society to herald the message.

R9

I think success inevitably has to be defined in terms of communication measures such as awareness (of the place and its attributes), understanding and perceptions i.e., opinions and feelings about the place, and the nature and extent of associations (positive and/or negative) with the place.

I feel it is problematic to define success of place marketing/branding activities using non-communications criteria (e.g. increased inward investment etc.) as there are a range of other potential factors contributing to that, and isolating the effect of marketing/branding activities on such broader issues alone is virtually impossible.

In terms of measurement, as mentioned above, using communication-oriented measures is critical and having a clear idea of KPIs articulated in those terms is fundamental.

R10

Though it is not a success criterion in and around itself, the foundational task of a place brand is to survive. Otherwise, the project cannot achieve any of its objectives. With this, a somewhat organic definition of success might be appropriate.

All living organisms share specific characteristics, most of which apply to place brands. They all grow, adapt, and reproduce. As per the former, one could measure target audiences' top-of-mind awareness levels, amount of foreign investment, citizen well-being, among others.

In terms of adaptation, one can look at how well the brand responds to its environment. Does it alter its value proposition to different target audiences? Can it form a symbiosis with different place brands (regional, national)? Finally, does it contribute to the most pressing global issues, such as global warming? (though I prefer the term global flooding).

Finally, as per reproduction, one may measure the adoption rate of brand identity. Does it create offsprings among key stakeholders? What percentage of decision-makers sing from the same page? Do local NGOs use it? Does it interact with local exporters as a place of origin brand?

R11

City marketing and branding efforts tend to be made in order to attract inward investment and / or tourism. Many marketing and branding strategies for other types of places are solely aimed at attracting more tourists, so I don't think we can take tourism out of the equation when discussing success measurements.

At the city level branding, success is usually based on attracting more people to live in, work in, or visit the city, and measured in terms of how these numbers grow year on year. I think that this is one of the basic problems that measurements of success tend to be based almost exclusively on growth and economic impact.

Even when quality of life is included as a measurement of success, it is also usually linked to economic improvement and how the place can improve its competitiveness against others. Also, if and when sustainability is included in place marketing and branding strategies, that tends to be linked only to its environmental impact and not measured in either economic or social terms. So there doesn't seem to be any joined-up thinking here with regard to how we define success holistically for places.

R12

There are indexes that allegedly define success, such as potential client awareness and perception, Lodging costs such as hotels and Airbnb, global students, Michelin restaurants. To these indexes, I would add "hosting sizeable international events" such as Expo's, Eurovision contest, Olympics, International Beauty Pageant competition and the like. I would also add the ability to create a "Vibe" to the place through human factors such as its people, the food etc....

R13

The correlation between the name of the place and certain words, describing feelings, traits or whatever else the brand is based on. This can be measured through surveys.

The basic question is what are the three words that first pop into your mind when you hear the name of a city followed by more specific questions that are based on the brand strategy. Another simpler way is media monitoring, measuring how often the place is mentioned and if it is growing or not, and how often specific keywords are in the same sentence as the place.

R14

I think success in place marketing and branding can be defined in different ways, mainly:

1. An increase in audience recognition of the place
2. Increased number of visitors (or tourists)
3. Increase in total investment or new investment
4. Enhanced local government administrative efficiency
5. A greater sense of belonging and thus engaging residents in the entire process of place marketing and branding

Measuring success in place marketing and branding is far more complex than those of products or services. However, there are possible ways to measure the success due to the flexibility it offers.

1. Conduct a comparative study to understand the numbers before and after the marketing and branding efforts. Quantitative data collection methods can be applied to gather details on the number of visitors (tourist) and investment.
2. Examine the level of recognition that residents have of the place by designing a questionnaire to examine any change in their recognition of the place.

3. Analyze positive or negative tendencies towards marketing efforts by studying media coverage and social media communications contents.
4. Survey residents on their perception and satisfaction of the marketing and branding efforts. A focus group interview can be conducted to learn about their recognition of the core value and attractive symbols of the place. This study helps to see if the perceived matches well with those that are designed and set in the branding efforts.
5. Observe the taken actions or progress made by the government by studying their work efficiency. Based on my observation of the Chinese context, when the local government sets to brand and market the place, they will give it all in to make their place well-known and attractive to drive the local economy.

R15

Success metrics for place branding are different from place marketing. I'll focus on the place branding piece.

As Charles Landry writes in "Cities of Ambition", the first thing a place needs to do is create a sense of ambition. In Landry's words, ambitious places recognize that, "it's not OK to be OK".

That requires having an honest conversation among key stakeholders about a place's current realities on a number of dimensions including:

- human capital (having the talent we need and want)
- social capital (sense of belonging and connectedness)
- cultural capital (identity and shared values)
- creative capital (inventiveness, curiosity and artistic expression)
- scientific/technical capital (advanced and practical know-how)
- environmental (sustainability)
- economic capital (business climate)
- civic capital (engagement and good governance)

In the earliest days of a place brand initiative, the level of honest dialogue assessing local strengths and weaknesses is a key metric to watch. Are locals willing to identify challenges and opportunities?

I recently interviewed Landry and he noted that, "Ambition is a quality that generates energy, motivation and passion from which other possibilities flow... It precedes vision."

Another metric of success for a place branding project is the extent to which a committed group of people feel they can collectively influence the trajectory of their place. In Canada, Sault Ste Marie, Ontario – a city of 73,000 people – was grappling with the economic and social impact of an imploding steel sector that had been the region's primary employer.

It created a citizen-led Committee of Adjustment that worked for a year to identify ways to move the city forward. The first recommendation was to forge a new brand strategy for the Sault. That strategy enabled the city to reframe its positioning around under-appreciated advantages of its location, sustainable energy generation, indigenous cultures and "maker" ingenuity that have sparked substantive new initiatives.

These kinds of initiatives, each have their own metrics of success but the degree to which residents and businesses are supportive and buoyed by them are key markers of a successful rebranding.

It has focused the city's collective ambition on specifics that are very tangible for residents. That local confidence, in turn, generates external interest. A project that mobilizes people around the idea transformation is galvanizing. This can be measured in terms of broad level of support as well as a general sense of optimism.

R16

It's important to remember there are a variety of ways to measure progress when embarking on a new place branding initiative. In order to deliver long-term impact and value for money, any given initiative must first set out an overarching long-term objective.

- What is at the core of the initiative?
- How will it help the city/region/country be better in 10, 15, 20 years' time?

With that in place, then we start working backwards from there.

Short-term performance indicators could be built on a combination of metrics that capture changes in perception of target audiences. These could take the form of polling, gauging media coverage, focus group testing, and even social media chatter.

The measures of success between the short term and the long term are likely to be more economic in nature or at least objectively assessed statistical indicators. These are likely to be things like inward investment, visitor numbers, increase in residents, tourism receipts, etc.

But in addition to the outward facing perception-based metrics and more objective economic indicators, a place branding initiative should also be assessed on the level of engagement with citizens and domestic stakeholder groups. As such it would be useful to include metrics on citizen engagement, community recognition and participation in the place branding project.

Support amongst trade bodies, unions, and other community groups can give a sense of whether there is genuine buy-in from the community and also sense-check an initiative's authenticity.

R17

The success in place marketing and branding is something related to creating a better place in general terms (economy, urbanism, environment, social services, etc.). It can sound romantic, but it is, in my view, the best indicator to measure the effectiveness of these strategies. There are many examples in this line: Imaginative Communities (Robert Govers) or Good Country Index (Simon Anholt), among others. I'm talking about creating a better world, not only related to communicational, promotional or positioning issues.

R18

Defining success in place marketing is something that has always worried those responsible for management, if tourism is excluded, it all comes down to the perception that interest groups may have as a result of communication and marketing actions.

R19

In my opinion, the ultimate measure of success of a place brand is the strength of emotion that a person experiences when its name is heard or seen. Does it stimulate a very positive emotion of love for the place, of association with it, of desirability to be there, of interest to find out more about it, etc.

But how to measure emotional interest? Here lies a challenge. Without an accepted and proven numeric emotional index (and one may exist) you need one or more proxies to assess such reactions which should be related to the stated goal and objectives of the place brand strategy.

You want to be measuring two separate types of variables:

1. Changes in perceptions and viewpoints (which can be a proxy for emotions) about the place among target market and target geography audiences; such as an increase in the degree of warmth (again an emotion) about or awareness of the place or an increase in willingness to explore its offers and opportunities.
2. Changes in clearly defined and easily measurable key performance indicators of expected or desired impacts of the brand, such as economic impacts like scale of investment enquiries, conversion rate of enquiries into investment decisions, etc.

Many of these KPIs can be measured through analysis of data drawn from online behaviour as we do at Bloom through our Digital Demand analyses or from specific surveys of the audiences.

The lessons I have drawn from my recent work and thinking on these issues and its challenges are:

1. be specific about the action to be taken to influence perceptions and behaviours
2. Be precise about the impacts of those actions you wish to measure
3. identify the behaviours or types of impact that will demonstrate positive, negative or neutral response
4. identify measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) for those responses and impacts
5. know, in advance, where you can get the data you require and that it can be collected and analysed in a cost effective and timely way
6. be willing to take action to change your brand's implementation plans to respond to the results of your analyses - improving or extending an action or offer, or halting it if it is not creating the desired impact

And finally, understand that it may, and often will, take time for your analyses to show either positive, negative or neutral impacts of your brand strategy.

R20

Success is different for each place depending on their starting point. For New Zealand, we had a strong position in the tourism sector however we were not as well regarded in other sectors that generate diverse economic returns e.g. technology/services.

So, for us, success was initially about shifting perceptions beyond natural beauty. Measuring this is relatively straightforward through qualitative perception research although funding the work can be a substantial challenge.

R21

There is for sure a change in the objectives of place marketing and branding in the last 10 years from purely promoting the place to new target audiences (talents, investors, companies and tourists) to also focus more on internal target audiences (existing residents for instance).

This means, we target on a much broader aim:

1. Creating awareness for the place (external)
2. Creating a strong and positive image (internal and external) for the place
3. Creating a strong identification and satisfaction with the place (internal)
4. Activate stakeholders as brand ambassadors (more internal)

To quote Ashworth and Voogd (1990, p. 41): place marketing aims "to maximize the efficient social and economic functioning of the area concerned, in accordance with whatever wider goals have been established."

The wider goals, however, are case specific (e.g., changing the perception of a place to be more bicycle-friendly).

This means, measurement-wise we need to add to the existing awareness and brand image measurements, also measurements about customer satisfaction, engagement and identification. And we need a deeper look at the political /place-planners aims of where the place should develop and to find indicators on how to measure that.

R22

I see place branding and marketing as “a unifying cultural expression and strategy.” It is excruciatingly hard to achieve because it has to be both bottom-up, top-down, and tied to action. Do citizens feel they helped create it? Does it feel true? If so, how is it more than marketing? How can they bring it to life through action?

There are fewer people to include, for the top-down aspect of the strategy, but depending on the administration of the city, state, or country there are nearly always multiple competing agencies and organisations that feel they are in the business of branding the place. Bringing them along is really hard, as human beings tend to build empires and fiefdoms, and we all want to preserve our marketing budgets and to do it in our own way.

Few people tend to be experts in neuroscience, unless they have been trained in that discipline and have plenty of experience. But everyone tends to be a branding and marketing expert. This is both a strength, as we can use it to bring people along, and a weakness. Unifying our top-down efforts is easy to measure: either it's working or it isn't. Bottom-up efforts are harder to measure, but I like to attach numbers and data to project work more than vague indicators of awareness and sentiment.

Marketing is easier to measure. What are we selling? Who are we selling it to? Are they buying or not? If not, why? And how can we change our strategy, based on the answers to these questions, without leaving our brand behind?

We understand success as changed behaviour within the place and a change of the perception of the place on the outside.

Changed behaviour means that the place identity defined during the place branding project becomes more salient - there are more opportunities to witness and experience it. If enthused and inspired by their place identity, local residents take it up in their everyday life and work. As a result, it starts to transpire in local services, such as hospitality; products, such as food and fashion; culture, such as music, art, and architecture. Each new product and service is important in this case and useful as a measure of success.

On the outside, the success of place branding is a more consolidated and consistent image of the place in the eyes of target audiences or global public. It can be measured with data and media analytics tools that are ever improving. Has the place become more pronounced in global conversations (social networks, films, books, media articles?) Does it have a clearer and more consistent or different image?

Expert Interview Results – Question 2. Where do you see challenges of success measurement in place marketing and branding How to overcome these challenges?

A1

The main challenges are linked to the one-fit all measurement which is for example presented in forms of indexes, used for the most, in universal manner. Most of the time these are over-imposed on cities and regions or are adopted by cities and regions as inspirational for their place branding and marketing practices. Measurements risk to be function as “fetish” for cities and region, this is the main problem for me.

A2

When place branding and marketing fails it's usually because there was no clear criteria or clarity around goals and targets. This often occurs when cities dumb down the exercise to a logo and tagline instead of thinking of place branding as a strategic blueprint. What place branding and marketing should represent is a plan for overarching growth and development, something that cannot be achieved by an icon on marketing material. Be clear about you purpose and let that determine a very specific set of success metrics which are measurable. it's usually because there was no clear criteria or clarity around goals and targets. This often occurs when cities dumb down the exercise to a logo and tagline instead of thinking of place branding as a strategic blueprint. What place branding and marketing should represent is a plan for overarching growth and development, something that cannot be achieved by an icon on marketing material. Be clear about you purpose and let that determine a very specific set of success metrics which are measurable.

A3

The metric for place branding should be community happiness, now measurable, while for place marketing this metric is probably more linked to performance, although performance, inevitably, is also linked to the happiness of a positive experience in a certain place.

The challenge is to create more “human” methods of evaluation. How to measure the performance of an exciting experience in a place?

Migrating from a purely quantitative approach to a qualitative approach may be the first step.

A4

We already have means to measure this and have done so already. It's available to anyone who commercially wish to purchase and involves our data models we have built for clients. It's available to anyone who commercially wish to purchase and involves our data models we have built for clients.

The worst way to measure it is nebulous brand techniques like impressions, uploads, clicks, recognition (e.g. those 'have you seen advertisers') etc.

A5

Two big challenges include:

1. Getting alignment on the meaningful attributes that truly define resident aspirations and enable them to thrive. The practical working number is under 30 attributes, and more often than not cluster analysis is used to understand the attribute connectivity.
2. Educating decision makers on how strategic choices around capital and infrastructure investment as well as public policy/program choices impact Place Branding success. And enrolling those decision makers in focusing on delivering long term sustainable improvement rather than scoring short term political points.

A6

I will share two challenges: attention span and attribution.

We, as place branding scholars and practitioners, operate on the assumption that audiences - let it be residents, tourists, or even businesses - think about places critically, re-evaluate their opinions, and even change their behaviors based on newly acquired information. The reality is that audiences don't think about places frequently, including their hometowns. When we try to measure the success of our campaigns, we have two options. We can use designed surveys and prompt audiences to share their views. Or we can use organic social media data to see what audiences are thinking. The former basically forces people to spit out answers. The latter is usually guided by extraordinary events, such as a touristic visit to a city or a policy discussion on hometowns. But in neither of these options, we can completely extract what people think about a given place because they usually just don't think. Using a combination of surveys and social data, as well as longitudinal or constant monitoring studies, can help overcome these challenges.

The second challenge is about creating the causal link between place brands and place branding. The conversation around a place can be changed by many external factors. How can we attribute these particular changes to the actual campaign? In academia, we have a couple of answers for this question, yet none is iron-clad. Logic model can help remedy the situation by linking inputs to outcomes to an extent. Yet, the complexity of place brands makes measurement a difficult endeavor.

A7

It's impossible to measure the outcome of place marketing in a meaningful way. Either you have to reduce your ambitions and f.ex. count number of foreign newspaper articles mentioning your city, buzz in social media, or your city can gather all the major rankings worldwide to see if there is any good results. Greg Clark and Business of Cities are each year publishing a State of the City-report for Oslo, collecting around 200 global rankings. The politicians are happy as long as we're improving in major rankings within our prioritized areas

f.ex. green politics. And if your city is mentioned in 200 rankings, there will always be rankings where we are on the rise. It's all about storytelling.

A8

Challenges of success measurement revolve around the problem of isolating the effect of marketing/branding activities from a variety of other issues that might impact on place performance, so having appropriate communications oriented KPIs is crucial here.

A9

The primary challenge of success measurement is ownership. Some place brands are orphaned right after launch. Without the backing of an influential sponsor, the project becomes stillborn, hence no measurement.

The second challenge is professional management. To be able to measure success, one must first manage the project properly. However, places resist hiring top marketing professionals like a corporation would do. As a consequence, of the surviving projects, some fall into no man's land, hence no measurement.

The third challenge is accountability. Most place branding projects do not have clear KPIs. In the absence of clear objectives, the project manager does not have the incentive to track progress, for s/he is not held accountable.

Finally, there is the problem of noise in data. Place brands operate in higher systems. Cities are a part of a country; countries are a part of a region. The brand might be doing great while its parent country is dealing with a crisis. Or vice versa. For instance, during the Arab Spring, Tourism Turkey's performance skyrocketed, not due to branding but opportune political conditions. So, removing the noise from data is a challenge.

A10

One of the unresolved challenges concerns what happens when place branding efforts become too successful. Many different types of places are experiencing problems relating to their success in attracting unsustainable numbers of tourists, an issue that was highlighted when the 'summer of overtourism' became headline news in popular media in 2017. overtourism' became headline news in popular media in 2017.

Taking tourism out of the equation and focusing more on those who live in and work in a place, there will remain challenges for success measurement in place marketing and branding if these efforts result in inequalities and the marginalisation or exclusion of certain social groups. Place marketing and branding efforts can also lead to the commodification of a place and its cultural heritage which can also lead to certain stakeholders becoming at best disinterested and at worst antagonistic towards success measurements.

To overcome all of the above, success measurement needs to be defined in an inclusive manner that takes into account the perspectives of all relevant stakeholder groups. Thus, it needs to be undertaken less top-down and more bottom-up, not only paying lip service to stakeholder engagement, but really including, involving, and actively listening to these different views and voices. In that way success measurements for a place may be generated that are based more on quality of life, sustainability and sufficiency indicators rather than heavily or exclusively on economic growth.

A11

Some of the factors are subjective rather than objective. Indexes such as awareness and perception are not necessarily measured by numbers. For instance: Turkey's 30M tourists doesn't necessarily improves the country's branding and Tel-Aviv with only 1M tourists has much stronger place branding. doesn't necessarily improves the country's branding and Tel-Aviv with only 1M tourists has much stronger place branding.

To tackle this challenge, I would look more closely at other factors that are not currently defined as indexes but can give us a better idea of defining success in place branding. These need to be thought about and figured out.

A12

It is in the nature of place marketing and branding to have a very high number of variables, making it harder to measure and impossible to prove. The growth of the brand is based on the combination of thousands of things, although the overall development can be measured. The best way to overcome this challenge in measurement is to base the brand on a strong story and keywords and see how the growth of those is correlated to the growth of the place awareness.

A13

There are many challenges to success measurement in place marketing and branding. Because places are dynamic, with changes happening every day. The challenge adds up as the geographical size of the place increases as there are more dimensions to be considered. To add on, people have a different preference for places, and they are attracted by different things in a place. Therefore, in my opinion, success measurement might be easier for destination branding as they are made to attract consumers from the very beginning. Statistics such as the number of tourist and revenue can be easily collected and studied.

I would suggest three ways to overcome the challenge. First of all, the goal of the marketing and branding effort must be specific, so is the target audience. Besides, marketing activities must be clearly designed with a focus. Secondly, the place must have unique attractiveness, leading to focused marketing and branding objectives and thus making measurement simpler and more focused. Thirdly, the questionnaires should be distributed to both residents and visitors on a large scale before the marketing task and after the task, to compare the change in their awareness and recognition of the places.

A14

It's important to have both a qualitative and quantitative sense of attitudes. What is the general sentiment regarding a place, for residents and visitors. The trajectory is as important as a snapshot in time. Is the momentum trending toward positive or negative sentiments? Who are the influences? What's emerging?

A15

Usually, it's budget. The methodologies – even if imperfect works-in-progress – are broadly there, but it's a question of finding the resources required to pay for them. Doing proper measurement and evaluation is not cheap, so it's often neglected. Beyond that, the biggest challenge is linking branding initiative outputs, whether creative or actual policy changes, to impact over a short enough timeline to satisfy political demands on leaders. This is why measurement at the short, medium, and long term is so important, to demonstrate progress and keep momentum going. Or if an initiative is not demonstrating impact, then to either change tack or simply end it in its current form.

A16

The challenge is, in my opinion, in the great opportunity to create a multidimensional measurement, that is, an indicator with capacity to measure the improvement (or not) of any place beyond economic results. For example, the government of Bhutan has a critical indicator to measure the prosperity of the country: the happiness.

A17

The main challenges in measurement are based on the goals and objectives that are proposed. You have to set goals that are measurable and consequently find a way to measure them.

A18

Measuring is a dedicated activity, so the first requirement is to have people, tools, time and budget in place. The team doing the measurement should be very fluent in the place brand identity to be able to see its offspring and iterations.

A19

There are four key challenges we face in success measurement:

1. Quant vs. Qual: Measuring shifts in perception requires all stakeholders to grasp qualitative perception research. For officials used to defining success with quantitative metrics such as 'bed nights', 'student numbers', or 'investment inflow', trust in qualitative measures demands a substantial mindset shift and takes time and education.
2. Funding: Measurement research is often not part of the place marketing funding package or minimal spend is assigned to it. It can be very expensive to conduct qual research in some countries and it also demands stakeholders understand the need for international travel associated with the research. Research and travel are often frowned upon by public sector stakeholders who see this is an unnecessary or unproductive expense.
3. Project vs. ongoing: Stakeholders unfamiliar with brand tracking can often view measurement as a one-off project – something to be undertaken when a report or justification is required. Yet the true value is measuring shifts over time, trend analysis, and building the insights into your ongoing work plan.
4. Opinions over facts: Despite one's best efforts to educate officials and stakeholders on the value of credible research and insights, the opinions of one or two high ranking officials can still be overwhelming and drive initiatives. You need conviction, thick skin, and a willingness to speak up to debate the opinions and ensure the work you do is taking you in the right direction.

A20

The complexity is to do with the fact that we're dealing with different measurements in areas such as: we're dealing with different measurements in areas such as:

- Sustainable economic performance in tourism, investment, exports, talent attraction; Sustainable economic performance in tourism, investment, exports, talent
- Community building, civic pride and resident satisfaction; Community building, civic pride and resident
- Stakeholder commitment;
- Social media buzz;
- International news media coverage;
- On-brand project and product development;
- On-brand communications;
- Reputation.

And that at various levels of:

- Impact

- Outcomes
- Outputs

It's a complicated maze of potential success factors to monitor and for more on this, see <https://www.citynationplace.com/robert-govers>

A21

Obviously, success measurement is problematic here as place marketing and branding is only partially responsible for success. It is much too complex, to measure the hard-impact of the marketing (due to the numerous amounts of other influencing factors).hard-impact of the marketing (due to the numerous amounts of other influencing factors).

I tell the cities often in regard to success: "if things do not develop well it was you – if things change into positive, it was the mayor" ;)

The three main problems are:

- Complexity: There are many different aspects and actors involved to create success. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to calculate single effects of one part of it. To solve this problem, chaos theory suggests – for instance – rather think in a scenario-approach (calculating and forecasting effects without or a different place marketing effort).
- Little direct, but many indirect effects of our work: That means we are often more fuelling events and developments (increasing their impact), rather than having a direct effect. We must therefore focus more also on indirect measures.
- The time-effect: Many current initiatives will have an effect in a couple of years. Brand-image changes take a lot of time; moving decisions are often not immediately and place marketing often only fuels the seed of a decision. To solve this, we need longer time-series and longitudinal studies.

A22

I understand why there are off-the-shelf "products" to measure success in place marketing and branding. But in some ways, I think they harm our efforts. They tend to measure digital sentiment, and they rarely give us information we can use. If we spend a pile more money on events, for example, there will be more social media activity and economic success. The question is: did those events pay for themselves, and was that social media activity about the event or was it about who we are – our brand? That takes a much harder look.

If we move from communications to action, it gives us something to measure. We can measure participation in projects we launch to bring our brand to life. We can measure our partners' success, digging into the place brand component of that success – particularly when we look at labour, student, or investment attraction.

Expert Interview Results – Question 3. What are good examples of success measurement in place marketing and branding (Any cases you know, for example.)

E1

For me Berlin is a great example of success in measuring place marketing and branding. This is because the city had a set of very clear goals that it wanted to achieve: positioning and promoting Berlin as the place for start-

ups. Berlin's marketing and branding focuses on attracting a very specific international audience with a certain mindset. As a result of having such a clear and specific goals and target audience, measuring the impact of Berlin's place brand and marketing has been measured with relative ease and simplicity - by tracking the number of start-ups that cluster in the capital and the percentage of foreign investment that pours into this sector, which is then absorbed by Berlin.

E2

The Koreans have done some interesting work in this area, so have the New Zealanders and the Indonesians.

E3

In Ohio, we created, and annually fielded, a state brand equity monitor and used the results to identify opportunities to improve both Ohio's brand identity and image. This quantitative research evaluated perceived importance and performance of Ohio and a cohort of competitive states on a range of rational and emotional criteria used by CEOs to make major capital investment decisions. Statistically significant differences based on an 80% confidence level was used to define competitive strengths and weaknesses.

As an example, here are four (of roughly 30) attributes that were in the research:

1. Location will allow me to achieve my professional ambitions.
2. Location will allow me to achieve my personal ambitions.
3. Family would feel at home.
4. Can envision company thriving there?

The results of this quantitative research informed state level choices in capital investment, infrastructure improvement and public policy/program choices. Over a 5-year period, Ohio led the Nation in new capital investment deals (as measured by Site Selection Magazine). Our target audience was CEOs in specific industries of focus.

If I had the opportunity to do it again, I would have designed the quantitative study to gather data from state residents and from non-resident top talent in select industries to guide strategic choices on Place Making. This approach squarely focuses attention on meetings the needs of residents with the belief that doing so will ultimately benefit business.

E4

Stockholm's infamous "Capital of Scandinavia-campaign from around 2005 were seen as hugely successful because most of the surrounding municipalities and many of the large Swedish multinational companies headquartered in Stockholm actually adopted both the logo and the slogan.

E5

With regard to coping with success, and concerns of overtourism, the Institute of Place Management has recently updated the Overtourism Toolkit of Resources to reflect new literature on the topic and to introduce more place-based cases. The 2020 updated materials can be found here.

E6

First off, I would like to note that this answer is not so relevant to the current state of the COVID-19 crisis, when cities like Prague, Amsterdam and Barcelona had too much incoming tourism and were already exploring ways to reduce the numbers. And again, the issue is subjective rather than objective

Nevertheless, I would say that, generally speaking - places that have had conflicts or crises and still managed to produce a positive image would be good examples of successful place marketing and branding. These would include Christchurch despite the earthquake and shootings, New York after 9/11, Tel Aviv with the wars and military operations.

E7

My studio once helped the city of Chengdu to measure the success in marketing their city during the 2012 London Olympic Games. The government organized a few marketing events in London including the Panda show in Trafalgar Square. We did some tests including an on-spot interview with spectators to learn about their experience with the Panda show and their association of Chengdu city. We also did an in-depth analysis of the event's media coverage in English-speaking newspaper and social media posting on the same day. Also, we checked how many tourism brochures and panda toys (with the name of Chengdu written on their chests) were distributed to spectators on that day. Although the report was a short one, the research on the success of that marketing activity seemed interesting and inspiring.

E8

Creating the equivalent of an integrated brand “dashboard” is the most effective strategy we have seen. From Mississauga, Ontario, Canada’s sixth largest city...

E9

The UK’s GREAT campaign put a lot of effort and resource behind measurement. However, it was geared almost exclusively to economic impact and the ROI figures should be taken with a pinch of salt. Still, GREAT’s work in trying to develop these metrics should be commended.

Likewise, Brand USA has done a decent job of working to calculate reliable ROI figures for their efforts, though this is limited to tourism, and thus easier to pin down as a single industry vertical.

E10

The Good Country Index is a good example of success measurement on the basis of many different place indicators.

E11

There are many rankings and measurements across the planet, many of them with purely commercial purposes, in my opinion the best measurement is that made by BRAND FINANCE, where based on its methodology to value trademarks, it makes its assessment of the different country brands of the world.

E12

I would say the qualitative research and creative testing we do for the New Zealand is unique in its breadth and has been very effective in driving a consistent understanding of what’s required among stakeholders. All work across New Zealand Story, Tourism, Education, Investment, and Immigration is insight or data led. This means we can take a long-term approach as well as gain the trust and confidence of both the public and private sector to support our objectives.

Those countries who have been able to pool all measures across sectors into one dashboard stand apart in being able to command the attention of all stakeholders and coral everyone in the same direction.

E13

so far – I haven’t seen any case studies of cities, regions or countries that apply a holistic approach.

E14

Currently not a lot that I am aware of. Big Data is of course helping at some places (so the immediate promotion effects are measured quite well, like with click-rates etc.)

I do not know any case that is doing it on a more advanced level, though.

E15

We set a baseline. Let's say it's the number of nurses we have attracted to our state in the past two years. Then we launch our place brand and begin working with the agencies that recruit nurses. We use the brand as communication and as action. We use it to segment our audience. Perhaps we launch a campaign that tells our brand story in a compelling way. We wait a year and we measure it. Did we succeed? If not, we use data and interviews to understand why we didn't succeed, and we try again.